In response to the Covid-19 crisis, the following Public Education Benefits Trust (PEBT) benefit information has been prepared for K-12 support staff members.

Who is eligible for Core Long Term Disability (LTD) benefits?

Members who:

- Are working 15 or more hours per week as a regular employee;
- Have an illness or injury which prevents them from performing their regular work duties;
- Have been disabled from work for 120 days or more; and
- Have participated in the Joint Early Intervention Services (JEIS) with Desjardins.

If you have been unable to work due to an illness or injury for 6 consecutive workdays or more, please contact your school district to ensure you are referred to the JEIS program.

Details about the JEIS and LTD programs, including a copy of the Core LTD Program Text, can be found at www.pebt.ca. Sick leave and Employment Insurance (EI) benefits may be accessed prior to applying for LTD. Please see the link below.

Who may not be eligible for LTD benefits?

- Members who are self-isolating but who are not disabled due to an illness or injury.
- Members who become disabled after an employment status change that makes them ineligible for benefits (i.e. certain leaves or lay-off).

If you are disabled due to an illness or injury and have questions about applying for LTD you may contact Desjardins at 1-800-263-1810 (option #1). If you are not eligible for LTD, you may apply for Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. Please see the link below.

Where can I get more information about my benefits?

- Information about the K-12 support staff benefits plan through the PEBT can be found at www.pebt.ca.
- Pacific Blue Cross (PBC) for extended health and dental benefits. PBC created an info sheet on COVID-19 with responses to questions about how they are handling claims and benefits. This can be found at www.pac.bluecross.ca/covid19/
- If you have an illness or injury and need information about JEIS and long-term disability benefits you can call Desjardins at 1-800-263-1810 (option #1).

What other supports are available?

The federal government recently announcement a number of different income support measures. The formal news release can be found here;

https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html

Please note that several of these key initiatives are proposed, requiring legislation to be passed so are subject to change:

- Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits are available to provide income replacement for those unable to work because of illness, injury, or quarantine. Quarantined Canadians can apply for EI sickness benefits and the typical requirement to provide a medical certificate is being waived. The one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits <u>will be waived</u> for new claimants who are quarantined so they can be paid for the first week of their claim. Service Canada's dedicated toll-free support number is 1-833-381-2725 and information **is available here**.

- Emergency Care Benefit (applications to be available in April 2020) to provide up to $900 biweekly for up to 15 weeks to provide income support to:
    - Workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
    - Workers, including the self-employed, who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent, but do not quality for EI sickness benefits.
    - Parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, whether they qualify for EI or not.

- A new Emergency Support Benefit to provide support to workers who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment (details to follow).

- Implementing the EI Work Sharing Program, which provides EI benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hours as a result of developments beyond the control of their employers, by extending the eligibility of such agreements to 76 weeks, easing eligibility requirements, and streamlining the application process.