



# District Joint Committee

# Best Practices Guide

Joint Early Intervention Services (JEIS)  
Long Term Disability (LTD)



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# A Best Practice Guide for District Joint Committees

## About the Public Education Benefits Trust

When Members become disabled due to illnesses or injuries, the Public Education Benefit Trust's (PEBT) Joint Early Intervention Services (JEIS) and long-term disability (LTD) programs provide caring, timely benefits and services. We are dedicated to support Members in their recovery, rehabilitation and safe return to work

## About JEIS/LTD District Joint Committees

All school districts should have a JEIS/LTD District Joint Committee made up by both employer and local union. District Joint Committees play a key role in ensuring that Members are well-supported by the PEBT programs. This guides provides information to assist you in your work.



## Contact Us

We support the District Joint Committees.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please call Ray Parker at 604-880-0049 or email [rparker.pebt@gmail.com](mailto:rparker.pebt@gmail.com)



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# How to use this guide

We have collected best practice recommendations from District Joint Committees throughout British Columbia. Take what works for your local district and union. Not everything may be appropriate for your local circumstances.

Use this in combination with other JEIS and LTD reference information available on the PEBT website - [www.pebt.ca](http://www.pebt.ca) :

- General (JEIS and LTD) Information
- The JEIS and LTD Processes
- Roles and Responsibilities
- The PEBT JEIS Procedure Manual
- JEIS Process Flowchart for Addictions Treatment Programs
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Average JEIS notification times
- JEIS Union Coordinator – Employee Contact Script
- JEIS/LTD Brochure
- Filing an Appeal (LTD)

PEBT Website



## Share Your Recommendations

We will update this document regularly. In the spirit of helping other District Joint Committees, please share your ideas on how best to support Members.

Please send your ideas to Ray Parker at [rparker.pebt@gmail.com](mailto:rparker.pebt@gmail.com) or 604-880-0049.



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# District Joint Committees

## Best Practices Themes

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Promote JEIS/LTD to all Members,  
before they get sick

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Contact Members at the start of  
their absence

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Maintain contact with Members  
during their absence

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Meet regularly as a District Joint  
Committee to ensure Members  
are supported



# #1 Promote JEIS/LTD to all Members, before they get sick

*'Raising awareness of JEIS/LTD not only provides reassurance for Members, but it reduces confusion when they are actually ill.'*

-Lower Mainland District Joint Committee



Talk about JEIS and LTD in professional development or union meetings. The PEBT has a presentation, including speaker's notes, that you can present. Or someone from the PEBT can present to your Members in-person or through a virtual meeting.

Help Members to expect a call by their 7<sup>th</sup> day of absence (6 days of absence plus 24 hours for the referral to Desjardins) from the Healthcare Management Specialist (HCMS). If they have not been called, ask the Member to contact the school district to ensure the referral was sent. Missed or late JEIS referrals result in Members not receiving timely support, and significantly lowers a Member's likelihood of returning to work.



Find opportunities, such as social media, to share stories about the JEIS program and of how other Members have been helped (without using any names). Ask your HCMS for these stories – even about Members in other school districts. This can be very reassuring to Members who are struggling at work. For example, some Members have been able to see medical specialists or have diagnostics such as an MRI a lot quicker through the JEIS program.



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# #1 Promote JEIS/LTD to all Members, before they get sick

*'It is not about snooping or shaming but ensuring Members get the help they need.'*

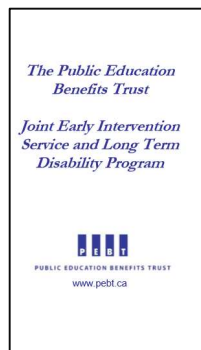
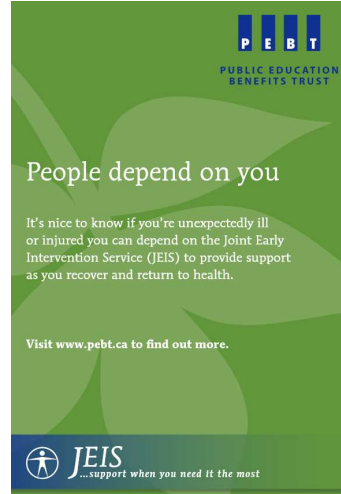
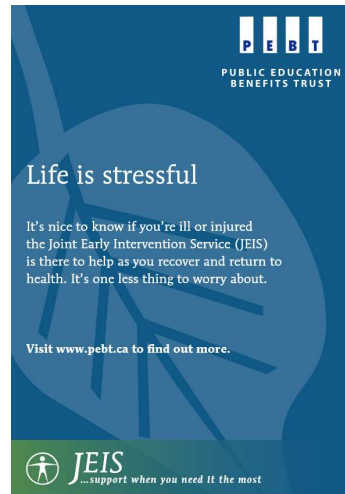
-District Joint Committee



Tell Members about your District Joint Committee – what you do, how often you meet and how Members are supported. This can go a long way to making Members feel more comfortable with the JEIS program. Do an informal role play at your next union meeting to show how the meetings go.



Display PEBT posters in staff areas at your schools. Posters are available through [www.pebt.ca](http://www.pebt.ca) 'Contact Us'.



Distribute electronic or printed PEBT brochures to your Members once a year. Electronic brochures are available at [www.pebt.ca](http://www.pebt.ca) 'Learn about Joint Early Intervention Services', 'Updates and Documents', 'Brochures'.



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## #2 Contact Members at the start of their absence

*'When the District or Union does not contact a Member at the start of the absence to introduce the JEIS program, what we often see is a Member who is reluctant to call us back. We then spend a lot of time just following-up with Members instead of actually helping them.'*

-Desjardins' Health Care Management Specialist



Contact the Member at the start of their absence. If time is short, try these strategies.

- Consider calling only Members who have not been through JEIS before.
- Send an email instead of calling (email inserts are available from the PEBT).
- Form a union sub-committee with enough volunteers to contact your absent Members.



JEIS email insert

Introduce the program.

- When talking to your Members use the Employee Contact Script found at [www.pebt.ca](http://www.pebt.ca) (under JEIS -Updates and Documents) but in your own words.
- Emphasize that JEIS is to ensure Members are receiving the best medical care including access to medical specialists, testing, treatment and rehabilitation professionals.
- Share that JEIS is a supportive, caring program that is endorsed by both union and employer.
- Let your Members know that a Healthcare Management Specialist (HCMS) from Desjardins will be calling within 24-48 hours.



Let the Member know that participation is required if they are absent for 6 days or more.

- Outline that not participating may mean losing eligibility for LTD which could be very important particularly if the Member does not recover as quickly as expected.
- Ask your Members to return Desjardins' phone calls within a day or two if possible, even if they are planning on returning to work. This will allow Desjardins to focus on supporting Members rather than on following up.



Emphasize that the Member's personal medical information, such as diagnosis and treatment details, is confidential and will not be shared with either the employer or local union.



## #2 Contact Members at the start of their absence

*'Missed or late JEIS referrals can result in someone not getting needed help and ending up with a permanent disability that was entirely preventable. The stakes could not be higher.'*

-District Joint Committee



71%

Of Members return to work if referred to JEIS within 10 days of stopping work

versus

48%

Of Members return to work if referred to JEIS over 20 days of stopping work

Send JEIS referrals by the 6<sup>th</sup> day of absence

- a) Strive to meet or report earlier than the 6-day notification target. Monitor your referral timelines at each JEIS meeting with your HCMS.
- b) At the start of any vacation, December holiday or Spring Break, send an email to the Members asking them to contact you immediately if they experience a disabling injury or illness. This includes 10- or 11-month workers who become disabled during the summer. The sooner the Member is referred to JEIS, the sooner help can be provided. **Do not wait until school restarts to refer a Member to JEIS.**
- c) Regularly remind Members and managers about the 6-day reporting requirement. This helps minimize missed absence reporting.
- d) Ensure that there is adequate back-up and training for absence advisors. If you are looking for training support and materials, contact the PEBT or visit the website at [www.pebt.ca](http://www.pebt.ca).



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### #3 Maintain contact with Members during their absence

*'When a Member stops working it can be very isolating and depressing. This can add to a Member's disability. Simply asking every so often how a Member is doing goes a long way to showing that someone cares.'*

-District Joint Committee



Establish a plan at your school district to maintain contact with Members during absences. Share this plan with your Members regularly (e.g. Pro-D day meeting), before they get sick, so everyone is aware.



Reassure your Members that the purpose is to connect and support, not to check up on or validate their disability.



When a Member is absent, allow them to provide input on the contact type and frequency. Examples include a text, email or phone call every 2-4 weeks.

*'In our school district, we offer to stay connected with Members who appear to be struggling, and not necessarily with a Member with a broken bone and a clear return-to-work date. We apply common sense.'*

-District Joint Committee



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## #3 Maintain contact with Members during their absence

*'When a Member is off work, the longer they don't hear from someone at work, the more they wonder whether they are welcome back.'*

-Vancouver Island District Joint Committee



If a Member is not comfortable maintaining contact, offer flexibility – such as letting the Member choose the contact person.



If you have difficulty contacting or maintaining contact with your Member, please let your HCMS know. They may be able to assist.



Do not probe – the main purpose is for empathy. Do not ask for the diagnosis or the nature of the Member's absence.



Do not share information which would be stressful to the Member including that their team is struggling or short-staffed.



Share good wishes from colleagues.



Let the Member know that they are welcome back at work, perhaps even in part time or different duties if available, when medically appropriate.



If more than one person is contacting a Member, ensure this is coordinated so that Members do not need to repeat themselves as this can be frustrating.



During contact if a Member is distressed, start by just listening. Then refer them to Desjardins, the employee & family assistance program (EFAP) or their family doctor. If you are concerned contact your HCMS.



## #4 Meet regularly as a District Joint Committee to ensure Members are supported

*'If you meet regularly and follow the process, you get the best results for Members. We meet once a month except during the summer. '*

-Lower Mainland District Joint Committee



Have regular meetings as a District Joint Committee. Monthly meetings have been found to be effective. At the beginning of each school year schedule all the meetings and include enough time for each meeting.

Each meeting, review the Desjardins' listing of all absent Members.

- Ensure no absent Members are missing.
- To identify return to work opportunities, review the following for each Member.
  - Physical and mental capabilities (limitations and restrictions).
  - Improvement status. If the Member is not improving, what will Desjardins do to support the Member?
  - Return-to-work timelines.
- Commit to looking for ways to bring people back as soon as safely possible such as with modified duties or at another school. If you don't have a modified duties program – start the discussion with your HCMS.
- Focus on bringing Members back to work as soon as possible but not too soon. Ensure that the Member's capabilities are clear, and that they match with the possible job duties.
- Share ideas and brainstorm on how to help the Member. For example, if you hear someone is struggling, think about how to connect with the Member and also remind them about your employee & family assistance program (EFAP).



## #4 Meet regularly as a District Joint Committee to ensure Members are supported



*'The meetings are about coming together to support your Members. Make these meetings a priority.'*

-District Joint Committee



Work together as a team.

- Ask questions of the HCMS and LTD Case Manager to understand their roles and to determine how to work together for the Member.
- If you have a new HCMS or LTD Case Manager take time to tell them what may be specific to your school district and community.
- Meet with the HCMS occasionally in person or by video to build a collaborative relationship
- Share information about any workplace challenges so that the HCMS can provide necessary supports to Members such as coping with return-to-work anxiety.
- Let your HCMS know about important Member events such as a surgery, family death or if your Member has returned-to-work. This will allow the HCMS to schedule their call with the Member appropriately and can reduce stress for the Member. Include these details in the 'Comments' section of the JEIS referral form.



If you are a new District Joint Committee without experience, consider working with a mentor committee who can answer any questions and provide guidance. Contact PEBT (below) to be paired up with a mentor District Joint Committee.



Twice a year review your school district's JEIS referral averages and other benchmarking data including your Members' JEIS/LTD survey results. This information is available from the PEBT through [rparker.pebt@gmail.com](mailto:rparker.pebt@gmail.com) or by calling Ray Parker at 604-880-0049.



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