

President's Message: Employee "Benefits"

Employee benefits are typically thought of as items paid by the employer, either partially or entirely, that provide a benefit to employee in addition to wages. Under this definition, teachers in the Interlake, and indeed, most of the province, have very few employee benefits. A quick look at your CIMS pay stub will show you that only the Mandatory Group Life Insurance is cost shared. Teachers pay the entire cost of Blue Cross, Disability Benefits (aka long-term disability), and TRAF pension. The division does contribute to CPP and EI, but these are legislative mandates and the cost of administering the benefit plans is also borne by the division. But, for the most part, we provide our own benefits. We, as a union, have combined to create and fund plans to assist those among us in need. From a simple dental check-up to income replacement during a long-term illness, we spread the cost among us, so that no one is left in financial hardship. Union membership is about looking out for each other, especially the less fortunate; this should always be a source of pride.

(The easiest way to find out what is in your benefits package is to visit the ITA Website. The aptly named [Benefits and Pension](#) tab has links to all our plans and benefits.)

Some News from the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund (TRAF)

TRAF will be hosting two webinars this fall.

- **Pension Information for Early Career Teachers:** Wed., September 27: 6:00pm - 6:45pm.
- **Making Voluntary Contributions:** Wed., October 25: 6:00pm - 6:30pm.

TRAF will be sending an email invitation to all members registered for [Online Services](#) approximately two weeks in advance of each webinar. Further webinars will be held in the spring. Topics are "Your TRAF Pension - Preparing for Retirement" and "Purchasing Maternity/Parental/Adoption Leaves". Only members registered for Online Services will have access to the webinars and to view the recording; space is limited. Please note that TRAF Online Services is different from MTS MyProfile online services. You must register for TRAF Online Services on the TRAF website. You will find a link to the TRAF Online Services page on the strategically named [Benefits and Pension](#) tab on the ITA website.



Maternity Leave News and Information

Regional Maternity/Parental Leave Seminar: October 23.

The annual Interlake Region Maternity and Parental Leave Seminar will be held on October 23, in Selkirk. The presentation will take place in room 140 of the Lord Selkirk Regional Secondary School from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. A meal will be provided starting at 4:45pm. The seminar is free for any member of the Interlake Teachers' Association. Guests and significant others are welcome. To register send an email to president@interlaketeachers.ca, or, better register [online](#). You will find a link to the online registration on the [ITA website](#).

Maternity Leave and Pension Buy Back

TRAF will soon be launching a new online maternity/parental/adoption leave cost calculator, accessible through [TRAF Online Services](#). This calculator will provide a quicker and smoother application, tracking, and calculation process for members and school divisions. This calculator is for maternity/parental and adoption leaves that are purchased during the leave and within 18 months after the end of the leave. The online calculator will be available to members and school divisions on October 2, 2017.

Project Overseas (text: MTS; image: The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario)

Each year about 50 Canadian teachers spend their summers working with colleagues in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Based on requests from overseas partners of the CTF, teams are formed in January with service taking place the following July or August. This year, MTS, in conjunction with The Canadian Teachers' Federation, will be sponsoring five MTS members. Criteria include appropriate teacher's certificate, five full years teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship, and excellent health. English and French-speaking teachers at all levels are required.

For more information and application forms, contact Nancy Kerr at:

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