

Date: December 18, 2024 **Agenda Item:** 8.3
To: Board of Trustees
From: Shawna Warren, Superintendent
Originator(s): Lisa Lacroix, Associate Superintendent Human Resources
Rita Raposo, Director Human Resources
Subject: **Workplace Safety Report**

Background:

In Section 33 of the Education Act, school boards are required to ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

The *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* outlines the Board's obligation to take all reasonable and practical steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees. This includes ensuring employees receive adequate training to perform their duties safely and in compliance with health and safety standards.

Similarly, the *Alberta Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) Regulations* mandate the Board to work proactively with employees to prevent workplace injuries. In the event of workplace injuries, the Board is to report promptly and facilitate the employee's safe return to work in either their original position or a suitable alternative.

Sturgeon Public School Division (SPS) is dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive and healthy working environment for staff, students and the broader school community. Sturgeon Public Schools is committed to adhering to the legislative requirements of both the *Education Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*.

Report Summary:

SPS remains compliant with all relevant legislative requirements and has implemented various programs and practices to maintain the safety and well-being of students, employees and community members across its facilities. The following report provides an overview of these measures and practices that contribute to the safe and supportive environment SPS strives to maintain.

Status & Relationship to Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS):

This report aligns with the [SLQS](#) in the following way:

COMPETENCY: (6) School Authority Operations and Resources

INDICATORS: a. providing direction on fiscal and resource management in accordance with all statutory, regulatory and school authority requirements; and
h. implementing programs and procedures for the effective management of human resources in support of mentorship, capacity building and succession planning.

COMPETENCY: (7) Supporting Effective Governance
INDICATORS: b. ensuring that all students and staff are provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

Governance Implications:

Occupational Health and Safety Act

The OHS Act sets out the framework for health and safety in Alberta's workplaces.

Workers' Compensation Regulation

This Regulation contains detailed provisions regarding application of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Policy 110: Welcoming Inclusive, Safe and Healthy Environments

The Board believes in the importance of, and is committed to, establishing, and maintaining a welcoming, inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.

Policy 225: Role of the Board

Safe, Caring, Respectful and Healthy Environments

The Board shall ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the Board and each staff member employed by the Board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging [Education Act s. 33(1)(d)].

Administrative Procedure 245: Health and Safety

Sturgeon Public Schools recognizes its responsibility for providing services and facilities that will maintain, if not enhance, the physical well-being of students and staff; and awareness of and compliance with the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Code, and Regulations.

Administration is prepared to respond to questions at the December 18, 2024, Public Board meeting.

Attachment(s):

1. Workplace Safety Report



Workplace Safety Report

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

The province of Alberta continues to emphasize the significance of occupational health and safety, expecting employers to adhere to these standards to safeguard employees, students and visitors from workplace incidents.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act states:

2 The purposes of this Act are

- (a) the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers,
- (b) to prevent work site incidents, injuries, illnesses and diseases,
- (c) the protection of workers from factors and conditions adverse to their health and safety, and
- (d) to ensure that all workers have
 - (i) the right to be informed of work site hazards and the means to eliminate or control those hazards,
 - (ii) the right to meaningful participation in health and safety activities pertaining to their work and work site, including the ability to express health and safety concerns,
 - (iii) the right to refuse dangerous work, and
 - (iv) the ability to work without being subject to disciplinary action for exercising a right or fulfilling a duty imposed by this Act, the regulations or the OHS Code.

Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee

The Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee is mandated by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This committee aims to ensure safety compliance and provide Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) recommendations to the Superintendent.

Membership in the committee is diverse, including representatives from all Union and Employee groups (ATA, CUPE, GEC), as well as members representing various employee roles within the division. The Occupational Health and Safety Act ensures equal representation on the Joint Worksite Occupational Health and Safety Committee.



This year the Joint Workplace Health & Safety Committee has 4 new members. The committee consists of:

- Lisa Lacroix - Employer Co-Chair (returning)
- Meagan Kuik - Employee Co-Chair (new)
- Rita Raposo - Secretary (returning)
- Janet Westworth - ATA Representative (new)
- Marguerite Rushworth- CUPE Representative (new)
- Brett Hansen - GEC Representative (new)

Complaints to Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee (JWHSC) **Members**

Each school has at least one Health & Safety Representative. Employees report potential safety issues to the School Health and Safety Representative who forwards on to school administrators, and work orders are subsequently submitted to facilities for resolution. Workers may also refer a complaint directly to the school administrator.

Workers may also report complaints to their local union representative or directly to any member of the Joint Worksite Health Safety Committee.

OHS Complaints:

Filing a complaint differs from reporting unsafe work. Filing a complaint is a formal process. A complaint results in a government investigation of workplace hazards. Filing a complaint means you are reporting unhealthy or unsafe hazards to Alberta OHS. Reporting unsafe work is a school-based process. School Representatives or Principals are alerted to unsafe or harmful hazards at school.

Workers and visitors at work sites in Alberta have the option to directly submit complaints to Occupational Health and Safety if the concerns have not been resolved at the school level. Complainants can choose to remain anonymous or disclose their contact details. An OHS Officer, along with representatives from the Division and the school conducts an investigation without revealing the complainant's identity, regardless of whether they opted to remain anonymous.

In instances where an anonymous Occupational Health and Safety complaint is lodged, OHS encounters limitations in conducting a specific investigation. The OHS Officer, under such circumstances, examines Sturgeon Public School Division Policies, Procedures, processes, protocols, and relevant documents such as safety manuals and training materials. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, a



comprehensive written report is generated. These reports are shared with both SPS and the Worker Co-chair.

When a specific complaint is filed, providing detailed information including the date, incident description, and individuals involved, the OHS Officer initiates a comprehensive review. This includes an examination of SPS Policies, Procedures, processes, protocols, safety manuals, and training materials. The investigation also involves a scrutiny of Accident/Incident reports and other pertinent documentation related to the incident, along with a review of prior Accident/Incident reports. Staff members may be interviewed as necessary. Following the completion of the investigation, a detailed written report is produced. Similar to anonymous investigations, these reports are shared with both SPS and the Worker Co-chair and may include recommendations.

Complaints and Investigations Update

We haven't received any complaints/investigations since our last report.

Workers Compensation Board

All work-related injuries must be documented and reported to Human Resources. Any staff member, excluding most teachers, who experiences a work-related injury requiring medical attention, modified duties, or resulting in lost wages, must complete and submit a WCB Report of Injury. Modified duties are available to accommodate staff whenever possible.

WCB Statistics from September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024

	Employee Injury Reports	WCB – New Claims	OIS Clinic Visits	WCB Employer Claim Costs
ATA	39	1		\$0.00
CUPE	56	10		\$24,469
GEC	10	3		\$418
TOTAL	105	18	0*	\$53,438



All employee injury reports that involve a student are shared with the Director of Learning Services for review and investigation.

We are seeing improvements with our WCB rates, but have a long way to go. Claims affect our rates for three years (ie - claim in 2019 will affect our rates for 2021, 2022 and 2023.)

	2023 Calendar Year	2024 Calendar Year
Ranking	64/64	57/64
Surcharge	90%	23.29%
SPS Rate	\$2.05	\$1.45
Industry Rate	\$1.08	\$1.18
SPS Annual Premiums	\$325,553	\$258,638
Industry Annual Premiums	\$171,511	\$210,478
SPS Claim Costs	\$277,867	\$160,755
Industry Claim Costs	\$106,605	\$109,678

PublicSchoolWORKS

We are currently implementing PublicSchoolWORKS, an online platform designed for safety training, compliance and comprehensive risk management for school staff. This training meets the standards set out by the Alberta Occupational Health & Safety Code.