

Welcome Back!



September 12, 2013

Teachers'

Bulletin

www.osstfd2o.ca

905-332-1228



On August 28th Instructor Blake Hurst led courses at the District Office that provided participants with a basic understanding of cardiovascular emergency management and one that led to Heart and Stroke CPR "C" Certification. Participants found the courses entertaining and engaging.

You've Been Asking!

When are the unpaid days?

Some teachers have asked for clarification regarding the unpaid days scheduled for this year.

- October 11 is a paid PA day. Teachers report to work and will be paid for the day.
- December 20 is an unpaid day. Teachers do not report to work and will not be paid.
- March 7 is currently an unpaid day. Teachers do not report to work and will not be paid. The only way that would change is if savings attained through VLAP and the upcoming retirement incentive program are sufficient to pay for the day, in which case it would become a paid PA day on which teachers would report to work. A specific date for making this determination does not yet seem to have been set.
- At the end of the school year, teachers who have used less than six sick days will be reimbursed for the December 20th unpaid day.

Halton Union Coalition Cites AMP Deficiencies and Failings

The nine bargaining units of OSSTF, ETFO, CUPE and HDEAA, representing the employees of the Halton District School Boards, have written the board in June calling for a review of the HDSB Attendance Management Program.

To: Amy Collard, Chair, HDSB
David Euale, Director, HDSB

The Halton Board's Attendance Management Program (AMP) has been operational since January 1, 2012. Over the past six months, employees' complaints to the Union offices regarding the AMP have increased exponentially. These complaints have highlighted a variety of deficiencies in the AMP. The members of the Halton Union Coalition, representing the employee groups within the Halton District School Board, are requesting a meeting with representatives from the Board to discuss current problems with the AMP and to seek solutions.

One specific concern that demands immediate attention is the significant and increasingly frequent delay in notification to employees who have exceeded the Board's absence threshold. It is not uncommon for employees to inform the Union offices that there has been a delay of a month or more between the "trigger" absence and the Attendance Management Officer's initial e-mail notice to the employee. For example, the OSSTF District Office was recently contacted by a secondary teacher who received notification on April 3rd that he had exceeded the attendance management threshold on January 15th. By the time the Board began its 90 day monitoring period on April 8th, 53 working days had passed--53 days unaccounted for in the AMP's records and during which time the teacher had not been absent at all.

Board Claims Support - Continued pg. 2

Our New Contract You Say?

Our contract for the period September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2014 has, as its base document, our 2008-12 contract. The articles of the 2008-12 contract remain status quo, except where modified by the government's imposed terms and regulations, as well as the provisions of the provincial Memorandum of Understanding (April 9, 2013) on the one hand, and by the provisions of the local Memorandum of Settlement (June 11, 2013) on the other.

Yes, it is now very convoluted!

Board Claims Support – Continued from pg. 1

The Board has consistently promoted Attendance Management as a program designed to provide support to employees who may be having difficulty attending work. It is difficult to take such a claim seriously when the AMP responds with such slowness to those employees whose absences have exceeded the Board's threshold. Support is support only if it is offered in a timely manner. Far from offering timely support to its employees, the Board appears already to be overwhelmed by the administrative burden of its Attendance Management Program.

Another specific concern is the Board's current definition of an absence, in the context of the AMP, as "any portion of a day." In other words, an employee who is absent from work for thirty minutes is no different in the eyes of the AMP tracking system than an employee who is absent for an entire day. Both employees have one "absence" recorded against them. One obvious result of this is that the incentive to avoid whole-day absences wherever possible is seriously diminished. If an employee who makes the effort to return to work after an early morning medical appointment is penalized to the same degree as an employee who makes no effort to return to work, where is the incentive to make the effort?

Another result of the Board's current definition of an absence as any portion of a day is that the AMP is needlessly capturing many employees whose attendance is not a concern at all. One secondary teacher, for example, recently exceeded the Board's nine-absence threshold in the following manner. A series of appointments with a medical specialist obliged the teacher to leave work 15 minutes early on six days. The teacher left work during the last 15 minutes of the prep period and did not miss any instructional time. Following the instructions of the Business Manager, the teacher booked off each 15-minute period in HARRI, using the illness code. As a result, six absences were recorded against the teacher in the AMP tracking records. Sometime later, the teacher underwent an emergency operation, was absent for four days, and consequently was inducted into the AMP. The above absences clearly indicate that this employee does not have an attendance problem. If anything, they indicate a conscientious desire to avoid missing work whenever possible.

The end result of defining an absence as any portion of a day (a definition, by the way, that is not found in any of the Board's policy and procedure documents related to the AMP) is that the incentive to minimize full-day absences is reduced, employees who have made a conscientious effort to minimize their absences are told that they have an attendance problem, and the AMP itself becomes bogged down in the attempt to keep track of employees whose

attendance is not a concern at all. The solution is a simple one: track absences in the AMP in the same way as sick-leave deductions are tracked. Whole days are counted as whole days, and part days are counted as part days.

The concerns detailed above are two of several that the Halton Union Coalition wishes to bring to the table for discussion. The feedback from our members has convinced us that the Halton Board's AMP is failing to provide targeted, effective support for those few employees who are experiencing difficulties with regular attendance, while at the same time it is lowering the morale and dedication of the many more employees whose attendance is not a concern. The Halton Union Coalition is willing to work with the Board to correct these problems.

We look forward to the Board's response to our request for a meeting.

OSSTF Workshops

Maternity/Parenting Workshop

Mon. September 25, 2013 @ 4:15 pm

New to Teaching e-Learning Workshop

Thurs. September 19 – 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Release Time and Lunch Provided

New to Teaching Canada and World Studies, Social Science and/or Humanities Workshop

Tues. September 25, 2013 - 12:00 pm to 3:30 pm

Release Time and Lunch Provided

New to Teaching English Workshop

Thurs. September 26, 2013 - 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Release Time and Lunch Provided

New to Teaching Math Workshop

Thurs. October 3, 2013 – 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Release Time and Lunch Provided

Workshops are held at: OSSTF District 20 Office
3410 South Service Road
Burlington, ON

**Call Lorie Wiersma, Executive Assistant, @ 905
332 1228 or CHATT to reserve your spot.**