

President's Message

Short Term Disability Insurance: The Basics

In the previous newsletter I wrote of how Short Term Disability Insurance is just that, insurance. Something you hope you never need, but are grateful it is there if you must. I also noted that, statistically, several of our members would make use of Short Term Disability Insurance, if it were available. Thus, there is rationale to adopt Short Term Disability Insurance on a personal level and for the collective good.

This month I will explain more of the details of how Short Term Disability Insurance functions. To do this, we first need to understand the Disability Benefits Plan (DBP) – aka Long Term Disability. The DBP is income replacement insurance for those who fall seriously ill. The DBP pays out insurance equivalent to 80% of take-home pay to recipients. To be eligible for DBP, a teacher must be off work for at least 80 teaching days *and* have used all their sick days. Thus, if a teacher has 130 sick days in the bank, they must be off work for 130 teaching days before DBP will begin to pay out. When such a teacher returned to work, they would begin accumulating sick days from zero.

Teachers who have fewer than 80 sick days, will experience an income gap if they encounter a long-term illness. A teacher with only 20 sick days will have to wait an additional 60 working days (about 3 months) before DBP will begin paying. During those three months, the teacher is eligible to collect EI sick benefits which are roughly 30% of take home pay. There is also a two-week, EI waiting period during which that teacher will receive no income at all.

We buy insurance to cover us against risks we cannot afford. When considering Short Term Disability Insurance, we must ask ourselves whether we could easily absorb several months of a 70% pay cut at a time when we are ill and have the added expenses that come with hospital visits and other treatments. Short Term Disability Insurance is designed to insure against that. Short Term Disability Insurance begins paying immediately after a teacher uses their last sick day and continues to pay until the DBP starts paying on day 81. Short Term Disability Insurance pays out 80% of take home pay, so teachers are not left financially vulnerable while they deal with their health.

None of us want to be in the position of having to use Short Term Disability Insurance; all of us have the potential to need Short Term Disability Insurance; and someone among us almost certainly would use it – if we had it.

In the coming weeks, I will continue to provide information in these newsletters about Short Term Disability Insurance. We will have an additional information session at our AGM on April 24 and then a vote in early May.

School Supplies

An often overlooked source of funds for classroom purchases is the Manitoba Textbook Bureau grant. These funds may be used for much more than just textbooks. Essentially, any teaching related print material may be purchased through the Manitoba Text Book Bureau (MTBB), whether or not that book is in their catalog. The MTBB will process special orders from outside their catalog. Looking inside their catalog, you will find the regular textbook related items but also manipulatives (especially from Spectrum), educational kits, planners, professional development books, and even the Canadian flag. According to their website the grant can be used for calculators, probes, globes, and much more. Again, these materials can be from their catalog or be special ordered through them from any vendor. More information is on their [FAQ page](#). If you are unsure about whether the grant will cover an item, just phone them and ask: 1-800-305-5515.

This is the time of year I remind all of you that there is a small federal tax deduction for teachers who have spent their own money on school supplies – and still have the receipts. I then remind you that it is the position of the Interlake Teachers' Association that no teacher should spend any of their own money on supplies for a publicly funded school system. In fact, we hold that no student or parent should spend any of their own money for services in a public school either. The discussion surrounding the chronic underfunding of the public-school system I will leave to another day. Until then, please ensure that all purchases you make for school are pre-approved by your principal so that you can receive reimbursement. And, if you must, don't forget about the tax deduction.

Lakewood Region Early and Mid-Career Seminar - Pension Sustainability

Lord Selkirk Regional Secondary School Selkirk

(Please note this is NOT a pre-retirement seminar)

You are invited to attend a presentation for Early and Mid Career Teachers 5-20 years into their careers. This year we are offering a seminar specific to pension sustainability for your association. The seminar is on Wednesday, March 21, Lord Selkirk Regional Secondary School in Selkirk. Should you be unable to attend, there will be an MTS Open Session held at McMaster Auditorium on Saturday April 7th, 9:00 – 12:00. This session is sponsored by MTS and TRAF. The objective is to help you understand aspects of the sustainability of your pension, the possibility of changes to your pension, and prepare for retirement even though it may seem a long way off. You may bring your spouse or significant other. A good understanding means better planning for life events.

In order to prepare handouts, pre-registration is necessary. To register online go to the [MTS website](#) at www.mbteach.org, log in at [MyProfile](#), click on the header Events and from the drop-down menu choose Event Listings, scroll down and click the applicable Early and Mid Career Seminar to complete the registration process.