



REPORT TO

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL BEING, CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM

*I Trust in You, O Lord. You are my God. My times are in your hand.
- Psalm 31: 14-1*

Created, Draft	First Tabling	Review
January 22, 2018	February 1, 2018	Click here to enter a date.

Adrian Della Mora – Superintendent of Education, Human Resources & Employee Relations
 Paul De Cock – Comptroller of Business Services
 Darlene Purkess – Senior Coordinator, Human Resources

INFORMATION REPORT

Vision:

At Toronto Catholic we transform the world through witness, faith, innovation and action.

Mission:

The Toronto Catholic District School Board is an inclusive learning community uniting home, parish and school and rooted in the love of Christ.

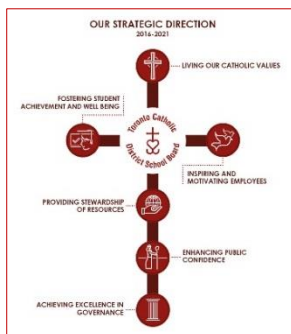
We educate students to grow in grace and knowledge to lead lives of faith, hope and charity.

Rory McGuckin
 Director of Education

D. Koenig
 Associate Director
 of Academic Affairs

T.B.D.
 Associate Director
 of Planning and Facilities

L. Noronha
 Executive Superintendent
 of Business Services and
 Chief Financial Officer



A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes employee absenteeism for the school years 2015-2016, 2016–2017, and the present school year up to December 31, 2017. It also highlights data variances, absenteeism trends, presents a snapshot of actual absenteeism –related expenses compared to budgeted amounts and outlines steps taken to address areas of concern.

The cumulative staff time required to prepare this report was 30 hours

B. PURPOSE

1. At the January 17, 2018 Audit Committee, the Trustees approved the following motion:

That staff bring a report back to the February 2, 2018 Student Achievement & Well Being Meeting (with a go forward reporting on a quarterly basis) that covers:

- a) Employee absenteeism to date
- b) A variance analysis against the budget
- c) Management response of what will be implemented/done to address concerns
- d) Long-term prognosis for the budgeted funds for employee absenteeism (i.e. projected to come in under/over/at budget)

C. BACKGROUND

1. **Prior to 2013:** sick leave for teachers was in accordance with the local collective agreements. At the start of each school year, each teacher’s sick leave was credited at the rate of two (2) days per calendar year for the ten months from September 1. All unused sick leave accumulated and carried over to future years.
2. **July 5, 2012:** Ministry of Education and OECTA signed a Memorandum of Understanding as it was referred to in Bill 155, Putting Students First Act. Each school year, a teacher shall be paid 100% of regular salary for up to ten (10) days of absence due to illness. It halted the practice of accumulating sick leave days year to year. Teachers were entitled up to an additional one hundred and twenty (120) days short term sick leave to be paid 66.7% of regular salary, and eligible

for 90% of regular salary in accordance with the Short-Term Leave and Disability (STLDP) provisions. Absences could be eligible for the STDPL subject to the third party adjudication process and certain conditions.

3. **January 2, 2013:** Ontario Regulation 1/13 of the Education Act dealt with Sick Leave Credits and Sick Leave Credit Gratuities. This regulation allowed for the introduction of top up days whereby an employee may use any unused sick leave credits that were provided for the immediately preceding fiscal year. Each unused sick leave credit may be used to top up a maximum of ten (10) sick leave credits provided. For the 2012-2013 fiscal year, it was deemed that every permanent employee had a total of two unused sick leave credits that may be used. The regulation also included information regarding carry over from previous year if absent for the first day of the academic year. The legislation was revised on January 21, 2013 and increased the number of sick leave days from 10 to 11 payable at 100% and also included other information regarding graduated returns to work with top up provisions. Various other changes to the sick leave provisions regarding adjudication occurred June 2013 to August 2015.
4. **August 25, 2015:** The Memorandum of Settlement of Central Terms between OCSTA and OECTA was signed. This memorandum outlined the 11/120 sick leave allocations per academic year along with 5 non-personal illness days. It also set out the internal administration of sick leave/short-term disability plans, specifically that medical confirmation required to be provided by the teacher for absences of 5 consecutive days or greater. The Board may request medical confirmation of illness or injury confirming dates of absence, the reason therefore (omitting a diagnosis), the teacher's prognosis and any limitations or restrictions.
5. Employee absenteeism is a challenge for all Ontario district school boards as boards struggle with the demand on the overall budget while also being tasked to provide quality instructional programming and service support with the increase in absences.

D. EVIDENCE/RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

1. The six-year absenteeism trend analysis which is provided in Appendix A suggests the following:
 - From 2011 through to 2017 all employee groups are trending upward in terms of average number of days absent per year

- Educational Assistants and Custodial/Maintenance staff have experienced the highest year over year (2015/2016 to 2016/2017) increase in terms of average number of days absent per year at a significant average of 24.6 and 18.9 days respectively
 - When non-personal absence days (5 days for Family Illness and/or Urgent Personal Illness) are considered, Elementary Teachers and Educational Assistants show greater use of these days
2. Detailed absenteeism data for five employee groups (Elementary teachers, Secondary teachers, Educational assistants/Child and Youth Workers, Other Board employees) is provided in Appendix B. An analysis of this data suggests the following:
- When comparing employee absences over the period September 2016/2017 to September 2017/2018 the system has experienced an increase of 4,121 recorded absent days for all employee groups.
 - All four of the specific employee categories (Elementary teachers, Secondary teachers, Educational Assistants/Child & Youth Workers, and Custodians/Maintenance staff) experienced increases in the number of absences taken for other paid leaves (outside of personal illness and family illness and urgent personal business days).
3. Key comparisons of actual to budgeted figures for absentee costs related to each employee group are provided in Appendix C. An analysis of the data suggests the following:
- The revised 2017/2018 budget estimates for Occasional Teachers reflect our concern with increased levels of absenteeism.
 - The significant increase in the percentage of the budgeted amount used (when comparing actual usage over the period September – December 2016/2017 to September – December 2017/2018) for Educational Assistants and Early Childhood Educators (49% and 45% respectively) suggests that we will be over budget for these groups in absenteeism costs for this school year.

E. ACTION PLAN

1. Cost is a key measure of the impact that employee absenteeism has on our board. There are many direct and indirect costs associated with employee absenteeism. Direct costs associated with the replacement of the employee are easy to measure. Indirect costs associated with employee absenteeism include such things as an adverse impact on student achievement and engagement, inconsistent delivery of program, classroom discipline issues, costs of organizing temporary/replacement workers, increased demand on management's time and employee morale issues.
2. TCDSB acknowledges that their employees are the Board's greatest resource and realizes that a positive workplace culture contributes to significant cost savings and better levels of engagement. The board's introduction of an Employee Family Assistance Plan in December 2017 and its partnership with the School Board Co-operative Inc. are testaments to its commitment to supporting employees in need and exploring and implementing provincial best practices to address factors which contribute to increased employee absenteeism.
3. The TCDSB's separation of the Benefits & Compensation and Short-term Sick Leave and Disability departments (effective October 2017) is promoting the creation of policies and procedures required to address the significant increase in short-term sick leave and disability cases. The hiring and on-boarding of eight additional staff members in this department (November 2017) is helping develop lateral capacity to address the increased volume of new cases and process the back-logged cases. The acquisition of the consulting services of the School Board Co-operative Inc. (October 2017) is helping operationalize the disability management component of our services and will assist in laying the foundation for an absentee support program as well. As always, senior staff remain committed to maintaining open dialogue with our union partners in order to nurture positive working relationships as we collectively address the needs of our employees.

F. METRICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Employee absenteeism for the six major employee groups identified in this report is monitored on a daily basis through the SEMS/Smart Find Express Program, as well as the fill rate of assignments for each group.
2. Accounting department staff will continue to monitor actual absentee coverage costs as compared to budgeted figures (for teachers, Educational Assistants and Early Childhood Educators) on a monthly basis. They will use a trend analysis to anticipate and report (to the Chief Financial Officer and Superintendent of Human Resources) any concerns and explore ways to mitigate anticipated overages in certain areas.
3. The Superintendent of Human Resources has scheduled meetings during January and February 2018 with union Presidents to proactively discuss concerns and proposed board policies/practices relating to absenteeism rates.

G. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

This report is for the consideration of the Board.