



## *President's Message Marcela Cabezas*



One year ago, on March 12, 2020, the province of Manitoba announced its first three presumptive cases of COVID-19. The very next day, on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, they announced the impending closure of schools throughout the province. The date should have been an omen for what was to come.

At the time, we had been patiently awaiting the release of the K-12 Education Review. The pandemic altered that course of action instead bringing about significant changes to our lives both professionally and personally.

We have learned a lot about ourselves and each other over the course of this past year. The pandemic has revealed the many inequities inherent in our public education system. On Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the province announced it was finally ready to reveal the contents of the K-12 Education Review. One can only hope that the intent of this review will deal with the core issues at the heart of the system. Instead, I fear they will only topically address a poorly veiled political agenda of balancing budgets and cutting costs neglecting to consider the learners and workers who are the numbers and dollars in human form.

Education Minister Cliff Cullen remarked that there was much the province has learned from COVID this year with respect to public education. The Winnipeg Free Press quoted the minister as stating, "We recognize the system is quite resilient, it is able to adapt to change, which I think is quite positive, but on the other side of it too, we had 30 different entities sort of doing their own thing and it was difficult to manage that from a government perspective."

I can only hope that the government recognizes that the resiliency demonstrated over this past year is in no small measure due to the herculean feats performed

by our members. Teachers, principal teachers, clinicians, and coordinators have reimagined the way we have traditionally delivered education to ensure the continuity of learning for our students. We have turned our classrooms and lives upside down to keep a system running amid a global pandemic, incorporating safety protocols at the expense of best practice. We have been forced to abandon the natural order of things once taken for granted like one teacher to one classroom in the early and middle years to ensure social distancing requirements can be met. Teachers have been reassigned and taken on new roles at a moment's notice. High school schedules have been modified requiring a new way of planning for student learning. The system has forced us into the smaller class sizes we have always advocated for. We have learned to collaborate with colleagues in ways never previously conceived. We have given more of ourselves than was fair to ask for. And we have done it as an act of devotion to the students with whom we work and because we are professionals.

As I submit this article, we in the LRTA Office are just starting to take in the contents of Bill 64 – The Education Modernization Act. The impact of the many changes from it may take days to fully digest and weeks and months to bring to an implementation stage. Rest assured that the Association and MTS will be sending more information to you as soon as possible.

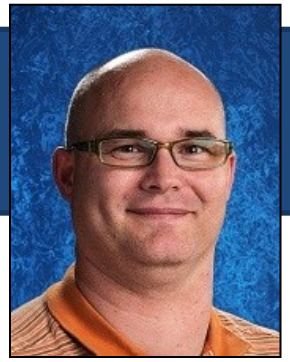
Once again, it is time for us to use our voices to communicate our concerns to the powers that be. Write or call your MLA. Speak out on Bill 64. We will make it through this next challenge together knowing that there is strength and resilience to be found in each other.

Yours in solidarity,

Marcela

# Bargaining Updates from Around Manitoba

## Vice President Bargaining—Scott Wood



### Pembina Trails Arbitration Award

Pembina Trails' Teachers Association received their arbitration decision on February 15, 2021. The decision was unanimous from the three person arbitration board, and followed closely the previous decision rendered in the Louis Riel arbitration case last year.

Highlights of the decision:

- Four year contract expiring June 30, 2022.
- This extends two years past our current Collective Agreement, and sets a pattern for the rest of the Province to follow. Pay increases of 1.6%, 1.4%, 0.5%, COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment).
- The first two years match our settlement, and inflation protection is set as the mechanism for year three and four of this agreement. The COLA in year four will be set in January 2022 and applied retroactively to July 1, 2021.
- Of note is that this is the first time that COLA has been included in an arbitration decision for teachers in Manitoba.
- New language for Term Teacher contracts that matches the language awarded in the LRTA decision.
- Length of Instructional day is set at 5 hours 50 minutes for high schools, and 5 hours 45 minutes in other schools. This is the first time an arbitration has set a limit on the school day. There are now three Metro Associations with length of day clauses in their Collective Agreements.
- Change to Maternity Leave benefits requiring members to return to work following leave.
- Members who receive top-up benefits will now be required to return to work and remain in the employ of PTSD for the equivalent of one full school year. If they fail to return to work, they will need to pay back the top-up benefits received.

As a reminder, the PTTA decision only applies to members of the Pembina Trails Teachers' Association.

### Beautiful Plains Agreement

Beautiful Plains Teachers' Association reached an negotiated settlement with BPSD, with the teachers voting 100% in favour of the agreement on February 25, 2021.

Highlights of the agreement:

- Two year agreement, expiring June 30, 2020. This matches our Collective Agreement.
- Pay increases of 1.6%, 1.4% on basic salary schedule only. The numbers match the LRTA settlement, but note that the LRTA settlement increased all allowances and stipends as well.
- All steps on the pay grid increased by \$500 effective June 30, 2020. This provides additional pay beyond the percentage increases. BPSD had one of the lowest rates of pay in Manitoba and this helps close the gap with other divisions.
- Substitute teachers receive a 3% pay increase, effective February 2021. This provides a similar pay increase to what the general membership received but is not retroactive.
- Maternity leave "waiting period" is revised to one week to reflect changes in the Employment Insurance Act.

These recent agreements show some positive signs for teacher bargaining in Manitoba. The PTTA decision sets the minimum pattern on salary for the next two years and will guide our future negotiations with LRSD. The BPTA agreement is significant because it was negotiated at the table and did not require the intervention of arbitration to get the agreement done. It is one of very few freely negotiated contracts signed by a public sector union during this time of government-imposed austerity on employers.

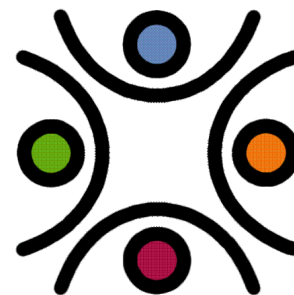
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# Louis Riel Teachers' Association

## ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>



The LRTA Annual General Assembly (AGA) scheduled for Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 cannot be held at the Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre this year due to public gathering health orders. The Manitoba Teachers' Society Provincial Executive has approved a temporary suspension of provisions of Local bylaw and constitutional requirements pertaining to the Annual General Assembly.

As such, Associations such as ours have been directed to conduct our AGA by electronic means and to hold online voting for budget and membership fees. As was done last year, the LRTA will be forwarding a Microsoft Forms Document link to all LRTA members on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to conduct a vote on these key items of business. Information will be forwarded to members electronically via Council Reps prior to the meeting date to provide members with all the necessary information. Thank you to all LRTA members who continue to support the important operations of your Association

## Louis Riel Teachers' Association Executive 2021-2022

The Manitoba Teachers' Society Provincial Executive has approved a temporary suspension of provisions of Local bylaw and constitutional requirements pertaining to Local Association elections.

The Call for Nominations for a position on the Louis Riel Teachers' Association closed on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 12:00PM.

Acclaimed to the 2021-2022 LRTA Executive are:

President – Marcela Cabezas  
VP Collective Bargaining – Scott Wood  
VP Professional Development – Jay McGurran  
Secretary-Treasurer – Cynthia Taylor  
Employee Benefits – Jaclyn Porteous  
Equity and Social Justice – Charlene Sacher  
Public Relations – Karen Myshkowsky  
ÉFM – Sharad Srivastava  
Social – Jaclyn Richard

Collège Jeanne-Sauvé  
Glenlawn Collegiate  
Marion School  
Glenlawn Collegiate  
Hastings School  
General Vanier School  
Glenlawn Collegiate  
École Henri-Bergeron  
École Henri-Bergeron

Members-at-Large: Lindsay McDonald  
Mike Moyes  
Michelle Bissonnette

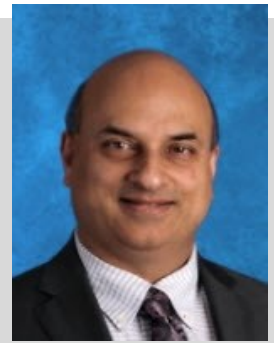
École St. Germain  
Glenlawn Collegiate  
École Provencher

LRASA – Ron Cadez

École St. Germain

# Le coin des

par Sharad Srivastava



Lors de la récente réunion du Conseil des écoles, voici les grandes lignes :

- La MTS et les ÉFM ont communiqué avec le Gvt du MB le désir de placer tout employé dans les écoles qui le désire sur une liste de priorité. Pourtant, en consultation avec les autorités médicales, le Gvt a dit non. La MTS respecte les autorités médicales dans ce cas.
- On encourage tout membre de suivre de près les plates-formes de la MTS et des ÉFM afin de rester au courant des observations sur le rapport sur le système public d'éducation
- Les ÉFM avaient offert trois recommandations : que le Gvt :
  - ⇒ travaille le recrutement et la rétention des enseignants francophones et augmente le personnel bilingue dans les écoles d'immersion
  - ⇒ s'assure que le programme de l'immersion reçoit les appuis bilingues pour développer leurs programmes d'études
  - ⇒ rédige les programmes d'études pour les matières et non pas les traduire en français
- Il y a des octrois disponibles toujours pour le perfectionnement professionnel, les ÉFM sont à la recherche des animateurs pour le TLLT et Collaborative Learning Facilitators. De plus, il y aura un forum pour les animateurs pour offrir la formation au mois d'août 2021
- La Conférence pédagogique – on espère l'offrir en personne (en octobre)—tout dépend. Veuillez contacter les ÉFM pour des plus amples renseignements si vous désirez présenter de quoi.
- Si vous faites quelque chose d'intéressant dans votre salle de classe, ou dans votre école, on vous encourage à communiquer avec les ÉFM et rédiger un article pour l'Inform-Action
- Bobbi-Jo LeClair a mené une présentation sur les perspectives autochtones – elle a offert des informations, elle a partagé des ressources, elle a facilité les discussions et elle a encouragé la réflexion.
- Certaines ressources qu'elle a partagées sont :
  - ⇒ [Reel Injun](#). (Documentaire sur la représentation des peuples autochtones dans les films hollywoodiens)
  - ⇒ Elle a partagé l'art de KC Adams—[sa fameuse exposition de photographie](#)
  - ⇒ Les ressources sur le portail de [Manitoba First Nations Education Network](#)
  - ⇒ [We Will Stand Up](#)—L'histoire de Colton Bushy; fortement recommandé par Bobbi-Jo
  - ⇒ Le nouveau Minecraft de la Division [Manito Ahbee Aki : L'endroit où se trouve le créateur](#)
  - ⇒ les nuances des mots « indigène » ou « autochtone » et les nuances de ces mots en anglais et en français (contexte canadien)
  - ⇒ [Indigenous Perspectives Education Guide](#)
  - ⇒ Leurs voix nous guideront [Guide de mobilisation des étudiants et des jeunes](#)
- Sélina Audino et Joelle Lumarque : des étudiantes universitaires qui ont préparé une présentation pour encourager les jeunes au secondaire de poursuivre leurs études en français, spécifiquement pour devenir enseignant; on contacte sjones@mbteach.org pour des plus amples renseignements
- <https://fr.mbremotelearning.ca> (ressources d'apprentissages—projet d'enquêtes (M à 8); stratégies pédagogiques pour l'apprentissage et l'enseignement à distance (stratégies gagnantes) et des ateliers interactifs en français—**accès gratuit**)
- Tout spectacle de [Festival du Voyageur](#) **est dispo pour de gratuit!**

Visitez les ÉFM à <https://efm-mts.org/> Suivez les ÉFM sur Facebook, Twitter et Instagram



[ÉFMdepartout](#)



[ÉFMdepartout](#)



[ÉFMdepartout](#)



# Personal Professional Development Fund Update

Vice President Professional Development—Jay McGurran



The financial status of the PPDF remains quite healthy. As such, there are sufficient monies remaining in the fund to support members' autonomous professional development for the remainder of the 2020/21 school year. Below are a few reminders for submitting an application, attending a PD event and seeking reimbursement from the PPDF.

- Please ensure to submit your application for Category A Funding (traditional PD) at least 5 days prior to the event start date.
- Please be reminded that a complete event schedule is needed for the application to be considered.
- Events that occur during school hours and require substitute coverage are being considered.
- Events that can happen outside of school time or asynchronous of the live event are also being considered.

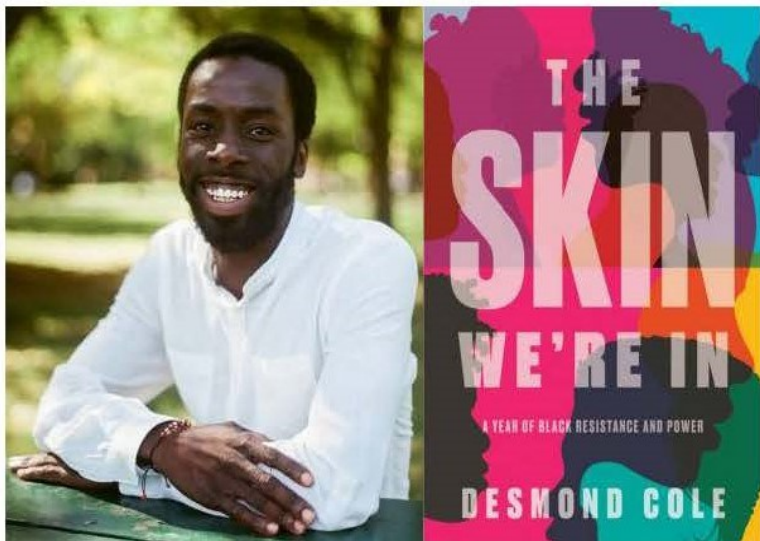
Applications for Category B Funding (Tuition Fees) for courses that occur from May to August will be accepted until Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021. These applications do not need to be submitted 5 days prior to the start of the course.

Upon completion of the event, you will receive an email with instructions outlining the steps for reimbursement. Please note the following.

- All reimbursement requests need to submit the PD Reimbursement Form which can be found at [www.lrta.ca/professional-development/](http://www.lrta.ca/professional-development/)
- Receipts in US funds need to be accompanied by a redacted bank or credit card statement showing the exchange rate that was paid.
- PayPal or credit card statements are not considered official receipts.
- Tuition Fee reimbursements need to provide a transcript and account summary.
- All documentation needs to be sent to [pdlrta@shaw.ca](mailto:pdlrta@shaw.ca).

If you have any questions about the Personal Professional Development Fund please do not hesitate to contact me at [pdlrta@shaw.ca](mailto:pdlrta@shaw.ca) or 204-929-5782. For the full PPDF Guidelines please visit <https://www.lrta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PPDF-Guidelines-2020-21.pdf>.

Jay McGurran



## LRTA Book Club

Join the LRTA Equity and Social Justice Committee for an evening of discussion of the book *The Skin We're In* by Desmond Cole on Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Please contact [charlene.sacher@lrsd.net](mailto:charlene.sacher@lrsd.net) if you need a copy of the book (limited copies are available).

RSVP to [charlene.sacher@lrsd.net](mailto:charlene.sacher@lrsd.net) and include the email you would like the virtual meeting link to be sent.

# 1 IN 10 CANADIANS LIVE IN POVERTY

Can you make the month?



## LRTA Professional Learning Night with UNITED WAY

Join the LRTA Equity and Social Justice Committee for a great night with United Way on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. We will be virtually learning together how poverty affects our community and participating in a simulation to gain an understanding of how 1 in 10 Winnipeggers try to make the month.

RSVP to [charlene.sacher@lrsd.net](mailto:charlene.sacher@lrsd.net) and include the email you would like the virtual meeting link to be sent.

MONDAY, APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup>  
6:30 PM- 7:45 PM

RSVP TO  
[charlene.sacher@lrsd.net](mailto:charlene.sacher@lrsd.net) BY APRIL 5TH

CAN'T WAIT TO "SEE"  
YOU THERE!



UNITED WAY





# Benefits Update

Benefits Chair—Jaclyn Porteous



## YOUR BENEFIT NEWS

### TEACHERS

#### January 2021

Happy New Year!

More than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to remind you that your health insurance plan is there to support the health and wellbeing of you and your loved ones by covering a comprehensive range of health-related expenses.

This first newsletter of 2021 provides information to help you get ready for tax season. You will also find links to useful online resources and programs to make the most of your benefit plans.

#### What's new?

##### Travel during COVID-19

Blue Cross has announced they are no longer excluding claims related to COVID-19 that you incur if you are traveling. However, before finalizing any travel plans, you should check with Blue Cross in order to find out what their current position is.

##### COVID-19 Vaccines

Since the cost of COVID-19 vaccines will be covered by the government, they are not an eligible expense under your Health plan.

##### Improvements from Express Scripts Canada

As you may be aware, Express Scripts Canada (ESC) has reduced its dispensing fee from \$9.00 to \$6.99, which means better value for you. Members who are unable to be at home during the week now have the added convenience of Saturday deliveries. Finally, enhanced packaging for orders of three or more medications can help you manage your dosing schedule and make it easier to follow the prescribed treatment.

##### Paramedical coverage

Reasonable and customary per visit maximums for some paramedical practitioners covered under your plan are changing as of March 1, 2021. Applicable maximums can be found under the Health tab at [www.mpsebp.ca](http://www.mpsebp.ca).

#### Is your dependent and beneficiary information up to date?

The start of the year is a good time to check that the correct information is on record for your dependents and beneficiaries.

Remember that if there is a change in your personal situation, such as marriage or the birth of a child, you have 90 days to register it with the Blue Cross benefit plans. Your partner is eligible for coverage as your common-law spouse, if you have lived with them for at least one year in a conjugal relationship. You have 90 days following the one-year anniversary of your co-habitation to enroll them in the plan. If you do not register the change within 90 days, your dependent will have to wait one year.

You should also review your beneficiaries for the Group Life plan. If you need to change them, complete and submit the change form (Canada Life - MPS 103) which can be found online ([www.mpsebp.ca](http://www.mpsebp.ca)) under "Forms".

#### Taxes and your benefits

With tax season fast approaching, it's important 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, this may result in your income being taxed at a lower marginal rate.



# Benefits Update

Continued



**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.

**What medical expenses can I claim on my tax return?**

- You may be able to claim eligible medical expenses under the Medical Expense Tax Credit. Be sure to keep all receipts for health-related expenses for the entire tax year (January 1 to December 31). If you have a spouse, you can claim any eligible health expenses on the tax return of the person with the lower income to maximize the amount of the tax deduction. 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.

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

- As part-time teachers pay a portion of Health and Dental premiums, that portion is considered an eligible medical expense and counts toward the total Medical Expense Tax Credit. T4 tax slips (box 85) list these amounts.

## 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. You pay any additional amount out of your own pocket.

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

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

Pharmacy	Average Dispensing Fee in Manitoba
Costco*	\$4.48*
Express Scripts Canada	\$6.99
Walmart	\$9.38
Superstore	\$10.22
Save On Foods	\$10.27
Shoppers Drug Mart	\$12.64
Red River Co-op	\$13.38
Pharmasave	\$13.50
Safeway	\$13.53
Rexall	\$13.63
Medicine Shoppe	\$13.69
Sobeys	\$13.95
Super Thrifty	\$15.79

*\*Costco membership is not required to purchase medication at a Costco pharmacy.*

## Online Benefit 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, per visit paramedical maximums, recent 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

- View remaining coverage amounts, submit claims online, set up direct deposit reimbursement, access your ID card

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

Access 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 do not have to be a Costco member to have your prescriptions filled at that pharmacy.*



**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual**

# **Menses Madness**

**LRTA's Equity and Social Justice Committee challenges members to donate menstrual hygiene products during the month of March.**

• **Tampons**

• **Pads**

• **Liners**

• **Menstrual cups**

**Donations can be sent to General Vanier School  
ATTN: Charlene Sacher Products will be donated to  
Teen Stop Jeunesse and North End Women's Centre**

**If you would like to learn more about the equity issues  
surrounding menstrual hygiene, email: [charlene.sacher@lrsd.net](mailto:charlene.sacher@lrsd.net)**



## LRTA MEMBER WELLNESS GRANT 2020-2021

As part of our mission to safeguard the welfare of teachers, the LRTA is exploring new ways to promote member wellness during these unique and challenging times.

Given that the nature, needs, and composition of each workplace is distinct, the Association would like to offer the opportunity for members to put forward proposals for LRTA member wellness events that promote stress reduction, physical activity, nutrition, and life management/work-life balance.

Guidelines, grant ideas, and application form can all be found here:

<https://www.lrta.ca/member-wellness-grants/>

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



#### LRTA Calendar 2020-2021

##### April

Wednesday, 7th  
Wednesday, 14th  
Thursday, 15th  
Wednesday, 21st  
Monday, 26th

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting  
Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar  
LRTA Annual General Assembly  
MTS AGM Binder Meeting

##### May

Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup>  
through Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Appreciation Dinner  
MTS AGM

LRTA Council Meeting

##### June

Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Retirement Reception  
LRTA Council Meeting

### Contact Us

**LRTA Office**  
204-929-5782

**President**  
Marcela Cabezas  
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Scott Wood  
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**Professional Development**  
Jay McGurran  
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All matters will be dealt with in confidence.

Call MTS at 204-888-7961 to request assistance from a Staff Officer

**@preslrta**

