

AGENDA: 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Correspondence referred (Board, December 4, 2024 – Res #23-163): Union Local Leadership re: Living Wage (discussion)
5. Employee Recruitment and Staffing Update
6. Employee Attendance Monitoring
7. Adjournment and Resolution Into Private Session as per the Education Act, Section 207.2
(b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee member, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian

HWDSB Trustees and Executive Council,

Solidarity is a key feature of Unionism. It identifies the concern, and the willingness to provide support, for the conditions of all workers, not only those within a shared bargaining unit. What happens to one, happens to all.

As such, the affiliated Locals of the HWDSB are writing to the Trustees and Executive Council in support of the members of the board's OCTU Local.

Previously, the HWDSB proudly announced their promise and commitment, in the form of an official motion, to be a Living Wage employer. Trustees declared that the HWDSB would ensure that all of their employees would meet and/or exceed wage levels identified to mark the distinction between poverty and a Living Wage in Hamilton-Wentworth.

The board was celebrated for their progressive labour practices and acknowledged by the Unions as making a significant step towards the mitigation of the effects of poverty. The board was ensuring that, at the very least, it was not contributing to that scourge on society.

All HWDSB workers, and their own children, would arrive at their schools with dignity and respect.

Recently, the HWDSB put aside their commitment to fight poverty within the HWDSB. A portion of the HWDSB "family" are being left behind. This is unacceptable to the Board's Labour partners.

We are in tough economic times. The provincial government is not a collaborative partner in support of education funding. Regardless, a commitment only counts if it is kept in difficult situations. A promise that is easily broken was never really a promise. A Living Wage is needed now more than ever.

The leadership of the Board is asked to reconsider their decision to allow poverty within an institution strategically directed to address inequities and to improve the community. The leadership of the Union Locals is prepared to work with the Board to find and enact solutions.

'The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members'

- **Ghandi**



HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DECE LOCAL





HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

June 3, 2024

Staffing and Operations, Professional Development, and Recruitment Update

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jason Alexander, Executive Officer, Human Resource Services & Staff Well-Being
Lety Goddard, Senior Manager, Human Resource Services & Staff Well-Being
Lara Gallagher, Manager, Staffing and HR Operations

Recommendation:

That the Staffing and Operations, Professional Development, and Recruitment report be received, as information by the Human Resources Committee.

Background:

The Human Resource Services and Staff Well-Being Department is committed to supporting the Multi-Year Strategic Direction. As a division, Human Resource Services and Staff Well-Being plays an integral role in each of the priorities. Within Human Resource Services and Staff Well-Being, the Staffing and Operations and Professional Development and Recruitment departments co-lead the major functions within the division to recruiting and staffing qualified individuals for various roles within the organization.

Status:

Elementary Teachers

In early April, staff implemented significant positive changes to system positions, posting 33 new roles with added responsibilities, ranging from special assignment teachers to consultants. Although data for permanent roles posted to occasional teachers will not be available until mid-June, we anticipate a high number of postings due to upcoming retirements.

Professional Development and Recruitment continue to recruit for Elementary Occasional Teachers in all qualifications, with a focus on French, English as a Second Language, Junior, and Intermediate qualifications.

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

Secondary Teachers

Professional Development and Recruitment continue to recruit for Secondary Occasional Teachers in all qualifications, with a focus on all Technological Studies subjects, Math, English, French and Science.

Educational Assistants

From September 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024, 161 Education Assistants were hired. Professional Development and Recruitment continues to recruit and hire into the EA casual pool to fill daily absences and long-term assignments.

Additional Positions

Since the beginning of the 2023-24 school year, the Board has posted 50 temporary and/or permanent OCTU positions and has added over 43 casual CUPE new hires. In addition, there have been over 15 permanent and 2 temporary PASS hires.

Total Workforce

As of April 30, 2024, the total number of employees working for Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is 8,992 people (6,259 permanent employees; 2,663 occasional or casual staff). This represents an increase of 57 permanent employees and an increase of 51 occasional staff.

Fill rates for March 1 to April 30, 2024, of the 2023-2024 school year

Fill rates up to April 30, 2024, are approximate 86% for teachers and approximately 70% for Education Workers. For all other positions are approximately 82%.

Our pressure point continues to be the Educational Assistants group.

Recruitment and Onboarding

During the 2023-2024 academic year, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to maintaining a year-round recruitment process to aptly address the dynamic needs of our schools and departments. Between March and April, HWDSB successfully onboarded 166 new casual staff members.

Throughout the spring recruitment phase, our active participation in a series of job fairs and informational sessions has been crucial. The focus of these events has been on recruiting teachers, including new graduates. This year, HWDSB visited several Faculties of Education and hosted HWDSB Information Sessions to prepare candidates for interviews scheduled in April. As a result of these efforts, 200 successful candidates have chosen to join HWDSB.

In response to the need for job-specific professional development for current and new clerical staff, all OCTU staff hired within the past 2 years have been invited to attend up to 2.5 days of professional development. In collaboration with Information Technology, Privacy, Finance, and

Human Resources and Staff Well-Being, OCTU staff will have the option to learn about a range of topics relevant to their roles throughout the system.

Educational Assistant Recruitment

Addressing the demand for Educational Assistants remains a priority. HWDSB has instituted a continuous recruitment process for Casual Educational Assistants. This approach encompasses successive interview rounds coupled with targeted outreach initiatives directed towards post-secondary institutions and community partners whom we have been building and strengthening positive working relationships.

Community Partnerships

The cultivation of enduring, reciprocal relationships with community partners remains at the forefront of our priorities. In tandem with community partners, including our college collaborators, HWDSB persistently provides opportunities for student placements across a plethora of program areas, including Early Childhood Education (ECE), Educational Assistant (EA), Human Resources (HR), and Office Administration. Recently we started a new partnership with Conestoga College to host Educational Assistant student placements at HWDSB. Further, we work with community partners to encourage their clients to apply for roles with HWDSB and continue to have discussions on how we can best support them during the hiring process.

In-Person Orientation

HWDSB's Professional Development and Recruitment Department remains dedicated to offering regular orientation sessions for new staff. In July/August, we will be hosting our 3rd session of the current school year, complementing the mandatory onboarding on the HUB. This will provide recently hired staff a chance to connect with peers and meet multiple HWDSB departments and union groups.

Financial Implications:

There are no additional financial implications as a result of this report.

Strategic Directions:

Building a Sustainable Education System

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.



HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPORT

June 3, 2024

Employee Attendance Monitoring Report

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jason Alexander, Executive Officer, Human Resources and Staff Well-Being

Lety Goddard, Senior Manager, Human Resources and Staff Well-Being

Lana Zekonjic, Manager, Employee Support and Wellness

Recommendation:

That the Employee Attendance Monitoring report be received as information by the Human Resources Committee.

Background:

In September 2019, staff implemented the HWDSB Strategic Wellness and Absence Management Plan to support staff wellness and promote improvement in staff absence rates related to personal illness. The goal is to support staff early toward early and safe return to work and reduce personal illness usage. This report monitors the status of HWDSB's progress towards the goals implemented under the Strategic Wellness and Absence Management Plan.

For reference purposes, personal illness or *"sick leave and short-term disability leave"* is an entitlement in Collective Agreements and Terms and Conditions of employment. Such agreements provide entitlements for staff to access sick time to attend medical and dental appointments. The Employee Support and Wellness Department provides support to staff on a case-by-case basis related to medical absence and medically supported accommodation needs in the workplace.

Status:

Staff Findings: Personal Illness Absences

- HWDSB has had an increase in employee absence rates related to personal illness from September 2023 – April 2024 compared to the same period for the 2022-23 school year (Appendix 1).
- Between September 2023 – April 2024, the average permanent Board employee utilized 12.83 personal illness days per 1.0 FTE. In comparison, the average was 12.40 days over the same period in the 2022-23 school year. This is an increase of 0.43 days per 1.0 FTE (Appendix 1).
- The HWDSB attendance rate is a review of personal illness, medical appointments, and dental appointments pursuant to central sick leave collective agreement provisions.

Staff Observations

The Employee Support and Wellness (ESW) Department continues to support staff with return-to-work planning and accommodations. Some observations impacting the wellbeing of staff include but are not limited to:

- Increased precautions with regards to illness transmission resulting in increased short-term absences.
- Increased number of staff receiving early intervention communication from Employee Support and Wellness.
- Delays within the health care system to access treatment for emotional and physical health conditions, including surgical medical procedures, longer wait times to access health care resources, and shortage of mental health resources for community to access.
- Pre-existing health conditions that have been exacerbated due to the pandemic. We are seeing an increase in personal illness absences resulting in increased sporadic illness absences and a high number of workplace accommodation cases.

Next Steps

The Employee Support and Wellness Department continues to monitor attendance rates. The department supports staff through best-practice early intervention programs, workplace accommodation programs, attendance support programs, and disability management programs to promote a safe return to work while working with our staff, system leaders, union leaders, and medical practitioners to further support and remove barriers which may prevent employees from regularly attending work.

They also continue to work closely with our Employee and Family Assistance Provider (EFAP), Homewood Health, in promoting available resources and services to support HWDSB staff through a variety of avenues. Homewood Health offers a variety of well-being programs and services to support employees in their wellness journey both within the workplace and in their personal life. Examples of services include life coaching, counselling, interactive educational tools, health and wellness assessments, access to a library of health, life balance and workplace articles, crisis response, and more. Homewood Health is a

confidential service available to all HWDSB employees and their dependents, 24/7 and is free of charge to the employee.

Staff will continue to provide attendance monitoring reports to the Board including the steps taken to support all staff with the implementation of our Staff Wellness plan.

Financial Implications:

The financial implications regarding staff wellness and absence management relate to Board employees paid sick leave entitlement and the large portion of positions that require coverage when absent. Full-time staff are entitled to 11 sick days paid at 100% of wages, plus an additional 120 short-term disability days paid at 90% of wages by the Board. The financial ramifications of absence management are primarily observed in replacement costs while providing paid sick leave time to incumbents.

Strategic Directions:

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Appendix 1**Overall Rate of Absence Year Over Year – September – April**

School Year	Rate of Absence
2022-23 – Sep-Apr	12.40
2023-24 – Sep-Apr	12.83
Difference:	+0.43