

NOVEMBER 2022

# RIELITY CHECK

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOUIS RIEL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION [www.lrta.ca](http://www.lrta.ca)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**Marcela Cabezas**



Sometimes things need to get taken apart so that they can be put back together better. For anyone who has ever lived through a major home renovation, you understand the sense of angst and worry one feels witnessing your house being taken apart to the rafters and the studs. The journey through a significant reno can feel arduous, interminable, and hopeless at times. The process to reassemble it all takes time and careful considerations. But by the end of the process, hopefully you find yourself living in conditions far better than those you started in.

In many ways, the public education system has been taken apart by the pandemic and the flaws inherent in its construction have been exposed for all to see. As we start the process of reconstruction, an examination of our wellbeing at work needs to be a significant part of the process.

The World Health Organization posits that mental health is the foundation of well-being and effective functioning for an individual and for a community. When it comes to public education, establishing psychologically safe workplaces will be key to helping support, sustain, and eventually recruit more workers into the sector.

Psychological health is related to mental health. When one is in a good state of mental health, one can realize one's own abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to one's community. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety recognizes the work outlined in the *CSA Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, a document that focuses on prevention of factors that cause harm to worker psychological health in the workplace and the promotion of self-assessment leading to better practices.

There are a variety of psychosocial risk factors that can affect one's psychological health at work. They include:

- Balance
- Civility and Respect
- Clear Leadership and Expectations
- Engagement
- Growth and Development
- Involvement and Influence
- Organizational Culture
- Protection of Physical Safety
- Psychological Competencies and Demands
- Psychological Protection
- Psychological and Social Support
- Recognition and Reward
- Workload Management

As we look to reassemble the public education system, we need to examine these aspects for the betterment of all who work and learn within it. Experts in the field of diversity, equity, and inclusion have also highlighted that these psychosocial risk factors often impact more members of marginalized communities. Finding ways to ensure people feel able to put themselves on the line, ask tough questions, seek feedback, report concerns, and propose innovative ideas without fearing negative consequences needs to be prioritized in the reconstruction phase.

Your Association continues to work on your behalf to elevate your voice. Conversation and advocacy connected to these risk factors is taking place at a variety of tables at which the LRTA and MTS sit. With school visits now underway, Jay, Scott, and I are excited at the opportunity to meet with and hear directly from members. Be sure to pop in to say hello when we visit your worksite!

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.

At your service,

Marcela

## BLUE CROSS COVERAGE FOR SUBSTITUTES

### *Vice President Collective Bargaining—Scott Wood*

As of September 1, 2022, substitute teachers in Manitoba are able to access health and dental benefits through Manitoba Blue Cross.



Coverage through this plan includes items typical in all Blue Cross plans such as prescription drugs, accidental dental, hospital and ambulance, medical equipment, medical practitioners, vision, and dental. Full details on the plan and the limits to each category can be found at:

[https://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/form/SubstituteTeacher\\_PlanProvisions\\_2022.pdf](https://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/form/SubstituteTeacher_PlanProvisions_2022.pdf).

Enrolment into the plan must be done with true family status, and monthly premiums are based on the specific composition of your family. For example, a 21-34 year old would pay a monthly plan premium of \$87.59. If they have a dependent who is age 5-20, then an additional monthly premium of \$65.83 would be added to the plan. All premiums are paid directly to Blue Cross by the subscriber.

Substitute teachers can apply for coverage under this plan by visiting the Manitoba Teachers' Society website ([mbteach.org](https://www.mbteach.org)) and following the links under "Benefit Plans". The application can also be accessed through [https://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/form/SubstituteTeacher\\_PlanApplication\\_2022.pdf](https://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/form/SubstituteTeacher_PlanApplication_2022.pdf).

## WEATHER-RELATED ABSENCES FROM WORK

Everyone knows that Manitoba winters can pose a particular challenge to our morning commute, especially for members who may live out of Winnipeg. There is a Divisional policy that helps members maintain their personal safety.

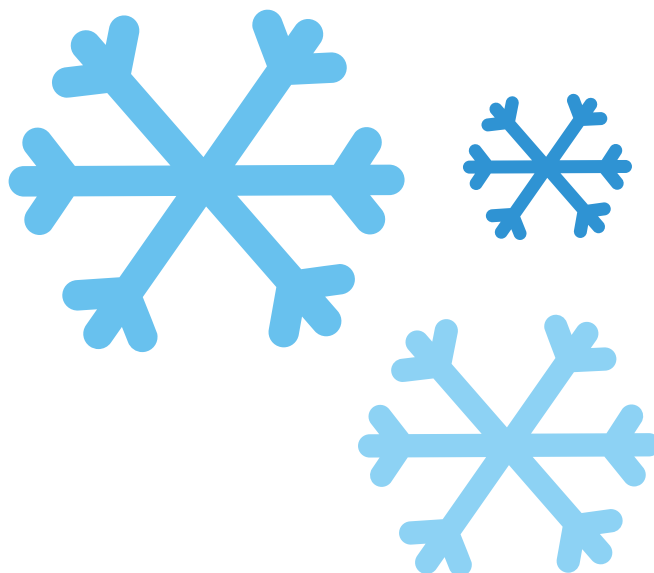
**LRSD Policy GCC/GDC** deals with absences due to weather. Simply put, if a member does not arrive at work due to weather conditions, they shall access a leave at the cost of substitute for the time missed. There is no loss of pay, and no impact to other leaves available to the teacher.

This policy allows members the ability to avoid risks to personal safety when weather creates unsafe travel conditions.

If you have questions or require clarification about this policy, please contact the LRTA Office at 204-929-5782.

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*The objective of the PPDF is to support autonomous personal professional growth and provide financial assistance for as many members as possible. The PPDF is committed to supporting professional growth opportunities that reflect the diverse community in which we teach.*

### **Planning to Travel?**

As Out-of-Town PD events are back in full swing, please keep these points in mind if you plan on applying for funding or have already received funding.

- A current year's schedule of the conference is required to ensure travel and release time align correctly with the event and satisfy the PPDF Guidelines.
- Members are to make their own travel plans. When traveling by air, proposed travel plans need to include a detailed itinerary with flight times and flight numbers.
- Should travel plans change, it is vitally important to notify the PD Chair prior to departure.
- While not supported by PPDF, it is highly recommended that members purchase trip cancellation insurance. Members may be responsible for costs associated with cancelled applications.
- Be sure to keep registration, flight, hotel and local transportation receipts from your event. Food receipts are not required.
- PPDF cannot approve attaching a Discretionary or Extra-Curricular Leave to a PPDF application. A Leave Request Form needs to go to the Division and should only be accounted for if the Division approves the request.

By keeping these points in mind, members will avoid some of the snags that cause delays in the Committee Review Stage and issues during the Reimbursement Stage. If you are contemplating attending an Out-of-Town and have more questions, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

### **Contact Us**

LRTA Vice President, Professional Development  
121 Hazelwood Crescent  
Winnipeg, MB R2M 4E4

**204-929-5782**

[vp-pd@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:vp-pd@lrta.mbteach.org)



### **Term Opening Dates**

Term	Dates	Opens
1	Sep 6 – Dec 31	September 6
2	Jan 1 – Feb 28	October 15
3	Mar 1 – Apr 30	November 15
4	May 1 – Jun 30	January 15
5	Jul 1 – Aug 31	February 15

### **Term Closing Dates**

Term	Dates	Closes
1	Sep 6 – Dec 31	December 22
2	Jan 1 – Feb 28	February 28
3	Mar 1 – Apr 30	April 30
4	May 1 – Jun 30	June 25
5	Jul 1 – Aug 31	June 25

### **FAQs**

#### ***How do I know which term to apply in?***

The application term corresponds with the opening date of your event, exclusive of travel.

#### ***I've used some In-Town funding this year. Can I use the rest for an Out-of-Town PD?***

No. You cannot use In-Town and Out-of-Town funding in the same year.

#### ***How do I amend or cancel an application?***

Please contact [vp-pd@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:vp-pd@lrta.mbteach.org) to amend or cancel any application.

#### ***Can I save a draft of an application for submission at a later time?***

Not really. While the new Online System does auto-save unsubmitted applications, application forms can only be accessed once the term opens (see above dates). It is advised to have information ready to copy into the application form when the term opens.

#### ***I keep getting emails from the new system. What's going on?***

The new SMA PPDF system will send a reminder email when you need to do something to an application. This will most likely happen if you have an unsubmitted request in the Application Stage. To stop these reminders, delete any unwanted applications.



# MB Teacher Goes Electronic



August 31, 2022

## Members Must Opt into Print

At MTS Provincial Council AGM in May, a Resolution was passed requiring readers of the MB Teacher to opt *into* a print copy of the magazine. This is a big change with implications worth noting.

In recent years, members have had the option to go into their MTS MyProfile account and select the option to receive an electronic copy, rather than the printed magazine. With the 2022 Resolution, however, that option is reversed. Starting with the Fall, 2022 issue of the magazine, the default will be electronic copies distributed via email. Members who wish to receive a printed copy of the magazine **must** opt to do so in **MyProfile**.

In 2021, MTS conducted focus tests of the membership to better align the form and function of the MB Teacher with the evolving needs of teachers today. We heard what you said and made a number of exciting changes as a result of your feedback. The focus has shifted to news you can use, in your classroom and in your efforts to stay healthy and inspired by your practice—a tall order as we gradually emerge from the grip of a pandemic.

We also reduced the number of annual issues of the magazine, from seven to three. And we dive a bit deeper into content that delivers tangible benefits for the classrooms: important updates on bargaining and union initiatives, PD information that promotes personal and professional growth, lesson plans and resources you can draw on, and profiles of Manitoba teachers creating new pathways in their practice—content that's sure to inspire discussion among colleagues. The reduction in the number of issues was also done to reduce our environmental impact: going from seven to three issues reduces our print run by 67,000 copies (and hundreds of thousands of pages) annually.

That said, one thing we heard loud and clear from our members was that there's still a place in our lives (and hands) for a physical book or magazine. Some of us connect better with reading material when we can hold it and engage with it in a tactile way. And some of our members have unreliable (or nonexistent) internet service, which makes the print copy an essential link to their professional community and MTS colleagues.

**If this is you, log into MyProfile [here](#). Once you're in, click the menu item "Make Changes" and in the drop-down menu select "Update My Info". Under line item "Request MB Teacher" click "Yes - Print" and we'll continue to deliver your copy directly to your school.**

If you haven't yet created a MyProfile account, please do so. Your account is a quick and easy way to keep your contact information current, register for MTS events, and select preferences for how you receive emails and other correspondence from the union—as well as the MB Teacher magazine!

***[Opt in here for a printed copy of the MB Teacher!](#)***



## LRTA Calendar 2022-2023

### December

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> through  
Wednesday, Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting

Winter Break

### January

Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting

### February

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup>  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting

### March

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup>  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup>  
Monday, 27<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday, March 31<sup>st</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Council Meeting

Spring Break

### April

Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup>

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

### May

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> through  
Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup>

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

MTS AGM

### June

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup>  
Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup>

LRTA Executive Meeting  
LRTA Retirement Reception  
LRTA Council Meeting

Updated June 2, 2022

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

## CONTACT US

LRTA Office  
204-929-5782

President  
Marcela Cabezas  
[president@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:president@lrta.mbteach.org)

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Professional Development  
Jay McGurran  
[vicepresident-pd@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:vicepresident-pd@lrta.mbteach.org)

All matters will be dealt with in confidence.

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

@preslrta 

