

HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL REPORT 2024



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73
(Kamloops - Thompson)

Land Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement that we are on the Secwépemc territory and land of the Secwépemc People:

Secwepemcúl'ecw yi7élye ell, re tmicws re Secwepemc n7élye.

School District No. 73 (Kamloops-Thompson) acknowledges that we reside in Secwepemcúl'ecw and recognizes the Secwépemc as the keepers of their traditions and knowledge.

Table of Contents

- Introduction** 4
- Recruitment and Onboarding** 5
- Health and Safety** 10
- Labour Relations** 12
- Employee Engagement** 14
- Privacy** 17
- Appendices** 18
 - Recruitment and Onboarding 18
 - Health and Safety 21
 - Labour Relations. 22
 - Employee Engagement 23

Introduction

Humans, our Greatest Resource

Congratulations, and welcome to the Kamloops-Thompson School District!

These are the first words a new employee hears when hired to SD73. Regardless of whether people come to us as teaching, support, excluded or administrative staff, the Human Resources department is given the honour of welcoming these new people, supporting and helping them grow throughout their career, and finally learning from them as they leave us to move on to other opportunities.

As a department, we understand that the *humans* in our organization really are our greatest *resource*, so we aim to foster resilient employees empowered to contribute to a diverse, inclusive, caring and sustainable district. In turn, this solid foundation of staff supports learning opportunities and environments which inspire students to thrive in SD73.

Recruitment with attention to equity and diversity is the catalyst to HR's involvement in the life cycle of all employees. Along this journey, HR looks after people by fostering their emotional, psychological and physical well-being. As a department, we build meaningful relationships with all employee groups to ensure labour relations remain solution-focused and centred holistically on the good of the organization. Employee engagement is a priority for the District, and the Human Resources department puts this into action as we walk with staff in the important work they do every day supporting students to be their very best.

The following report outlines in greater detail the story of SD73's Human Resources department, how its foundational work contributes to a thriving school district, and what we are learning along the way which will provide direction for where we need to go next.



Recruitment and Onboarding

The journey for all employees in SD73 begins the moment they are hired. Ensuring this workforce can meet the needs of the District, however, is a challenge all schools across the province of British Columbia are facing. In the 2022-2023 year an average of 275 dispatches are sent out daily for CUPE and teaching staff. Of those, 75 CUPE vacancies went unfilled on average per day, and although teaching vacancies were significantly better with an average of 3 unfilled vacancies per day, these failures to fill have led to triage situations in schools. Over time, this impacts the wellbeing of employees, may lead to manager burnout, and impacts student learning. The antidote is simple. Hire more people. Actioning this, however, is more complex and requires a thoughtful approach to recruitment, onboarding and retention.

Recruitment

Despite these challenges, the HR department is committed to ensuring schools are well looked after. We have hired 58 support and 104 teaching staff from June 1 to December 1 2023, but this has been counter-balanced with the retirement and/or resignation of 35 support and 21 teaching staff during this same time. In short, we have not yet eradicated the failures to fill – an important goal HR continues to adhere to.

Upon review, recruitment efforts have been relatively static as opposed to strategic. The HR department knows this and has learned that we need time to research other districts, leverage current tools, and improve the processes we are currently using. We recognize this is an area of growth for us in our department. That said, a few current processes and structures have been outlined below followed by a list of things we are learning along the way.

School District Website & Make A Future:

“[Come Work With Us](#)”, a page on the District website, includes geographic data as well demographics about the Kamloops-Thompson school district. It contains links to the Strategic Plan, Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement, and Long-Range Facilities Report. As well, this page includes a link to [Make A Future](#), a platform created by BC Public School Employers’ Association. All rural jobs, or those deemed as potentially hard to fill are posted internally as well as on [Make A Future](#).

In the chart below, you will see that over half of the teachers hired since June 1st, 2023 were hired directly into contracted teaching positions.

New Hires in Teaching staff from June 1 to December 1, 2023	104	
Resigned (from new hire group)	2	2%
Those who secured assignments	47	45%
Secured assignments in rural areas	24	51%
Secured assignments in FRIM	2	4%
Secured assignments in positions of special responsibility	3	6%

Connecting with adult learners:



SD73 is very fortunate to have a direct pipeline to a quality teacher education program at [Thompson Rivers University \(TRU\)](#). In the spring of every year, HR visits the secondary and elementary teacher programs to share information regarding job opportunities as well as the values and priorities of SD73. Every teacher candidate from the program who requests an interview to work in our district is provided with one.

In addition to participating in the [TRU Job Fair](#) each February, the HR department also presents to first year teacher education candidates at Simon Fraser University. It should be noted, however, that SFU

candidates have yet to apply to the Kamloops-Thompson district for work. Given the lack of teacher candidates from SFU, this strategy is under review. Despite this, it is clear from the quote included below, that SD73 resonates with these teacher candidates.

[Something that really stood out to me was the Indigenous Family Voice for Education; I haven't heard other districts so intentionally reaching out to Indigenous families, and I think that it is beautiful to see this effort being made to have all voices heard! (Student from Simon Fraser University, 2023)]

BCPSEA Pre-Employment Hiring Incentives

The Kamloops-Thompson school district was one of 19 districts in BC approved to offer pre-employment hiring incentives for two of our rural areas. Postings went out more than once for Blue River and Vavenby, and without this incentive, the District would have had to look at possibly closing the one-room school in Blue River. SD73 is currently exploring the option of broadening this hiring incentive to include other rural areas.

The BCPSEA hiring incentives, however, do not apply to CUPE positions like certified education assistants or even trades positions.

Underfill Process for Certified Education Assistants:

The workforce of CEAs, more so than any other employee group, has been challenging to fill. To mitigate this, HR worked with CUPE to put an underfill process in the [Collective Agreement](#) which has allowed uncertified, but appropriately skilled, employees to be hired.

Onboarding

Building meaningful relationships that support and strengthen learning and growth, is a core value commitment of SD73. For employees, developing these relationships begins with the onboarding experience and carries into training and support for those in new roles. HR understands establishing a sense of belonging is directly connected to wellbeing and retention of staff. The following outlines a sample of HR's current processes to do this.

Onboarding New Hires:

New hires be they support, excluded or teaching employees, are connected with clerical staff in HR who assist them with the onboarding process mostly through email which includes the transfer of information and other documentation. The HR department works together to ensure all documents are received from employees and has included a [welcome video](#) in the introductory email for new teachers to personalize their initiation into the District.

[Onboarding to-do items seemed to be in a multitude of different places (google classroom with too many folders & sub-folders, work email, personal email, sd73 site, etc.). It was very frustrating to keep track of what needed to be done. (Onboarding survey, March 2023)]

TTOC Focus Group:

To better understand the onboarding process from the user's perspective, a group of TTOCs collaborated with HR for 4 months to share their experiences as new hires. This work resulted in the creation of a list of recommendations. From this engagement we learned that not all new TTOC experiences are positive as indicated in the testimonial below.

[I was dispatched to Sun Peaks Elementary and was totally unprepared for the trek to the school. Firstly, I couldn't find the school... I had to crawl under the fence and walk a distance in deep snow across the ski run and over a narrow ledge of an unshovelled hillside down to a portable. I was not wearing boots and totally unprepared for that trek.... But all it said on dispatch was that it was not wheelchair accessible. (Onboarding survey, March 2023)]

Creating a Culture of Learning:

Moving from the classroom to the office in a school is an incredibly large shift for people entering into an administrative role. It should be noted that 42% of principals and vice principals have 3 or less years' experience in this new role. For these reasons, HR is piloting a Culture of Learning series for school leaders starting in the new year. The learning modules in this series is based upon feedback and emerging patterns HR has noticed over the last few years. Confident, well-skilled school leaders will ensure a quality education for students of SD73, so this research-based approach is a worthwhile endeavour.

Supporting New Hires

Filling jobs that require specialized qualifications or finding teachers for vacancies in rural areas can be challenging. BCPSEA incentives have helped this year, however, many times these positions are filled with inexperienced staff.

For example, in September, an eager new teacher joined the North Thompson with no experience in the BC education system. The HR department believes that with the right interventions and support, all teachers can flourish, and students are then able to thrive under the tutelage of highly skilled staff. In response to this new hire, a collaborative plan was put in place right away which included effective coaching from the school's administration, a mentor supplied by the KTTA, and ongoing check-ins by the HR department. By winter break, the school leaders reported incredible growth in this employee.

Filling jobs is important, supporting new hires is more important, and ensuring SD73 has high quality learning environments for all learners is most important. This is something HR strives to achieve in all its recruitment and hiring processes.

Document Management

The employee life cycle begins in recruitment and onboarding, and the human resources department is the heart of records management for not only our 2600 employees, but also for all historical labour relations, health and safety and employment records.

Over the last 5 years, there has been a rapidly growing need for more records to be stored, accessed and shared digitally. Because the digitization process for hundreds of thousands of pieces of paper is a daunting undertaking, the transition to digital recordkeeping will have a tremendous impact on department efficiency and user experience. Digitization of personnel files will:

- Provide faster storage, access, collaboration, and search functionality.
- Ensure a more environmentally friendly and sustainable practice.
- Free up over 160 sq ft of space in the HR department by eliminating filing cabinets, equivalent to two additional staff workspaces.
- Meet today's technological standards.
- Prepare for the future landscape of work by allowing us to access to records from anywhere at any time.
- Reduce the risk of error by improving audit efficiency and auditor experience.

What we are learning along the way:

- Recruitment strategies need to be developed purposefully and competitively.
- BCPSEA Pre-Employment Hiring incentives work and we need to continue to use this resource.
- Onboarding processes need to be moved into a single, digital space that the user can interact with. (Ex. EDocs and WorkFlow from PowerSchool)
- A strategy needs to be developed to connect new hires to the Kamloops-Thompson School District in a purposeful, supportive way that contributes to their sense of belonging.
- Wages, especially for those employees working in the trades, is below the private sector. This is affecting HR's ability to recruit and hire the people we need to look after our sites.
- Digital record keeping has become a critical component of having a functional human resources department of this size.

Health and Safety

The Human Resources Department looks after the emotional, psychological, and physical wellbeing of everyone in SD73. When we protect our staff, we make a positive impact on absenteeism and work becomes more productive which in turn saves the District money. More importantly, looking after the health and safety of our organization lets people know we care about them and value the work they do. Humans really are our greatest resource, so HR ensures our staff are well-trained, well-informed, and well-equipped with what they need to establish a solid foundation for career wellbeing.

This begins with mandatory health and safety training as part of the onboarding process, but health and safety continue to be an important part of work life in SD73. Training sessions on diverse topics from winter driving and ladder safety to prevention of workplace violence, add tools in the kit for Joint Occupational Health and Safety committees. This also has a positive impact on our students too. Annual anaphylaxis and naloxone training have had kept our young people safe, and when we test our buildings for radon and water quality, everyone benefits. Health and safety is literally woven throughout the life cycle of our employees.

Proactive Initiatives

To ensure all SD73 employees can report safety issues regardless of where they work or what job they do, a new online safety software system known as Prismatic, was introduced in November 2022. In collaboration with all employee groups, this platform was implemented to ensure compliance, provide real-time data to principals and managers and cultivate an efficient environment to bolster our safety management system. Keeping our staff physically and psychologically safe is important to HR. Prismatic has provided everyone with the ability to report concerns, and managers the ability to investigate issues as well as effectively communicate important information to all who need it.

Violence in the Workplace Prevention



WorkSafe BC promotes occupational health and safety and protects workers at workplaces from work-related risks to their health, safety, and well-being. The HR department looks at this legal obligation as central to all that we do and is committed to supporting, training, and providing the necessary resources for all employees to stay safe physically and psychologically. One way we do this is through the District Violence Prevention committee which consists of representatives from CUPE, KTTA, KTPVPA and senior Board Office Staff.

The potential for violence exists in all areas of any organization, and SD73 is no exception. To that end, the District Violence Prevention committee is working proactively to develop a Worksite Risk Assessment Tool to fulfil the legal obligation outlined in Policy

4.28 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. Ongoing assessment of our sites combined with data collected and tracked from Prismatic is intended to move our District closer to more truthful conversations about risk and prevention of violence. In essence, we are working to shift the culture of our District so that health and safety become a part of how we do business. Reviewing data, speaking with employees, seeking advice, and maintaining a curious mindset is targeted to become a comfortable part of the management process throughout our organization.

Continued Support for Everyone with COR

A Certificate of Recognition (or COR) is an occupational health and safety management program based on the premise of continual improvement, and the Human Resources department is focused on supporting SD73 to become COR certified. In doing so, we will be able to demonstrate in a very real way that we are focused on a healthy workforce and are serious about ensuring our employees return home safely every day.

Being COR certified will also help SD73 in other ways. Potential employees are becoming more savvy and socially conscious about who they choose to work for, and COR will assist us in this competitive market. There are also significant financial gains to this certification. When there are fewer worker injuries, and claims are shorter, our WorkSafeBC experience rating improves which leads to discounts on our premiums. In all, this is not only the right thing to do, but it's also the sustainable and responsible thing to do as well.

Approaching Health and Safety with an Open Heart

Ensuring the health and safety of staff remains foundational to everything the Human Resources Department does, and we do this work thoughtfully and holistically.

For example, personal protective equipment like respirators for employees who may be exposed to hazardous substances in the air, is important to implement and maintain. Annual respirator Fit testing for custodians, therefore, ensures we are keeping our employees safe. This testing entails having a clean-shaven face to check the seal of a mask. But what if you are unable to shave? What if cutting your hair is an affront to your faith, in this case the Sikh religion? SD73 is proud of its diverse population and put into action a way to protect diversity using AP 170: Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights. This allowed the employee an exemption for religious reasons.

The way we show the humans in our organization they are our greatest resource is by looking after their emotional, psychological, and physical wellbeing. The programs, tools, processes and administrative procedures we use every day in our department ensure we are not only fulfilling our legal obligations, but we are also doing what is morally right for all staff in the Kamloops-Thompson school district.

What we are learning along the way:

- Implementation of Prismatic is still ongoing. This means staff will continue to need support and training over the next year.
- Becoming COR certified aligns with well-being and sustainability, two foundational values of our District. The process to become certified will show all through our actions what we value most... the emotional, psychological, and physical wellbeing of everyone in SD73. Pursuing this is the right thing to do.
- Finding ways to shift the culture so that health and safety is a welcomed part of how we manage staff and spaces at all levels of SD73, is a complex but a morally important goal to attain.

Labour Relations

In very general terms, labour relations refers to the relations between employers and employees. In the Kamloops-Thompson School District, these relations are affected and influenced by the intersection of many factors including two local unions, [CUPE 3500](#) and the [KTTA](#), which in turn are governed by the [BCTF](#) and [CUPE BC](#). In addition, many excluded staff are guided by the KTPVPA, a chapter of the [BCPVPA](#), while most senior staff are members of the [BCSSA](#) or [BCASBO](#). Each one of these organizations is governed by a code of ethics or standards which work in tandem with SD73's policies and administrative procedures. These complex intersections are overlaid with independent governing pieces like the [School Act](#), the [Professional Standards for BC Educators](#).

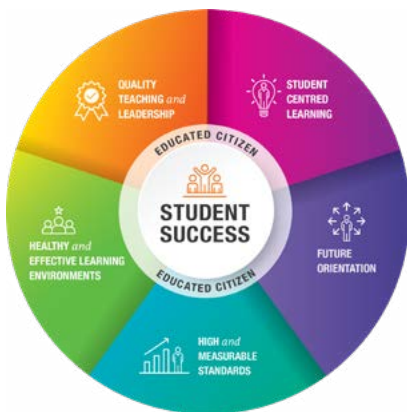
It can be understood that decision-making in this complex landscape requires a unique skill set steeped in good communication, as well as deep knowledge of collective agreements, policy, law and standards. The Human Resources department takes pride in its leadership role with labour relations and holds its working relationships with each employee group in high regard. Be it negotiating a new contract, conducting a workplace investigation, or working through the grievance process, HR values the professionalism and commitment to making things better that each employee group brings to the table.

Gaining clarity

There are times when formal complaints are raised through the union on behalf of one of their members. These grievances can arise for many different reasons; however, they will always stem back to a perceived breach of the contract, policy and procedure or law. The Human Resources department welcomes the opportunity to work with the unions to gain clarity on any matter brought forward. The stepped grievance process is designed to get to a resolution and includes opportunities for strategic conversation around what matters most and is always grounded in what is best for the students we all serve in SD73.

The HR Department uses prescheduled meetings, inclusive communication, support from lawyers and [BCPSEA](#) as well as listening deeply when grievances are brought forward. There are times, however, when we may come to an impasse. A resolution process involving one or more arbitrators who make binding decisions on the dispute is then implemented. Working hard to resolve grievances before this is necessary is very important to the Human Resources team, and as a testament to this goal, there has been a 70% reduction in the number of matters that have gone to arbitration in 2022-2023 compared to previous years.

Supervision of the workforce



The mission of the Kamloops-Thompson school district is to *support learning opportunities and environments which inspire students to thrive*. Thriving is a far reach from surviving and in order to get there, a high level of competence and conduct is needed from the entire workforce.

Human Resources work with managers and school leaders through annual training and constant check-ins, however, there are times when information is shared with us about a matter which if true, would violate or breach administrative procedure, professional standards or even the job description of a staff member. HR approaches these potential concerns respectfully and timely and involves the union or association right away when a workplace investigation becomes necessary. The

intent of these investigations is to make factual findings and then support people to move forward again in the right direction. Ensuring our workplaces are filled with quality employees is a foundational piece to helping our students thrive in inspiring environments.

Building a stronger relationship

The terms and conditions of employment are outlined in both the CUPE and KTTA collective agreements as well as customized contracts by job description for excluded staff. The information contained within these documents ensures that employee rights are balanced with the needs of the District and provide clear guidance as questions arise. These are living documents that are renewed or renegotiated on a regular basis to allow SD73 to shift along with provincial or broader initiatives, policies or employment standards.

The Kamloops-Thompson Principals and Vice Principals Association has recently undergone such an updating process. The KTPVPA is not part of a union; nonetheless, the District values input from this employee group and HR has worked hard to ensure their voice is heard by engaging with school leaders as outlined in Article 10 of the Principal/Vice Principal contract. These important, respectful conversations are aimed at reviewing the terms of employment to ensure they adequately reflect the economic, professional and working conditions of the Board and its school leaders.

In January 2023 the Board of Education and CUPE Local No. 3500 celebrated the ratification of the Memorandum of Agreement laying the foundation for a new Collective Agreement for the period of July 1, 2022-June 30, 2025. Both bargaining teams reported the negotiations were respectful, collaborative, and solution focused. Many challenging issues were addressed during the bargaining sessions, but this dynamic process resulted in a general wage increase, two days' leave for Indigenous employees to observe or participate in traditional Indigenous activities, a commitment to exploring remote work, hybrid work, and 10-hour shifts with employee groups, as well as access to a deferred salary leave plan. It even resulted in the creation of an underfill process to help the District deal with a province-wide shortage of Education Assistants.

Regardless of employee group, a solution-focused approach with clear communication is always the goal in labour relations for the human resources department.

What we are learning along the way:

- Ensuring we are always listening to the voice of each employee group leads to stronger, trusting relations with our staff. Ensuring we are maintaining structures to keep the doors to this communication open needs to be a priority.
- Negotiation for a new teacher contract begins in November 2024. HR will need to review emerging local issues and areas that need further clarification. Transparency with the KTTA around what we want to look deeply into will continue to strengthen trust and labour relations.

Employee Engagement

The Human Resources department understands the importance of supporting the career well-being of all its employees. According to *Wellbeing at Work: How to Build Resilient and Thriving Teams* (Clifton and Harter, 2021), employees do well when “work is interesting and challenging”. There are several ways HR is committed to nurturing trust with employees and “dream big together”, something Clifton and Harter say is essential to the development of purpose and wellbeing for everyone in the organization.

One way the HR department has worked towards innovation and improvement is through employee engagement. Providing opportunities for staff to showcase their gifts, learning and growing together, as well as being there for people when they need us the most are just a few ways that HR is working towards greater connections with employees.

Engagement through learning together

Employee Transition Program:

A school district is a complex organization placing multiple demands on different employee groups, so ensuring staff are stretched in their work journey without becoming overwhelmed is important. Through an application process, the Employee Transition program allows managers and principals to work with HR in the development a transition plan for a staff member who may be new to a complex role or possibly returning to work from a long-term leave. Since March 2023, fourteen employees have participated in this program. Interestingly, mentors have also benefited from this transition Plan as well. This is exemplified in the following quote:

[This was great. The teacher went from feeling defeated to feeling inspired. It was great to see. (Program Participant, 2023)]

Professional Growth and Performance Reviews:

Professional growth plans, performance reviews, and evaluations provide opportunities for supervisors to recognize the complex work school leaders and managers do daily. So much of this is hidden in the business of teaching, leading and learning; however, these annual check-ins perpetuate a culture of recognition which according to Gallup and Workhuman, “boosts engagement and strengthens connections between people and across the organization”. ([From Praise to Profits: The business case for recognition at work, 2023](#))

HR worked with Principals and Vice Principals in 2022 to align the growth plan and review process with the [BCPVPA Standards](#), First Peoples Principles of Learning and the District Strategic Plan. HR then collaboratively created [AP 432](#) as a guide to formalize expectations and create the conditions for school leaders to showcase the work they do with their supervisors.

Principals and Vice Principals as part of the hiring panel

An interview for a potential new teacher hire takes approximately 30 minutes for each candidate followed by a discussion about potential suitability. Over the past year, HR has pulled in 18 principals and vice principals to be a part of the interview process. Most of these people have less than 5 years' experience leading in a school, so the opportunity to listen to potential new teaching staff, and then talk collegially with HR about what good teaching looks like has been invaluable and engaging experience for all involved.

[Thank you for including me as a panel member. This has been like a mini-professional development session! (Elementary Vice Principal, January 2024)]

Staying engaged when it matters most

On average, 23 long-term medical leaves are being managed per day throughout the District. This sometimes means coordinating graduated return to work plans, posting vacancies, and working with external health management providers like Desjardins to support employees as they leave work to look after their health. HR provides guidance to supervisors asking them to stay connected to staff who are on leave. Knowing people care about you while you are away from work has a positive impact on people when they need it the most.

Gallup and Workhuman estimate a 22% decrease in employee absenteeism when praise for doing good work is a part of work culture. Missed work results in a significant financial impact, so keeping employees engaged and connected to the district shows that we care about them and value the work they do. Simply put, HR strives to look for positive ways to impact employees' lives and give them the vitality and resiliency to show up for their employers. (Gallup, 2023).

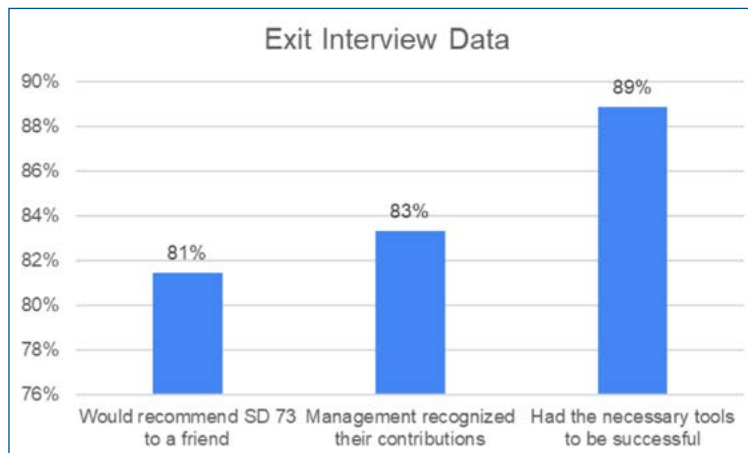
Homewood Health:

When employees need extra support, they also have access to an [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#). This professional, confidential, and proactive service supports people with a wide range of personal, family, and work-related concerns. This includes everything from how to support those in recovery during the holidays to more traditional counselling and treatment programs. When our employees are supported and engaged, healing is accelerated and the return to work is faster.

School District 73 has provided its employees and their family members with proactive health services through Homewood Health since August 2017. The program services plan we have used for the past six years is now obsolete and Homewood Health has notified us that we will not be able to renew the contract for our existing service package beyond June 30, 2024. Maintaining a high level of support for all employees, however, is something HR understands is foundational. To address this matter, the Health and Safety team has compiled robust data to assist with decision making for a new provider or new service program. A portion of this is outlined in the Employee Engagement appendix.

Learning about engagement from those who are moving on

When employees leave SD73, they are encouraged to share their employment journey with HR. We are interested in how they felt, and eager to look for patterns that may tell us where to go next. Since October 2022, 50 employees from all employee groups have shared their thoughts with us.



[I enjoy teaching a great deal. Teaching has been much more than a profession or occupation - it has become the central piece of who I am. (Exit Interview Participant, 2023)]

The Human Resources department is honoured to be deeply integrated into the life cycle of its staff in the Kamloops-Thompson School district. As we have aimed to foster resilient employees empowered to contribute to a diverse, inclusive, caring and sustainable district, we know we are supporting learning opportunities and environments for students to thrive. In turn, we have learned so much from the people we have walked alongside with in this journey.

["Organizations that care deeply about their employment brand will make efforts to set employees up for the next phase of their life when they leave the organization – their retirement or transition to whatever they define as the next chapter. Regardless of the stage of the life someone is in, 'what I do' is important and becomes their identity". (Clifton & Harter, 2021)]

What we are learning along the way:

- The Employee Transition Program helped mentors connect with their own gifts as they supported their colleagues. Clifton and Harter believe this contributes to career wellbeing.
- Employee Transition Program can be enhanced with a One-Pager Guide which could include how to book the session in OASIS, what to focus on, how to keep your new learning alive.
- Employee recognition is connected to engagement. The growth plan and performance review process create the conditions for employee recognition. HR will continue to support the development of this process and look for other ways to recognize the work all employees are doing.

- An analysis of Homewood Health as our EFAP provider has indicated that there may be room for improvement. HR is engaged in further analysis to determine where the gaps in service are and whether other providers may be better equipped to address these. Please see the Employee Engagement appendix for more information.

Privacy

Personal Information Management Program

There are many ways the Kamloops-Thompson School District works to protect the privacy of its staff and students. Processes, administrative procedures, and even contract specification with any agencies we work with, guide this work. By law, SD73 has assigned a Privacy Officer within the HR department who is the first point of contact in our organization when privacy issues arise. The Officer carries the responsibility of intervening on these issues, conducting audits along the way, and generally ensuring everyone's right to privacy is respected and protected. Fundamentally, the HR department recognizes the importance of maintaining the privacy and security of the personal information it collects, uses, and discloses during its operations and programs.



In a world, however, where rapidly emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, monitoring and tracking tools as well as social media prevail, society's expectations about what information is okay to share has become more open. With the help of

Administrative Procedure 461, the HR department can support staff in the organization to follow responsible information management practices, protect personal information, report privacy breaches and lead privacy impact assessments. These impact assessments, led by the Privacy Officer, are an in-depth review of any new or significantly renewed initiative to ensure that it is compliant with the provisions of [FIPPA](#). Although time-consuming and involving the gathering of information from many people in the system, these PIAs are intended to mitigate risk and need to be a part of the implementation of any new initiative, program, or activity where personal information is involved.

Proactively Protecting a Fundamental Right

The HR department uses a number of administrative procedures to ensure that the fundamental right to privacy is ensured for all in the School District community. How to use video surveillance to enhance safety and security while maintaining the provisions of [FIPPA](#), for instance, is outlined in AP 181. There are also clear guidelines laid out in AP 182 with regards to surreptitious recording within the working and learning environment. The creation of covert recordings is viewed as invasive to an individual's privacy and undermines trust and collegiality, so outlining expectations around this and steps to be taken if it occurs is a way to keep our staff and students safe.

The HR department also collects a lot of personal information especially when supporting staff with medical concerns and their requests for leaves away from work to get better. We understand the ethical and legal

obligations to protect this information while people are part of SD73 as well as the need to maintain custody control of the information beyond the completion of employment. AP 402.1: Employee Health Information and Privacy and Confidentiality lays out how data is collected, used and disclosed on a “reasonable need to know” basis.

What we are learning along the way:

- The protection of privacy is a responsibility all of us own, so ensuring our district community can easily report a breach and that HR has a formalized process for responding to these breaches is an important priority. Administrative Procedure 463: Critical Incident and Privacy Breach outlines this process and will provide guidance for the development of process.

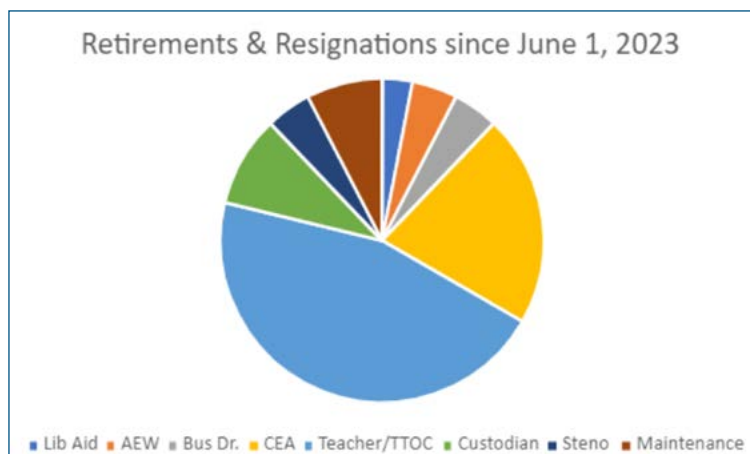
Appendices

This additional quantitative and qualitative data is provided to support our HR team and to provide further details to the report reader.

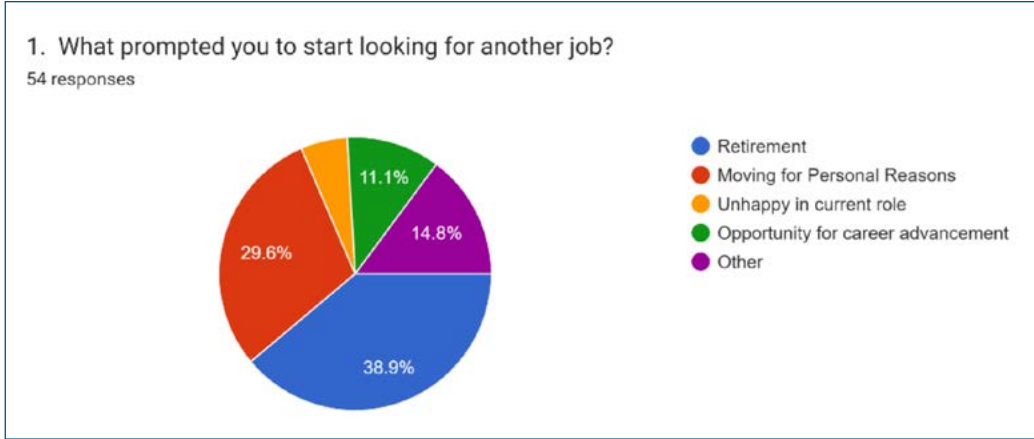
Recruitment and Onboarding

Hiring new employees is tempered by those who are leaving us

There have been 67 employees either resign or retire since June 1, 2023. Here is the breakdown by employee group:



Each employee who resigns or retires is provided the opportunity to participate in an exit interview. The department reviews the results of these interviews twice a year and uses the information to refine and improve our processes. Interviewees answer 15 questions through an anonymous Google Form which includes the question below as well as the three referenced in the body of the report. The general theme from all the answers is that departing employees have a very favourable opinion of their time with our district.



Letter of Understanding No. 23 (Certified Educational Assistant Underfill Appointments Test Program)

Underfill allows for the appointment of candidates who have a combination of skills, education and experience and who demonstrate capacity and potential for a role as a CEA, and who are qualified to perform the full functions of the position based on the language of the respective job description, but do not possess a Certified Education Assistant Certificate. The act of underfilling shall not eliminate existing assignments, nor replace qualified staff in assignments.

This underfill approach is utilized to support human resource planning objectives, including:

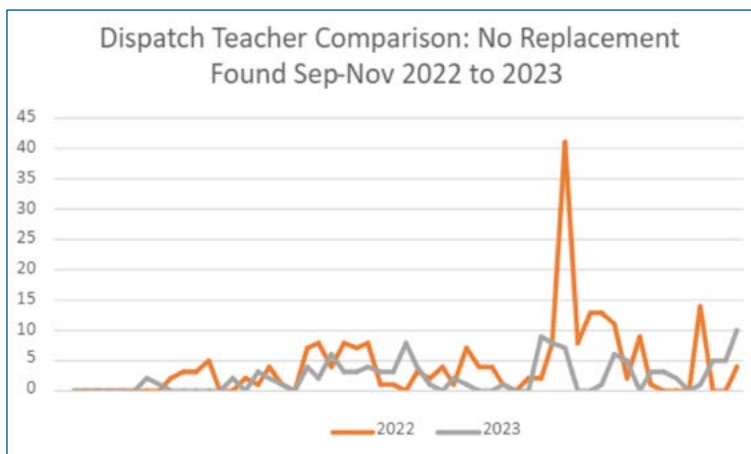
- Supporting the efforts of hiring diverse and representative employees
- Recruiting and hiring during periods when the employer is experiencing a shortage of qualified CEAs
- Increasing meaningful job opportunities for CEA candidates in our community

The Associate Superintendent of Human Resources determines the need for underfill in consultation with the Union. Posting for underfill positions shall proceed in accordance with the Collective Agreement but may be posted internally and externally simultaneously. No external candidate shall be hired over qualified internal applicants.

Since the inception of this Letter of Understanding the District has hired six underfill applicants that are currently working to support schools through the relief roster.

An improvement in unfilled vacancies for teaching staff

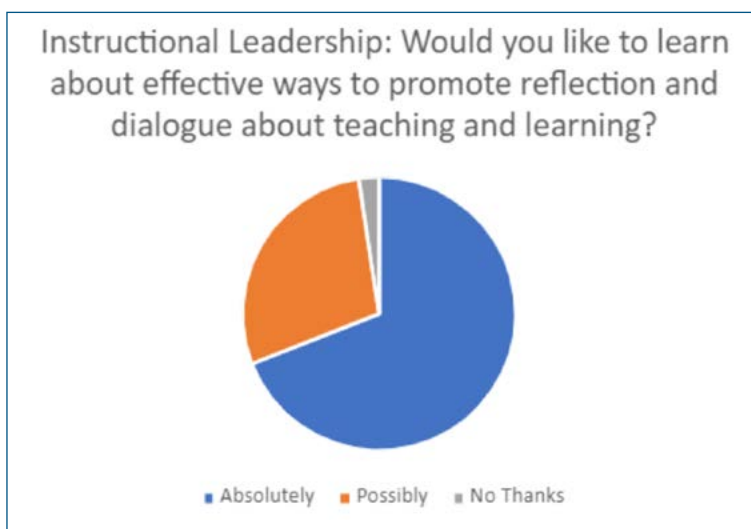
Although absenteeism fluctuates depending on everything from whether it is flu season to the day of the week or even whether there is a district inservice taking place. Overall, unfilled teacher vacancies have decreased in the 2023-2024 year. This can be seen when comparing the number of unfilled dispatch teacher vacancies for September to November 2022 to the same months in 2023.



A need for supporting our new school leaders

29% of our principals and vice principals have two or less years' experience as a school leader and although Principals tend to come to the job with more years' experience leading, 42% of school leaders have been in their role for less than 5 years.

Executive Council drafted a support program for school leaders and used input from our Principal and Vice-Principal group to create a professional learning series on "Creating a Culture of Learning". Survey participants identified performance management of staff as a key area they wanted more learning and support.



Health and Safety

The following programs are designed to look after the psychological and physiological wellbeing of staff.

Hearing Conservation: A district health and safety committee working group, meeting quarterly, scrutinized areas where noise could be problematic. We initiated a communication plan to implement sampling and created a one-page document guiding staff on selecting the correct personal protective equipment. Our efforts reduced disposable hearing plugs and environmental waste.

Science Safety: Addressing an abundance of non-approved chemicals, we invested time and funds in hazardous chemical removal and inventory. Legacy items and lack of training were identified as key issues, prompting in-person and online lab safety training. We continue supporting chemical reduction, proper storage, and safety best practices.

Radon Testing: Collaborating with Interior Health, we tested 28 facilities for radon, focusing on rural elementary and secondary schools and elementary schools with strong start programs.

Violence Prevention: Resources from BCPSEA supported a comprehensive review of processes for reducing worker risk, involving a collaborative working group with representatives from various organizations. These resources aim to minimize workplace violence through a commitment from the SD73 committee.

Water Sampling: In compliance with ministry guidelines, we annually test one-third of our facilities for lead content. A communication system using stickers was implemented to inform users of water sources' status.

Asbestos Regulation Changes and Training: Adapting to WorkSafeBC's regulatory changes, our staff underwent training to meet certification requirements for abatement, transportation, and supervision. This ensures our compliance with the changes and allows us to handle small abatement projects in-house.

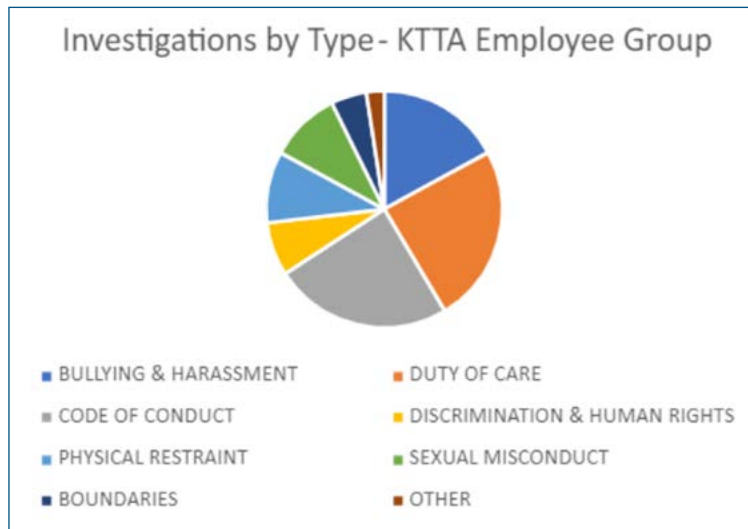
Fire Safety: We sustain our Life Safety Fire Prevention Program by providing updates, supporting safety committees, and incorporating program language into inspections.

Wellness: Our annual influenza initiative successfully administered 689 vaccines across 49 locations. Monthly wellness sessions, offering a mix of in-person and virtual options, were facilitated by a volunteer committee focusing on the seven dimensions of wellness: Occupational, Financial, Environmental, Mental, Cultural, Physical, and Social.

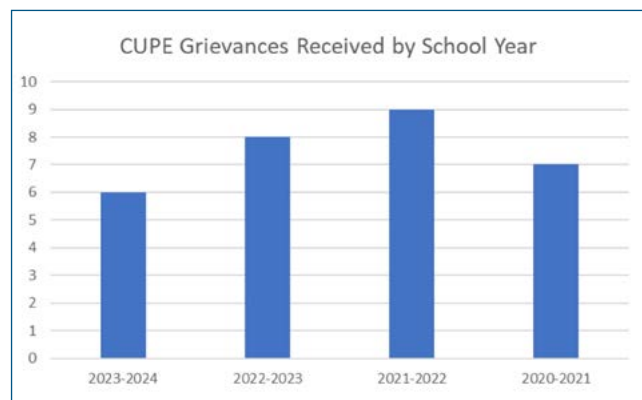
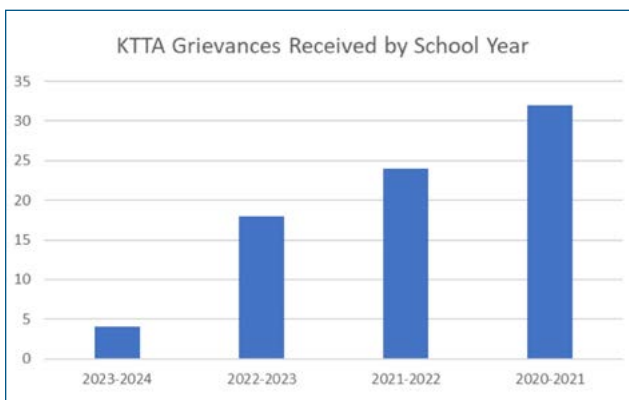
Labour Relations

The department supports labour relations through meetings with employee groups, responding to grievances and arbitrations, and supporting supervisors with the performance management of employees.

Workplace Investigations

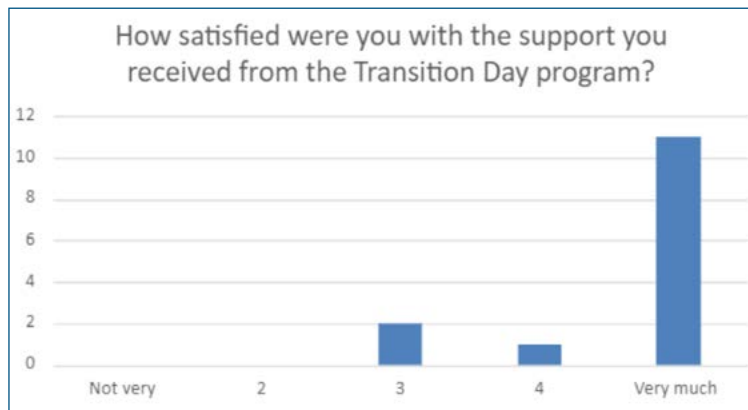


Grievance Data and Trends:



Employee Engagement

Employee Transition Program Data

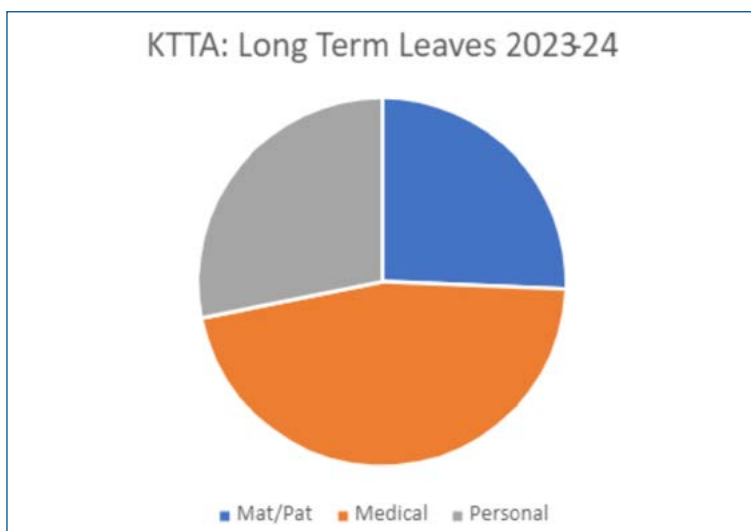


Employee Transition Program: Key Takeaways by Type

TYPE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
Classroom management skills	1	6%
Adapting for diversity	3	19%
Mentorship and collegial connections	2	13%
New resources	3	19%
Organization and course planning	7	44%

KTTA – Leaves By Type

All employees have access to a variety of different types of long-term leave as outlined in either their contract or collective agreement. The following outlines leaves for teachers who are currently in a long-term leave for the 2023-2024 year. 160 teaching staff have taken a leave this year:



- Total FTE accumulated for these long-term leaves is 109.414 FTE
- Average length of medical leave for these teachers is 4.5 months

Employee and Family Assistance Program

Current Program Details:

Provider	Homewood Health
Cost	\$3.20/employee/month*
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive supports and resources on a variety of topics (health, life balance and career) • Short term counselling (2-4 sessions per topic to a max of 8 sessions annually) • Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (self-guided) • Promotional materials (generic brochures and wallet cards, limited number of posters)

*Utilization statistics report a 15.91% average usage over the last three years (2020-21: 21.75%, 2021-22: 13.94%, 2022-23: 12.05%).

Trends & Statistics:

According to research conducted by Statistics Canada, the percentage of Canadian adults who have met the diagnostic criteria for common mental health disorders has increased significantly in the past 10 years. Indicators of declining mental health in the Canadian population were present before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and factors including the pandemic and less access to health services have contributed to this increase in mental illness.

It is estimated that more than 5 million Canadians are currently contending with mental health or substance misuse disorders. Among those affected, 1 in 3 reported unmet or partially met needs for mental health care services. There are often long wait times for these services and a shortage of family doctors in our community further exacerbates this issue. Offering preventative and proactive services to our staff, however, will assist with their ability to attend work on a regular basis.

A study conducted by Telus Health in 2022 showed that 24% of study participants would prefer better support for their wellbeing over a 10% salary increase at work. Feeling good about being at work is impacted by a negative workplace culture, so ensuring that we provide environments that are inclusive, innovative, respectful, collaborative, and supportive is important. This is time well spent because it impacts employees' wellbeing and ability to attend work regularly.

It is important to note that the most recent Annual Statistical Report from our current EFAP provider, Homewood Health, shows that clients seeking out support for repeated concerns, outweighed new cases for the 2022–2023 service year. These pre-existing clients more than doubled the number of new clients and several requests were made for longer-term services like counselling in the psychological, marital/relationship, and family categories.

Given these facts, HR is wondering whether it would be beneficial to source an Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) that provides a wide range of comprehensive services with on-going, individualized support for our staff members.

New Provider Program Recommendations:

Services to Include	
Telemedical Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> access to a medical professional that can provide referrals, prescriptions, and medical documentation for absences
Mid or long-term Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimum of 10 to 14 sessions per year
Training & Awareness Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> regular webinar offerings mental health training or materials for leaders posters, brochures, wallet cards and other small promotional items
Alternate Language Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability of services and resources in multiple languages
Mobile Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> downloadable app for ease of use digital intake process individualized dashboards for users
Customizable Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> digital intake process parses specific resources and services specific to the concern raised description or bio of service providers and ability for users to select and book a session with the provider of their choosing
Stay at Work/Return to Work Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inclusion of a goal setting program that can be included in a staff member's recovery plan

Utilization Summary Year Over Year For Our Current Provider – Homewood Health:

Year 1		July 2022 - June 2023	Cases	Percent
Service Utilization	12.05%	Counselling Services	258.00	92.4%
Total New Cases	279.33	Life Smart Coaching	21.00	7.5%
Employees Covered (Weighted)	2,319	Online Services	0.33	0.1%
Active Cases in Period	309.33			

Year 2		July 2021 - June 2022	Cases	Percent
Service Utilization	13.94%	Counselling Services	303.00	93.7%
Total New Cases	323.33	Life Smart Coaching	18.00	5.6%
Employees Covered (Weighted)	2,319	Online Services	2.33	0.7%
Active Cases in Period	352.33			

Year 3		July 2020 - June 2021	Cases	Percent
Service Utilization	21.75%	Counselling Services	347.00	92.1%
Total New Cases	376.67	Life Smart Coaching	29.00	7.7%
Employees Covered (Weighted)	1,732	Online Services	0.67	0.2%
Active Cases in Period	408.67			

