



President's Message

Marcela Cabezas



On Saturday, October 23rd, I attended my first MTS Presidents' Council meeting for the 2021-2022 school year. There were several parts to the meeting that felt different. One such element was the fact that it was in person for the first time since January of 2020. It felt nice to be in the company of so many local presidents and MTS leaders and to hear their common perspectives on the many issues affecting our members. A unique aspect to Saturday's meeting were the invited guests in attendance: the Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister of Education who accepted an invitation for a Question and Answer period on COVID concerns and education reform.

For an hour, Deputy Minister Dana Rudy and Assistant Deputy Minister Christina Moody participated in an exchange of questions and answers. Front and centre in my mind was the mental health of our members. When it was my turn to ask a question, I prefaced it by sharing with them the many challenges our teachers, principals, coordinators, and clinicians have faced over the past eighteen months of pandemic work. I shared that many of our members are exhausted and fragile because of the past and present demands in the system relative to COVID. I shared the challenges of being asked to assess the mental health of students, perform recovery learning for students whose learning has been impacted by extended absence or months of pivoting between instructional formats, and of course perform the routine annual tasks assigned by the province, by the school division, and by schools. I reminded them that nothing about now is routine as the pandemic is not yet over. I shared that now more than ever more supports are needed in the education system as the

simple things are no longer easy. Finally, I asked them what efforts government was making to consider workload demands on teachers with an aim to addressing mental health and well being.

While I appreciated the acknowledgement of the Deputy Minister in telling us that they were aware of the concerns in the system and that they were looking to examine the issue further through steering committees examining mental health from an education workforce and student perspective, I felt her answers fell short on examining how workload directly plays a role in mental health.

In contrast to the Deputy Minister's comments, our conversations with LRSD Senior Leadership a couple of days earlier felt more authentic. In sharing our concerns regarding members mental health and workload expectations, Superintendent Michalik indicated mental health of staff was at the front of their minds as well. As both the regular and COVID related challenges of the school year begin to ramp up further, our members will be reliant upon Divisional leadership taking tangible steps to safeguard their well-being in the workplace.

My predecessor would often sign off on his Presidents' Messages by saying, "Take good care of yourself and take care of each other." Now more than ever these words carry tremendous weight. In the coming days, MTS will be sending out an edition of their electronic newsletter via email with more information regarding the many changes to its Employee Assistance Program (EAP). These expanded supports are arriving at a timely moment for many. Ensure that you are registered with My Profile on the Manitoba Teachers' Society website so that you receive any and all important communications from them. .

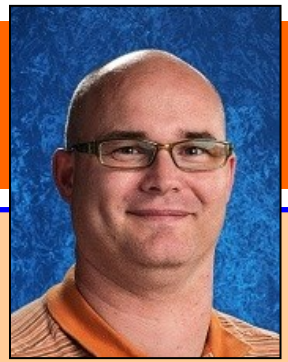
Please know that we at the office are here to serve you. Do not hesitate to call or email us with any questions or concerns. We are here to help.

Yours,

Marcela

Collective Bargaining Update

VP Collective Bargaining—Scott Wood



Manitoba Teachers' Society Member Workload Survey

In November, MTS will be conducting a workload survey of the membership. This paper-based survey, conducted typically every four years, is a comprehensive look at the specific workload issues faced by MTS members across Manitoba.

The data from this survey is used extensively in the bargaining process. Member participation is critical. More information regarding this survey will be circulated to members by our Council Reps.

Fun Fact: four years ago, in the last member workload survey, LRTA led the province in response rate, with over 85% of our members completing the survey.

Calling all LRSD Subs!

As a substitute teacher, you are a member of the LRTA. However, unlike other LRTA members, the Association has no master list that allows us to contact subs with important information. What can you do to help with this?

The Association needs all substitutes to ensure that they are registered with My Profile (<https://memberlink.mbteach.org/>). Once registered, substitutes who work in more than one school division are able to declare which Local Association they wish to participate in—a very important step when it comes to things like voting in local elections.

The registration with My Profile gives MTS the ability to send information directly to you, and also ensures that your personal email is included when the LRTA compiles lists of memberships for things like the Annual General Meeting or ratification of a Collective Agreement.

As MTS moves into the new world of provincial bargaining, it is more important than ever that the needs of substitutes remain a priority. Membership surveys, bargaining updates, and other information are funneled through My Profile, so the best way to stay informed is to make sure you are on the list.

Don't hesitate—sign up today!

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PPDF Information

VP Professional Development—Jay McGurran



Out-of-Town Events and Travel

In the September edition of the Rielity Check, I reported that attendance to out-of-town professional development events would be suspended for Terms 1 and 2. At this time, PPDF will need to extend this suspension to include Term 3.

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

1. It is important to have this information on the record before Term 3 opens on November 15th. This way members will be aware of the decision prior to accessing funds.
2. While the majority of our members are fully vaccinated and travel restrictions to various destinations are beginning to soften, there are still no mandates for individuals to be fully vaccinated while travelling via commercial airliner. While a mandate may be on the horizon, it is not yet in place and could cause issues for members seeking to travel.
3. LRSD protocol on travel shifts the onus and risk completely to the member. Any lost time due to the pandemic may be unpaid. Further, any funds spent may not be recoverable through PPDF, should circumstances surrounding the pandemic change.
4. The Province of Manitoba continues to state that non-essential travel is discouraged. While teacher professional development is vital to our job, accessing that PD in person at an out-of-town location, at this time, is not considered essential.

The possibility of granting out-of-town requests for Canadian destinations in Term 4 and 5 is still on the table and a decision will be made prior to LRTA Council on December 15th. Ultimately, PPDF is looking forward to a full return to personal professional development opportunities in 2022/23.

MTS PD Day Requests

Due to the overwhelming demand, PPDF will accept applications for MTS PD Day reimbursements until December 31st, 2021. The process for application is as follows;

1. Submit a request through the PPDF system.
2. The General Committee will review the request.
3. If approved, the member will receive confirmation through the PPDF system.
4. The member will receive an email from pdlrta@shaw.ca with instructions on submitting documentation for reimbursement.

Please note the following,

- An application must be submitted and approved prior to submitting any reimbursement forms.
- An error message stating that the application needed to be submitted 5 days prior the event will automatically appear. This message can be ignored.

PPDF Term Opening Dates

Term 1 (Sep. 7, 2021 to Dec. 31, 2021)	Now open
Term 2 (Jan. 1, 2022 to Feb. 28, 2022)	Now open
Term 3 (March 1, 2022 to April 30, 2022)	Opens November 15 th , 2021 at 8:00am
Term 4 (May 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022)	Opens January 15 th , 2022 at 8:00am
Term 5 (July 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022)	Opens February 15 th , 2022 at 8:00am

Click [here](#) to access the PPDF Guidelines for more details about how the PPDF can support your professional development. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at pdlrta@shaw.ca or 204-929-5782, and please stay connected with your Council Rep for regular updates.



LRTA MEMBER WELLNESS GRANT 2021-2022

As part of our mission to safeguard the welfare of teachers, the LRTA is pleased to offer this grant to our members.

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 forms can be found here: <https://www.lrta.ca/member-wellness-grants/>

École Guyot Staff Wellness Event 2020



HS Paul Staff Wellness Event 2020



Staff Wellness Event at École Sage Creek School 2020

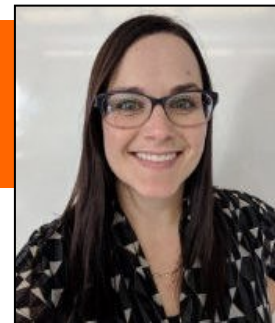


École Provencher's Staff Wellness Event 2020



Benefits Update

Benefits Chair—Jaclyn Porteous



Preferred Pharmacy

The Manitoba Public School Employees Benefits Trust has a preferred pharmacy arrangement.

If you purchase eligible medications at either Costco or Express Scripts Canada (ESC), you will be reimbursed at 90% of the cost instead of 80%. Prescriptions are conveniently delivered to your home or an address you choose at no additional cost (some restrictions apply). Costco Pharmacy can be used for your short-term prescriptions.

A Costco membership is not required to use their pharmacy. ESC is intended for long-term prescriptions, such as maintenance drugs used to treat chronic conditions.

ESC manages refills and prescription transfers. Pharmacists are on call 24/7. To sign up for ESC go to www.express-scripts.ca/mpse (VIP code: MPSE), or call 1-855-550-6337. You will need your ID card and the prescription information of any maintenance medications you are taking.

(Source: https://mpsebp.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Platinum_Health_0920.pdf)



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®



NEW! Canada Life Welcomes MTS Members to Portable Benefits

As a member of The Manitoba Teacher's Society, you have access to Canada Life's Portable Benefits through your group benefits plan.

With Portable Benefits, you can add life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) and critical illness coverage to your plan. You can apply for this coverage and keep it even after you leave your job. Your rates can be less than you'd pay for individual coverage, helping you save while keeping you covered.

- o **Pick your products.** Choose optional insurance that will best suit the needs of you and your family.
- o **Flexible payment.** Flexible payment options include credit card and pre-authorized debit.

Details can be found in the [Portable Benefits brochure](#).

Find the Coverage that Suits You

If you have questions about your current, mandatory life insurance or voluntary AD&D coverage, contact your employer. A Canada Life member guide can help find out how much coverage would help meet your needs. And now that you have access to critical illness coverage, they can help you with that, too. Connect with them to learn more about Portable Benefits' flexible options, get a quote and enroll at your convenience.

[Schedule an appointment](#) or call 1-844-545-0085, weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT.

Visit your LifeSpeak Library today!

LifeSpeak is a total well-being platform which gives you and your family members instant access to expert advice on all kinds of topics. From physical and mental health to relationships and finance to professional development...it's all here. You can watch videos, download action plans, and interact with world-class experts in real time. You'll find what you need to know so you can do what you need to do. Click the "[MTS-LifeSpeak Library](#)" link here or in the Quick Links panel on the My Profile home page to access the library.



Contact Us

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Professional Development
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All matters will be dealt with
in confidence.

Manitoba Teachers' Society
Call 204-888-7961
For Staff Officer Assistance

CALL FOR ESJ COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Any members interested in joining the Equity and Social Justice Committee are asked to please contact ESJ Chair, Charlene Sacher at charlene.sacher@lrtd.net

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

Calendar of Events



LRTA Calendar 2021-2022

September

Wednesday, 15th
Wednesday, 22nd

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting

October

Monday, 4th
Wednesday, 6th
Thursday, 14th
Wednesday, 20th
Friday, 22nd

LRTA New Rep Orientation
LRTA Executive Meeting
Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar
LRTA Council Meeting
MTS PD Day

November

Wednesday, 3rd
Wednesday, 17th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting

December

Wednesday, 1st
Wednesday, 15th
Thursday, 23rd through
Wednesday, Jan. 5th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting

Winter Break

January

Wednesday, 12th
Wednesday, 19th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting

February

Wednesday, 2nd
Wednesday, 16th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting

March

Wednesday, 2nd
Wednesday, 16th
Monday, 28th through
Friday, April 1st

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting

Spring Break

April

Wednesday, 6th
Wednesday, 13th
Thursday, 14th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Council Meeting
Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar

May

Wednesday, 4th
Thursday, 5th
Wednesday, 18th
Wednesday, 18th
Wednesday, 25th through
Saturday, 28th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Appreciation Dinner
LRTA Council Meeting
MTS AGM Binder Meeting

MTS AGM

June

Wednesday, 1st
Wednesday, 8th
Wednesday, 15th
Thursday, 16th

LRTA Executive Meeting
LRTA Annual General Assembly
LRTA Council Meeting
LRTA Retirement Reception