SBCI UPDATE

June 2015   *NEWSLETTER*

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

This is my first message to you as Chair of SBCI. My name is Maura Quish and I became Chair at the May 2015 Board meeting. I am the Human Resources Manager at Waterloo Catholic DSB. I have very much enjoyed being on the Board of SBCI, and am pleased to have the opportunity to become the Chair. The co-operative provides very valuable services to its member school boards and I am honoured to assist in this way.

I am glad, also, to have to opportunity to thank our previous Chair, Carolyn Bastien, for her insights and dedication over the past year. I learned a lot from her by being her Vice-Chair.

Early in May, SBCI issued the 2013-14 Absence Study to participating boards and I draw your attention to the article later in this Newsletter, which provides some high level lessons learned from this study. In fact, 52 Ontario school boards participated in the study. We will be extending the study to cover 2014-15.

I am very pleased to welcome a new staff member to SBCI. Renee Moreau has accepted a newly-created position of Data Management Assistant in the Data Management department. Welcome, Renee.

If you have any questions, comments or ideas regarding the Co-operative, please give me a call or send me an email. Our aim is always to improve the services that we provide to you.

I can be reached at maura.quish@wcdsb.ca or (519)578-3660 X2368.

Have a very enjoyable and safe summer.

Maura Quish
Chairperson

2013-14 SBCI HEALTH & SAFETY AWARDS

As in the past three years, SBCI recognizes good performance by school boards in Health and Safety. Our awards recognize the best statistical performance and most improved. The winners for 2013-14 are:

Best statistical performance, based on frequency rate for the small, medium and large categories:

Small sized Board
Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic DSB

Medium sized Board
Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario

Large sized Board
Upper Canada DSB

Most improved statistically, based on a three year average for the small, medium and large categories of school boards:

Small sized Board
Northeastern Catholic DSB

Medium sized Board
Near North DSB

Large sized Board
Upper Grand DSB

The awards were announced at the SBCI Annual General Meeting on April 10.

This was a great way to recognize and promote the wonderful work accomplished at all our school boards. Congratulations!

RECAP OF SBCI'S 2010-14 ABSENCE STUDY

In October 2014, SBCI published its first Absence Study Report for 49 school boards. More recently, in May 2015, we released a further annual Absence Study, adding the 2013-14 fiscal year, with a total of 52 school boards participating. The studies provide a consistent and comprehensive analysis of true sick leave usage for individual school boards and on an aggregate basis. The reports capture the impact of sick leave plan changes implemented in the years studied:

- 2010-11 was considered the baseline year before any changes to the sick leave plan

- 2011-12 was the transition year in which changes to the sick leave plan were being discussed
- 2012-13 was the first year that the changes to the sick leave plan were implemented
- 2013-14 was the second year of the new sick leave plan and provides the opportunity to review the overall impact on sick leave utilization to date

With consistent methodology, individual school board results are provided, broken down by employee groups:

- Elementary Teachers, including Long Term Occasional ETs
- Secondary Teachers, including Long Term Occasional STs
- Educational Assistants (EAs), including Long Term/Supply EAs
- Early Childhood Educators
- Custodial/Maintenance
- Other Employees

For each employee group, the school board's magnitude of absence is benchmarked against results for other participating school boards for each year. Further analysis is provided based on age, gender and years of service. To assist school boards in understanding the financial impact of sick leave usage trends, the report is rounded out with total cost of sick leave as a percentage of overall payroll, including sick bank carryover liability.

Response from participating school boards to the Absence Study has been favourable, with some indicating how useful and valuable the information contained in the report has been in understanding the sick leave benefit utilization picture at their boards.

2010-14 Absence Study findings include:

1) Over the four years of the study, overall magnitude of absence changed with:

- An increase of 2.03% between 2010-11 to 2011-12
- A decrease of 2.66% between 2011-12 to 2012-13
- An increase of 7.05% between 2012-13 to 2013-14

- An overall increase in the magnitude of absence from 2010-11 to 2013-14 (four years) of 6.33%.

2) From 2010-11 to 2013-14, the overall magnitude of absence increased from 8.85 days/year to 9.41 days/year. This translates into an increase in sick leave costs of approximately $50 million (collectively for 44 school boards), between 2010-11 and 2013-14. This figure only includes sick leave as a result of personal illness, excluding any absence costs related to occupational absences (WSIB), LTD or indirect costs.

3) Throughout the study, Educational Assistants/Early Childhood Educators and Custodial/Maintenance employees experienced the highest magnitude of absence and at times, two to three times the magnitude of absence for Secondary Teachers or 'Other' employees. Elementary Teachers consistently have higher magnitude of absences compared to Secondary Teachers. Employees classified as 'Other' consistently have the lowest rates of absenteeism.

With the data in hand, many of the school boards analyze and use the information to develop programs to improve absence management. The programming initiatives are focused on reducing sick leave costs which allows funding to be applied in the classroom. In addition, the staffing consistency is presented as another solid opportunity to enhance student achievement. Strategies applied include addressing sporadic, short term absences (accounting for two thirds of absence costs) through an effective Attendance Management program. In addition, the one third of absence costs related to longer term absences can be positively influenced with an effective Disability Management program including Case Management.

SBCI is now in the process of the preliminary review of 2014-15 absence data. Early indicators are showing yet again, a higher magnitude of absence and associated costs. SBCI will be requesting 2014-15 data from school boards, to continue with the annual Absence Study. We look forward to working again with boards to continue this focused study.

STRIKES AND THE IMPACT ON WSIB CLAIMS

In April, Secondary Teachers stopped work at three school boards and went on strike. Although legislation has been enacted ordering staff back to work, the subject remains topical. Here are a few things to consider if you have an employee off work and in receipt of WSIB benefits at the time of a strike or if you receive a new WSIB claim from employees affected by the strike.

The WSIB has a fact sheet on its website entitled "Work Disruptions" and an Operational Policy document # 15-06-02 that provides some good general information. Strikes are usually considered to be a temporary work disruption if the work disruption is expected to last less than three months. The WSIB will normally maintain someone's benefit status during a temporary work disruption. If an employee was off work and in receipt of Loss of Earnings (LOE) benefits at the start of a strike because they were unable to work and in receipt of active medical care then the WSIB would normally continue them on LOE benefits until the strike was over unless there was a significant improvement in the worker's condition during the work disruption. Similarly if an employee was back to work on a full-time basis and not receiving LOE benefits at the start of the strike then the WSIB would normally not pay the employee LOE benefits during the strike unless there was a significant deterioration in their level of impairment.

The WSIB would consider an employee for additional benefits during the strike if there was evidence indicating that the worker would seek new employment in the general labour market to restore their earnings during the temporary work disruption and there was evidence that the work-related impairment impacted the worker's ability to earn income through new employment. Each situation will be evaluated on its own merits taking into account the available medical evidence concerning the worker's condition and documentation concerning the employment situation at the time of a strike.

If you receive a new incident report involving an employee who is out on strike or potentially about to go out on strike, this information should be brought to the attention of the WSIB. Any concerns with a new claim should be noted on the Form 7 on page 2, question number 12 and on page 4 where there is space for additional information. A new claim may be entirely appropriate, but if you have any specific reasons to doubt the validity of a claim or the extent of what is being claimed, then these concerns should be brought to the attention of the WSIB and an investigation requested. Please provide the WSIB with as much information as possible so that they may review the matter in detail. The WSIB is relying more and more on e-adjudication so they will tend to allow claims unless an employer identifies concerns upfront on the Form 7. If you have any specific questions about the impact of strike action on an existing claim or a new claim please speak to your SBCI Claims Manager or alternatively contact chris@sbci.org or by calling 905-669-4449 ext. 227 for more guidance.

WSIB LOSS OF EARNINGS BENEFITS DURING SUMMER BREAK (FOR 10-MONTH EMPLOYEES)

For all employees, but specifically 10-month employees, who are currently on WSIB loss of earnings benefits as they are totally disabled, it is important that you closely monitor the level of the employee's disability and obtain functional/cognitive abilities information.

If the employee is able to work with accommodations (partially disabled), provide a written Return to Work Plan to the employee and copy the WSIB. Where possible, return the individual to full time hours by the end of the school year or earlier. If it is not possible, then still provide a plan with gradual return to work extending into the summer months, as if the employee were still working beyond the end of the school year. The WSIB will pay partial loss of earnings benefits in accordance with the Employer's Return to Work plan, regardless of whether the employee is working or not. The written plan should be detailed so that the WSIB can make the decision that the offer is

suitable and only pay partial loss of earnings.

WSIB will pay full loss of earnings benefits into the summer months if the employee is medically totally disabled, even though the employee works only 10 months and is considered to be on summer break. It is important to continue to monitor the medical findings through the summer. If the medical findings indicate the employee has become partially disabled at some point during the summer and functional abilities are available, it is important that the employer provide a plan to the employee and copy the WSIB, as if the employee was working and not on summer break. Again, the WSIB will pay partial loss of earnings according to the graduated hours in the Return to Work plan. If a written plan is not provided to the WSIB, full loss of earnings will be paid to the return to work date in September 2015 or earlier if, medically, the employee fully recovers.

If you have any questions, please contact your SBCI Claims Manager.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS AT THE WSIB

So far in 2015 there are two significant developments at the WSIB that will be of interest to Ontario school boards. They are Rate Framework Reform for Schedule 1 employers, that proposes to make significant changes to the way that Schedule 1 premiums are established, and the Value for Money Audit at the WSIB dealing with Schedule 2.

The WSIB released Rate Framework Reform papers in March 2015 and they propose significant changes for Schedule 1 employers but should not have any impact on Schedule 2 employers. The WSIB wants to change the present system where there are over 155 rate groups in 9 classes to the North American Classification system with 22 classes and a series of rate bands. Employers would be classified in one group based on their predominant activity. The WSIB plans to eliminate experience rating so that those employers presently enrolled in NEER, CAD-7 (construction industry) and MAP will see these plans phased out. Experience rating refunds and surcharges will come to an end. This will be replaced

by a prospective rate for each employer that is based on their risk profile looking at their insurable earnings and claim costs as compared to other employers in the same class. The WSIB indicates that the new system will be fair, streamlined and simpler than the existing system. The new framework will retain the Schedule 1 concept of collective liability but Second Injury and Enhancement Fund (SIEF) relief will be eliminated. Schedule 1 employers will no longer get a claim cost reduction if an employee's claim is prolonged as a result of a pre-existing condition. Instead the WSIB Case Managers will be asked to determine entitlement to LOE benefits with regard to the new policy on pre-existing conditions and the policy on aggravation basis. The WSIB consultation with stakeholders, including employers, will take place over a series of months and a time frame for moving to the system will be discussed later. SBCI will produce a separate "WSIB Flash Newsletter" on this topic with copies of the consultation documents for those interested in a more detailed review of this topic.

For 2015 the WSIB has selected Schedule 2 as the topic for an external Value for Money Audit. The WSIB picks a topic each year for an external value for money audit and in 2014 the topic was Noise Induced Hearing Loss. We have not received any documents that explain what will be reviewed by the auditors but early discussions with the WSIB indicate that they would like the auditors to see if "Schedule 2 employers are paying their share" of the costs of running the WSIB. The Schedule 2 Employers' Group has advised the WSIB that they would like to meet with the auditors to explain their issues and concerns. SBCI staff play a significant role with the Schedule 2 Employers' Group and will ensure that school boards interests are protected. The Schedule 2 Employers' Group has been asking the WSIB for years to re-establish the Schedule 2 sector and to provide dedicated Schedule 2 teams in all of the regional offices. One of the problems with the present system is that many WSIB staff are unfamiliar with the Schedule 2 billing and invoice processes plus other issues unique to Schedule 2. It is likely that the auditors will wish to contact individual Schedule 2 employers to get their perspective on the WSIB's service to Schedule 2 employers.

If you have questions about the Rate Framework Reform or the Value for Money Audit of Schedule 2 please free to contact your Claims Manager to review any concerns or alternatively you may contact Chris James by email at chris@sbci.org.

CREATING A SAFETY CULTURE

Based on an article by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (USA)

Why do you want a strong safety culture?

What is a safety culture?

A safety culture consists of shared beliefs, practices, and attitudes that exist at an organization. Culture is the atmosphere created by those beliefs, attitudes, etc., which shape our behaviour. An organization's safety culture is the result of a number of factors such as:

- Management and employee norms, assumptions and beliefs;
- Values, myths, stories;
- Policies and procedures;
- Supervisor priorities, responsibilities and accountability;
- Actions or lack of action to correct unsafe behaviours;
- Employee training and motivation;
- Employee involvement or "buy-in."

In a strong safety culture, everyone feels responsible for safety and pursues it on a daily basis; employees go beyond "the call of duty" to identify unsafe conditions and behaviours, and intervene to correct them. For instance, in a strong safety culture coworkers routinely look out for one another and point out unsafe behaviors to each other.

An organization with a strong safety culture typically experiences few at-risk behaviours, consequently they also experience low incident rates, low turn-over, low absenteeism, and high productivity. They are usually organizations who are extremely successful by excelling in all aspects of business and excellence.

Creating a safety culture takes time. It is frequently a multi-year process. A series of continuous process improvement steps can be followed to create a safety culture. Employer and employee commitment are hallmarks of a true safety culture where safety is an integral part of daily activities.

An organization at the beginning of the road toward developing a safety culture may exhibit a level of safety awareness, consisting of safety posters and warning signs. As more time and commitment are devoted, the organization will begin to address physical hazards and may develop safety recognition programs, create safety committees, and start incentive programs. Top management support of a safety culture often results in acquiring a safety manager, providing resources for incident investigations, and safety training. Further progress toward a true safety culture uses accountability systems. These systems establish safety goals, measure safety activities, and charge costs back to the units that incur them. Ultimately, safety becomes everyone's responsibility, not just the safety department's. Safety becomes a value of the organization and is an integral part of operations. Management and employees are committed and involved in preventing losses. Over time the norms and beliefs of the organization shift focus from eliminating hazards to eliminating unsafe behaviours and building systems that proactively improve safety and health conditions. Employee safety and doing something the right way takes precedence over short term working pressures.

Building a safety culture

Any process that brings all levels within the organization together to work on a common goal that everyone holds in high value will strengthen the organizational culture. Worker safety and health is a unique area that can do this. It is one of the few initiatives that offer significant benefits for the front-line work force. As a result, buy-in can be achieved enabling the organization to implement change effectively. Obtaining front line buy-in for improving worker safety and health is much easier than it is to get buy-in for improving quality or increasing efficiency. When the needed process improvements, are implemented all three areas typically improve and a culture is

developed that supports continuous improvement in all areas.

The following represents the major processes and milestones that are needed to implement a change process successfully for safety and health. It is intended to focus you on the process rather than individual tasks. It is common to have a tendency to focus on the accomplishment of tasks, i.e. to train everyone on a particular concern or topic or implement a new procedure for incident investigations, etc. Sites that maintain their focus on the larger process to be followed are far more successful. They can see the "forest" from the "trees" and thus can make mid-course adjustments as needed. They never lose sight of their intended goals, therefore, they tend not to get distracted or allow obstacles to interfere with their mission. The process itself will take care of the task implementation and ensure that the appropriate resources are provided and priorities are set.

Obtain Top Management Buy-in - this is the very first step that needs to be accomplished. Top managers must be on board. If they are not, safety and health will compete against core business issues, a battle that will almost always be lost. They need to understand the need for change and be willing to support it. Showing the costs to the organization in terms of dollars (direct and indirect costs of incidents) that are being lost, and the organizational costs (fear, lack of trust, feeling of being used, etc.) can be compelling reasons for looking at needing to do something different. Because losses due to incidents are bottom line costs to the organization, controlling these will more than pay for the needed changes. In addition, when successful, you will also go a long way in eliminating organizational barriers such as fear, lack of trust, etc.: issues that typically get in the way of everything that the organization wants to do.

Continue Building Buy-in for the needed changes by building an alliance or partnership between management, the union, and employees. A compelling reason for the change must be spelled out to everyone. People have to understand WHY they are being asked to change what they normally do and what it will look like if they are successful. This needs

to be done up front. If people get wind that something "is going down" and haven't been formally told anything, they naturally tend to resist and opt out.

Build Trust - Trusting is a critical part of accepting change and management needs to know that this is the bigger picture, outside of all the details. Trust will occur as different levels within the organization work together and begin to see success.

Develop Site Safety Vision, key policies, goals, measures, and strategic and operational plans. These policies provide guidance and serve as a check-in that can be used to ask yourself if the decision you're about to make supports or detracts from your intended safety and health improvement process.

Align the Organization by establishing a shared vision of safety and health goals and objectives vs. daily activity. Upper management must be willing to support by providing resources (time) and holding managers and supervisors accountable for doing the same. The entire management and supervisory staff need to set the example and lead the change. It's more about leadership than management.

Define Specific Roles and responsibilities for safety and health at all levels of the organization. Safety and health must be viewed as everyone's responsibility. How the organization is to deal with competing pressures and priorities, versus safety and health, needs to be clearly spelled out.

Develop a System of Accountability for all levels of the organization. Everyone must play by the same rules and be held accountable for their areas of responsibility. A sign of a strong culture is when the individuals hold themselves accountable.

Develop Measures and an ongoing measurement and feedback system. Drive the system with upstream activity measures that encourage positive change. Examples include the number of hazards reported or corrected, numbers of inspections, etc.

While it is always nice to know what the bottom line performance is, i.e., incident rates, overemphasis on these and using them to drive the system typically results in a culture where non-reporting of incidents becomes common. It is important that a culture is created that encourages employees to identify hazards and the responsible parties respond quickly with the appropriate controls to eliminate them.

Implement Process Changes via involvement of management, unions, and employees using a "Plan, Do, Check, Act" process via CSA Z1000 model.

Continually Measure Performance, Communicate Results and Celebrate Success - Publicizing results is very important to sustaining efforts and keeping everyone motivated. Everyone needs to be updated throughout the process. Progress reports during normal staff meetings allowing time for comments back to the safety committee opens communications, but also allows for input. Everyone needs to have a voice, otherwise, they will be reluctant to buy-in. A system can be as simple as using current meetings, a bulletin board, and a comment box.

On-going Support - Reinforcement, feedback, reassessment, mid-course corrections, and on-going training is vital to sustaining continuous improvement.

SCHEDULE 2 EMPLOYERS' GROUP 26TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 26th Annual Schedule 2 Employers' Group Conference will be held on October 6 & 7, 2015 at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel & Conference Centre, Richmond Hill.

The theme of the Schedule 2 Employers' Group Conference for 2015 is "Mindful at Work" and there will be plenty of emphasis in the keynote presentations and workshops on employee mental health. The keynote speaker on the morning of the first day will be Mark Henick of the Mental Health Commission of Canada who will be speaking on the "Business Case for Improving Mental Health". During part of the afternoon on October 6 there will be a panel discussion organized by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and featuring representatives from large employer like Manulife talking about the steps they took to implement the CSA Mental Health Standard.

There will be approximately 35 workshops to choose from spread out over the two-day conference dealing with topics related to Mental Health, Health & Safety, Disability Management, WSIB Claims Management, Attendance Management, Employment-related Legal Issues and HR issues. There will be opportunities to network with colleagues and presenters during breaks and at a cocktail reception at the end of the first day.

The conference agenda and workshop selection is being finalized this month with the goal of sending out invitations to register in June 2015. There will be an early bird discount for registering before September and discounts if you register more than five people from one organization. This conference is run on a not-for-profit basis and represents excellent value for people interesting in staying current on emerging trends and issues. For more information please go to www.s2egroup.com or contact Chris James at SBCI at 1-800-361-3516 ext. 227 or chris@sbci.org.

SBCI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DATES OF BOARD MEETINGS

2015	**July 3**
	August 17
	November 6
	December 11
2016	**February 5**
	March 4
	April 8 (AGM)
	May 6

SBCI STAFF

Brian Brown, Chief Executive Officer
Lynn Porplycia, Chief Operating Officer
Wendy Achoy, Chief Actuary

Raazia Haji, Manager, Actuarial
Department
Joe Huang, Actuarial Analyst
Shawn Tang, Actuarial Analyst
Lucy Lu, Actuarial Student
Christopher James, Senior Claims
Manager & Lawyer
Figen Dalton, Claims Manager
Darlene Iwaszko, Claims Manager
Dave Kersey, Claims Manager
Mary Luck, Claims Manager
Kelly Melanson, Claims Manager
Robert Orrico, Claims Manager
John Bryden, Director, Health & Safety
Services
France Germain, Health & Safety
Consultant
Jennyfer Payeur, Health & Safety
Specialist
Louise Bellamy, Financial/IT Coordinator
Karen Bertrand, Accounting Clerk
Erin McLennan, Executive Assistant
Lily Li, Executive Assistant
Melissa Hewit, Manager, Data
Management
Sylvie David, Data Management Assistant
Renee Moreau, Data Management
Assistant
Micheline Desjardins, Bilingual Data
Entry Clerk
Audrey O'Connor, Data Entry Clerk
Louise Ellis, Director Attendance Support
Services
Julia Barrasso, Attendance Support
Consultant
Kathleen Gratton, Attendance Support
Consultant
Shoba Thomas, Attendance Support
Consultant
Rana Khalaf, Manager, IT Applications
Patrick Gani, Senior Analyst Programmer
Anwar Khalil, Programmer/Analyst
Gavin King, Programmer/Analyst