

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2024

# RIELITY CHECK

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Jay McGurran*



Welcome back! I hope that you were able to find some time over the winter break to connect with friends and family, while taking some time for yourself to get ready for the back half of the 2023/24 school year.

As we progress through these long winter months, please make sure to keep your wellbeing a priority. As educators, the task that we are faced with can be overwhelming. It is vitally important to be in a self-reflective state to ensure that you are noticing, and reacting to, changes in your mental health. By being present and mindful to your state of mind, you are more likely to be able to adjust to the stressors you are experiencing.

Wellness and mindfulness are more important now than they ever have been in the past. For far too long, teachers have put aside their own health in their service to others. We do this by saying "yes" to too many things that we do not have the time, expertise, or passion to properly manage. By allowing yourself to say "no" to these things, you are actually saying "yes" to your needs, wants and desires.

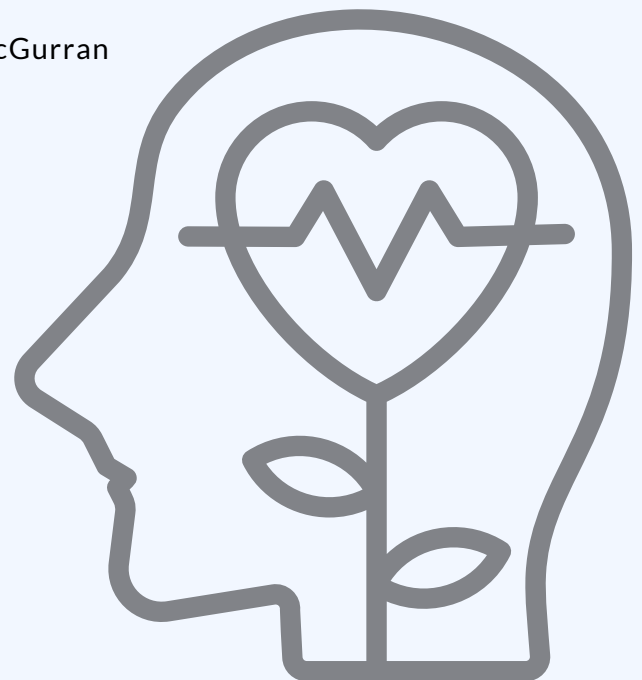


In my world, wellness is associated with movement. Walking and running have become a vital part of my physical and mental health routine. Recently, I went through a phase where my physical health was not allowing me to attend to this movement. The toll it took on my mental health was noticeable. As I began to feel better physically and started to work back into a movement routine, I began to feel better mentally.

Establishing a routine is important. It gives some stability in what can be a chaotic environment. Given the unpredictability of our profession, it is likely that your routine will be impacted from time to time. With that, if your routine gets upended, try not to be discouraged. Be forgiving with yourself and start the process over again.

All the best for a wonderful and prosperous New Year!

Jay McGurran



# 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, counsellor and psychologist, 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 \$90.26. If they have a dependent who is age 5-20, then an additional monthly premium of \$67.67 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) 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) .



## IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
- 2 **BLUE CROSS COVERAGE FOR SUBSTITUTES / IN THIS ISSUE**
- 3 **WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP (WAL)**
- 4 **MTS WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM 2024**
- 5 **PERIOD PRODUCT DRIVE**
- 6 **TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**
- 7 **THE PROS AND CONS OF MENTAL HEALTH APPS**
- 8-10 **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 LRTA EXECUTIVE**
- 11 **HUMANACARE / LRTA CALENDAR 2023 - 2024 / CONTACT US**



Picture a charismatic, passionate, and innovative leader in a school system. It would be understandable if the person you imagined is a man. The reason is that the positions of leadership continue to be dominated by men. The Manitoba Teachers' Society reports that, "women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of leadership" (Manitoba Teachers' Society, p.4, 2018).

We need to change the disparity that exists between women and men in educational leadership. Together, we can create a more inclusive and equitable educational system that benefits everyone. This can be done when we acknowledge the unconscious bias toward men and empower women to take on leadership roles.

The Louis Riel Teachers' Association has invested in the Women and Leadership (WAL) Committee. The committee's goal is to empower women and gender diverse members to pursue and excel in leadership roles. The LRTA WAL Committee is not leaving these members leadership development to luck. The committee has taken action to support personal and professional growth through a café style networking event, and podcast discussions. We invite all women and gender diverse LRTA members to participate in the LRTA WAL Speaker Series, April 30th. These experiences allow for our members to engage in meaningful conversations, gain insights, and build lasting connections regarding leadership.

Having women in leadership is crucial for fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive educational environment. Women bring unique perspectives and skills, which benefit the entire educational community. By promoting women's leadership, we can create a more balanced and equitable education system that supports the potential of all our students.

As we commemorate the 39th International Women's Day on March 8th, let us celebrate the progress women have made but we must also acknowledge the insidious gender-based biases that continue to exist. We must persevere for the generations of women leaders to come. We can build a future where women's voices are heard, their talents are recognized, and their leadership is valued.

Manitoba Teachers' Society. (2018) Women in educational leadership commission to provincial council 2018: Final Report. Retrieved from [http://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/ar/MTS\\_WEL\\_COM\\_FinalReport\\_2018.pdf](http://www.mbteach.org/pdfs/ar/MTS_WEL_COM_FinalReport_2018.pdf).





# Building Capacity, Confidence and Voice

Leah Gazan | NDP Member of  
Parliament for Winnipeg Centre

Cynthia Bird | Indigenous Educator,  
Facilitator



Karoline Krüg | PSAC Prairie  
Regional Education Officer



Bea Bruske | President of the  
Canadian Labour Congress

**Friday,  
March 1 &  
Saturday,  
March 2**



Dr. Sharanpal Ruprai | Associate  
Professor/Chair of the Department  
of Women's and Gender Studies at  
The University of Winnipeg



Sherry Jones | MTS Staff Officer



Andrea Zaroda | MTS Staff Officer



Arlyn Filewich | MTS Department  
Head, Teacher Welfare



Dana Driedger | Executive Director  
of The Nellie McClung Foundation

**McMaster House,  
191 Harcourt Street**

**Members: \$100  
Non-Members: \$150**



**WOMEN AND  
LEADERSHIP**

# Symposium | 2024



The symposium brings women and gender diverse members together to network, dialogue, collaborate and learn from each other. **Registration opens Monday, January 29, 2024.**

**REGISTER HERE: <https://memberlink.mbteach.org/Event.axd?e=2676>**





# Period Product Drive

Supporting Teen Stop  
Jeunesse and St.  
Mary's Food Bank

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

\*Pads      \*Tampons      \*Liners      \*Cups

Donations can be sent to the LRTA office at Dr.  
D.W. Penner School during the month of March

# TECHNOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Technology has opened a new frontier in mental health support and data collection. Mobile devices like cell phones, smartphones, and tablets are giving the public, doctors, and researchers new ways to access help, monitor progress, and increase understanding of mental wellbeing.

Mobile mental health support can be very simple but effective. For example, anyone with the ability to send a text message can contact a [crisis center](#). New technology can also be packaged into an extremely sophisticated app for smartphones or tablets. Such apps might use the device's built-in sensors to collect information on a user's typical behavior patterns. If the app detects a change in behavior, it may provide a signal that help is needed before a crisis occurs. Some apps are stand-alone programs that promise to improve memory or thinking skills. Others help the user connect to a peer counselor or to a health care professional.

Excitement about the huge range of opportunities has led to a burst of app development. There are thousands of mental health apps available in iTunes and Android app stores, and the number is growing every year. However, this new technology frontier includes a lot of uncertainty. There is very little industry regulation and very little information on app effectiveness, which can lead consumers to wonder which apps they should trust.

Before focusing on the state of the science and where it may lead, it's important to look at the advantages and disadvantages of expanding mental health treatment and research into a mobile world.



# THE PROS AND CONS OF MENTAL HEALTH APPS

Experts believe that technology has a lot of potential for clients and clinicians alike. A few of the advantages of mobile care include:

- **Convenience:** Treatment can take place anytime and anywhere (e.g., at home in the middle of the night or on a bus on the way to work) and may be ideal for those who have trouble with in-person appointments.
- **Anonymity:** Clients can seek treatment options without involving other people.
- **An introduction to care:** Technology may be a good first step for those who have avoided mental health care in the past.
- **Lower cost:** Some apps are free or cost less than traditional care.
- **Service to more people:** Technology can help mental health providers offer treatment to people in remote areas or to many people in times of sudden need (e.g., following a natural disaster or terror attack).
- **Interest:** Some technologies might be more appealing than traditional treatment methods, which may encourage clients to continue therapy.
- **24-hour service:** Technology can provide round-the-clock monitoring or intervention support.
- **Consistency:** Technology can offer the same treatment program to all users.
- **Support:** Technology can complement traditional therapy by extending an in-person session, reinforcing new skills, and providing support and monitoring.
- **Objective data collection:** Technology can quantitatively collect information such as location, movement, phone use, and other information.

This new era of mental health technology offers great opportunities but also raises a number of concerns. Tackling potential problems will be an important part of making sure new apps provide benefits without causing harm. That is why the mental health community and software developers are focusing on:

- **Effectiveness:** The biggest concern with technological interventions is obtaining scientific evidence that they work and that they work as well as traditional methods.
- **For whom and for what:** Another concern is understanding if apps work for all people and for all mental health conditions.
- **Privacy:** Apps deal with very sensitive personal information so app makers need to be able to guarantee privacy for app users.
- **Guidance:** There are no industry-wide standards to help consumers know if an app or other mobile technology is proven effective.
- **Regulation:** The question of who will or should regulate mental health technology and the data it generates needs to be answered.
- **Overselling:** There is some concern that if an app or program promises more than it delivers, consumers may turn away from other, more effective therapies.

Source: NIH - National Institute on Drug Abuse







## **Call for Nominations for the 2024-2025 Louis Riel Teachers' Association Executive**

The Nominations Chair is calling for nominations to the Louis Riel Teachers' Association Executive for 2024-2025. Nominations will be accepted beginning March 1, 2024. Nomination papers must be accompanied by the signatures of two members and forwarded to Marcela Cabezas, care of the LRTA Office, by 12:00 noon, March 13, 2024.

### ***What is the LRTA?***

The Louis Riel Teachers' Association represents all clinicians, coordinators, principals, vice-principals, substitutes and teachers of the Louis Riel School Division. The LRTA actively supports the wellbeing of its members through various committees such as Collective Bargaining, Professional Development, Social, Equity and Social Justice, and Public Relations. In addition, the LRTA provides assistance and guidance to individual members upon request.

### ***Who can be an Executive member?***

Any member in good standing with MTS who indicates their willingness to run for election to the Executive (when the call for nominations goes out) can be elected. Uncontested positions shall be acclaimed. Candidates for contested position shall be given the opportunity to address the AGA. Voting shall take place on Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, the day of the LRTA Annual General Assembly (AGA.) The Executive for 2024-2025 assumes office on August 1, 2024.

### ***What will I do if elected?***

All Executive members attend monthly Executive and Council meetings. A one-day planning workshop is typically held in October. All Executive members must familiarize themselves with current issues and be willing to serve on committees.

### ***What is the time commitment for an Executive member?***

The Executive and Council meetings last from one to two hours and supper is provided. Committees meet according to their mandate and therefore the number of meetings varies from committee to committee. Some Executive positions require less of a time commitment than others and may be ideal entry points. Descriptions of the Executive positions can be accessed on the [LRTA Website](#).

### ***Will I find the experience rewarding?***

You will find the experience to be very rewarding, both extrinsically and intrinsically. Members of the Executive are reimbursed for dependent care for meetings and the opportunities for professional learning and networking are many. Also, members of the Executive play a pivotal role in achieving improved working conditions for their colleagues and gain an insider's view of the political arena. Executive members know they have helped all their colleagues by serving their Professional Association.

### ***And there is more!***

You will get to work with a group of dedicated, supportive, and industrious leaders who will also become trusted friends.

***Nomination forms and related information can be found on the [LRTA website](#).***





**LOUIS RIEL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**  
**Executive Nomination Form for 2024-2025**

TABLE OFFICER POSITIONS OPEN FOR NOMINATIONS:

**PRESIDENT**  
**VICE PRESIDENT: COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**  
**VICE PRESIDENT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
**SECRETARY-TREASURER**

**We nominate** \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Worksite  
for the office of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Endorser Signature of Endorser Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Endorser Signature of Endorser Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Nominee Date

COMMITTEE CHAIR POSITIONS OPEN FOR NOMINATIONS:

**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS** **EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**PUBLIC RELATIONS** **SOCIAL**  
**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION** **LRASA REPRESENTATIVE**  
**MEMBER AT LARGE (3)**  
**ÉDUCATRICES ET ÉDUCATEURS FRANCOPHONES DU MANITOBA**

**We nominate** \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Worksite  
for the office of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Endorser Signature of Endorser Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Endorser Signature of Endorser Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Nominee Date

Deadline for Nominations is Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. (noon). This is to allow for distribution of electoral statements. By Constitution, nominations may also be made at the Annual General Assembly, Wednesday, April 17, 2024. Completed nomination forms can be sent through the divisional courier to: LRTA Office – Attention: Marcela Cabezas, Dr. D.W. Penner School. Scanned copies of completed nomination forms may be sent to [office@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:office@lrta.mbteach.org).



## Formulaire de nomination de l'Exécutif 2024-2025

LES POSTES DE MEMBRES DU BUREAU OUVERTS AUX NOMINATIONS :

**PRÉSIDENTE**

**VICE-PRÉSIDENTE - NÉGOCIATIONS COLLECTIVES**

**VICE-PRÉSIDENTE - PERFECTIONNEMENT PROFESSIONNEL**

**SECRÉTAIRE-TRÉSORIER.E**

Nous nommons \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom imprimé Site de travail  
pour le poste de \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nom imprimé de l'appuyeur Signature de l'appuyeur Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nom imprimé de l'appuyeur Signature de l'appuyeur Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature de la personne nommée Date

LES POSTES DE PRÉSIDENTE DE COMITÉS OUVERTS AUX NOMINATIONS :

**PRESTATIONS DES EMPLOYÉS**

**ÉGALITÉ EN EDUCATION**

**RELATIONS AVEC LE PUBLIC**

**SOCIAL**

**ÉDUCATION AUTOCHTONE**

**MEMBRE LRASA**

**MEMBRES DÉSIGNÉS (3)**

**ÉDUCATRICES ET ÉDUCATEURS FRANCOPHONES DU MANITOBA**

Nous nommons \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
Nom imprimé Site de travail  
pour le poste de \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nom imprimé de l'appuyeur Signature de l'appuyeur Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nom imprimé de l'appuyeur Signature de l'appuyeur Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature de la personne nommée Date

La date limite pour les nominations est le mercredi 13 mars 2024 à 12h00 (midi). Ceci permettra de distribuer les énoncés électoraux. Selon la Constitution, les nominations peuvent aussi être faites lors de l'Assemblée annuelle générale le 17 avril 2024. Les nominations complétées peuvent être envoyées par courrier divisionnaire à : Bureau LRTA – Attention: Marcela Cabezas, Dr. D.W. Penner School. Des copies numérisées des formulaires de mise en candidature remplis peuvent être envoyées à [office@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:office@lrta.mbteach.org).

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

### 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

LRTA Office  
204-929-5782

President  
Jay McGurran  
[president@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:president@lrta.mbteach.org)

Collective Bargaining  
Scott Wood  
[vicepresident-cb@lrta.mbteach.org](mailto:vicepresident-cb@lrta.mbteach.org)

Professional Development  
Jaclyn Porteous  
[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