

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

# RIELITY CHECK

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jay McGurran



A few organizational things to mention before you dive into the Rielity Check.

We have examined the purpose of this publication and want to make sure that we are providing relevant information, but also not over-saturating our exposure. So, going forward, expect five or six publications a year as opposed to ten. We are going to endeavour to create issues that reflect a theme in our current working environment and hope to provide you with relevant information to assist you in your work. Let us know how we are doing by sending feedback to [president@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:president@lrta.mbteach.org)

Teachers across Manitoba have had to deal with a rise in homophobia, biphobia and transphobia that has masqueraded as “parental voice in education” and served as a wedge issue in the most recent provincial election. The rhetoric and hate that has been produced regarding this topic is profoundly disturbing and affects all of us in different ways. I am pleased to see that **LRSD has been quite vocal** in denouncing the hate that exists and reaffirming its commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive community. Further, a **letter penned** by the five major education partners outlines an aligned commitment to create and maintain safe and inclusive schools for all students and members of the school community. Finally, a huge shout out to College Jean-Sauve teachers Kay Wojnarski and Alison Adachi for their activism and organization of the Anti-Hate rally held in the beginning of September. Well done! For more information about supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and promoting allyship, check out **All Persons Are Equal and None is Other**.



As we begin our school visits, I must admit that the general outlook about education has had a much more optimistic look since the provincial election on October 3. Change in government is always a disruption to the way decisions are made, policies are formed, and initiatives are implemented. To that end, Nello Altomare will have his work cut out for him as he assumes the role of Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning. The top priorities, as outlined in the **mandate letter** sent by Premier Wab Kinew, include establishing an accessible nutrition program, providing stable and predictable funding, hiring more teachers and EAs and returning to smaller class sizes for the youngest learners. To this I say, FINALLY! Finally, we have a government that has been listening to experts in education saying that kids cannot learn when they are hungry. Finally, we have a government that recognizes that the funding of public education needs to be consistent with student enrollment and predictable years in advance. Finally, we have a government that sees education as a profession that only excels when there are enough people in the system to effectively deliver instruction to the students. Finally, we have a government that acknowledges that large class sizes are a disservice to our youngest students. Having said that, the proof will be in the implementation and the first sign of this commitment will be the education funding announcement in the new year.

Heading out of report card writing season and into the busy month of December, please remember to take a moment for yourself. Watch your favourite show, read a good book or connect with friends. Take some time to go for a walk in the park, play with your pets or hit the gym for a little sweat equity. Your health, be it mental or physical, is paramount to creating and maintaining a positive work environment. Do not hesitate to reach out to us at LRTA if you need anything to assist in your journey.

All the best for a wonderful holiday season.

Jay McGurran

# THE IMPORTANCE OF A RELEVANCY STATEMENT IN YOUR PPDF APPLICATION

*Vice President Professional Development – Jaclyn Porteous*



Interested in attending a professional development opportunity? The committee needs to know WHY!

Once you fill out an application form for any type of PD (In-town, Out-of-Town and Tuition), your application is reviewed by 13 committee members. The committee is responsible for making sure your application adheres to the PPDF guidelines, and a big part of vetting your request is the relevancy statement. Including a thorough description of why you want to attend the event and how it will help you reach your professional goals, is an imperative part of the approval process. Keep in mind that the committee may not know who you are, what you teach or where you work, so be sure to make that connection for them in your explanation!

One of the principles listed in the MTS Code of Professional Practice states that a member makes an ongoing effort to improve professionally. LRTA is one of a growing number of associations who have an independent PD fund, and it is important that we use these funds in an ethical and responsible manner. In the LRTA PPDF guidelines, Section II (Funding Criteria and Allotments) says the criteria used for reviewing an application includes, 'The relevance to the member's professional assignment and related activities or needs'.

This means the next time you apply for funding, tell us why that particular PD event will help you be a better teacher, clinician, vice-principal or principal. A strong relevance statement will help the committee examine the merits of your application.



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# FINISHING YOUR POST-BACC, MASTER'S, OR DOCTORAL PROGRAM? INCREASE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS!



## Vice President Collective Bargaining—Scott Wood

The Association often gets inquiries from members about Article 4.01 (C)—Increased Qualifications. This clause comes into play when a member upgrades their education, typically through the completion of a Post-Baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctoral program. Completion of upgrades will result in moving one class on the salary scale (ie from Class 5 to Class 6) according to the rules set out by the Professional Certification Unit of Manitoba Education.

It is the responsibility of the individual member to engage in correspondence with the Superintendent's Department after the completion of any increased qualifications. Typically, the first available document to members is a statement from the university/college that course work has been successfully completed and that the member is eligible for graduation. A copy of this document should be forwarded to the Division as soon as possible as the date of salary increase is tied to when the notice is first received by the Division. This should take the form of a formal letter that includes a reference to Article 4.01 (C), and is addressed to the Assistant Superintendent, Staff Services.

After this documentation is submitted, the next step is to contact the Professional Certification Unit.

(<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/profcert/salarycl.html>) You will need to complete a reclassification request form and provide proof of your graduation to receive the higher qualifications.

Once the Professional Certification Unit has confirmed your qualifications, you must follow up with the Division to ensure that your documents are received. The Division will not increase your class on the pay scale until the Professional Certification Unit confirms the increase in qualifications.

You will officially move up a class on the pay scale on the first of the month following the first document provided to the Division. For example, if you submit your university documentation on September 20th, the Division will recognize your increase on October 1st. However, the Division will not actually increase your pay until the final documentation from the Professional Certification Unit is received. Continuing with the above example, if the documentation from the Professional Certification Unit is received on November 25th, you will see the increase on your pay effective the December pay period, but also will get retroactive pay to October 1st.

The key point is to submit your first documentation as early as possible. If you wait for the Professional Certification Unit to send their documents to the Division, you may find that you are giving up a month or more of increased pay.

If you have any questions about the application of Article 4.01, please contact the LRTA Office at 204-929-5782.

## THE MB TEACHER MAGAZINE

The MB Teacher Magazine is published three times a year (Fall, Winter, Spring) to update MTS members on current issues in public education.

In the Fall issue, members can find some timely information about AI in the classrooms and an article featuring Vice President Cynthia Taylor, a LRTA member. There is also an overview of the current state of Provincial Bargaining and a tribute to Tom Paci, a long-time MTS Staff Officer for the LRTA who recently passed away.

The MB Teacher Magazine is available in digital form on the [MTS Website](#).





## WEATHER RELATED ABSENCES

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.

## BLUE CROSS COVERAGE FOR SUBSTITUTES

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](http://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).

# DID YOU KNOW ABOUT YOUR MANITOBA SCHOOL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT PLANS (MPSE)?

## Extended Health

- Insured by Blue Cross
- Preferred Pharmacies Costco and Express Scripts Canada give you an extra 10% coverage (90% drug coverage vs. 80% drug coverage). You do not need a membership to use the Costco Pharmacy.
- Express Scripts Canada (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 <https://pharmacy.express-scripts.ca/manitoba-public-school-employees> (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.
- Travel Health coverage is available for up to 90 days for working teachers and retirees enrolled in the MPSE Retiree plan regardless of age. You do not need to buy health insurance, but you may want to buy separate trip cancellation insurance from your travel agent.
- 80% co-insurance for Extended Health under any of the categories that have a maximum means that the amount Blue Cross pays out will equal the maximum. For example, you must have \$1062.50 in invoices to get the maximum \$850 benefit.
- Maximums are for the calendar year (January to December).
- Your combined annual maximum for mental health practitioners increased from \$850 to \$1500 per person per calendar year in January 2023. Other paramedical practitioners have a maximum of \$850 per person per type of practitioner (unless noted) per calendar year.
- Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Equipment has a maximum of \$1,000 per person every five years.
- Insulin Pumps have a maximum of \$1,000 per person every five years.

## Dental

- Insured by Blue Cross
- Dental benefits are subject to a combined maximum of \$1,500 per person per calendar year.
- You will be reimbursed 80% of eligible expenses for “Basic” dental services.
- You will be reimbursed 80% of eligible expenses for “Major” dental services.
- You will be reimbursed 50% of eligible expenses for “Orthodontics” for dependent children up to the age of 21 or up to the age of 25 if in full-time attendance at an accredited educational institution, college, or university. Orthodontic benefit payments will cease at these ages.

## Group Life

- Insured by Canada Life
- Mandatory for all eligible employees hired after the plan became effective in LRSD.
- Minimum coverage is 2 times your annual earnings, rounded to the next \$1,000. You may have opted for more coverage to a maximum of \$1,000,000.
- Family Life Insurance
  - o Spouse \$20,000
  - o Child \$10,000
- Accident Insurance
  - o Employee available \$18,000 units, up to a maximum of \$360,000.

You can make changes to your coverage within first 90 days after a major life event (e.g., Marriage, Adoption or Birth of 1st Child, Death, Divorce).

Remember to keep your beneficiary up to date!

For More Information:

MPSE website – [www.mpsebp.ca](http://www.mpsebp.ca)

Blue Cross – 1 800 873 2583 or [www.mb.bluecross.ca](http://www.mb.bluecross.ca)

MTS 1 204 831 3052 or toll free 1 866 494 5747 ask for Glen Anderson or email at [ganderson@mbteach.org](mailto:ganderson@mbteach.org)

MTS website [www.mbteach.org](http://www.mbteach.org) click “Benefit Plans”



The Manitoba Public School Employees (MPSE) benefit plans support the health and wellbeing of all our members and their families. We review your benefit plans on an annual basis to ensure that we continue to provide the benefits that matter most to you at a competitive rate. This newsletter provides important information about rate and plan changes for the upcoming year. For more details about the information contained in this newsletter or your coverage in general, please visit [www.mpsebp.ca](http://www.mpsebp.ca).

## New in 2023!

### Manitoba Pharmacare added coverage for glucose monitoring – your benefit plan was adjusted to align with the Pharmacare Program

Effective April 1, 2023:

- Members with Type 1 or 2 diabetes are covered for Flash or Continuous Glucose Monitoring Systems if treatment includes both basal and bolus insulin or an insulin pump.
- Claims for glucose monitoring products will accumulate towards a member's Manitoba Pharmacare deductible.

## New for 2024!

### Increased coverage for pharmacy dispensing fees

Effective January 1, 2024:

- Pharmacy dispensing fee cap is increasing from \$7 to \$10 per prescription.
- This important change will allow for greater reimbursement at pharmacies with higher dispensing fees.

**PRO TIP: Spend less on your prescription expenses at Express Scripts Canada or Costco pharmacies**  
Fill your eligible prescriptions at Express Scripts Canada or Costco pharmacies to receive a **drug reimbursement of 90% per prescription**, compared to 80% reimbursement at other pharmacies



## Group Life Insurance

Effective October 1, 2023, Group Life Insurance rates will increase slightly, by \$0.023 per \$1,000 of coverage.

Remember that **your employer covers the cost of 1x earnings**. That means that for a member earning an annual salary of \$95,000 and insured for 2x annual earnings, the member's monthly premium will increase by \$2.19 per month (before any applicable tax). Premium will increase another \$2.19 for each additional level of insurance above 2x earnings, as shown in the example below.

Selected Level of Coverage	Additional Cost for Member per Month (excluding tax)
2 x annual earnings (\$190,000)	\$2.19
5 x annual earnings (\$475,000)	\$8.74

MPSE remains committed to negotiating the best possible coverage for our members and ensuring premium rates are market competitive.

## Need to make changes to your Group Life coverage?

When you **experience an eligible life event**, you will have 90 days if you wish to make changes to your coverage. If you increase your Group Life Insurance coverage within the 90-day period before or after a life event, you do not have to provide medical evidence of insurability. For the new coverage to take effect, you must be actively working.

### Eligible life events include:

- Legal or common-law marriage\*
- The birth or adoption of your **first** child
- The death of your spouse
- Divorce or termination of a common-law relationship
- Loss of your life coverage under your spouse's group benefits program

\* A common-law spouse is a partner with whom you have continuously resided for at least one year in a conjugal relationship.





## Family Life Insurance

There will be no change to the Family Life rate for the next plan year. **Remember:** Family Life Insurance coverage can be added without medical evidence of insurability within the 90-day period before or after gaining your first dependent.



## Accident Insurance

There will be no change to the Accident Insurance rates for the next plan year. **Remember:** Every September, you can add or increase your Accident Insurance for yourself or your dependents. No evidence of insurability is required.

This can also be done within 90 days of a life event (defined on the first page) or at the same time you apply and are approved for any other benefits.

### Want to change your Accident Insurance coverage?

Contact your payroll administrator for an application form. Your new coverage will begin on the date your application is received by your administrator.

**You must submit your application on or before September 30, 2023.**



## Health rates

The following monthly premiums for Health plan members are effective **September 1, 2023**.

	Under age 65	Age 65+
	12-month payroll	12-month payroll
Single:	\$71.00 (\$3.00 increase)	\$93.10 (\$3.00 increase)
Family:	\$142.00 (\$6.00 increase)	\$186.20 (\$6.00 increase)



## Dental rates

The following monthly premiums for Dental plan members are effective **September 1, 2023**.

	12-month payroll
Single:	\$36.50 (\$4.00 decrease)
Couple:	\$76.50 (\$8.50 decrease)
Family:	\$117.50 (\$13.00 decrease)

Provider name	Available online resources	Website
<b>MPSE Benefit Plans Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access Health and Dental plan summaries sorted by school division, as well as Life and Accident Insurance information</li> <li>Review coverage summaries, reasonable and customary maximums applicable to paramedical coverage, life insurance rate calculator, newsletters, retiree information</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.mpsebp.ca">www.mpsebp.ca</a>
<b>Blue Cross Plan Member Site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>View your remaining coverage amounts for the benefit year, submit claims online, set up direct deposit reimbursement, access your ID card</li> <li>Manage your coverage on the go with the mybluecross® mobile app</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.mb.bluecross.ca">www.mb.bluecross.ca</a>
<b>Express Scripts Canada (ESC) Pharmacy®</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce your out-of-pocket expenses with reimbursement of 90% (instead of 80%) when filling eligible prescriptions through ESC</li> <li>Sign up for home delivery of maintenance drugs for chronic conditions</li> <li>Manage maintenance drug prescriptions and schedule automatic refills</li> </ul>	<a href="https://pharmacy.express-scripts.ca/manitoba-public-school-employees">https://pharmacy.express-scripts.ca/manitoba-public-school-employees</a>
<b>Costco Pharmacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reimbursement of 90% (instead of 80%) when filling eligible prescriptions with Costco</li> <li>Costco membership is not required to have your prescriptions filled</li> <li>Online and home delivery services are available</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.costcopharmacy.ca">www.costcopharmacy.ca</a>

HumanaCare is a virtual Short-term (3 to 6 sessions) counselling service for members and family, available 24/7 365 days a year.

Access online or by phone. A triage nurse will assess the level of urgency. In emergencies, a counsellor will be in contact within 24 hours. Otherwise, it will take 3 to 5 business days.

Phone contact 1 800 661 5330

Online: [www.humanacare.com/mts](http://www.humanacare.com/mts)

Access code is MTSMFAP



For longer-term counselling services please see your extended health benefits plan at [www.mpsebp.ca](http://www.mpsebp.ca)



## LRTA Calendar 2023-2024

### November

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting

### December

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting  
Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> Winter Break

### January

Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting

### February

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> LRTA Council Meeting

### March

Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting  
Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> Spring Break

### April

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting  
Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> LRTA Annual General  
Assembly  
Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> Maternity/Parental Leave  
Seminar

### May

Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> LRTA Appreciation Dinner  
Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> through  
Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> Manitoba Federation of  
Labour Conference  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting  
Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> MTS AGM Binder Meeting  
Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> through  
Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> MTS AGM

### June

Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> LRTA Executive Meeting  
Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> LRTA Retirement Reception  
Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> LRTA Council Meeting

**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

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204-929-5782

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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