



## *President's Message Marcela Cabezas*



Relationships are at the heart of the work we do as an Association. To that end, we are grateful to our Council for supporting an ambitious idea we proposed to them back in September: to visit each of the forty worksites in our Division. The journey began back on October 7<sup>th</sup> with Jay, Scott and I visiting an enthusiastic group of teachers at Ecole Varennes and wrapped up this month with a stop-in at Victor Wyatt School. The end of these school visits also ended the weekly disappointment for my sons at Costco as we would purchase an abundance of cookies destined for the tummies of teachers, not theirs. They were comforted by the knowledge that those treats brought smiles to the members we visited every week.

Many thanks to our school reps for arranging our visits at each worksite. Wherever we went, we were warmly greeted by our members who were eager to both meet us and to ask the hard questions that I am hoping to have concrete answers for in the coming weeks.

Member questions were plentiful regarding The Public Services Sustainability Act (Bill 28.) This summer should render a decision from the courts regarding the constitutionality of this un-proclaimed law. I attended the first and last days of this court case and was dumbfounded by the change in direction taken by the legal counsel representing the government of Manitoba. In a synopsis of the proceedings Kevin Rebeck, President of the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL) indicated whereas the government's lawyers initially stated the fiscal crisis was a driving factor behind this legislation, in their closing arguments the government's counsel changed its tune and stated the economy was doing well and that is why controlling public-sector wage costs was required. What may prove to be most aggravating was the admission that the government did no financial analysis of cost saving from Bill 28 and that they picked the maximum wage increases in years three and four (0.75% and 1%) out of thin air.

Another area of questioning came from members regarding the LRTA/LRSD Arbitration for which no final decision has yet been determined. The Association

anticipates a final decision to be made by the Arbitration Board by early April.

Additionally, there were many questions regarding the K-12 Education Review. It is our understanding that the report is set to be released on or around March 27<sup>th</sup>. While I am certain many of your questions will be answered by the report, I suspect there will be new questions resultant as well.

Our Annual General Assembly on Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> will present members with yet another chance to meet with us to seek out answers to questions new and old. We have invited Manitoba Teachers' Society President James Bedford to our meeting to share the Society's perspective on current issues and to perhaps shed light on steps going forward. We encourage all members to save the date and attend this meeting where crucial decisions pertaining to the Association are undertaken annually. Remember – you are the LRTA – as such your presence at this meeting is paramount.

Finally, March 8<sup>th</sup> marked International Women's Day. Springing forth from one of the recommendations of the Final Report of the MTS Women in Education Leadership Commission, the LRTA has created an Ad-hoc Committee which is aiming to gather information with respect to various questions regarding women pursuing formal and informal leadership roles; identifying barriers or challenges women experience when in or deciding to assume leadership roles in the hopes of developing strategies or pathways to support women within the Society, the Locals and their school divisions in seeking out leadership opportunities. To this end, the LRTA Women in Educational Leadership Ad-Hoc Committee has created a survey that will be distributed in early April to members who identify as women with the hopes of gathering data to assist women in moving forward with their plans to provide leadership in the public education system. The participation of the women of LRTA will be greatly appreciated.

This is indeed a busy time for all members. Ensure that you continue to strive for personal and professional balance in your life. As always, remember, take care of yourself and take care of each other! Wishing you all a happy and restful Spring Break!

# Important Information Concerning COVID-19



As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, questions are being asked about how absences from work will effect employers and employees.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society has developed the following principles concerning potential workplace absence situations for members as follows.

1. If schools are closed: status of employment is working from home – salary and benefits continue.
2. If classes are suspended (no students): members will report to work as assigned by their school divisions – salary and benefits continue.
3. If a member is quarantined (not sick): status of employment is on an 'administrative (paid) leave' – salary and benefits continue.
4. If a member is quarantined (sick): sick leave provisions apply.
5. If a member is quarantined (sick) and sick leave provisions run out: in the case of a medically disabling condition, short-term and long-term benefits apply.
6. If the employer directs the employee to stay-at-home and the employee is not sick then the employer shall pay the employee as if they were working from home.

**NOTE:** The Government of Canada is advising that Canadians avoid all travel on cruise ships due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak until further notice. Further, the government is now advising against all international travel to limit the spread of the virus. Members should note that their MPSE Travel insurance benefits will be void if a member chooses to ignore this guidance.

Members should contact an MTS staff officer as needed about their individual circumstances relating to their employment and leave status.

Further, **Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living** (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/health/coronavirus/>) is recommending the following:

#### Strategies for Schools and Educational Institutions:

- ensuring ill staff and students stay home from school, and supporting those who are self-isolating at home to ensure they do not fall behind in their studies,
- reducing large group, and crowded activities,
- increasing desk distance between students, and
- considering implementing virtual or online classrooms, to reduce the number of people in classrooms.

#### Strategies for Employers:

- relaxing sick leave policies, such as the requirement for sick notes, to encourage those who are ill to stay home and prevent the spread of illness to coworkers or customers
- allowing employees to work from home if possible
- discontinuing non-essential work-related travel outside of Manitoba, and
- encouraging virtual meetings to reduce prolonged, close contact between individuals.
- minimizing prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two meters/ six feet) contact between other individuals in public,
- avoiding greetings that involve touching such as handshakes,
- disinfecting frequently used surfaces,
- following public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have travelled or have been exposed to someone ill with the virus.

**FAQ's about COVID-19 at [www.mbteach.org](http://www.mbteach.org)**

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# Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary

Vice President Professional Development—Jay McGurran



The Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary Committee is accepting applications for bursaries from teachers and principals to pursue studies related to public school education. The Bursary Fund, which is overseen by the Winnipeg Foundation, sits around \$8000 in a given year and is divided up by mathematical formula amongst all the approved applicants.

This bursary is for courses which were taken from January 2019 to December 2019.

## The Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary is available to:

- Educators who are *currently* employed in the Louis Riel School Division;
- Educators who are *currently* on leave from the Louis Riel School Division; and
- Educators who have requested a leave from the Louis Riel School Division for educational purposes and who will be *returning to the division*.

## Bursary Criteria:

- Proof of course completion is required via university transcript.
- Applicants may apply for tuition at registered universities or colleges. Maximum eligible tuition request is \$1500.00.
- ***Applicants may not apply for such things as (re)-registration, comprehensive exam fees, parking, dental or medical insurance, or cost of books and supplies.***
- Applicants must provide a copy of their T2202A Certificate ***and*** a university-generated account summary which indicates a separate breakdown of course (education) tuition and fees.

Bursary applications will not be accepted in two consecutive tax years (i.e. **2018** applicants can apply again in **2020**).

## Process:

- Applications will be reviewed by the Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary Committee prior to the deadline.
- The Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary Committee meets in May to review applications,
- Applicants may receive an additional five business days as of the convening of the Committee to provide additional documentation if it is determined that their application is not in order. After such time, their application is considered null and void in whole or in part.
- All approved applications receive funding. The bursary fund, which sits around \$8000 in a given year, is divided up by mathematical formula amongst all approved applicants.
- The Winnipeg Foundation receives notification as to the amounts to be awarded to each applicant as per the mathematical formula.
- Payment is made directly to the individual by the Winnipeg Foundation.

The Victor and Marie Wyatt Bursary Application form can be found [HERE](#).

Deadline for submission is:

**Friday, April 24, 2020 at 4:00 pm.**

Complete the form and return to:

Louis Riel Teachers' Association  
Attn. Vice President of Professional Development  
LRTA Office, 121 Hazelwood Crescent  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R2M 4E4



For further information, contact the Vice President of Professional Development at (204) 929-5782 or [pdlrta@shaw.ca](mailto:pdlrta@shaw.ca).



**Louis Riel  
Teachers' Association**



## **ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> @ 4:30 pm**

**Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre**

Come out and support your Association.

Vote on the 2020-2021 budget,  
proposed changes to the LRTA Constitution,  
By-laws and Policies and for the 2020-2021 Executive.

**Drinks/Pizza Provided!**

**Free Childcare Available!**

Call the LRTA office 204-929-5782  
or email [seclrta@shaw.ca](mailto:seclrta@shaw.ca) to register for childcare.

**YOU ARE THE LRTA!**

**MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD**

**ATTEND THE MEETING**

# The Winds of Change

Vice President Professional Development—Jay McGurran



With spring fast approaching, much of our attention will shift to the change in temperature and the warmer weather that awaits. As VP of PPDF, I am eager to see the changes that will be recommended in the K-12 Education Review, which is due for release prior to Spring Break. I am hopeful that the Education Review will be presented in a manner that highlights the challenges faced in our current model and offer sustainable and pragmatic solutions to address these challenges.

I will be particularly interested to see what recommendations are made in the area of Professional Development. At the heart of our journey, the equitable access to education opportunities for all students is of paramount concern. Every student should have the same access to education, no matter where they are or where they are from. This goal should also align with the Professional Development opportunities for membership.

There is little doubt that some of the recommendations of the K-12 Commission will suggest a new or different way of delivering curriculum and instruction. This will come with a cost, both mentally and financially. Will the government be willing to appropriately fund these costs and offer the necessary Professional Development or will they simply push these costs back to the teacher? How will the Professional Development model in Louis Riel be affected by the upcoming changes? What can our membership expect in the face of a once in a generation review of the most important system in our society? These are just a few questions that have bounced around my brain.

As always, I encourage each of you to access Professional Development in a way that best suits your students and your professional learning goals. As we embark on this period of transition, be reminded that your voice as a teacher is the most important and trusted voice in the education system. Use this voice to highlight all the virtues that you extoll on our society and never underestimate your importance.



MTS PD OPPORTUNITY  
(en français)

## Conversations cruciales®

Savoir et oser dire les choses - Conversations Cruciales® est un programme qui sert à présenter une approche non-seulement réservée à la gestion des conflits, mais aussi à une meilleure compréhension des relations interpersonnelles qui influence la manière de penser, parler et se comporter dans toutes les situations de la vie.

**Dates** Les 23 et 24 avril 2020 9 h à 16 h

**Lieu** McMaster House 191 rue, Harcourt

**Frais** Membre 300 \$ / Non-membre 350 \$ (*inclus le matériel*)

**Max** 50 participants.es

**Cheryl Chuckry** est une formatrice certifiée de l'atelier Conversations cruciales® qui travaille comme cadre administrative parmi l'équipe des Services professionnels et services en français à la Manitoba Teachers' Society. Son portfolio inclut l'équité et la justice sociale, le leadership scolaire, ainsi que le dossier « Collaborative Learning Team Grants » (octrois dédiés aux équipes d'apprentissage collaboratif). Elle a rempli diverses fonctions durant ces vingt-cinq ans d'expérience telles que leader scolaire, conseillère pédagogique, orthopédagogue et éducatrice en immersion française.

# Benefits Update

Benefits Chair—Jaclyn Porteous



## YOUR BENEFIT NEWS

### TEACHERS

#### Welcome to 2020

In this first newsletter of 2020, take a moment to read about important plan changes that are now in effect; learn about how your benefits affect your taxes; and find links to useful online resources and programs available to you.

#### What's new

The following changes to your benefits became effective January 1, 2020.

##### Changes to massage therapy reimbursement

Massage therapy claims are now subject to an \$80 per hour maximum instead of an \$80 per visit maximum. Under the Health plan, massage therapy is reimbursed at 80%, which means the maximum reimbursement for a one-hour massage is 80% of \$80, or \$64. Similarly, the maximum reimbursement for a 1.5-hour massage is 80% of \$120, or \$96.

To better understand how this change may affect you, consider that before January 1, 2020, the per-visit maximum for a massage therapy appointment was \$80 regardless of the appointment's length, meaning the maximum reimbursement for any appointment was 80% of \$80, or \$64.

##### Cap on vaccine coverage

You can claim the cost of vaccines under the Health plan, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per covered person, per year. For example, your Health plan coverage could help pay for the Shingles or Hepatitis A/B vaccines, which each cost around \$200 to \$250 for all required doses, or the HPV vaccine, which costs approximately \$500 to \$550 for all doses combined.

Keep in mind that you have 24 months from the date of service to submit a Health or Dental claim. Claims submitted after the 24-month period are not eligible for reimbursement.

#### Taxes and your benefits

With tax season fast approaching, now is the time to understand how your benefits affect your taxes, particularly if you have recently transitioned between teaching full-time and part-time.

**As a full-time teacher, can I claim my Health and Dental premiums as medical expenses on my tax return?**

- No, you cannot claim the premiums as medical expenses on your tax return because they are paid by your employer. You are paid on a lower salary scale to account for the payment of Health and Dental premiums on your behalf, which may result in your income being taxed at a lower marginal rate.

**Will I be taxed on the Health and Dental premiums paid by my employer?**

- No, you do not pay income tax on any employer-paid Health and Dental premiums.

**How does tax treatment differ for teachers who work part-time?**

- Since you pay a portion of your Health and Dental premiums out of your own pocket as a part-time teacher, they are considered eligible medical expenses which count toward your total for the Medical Expense Tax Credit. Your T4 tax slip (see box 85) lists these amounts. You can claim eligible expenses and premiums that are greater than 3% of your net income under the Medical Expense Tax Credit. For the full list of expenses eligible under the Medical Expense Tax Credit, visit [www.canada.ca/revenue-agency](http://www.canada.ca/revenue-agency) and type "medical expenses" into the search field.

# Benefits Update

Continued



## How much are you paying in pharmacy dispensing fees?

Did you know that your total bill at the pharmacy when you fill a prescription includes more than just the cost of the medication? A dispensing fee is applied to each prescription to cover the cost for the pharmacist to dispense the medication.

Your Health plan covers up to \$7 per prescription for dispensing fees.

However, if a pharmacy has a fee higher than \$7, you pay the additional amount out of your own pocket.

The table at the right lists the average dispensing fees for pharmacies in Manitoba.

Every pharmacy sets their own dispensing fee – it pays to shop around.

Pharmacy	Average Dispensing Fee in Manitoba
Costco*	\$4.47
Express Scripts Canada	\$9.00
Walmart	\$9.35
London Drugs	\$9.48
Superstore	\$10.22
Shoppers Drug Mart	\$12.69
Pharmasave	\$12.88
Medicine Shoppe	\$13.21
Safeway	\$13.28
Rexall	\$13.56
Sobeys	\$13.88
Red River Co-op	\$14.48
Super Thrifty	\$15.57

*\*Costco membership is not required to have a prescription filled at a Costco pharmacy.*

## Online Benefits Resources

### Manitoba Public School Employees Benefit Plans Website

This website is a useful resource for all plan members. On it you'll find:

- ▶ Coverage summaries, retiree information, life insurance rate calculator, annual paramedical maximums, past newsletters
- ▶ Links to the Blue Cross Plan Member Site and the Express Scripts Canada Pharmacy® website (details below)

[www.mpsebp.ca](http://www.mpsebp.ca)

Access Health and Dental plan summaries, sorted by school division, as well as Life and Accident Insurance information

### Blue Cross Plan Member Site

- ▶ Manage your coverage, submit claims online, set up direct deposit reimbursement, access your ID card

[www.mb.bluecross.ca](http://www.mb.bluecross.ca)

Manage your coverage on the go with the **mybluecross® mobile app**

### Express Scripts Canada (ESC) Pharmacy®

- ▶ Enroll in home delivery of maintenance drugs for chronic conditions
- ▶ Receive 10% additional reimbursement\* when you use this service for eligible prescriptions

[www.express-scripts.ca/mpse](http://www.express-scripts.ca/mpse)

Manage maintenance drug prescriptions; schedule automatic refills

*\*The additional 10% reimbursement also applies if you fill your eligible prescriptions at Costco. You don't have to be a Costco member to have your prescriptions filled at a Costco pharmacy.*



# ESJ OPPORTUNITY

Equity and Social Justice Chair—Kris Robinson



## LRTA FAMILY VOLUNTEER NIGHT AT WINNIPEG HARVEST!



**April 29<sup>th</sup>  
5:30 to 7:00 pm**

**Please email  
[kris.robinson@lrsd.net](mailto:kris.robinson@lrsd.net) to  
confirm your spot(s) by  
April 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT, ALL AGES ARE WELCOME!**

Reminder: If you have recently changed your name, please contact the LRTA office at 204-929-5782 or [seclrta@shaw.ca](mailto:seclrta@shaw.ca) and have your file updated.

### Calendar of Events

#### April

Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting  
Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar  
Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> LRTA Annual General Assembly – ATC

#### May

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> LRTA Appreciation Dinner  
Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> AGM Binder Meeting  
Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting  
Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> through  
Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> MTS Provincial Council

#### June

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> LRTA Retirement Reception  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting

### Contact Us

**LRTA office  
204-929-5782**

**President  
Marcela Cabezas  
[preslrta@shaw.ca](mailto:preslrta@shaw.ca)**

**Collective Bargaining  
Scott Wood  
[cblrta@shaw.ca](mailto:cblrta@shaw.ca)**

**Professional Development  
Jay McGurran  
[pdlrta@shaw.ca](mailto:pdlrta@shaw.ca)**

**All matters will be dealt with  
in confidence.**

**Manitoba Teachers'  
Society  
Can request Staff Officer  
assistance  
204-888-7961**

**@preslrta**



***Subject to change. Updated October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.***