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**Teachers Salaries Hitting New Heights**  
**Putting pressure on system, says school official**  
*Nick Martin, Winnipeg Free Press, March 3, 2005*

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TEACHERS salaries will top out at more than \$70,000 in two years -- placing enormous pressure on school boards trying to hold down property taxes, says River East Transcona school board chairman Peter Kotyk.

"It wasn't too far ago that teachers started out at \$28,000 and topped out at \$52,000," Kotyk said.

Documents distributed by the River East Transcona Teachers Association show that teachers graduating from the five-year programs at the University of Winnipeg and University of Manitoba -- a so-called Class 5 teacher -- make as much as \$66,199 after nine years on the job.

Teacher salaries have increased by three per cent annually in recent years.

"Three per cent (raises) on \$50,000 is a lot different than three per cent on \$60,000," when school boards are paying the bills, Kotyk pointed out.

"How far do you want to go with this? How long before they're making \$100,000?" Kotyk said.

Kotyk wants the metro school boards to consider working together to make the case to taxpayers of just how much it costs to maintain jobs, programs and services -- that they are bearing the brunt of paying ever-escalating salary increases, as the provincial government's share of the overall costs steadily declines.

Pat Isaak, vice-president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, said teachers' salaries have lagged behind inflation since 1990.

"Teachers' salaries make up 53 per cent of school division budgets," a percentage that is actually declining, she said.

However, MTS will not discuss the politics of bargaining or of teachers' salaries.

Last year, costs of running the public education system rose 3.7 per cent, but when the increase in provincial funding was applied to the entire system, the province's share went up only 1.1 per cent.

River East Transcona has been in a bitter labour dispute with its teachers, who have been without a contract since the forced merger of River East and the former Transcona-Springfield school divisions in 2002. They are going to arbitration next fall.

The starting salary in Winnipeg and Louis Riel school divisions for a Class 5 teacher is \$43,310.


Kotyk said divisions do save some money because 50 or 60 teachers are retiring each year at the top of the salary scale and being replaced by new teachers at the bottom of the scale.



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