

November 28, 2017

Waterloo Region District School Board, Educational Assistants Association
1023 Rife Road - Unit A
Cambridge, ON
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Dear Members of the WRDSB EAA,

First, congratulations on the 30th Anniversary of the Educational Assistants Association. On behalf of PSHSA, I would like to commend Educational Assistants and Child Youth Workers (EAs/CYWs) across the province for their commitment to students and the greater school population. As you know, the EAs/CYWs role is multidimensional, especially in the variety of classroom settings in today's school system. You are all valuable in managing an effective and safe classroom.

As a Health & Safety Association, the Public Services Health & Safety Associations' (PSHSA) primary focus is the well-being and safety of workers. Within the education sector, we, along with the sector itself recognize the key role EAs/CYWs play in the creation of safe workplaces and learning environments. With competencies in educational programming, child development, and behavioural intervention you understand the different aspects of a child in a classroom or school setting. For these reasons, PSHSA believes the EAs/CYWs are best utilized as part of the school team, involved directly in the assessments and reassessments of individual and behaviour plans which guide the students learning and growth.

It is important for everyone to be aware of and to acknowledge that EAs/CYW themselves deal with complicated, potentially violent situations on a daily basis. PSHSA would like to thank the WRDSB EAA for their contribution in an initiative focused solely on the Prevention of Workplace Violence in the Education Sector over the past year. Kathy Pittman, Colleen Dietrich Sisson and Lisa Weiler Haskins have taken the time to share the real-life stories and experiences EAs/CYWs face, as well as the potential risk(s) when schools and school boards are not striving to implement leading practices.

The time Lisa, Colleen and Kathy provided and knowledge shared enabled PSHSA and other stakeholders in the sector to have a better understanding of how to make learning environments safe and productive for all staff and students. They directly contributed to the development of a Risk Assessment Toolkit, soon to be released to aid in the evaluation of violence related hazards unique to a school setting. Their contribution has been instrumental in developing a comprehensive toolkit providing a wealth of knowledge, experience, and creativity to improve current practices.

We wish the WRDSB EAA all the best in your future endeavors and look forward to the continued partnership to transform Ontario school environments into the safest learning and working environments.

Sincerely,



Kim Litchfield
Executive Director, Education, Culture, Training Delivery
PSHSA