



Members Update for September 1st, 2021

It's not good news.....

Enhanced Cleaning Positions – I wanted to be bringing you better news about this, but right now my attitude is in line with the little guy up above on the right. As I shared with you yesterday, the rest of the Executive and myself have been hopeful that the HWDSB would see that slashing enhanced cleaning hours in schools was a bad decision and find the money to at least put 4 hours in each elementary school. Yesterday I received an email from Stacey Zucker, Associate Director for Services denying that request. Earlier today I notified the Director and Trustee Chair about the decision and still had some hope that they would intervene and find a mutually agreeable solution. I received a response from the Director around noon today basically echoing the response from Stacey Zucker yesterday afternoon.

So, until the end of January the HWDSB will only have 22 enhanced cleaners. These 22 temporary positions will be posted next Tuesday. Each of those positions will be responsible for providing touchpoint cleaning for 4 schools per day. Mileage will be paid from the time the member leaves the first location until they arrive at their last location. More information will be available on the postings next week but I urge you to fully understand what you are posting for if you are interested.

Now that we have a firm denial from the employer on this issue, I have reached out to both OSBCU and CUPE Ontario today to provide further direction and possibly some assistance with reaching out to community partners, parents and education stakeholders about the concerns we have with the drastic cut from up to 8 hours per location per day, down to approximately 90 minutes per day. Parents have a right to know this is happening but all people are hearing right now is how the HWDSB is putting student safety first and parents should be very comfortable and trusting when sending their kids back next week.

What Am I Doing Next Week? - There's been lots of questions about what routines are we following next Wednesday on afternoon shift when students return. Well, I've asked twice this week and still no answer. Apparently nobody knows. I hope we can return to our regular schedules (not the temporary or "enhanced" schedules we were following last year when students were in person) but all the way back to pre-Covid schedules with our regular duties and classroom cleaning after the kids leave. There is supposed to be a meeting between the HWDSB and Hamilton Public Health to determine what their guidance is on the issue and as soon as we know what the result is, it will be passed on to you if it isn't by the employer because as we know, some area supervisors forget to mention things that we find very important.

Day Shift Coverage & Floating Heads - That would be a great band name – Floating Heads. Wouldn't it?! Anyhow....there won't be a need for floating head caretakers this year as the HWDSB has introduced the Easy Bake Oven – sorry, Easy Connect system for both absence reporting and absence coverage. All absences will be filled by the system and the role that Eva has been in for many years will be replaced by automation now. On day one of an absence the system will fill the absence. If a posted member in that school is interested in bumping up after day one, they still have that opportunity and simply need to inform their area supervisor. Then on day two, they would step into that position and the casual who was called on day one will slip down to whatever position is vacant. The system will use the rotational system for calling/assigning casuals just like it should for casuals. Think of it as a giant wheel and when the wheel spins back to you, you get a call. Although right now I think that wheel will be going around as fast as my tires do when I'm heading to go fishing. At least for the time being, if you're a casual who wants to work a full shift every day, I don't think there's going to be any problem doing that.

Creating an Absence – Just for fun today I logged into my Apply to Education account and clicked on the Easy Connect tab at the top of the page. The new system for reporting an absence looks quite familiar to what SFX used to look like. You choose your shift, your position and reason for the absence and submit. That's it. Now granted I didn't follow it all the way through because I was at work today – but it seems quite similar to use. If you have any questions about the new system or are having difficulties logging in to Apply to Education you can find a guide with pictures on using the system and people to contact in an email from Neelam Sanduja to your HWDSB email on August 23rd.

Happy "you got a tiny raise today" day,

Blake