TEACHERS' PENSION PLAN ONTARIO

PENSION UPDATE

APRIL 2011

Welcome to the club!

In a year of significant reporting changes, Halton Catholic District School Board rose to the top and earned their first Employer Service Excellence award. Greenwood College School and Royal St. George's College maintained their reporting excellence to earn back-to-back honours.

Things were a lot different 10 years ago.

As our business operations have evolved over the past decade, so has our criteria for determining our annual Employer Service Excellence award recipients.

"When we introduced this recognition system in 2001, our benchmarks for measuring excellence were very different," explains Mila Babic, Director of Employer Information Services. "With the introduction of online reporting, and continued enhancements, employer results have improved. Consequently, what defines 'the best' has changed."

Moving in the right direction

At Teachers', we continue to focus on creating proactive opportunities and enhanced self-service for our members. Several stats from last year highlight the inroads our employer group has made in support of our initiatives.

PBR

- 57% have incoming data quality of 97% or higher (↑13%)
- 26% respond to priority issues in one day or less (↑2%)

WBR

- 25% had no monthly remittance variance (↑18%)
- 8 employers completed reconciliation within 31 days of year end (↑7%)

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3 keys to excellence

✓ **Commitment**
Work with us to improve reporting quality and service levels to members. You respond to our calls and questions in a timely fashion, proactively provide information to assist in data validation and actively use TIM.

✓ **Integrity**
In your relationship with us. You work hard to foster a strong partnership, keep your word when commitments are made, are forthcoming in your communication and do the right thing when problems arise.

✓ **Results**
Consistently achieve established goals. Your superior response time to member requests, and maintaining high incoming data quality, ensures your employees can receive outstanding service from Teachers'.

What's inside:

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Halton Catholic DSB

After a quick glance at her calendar, Patti MacArthur could relax – it wasn't April Fool's Day just yet!

"When Carrie called to tell me the good news, I just had to be sure," says Patti, Manager of Payroll Services at Halton Catholic District School Board (DSB). "I didn't want to get too excited."

Excited and then some. "We've been trying really hard to win, it's definitely been a goal for our team," adds Patti. "This award would not have been possible without the day-to-day dedication and commitment of my staff."

Led by Patti, the team at Halton Catholic also includes Susan Lewis, Anna Sequeria, Luisa Iglic and Donna Lowry. Carrie Crompton is an EIS analyst that works closely with all of the ladies at Halton Catholic.

"We learn, get caught up and then make the new tools part of our daily routine."

Patti was one of 15 employers that attended a one-day focus group last summer to preview and discuss the new Absences section in TIM. It's likely no coincidence that Halton Catholic has one of the highest volumes of absences reported using the new system. Patti and her team are also regular attendees at workshops.

> *"We learn, get caught up and then make the new tools part of our daily routine."*
>
> Patti MacArthur, Manager of Payroll Services, Halton Catholic DSB

Not afraid of change

One thing that separated Halton Catholic from the rest of the pack was the way they embraced the changes to TIM last year. According to Patti, their philosophy is really quite simple.

"We always get something new out of workshops, especially when it comes to TIM," adds Patti. "It's great to hear what our colleagues are saying and learn from their experiences."

Some payroll systems can pose challenges when it comes to pension reporting. Patti and her team have gotten used to working with their system and adjust where necessary. For example, Halton Catholic no longer runs their year-to-date process through their payroll, they complete it directly in TIM.

Their success is in the numbers: in 2010, they responded to priority inquiries on the same day – that was a two-day decrease from 2009!

Great teamwork makes the difference at Halton Catholic DSB.
Seated (l to r): Susan Lewis and Patti MacArthur. Standing (l to r): Anna Sequeira, Donna Lowry and Luisa Iglic

They don't let the challenges prevent them from attaining excellent pension reporting results.

And finally, being strong partners is very important to the team at Halton Catholic.

"Members are fortunate that the team effort between TPP and the boards is strong," adds Patti. "For our group, we can call Carrie or anyone at anytime and get the answers we need."

Royal St. George's College

Andrew Whiteley will always remember where he was when he got the good news this year.

"In the bright sunshine, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea on the balcony of my hotel in the south of France," describes Andrew, Director of Finance and Operations at Royal St. George's College (RSGC). "It was great news to end a beautiful day."

"As part of the deal to be away for a whole month, I promised to check my email once a day," explains Andrew. "My wife and I were in Côte d'Azur, on the last leg of our month-long adventure to Ireland and France."

Acting Headmaster Paul O'Leary (right) congratulates Andrew and Sandra on their back-to-back excellence award.

Going for a three-peat

With retirement fast approaching, Andrew has new motivation to stick around just a little bit longer. He's determined to receive the award for three consecutive years.

"I figure my last accomplishment will be to reconcile 2012 and then retire immediately after doing so," says Andrew with a chuckle. "Reconciliation is something that I've always been quite obsessed with, I need to complete it as quickly as possible," stresses Andrew.

In the old days, that meant reconciling by the end of February. Thanks to TIM and advanced technology, it's now possible to close out the year when it actually ends.

"If you stay on top of things and balance your month-to-month work, reconciling in December is quite effortless."

Andrew Whiteley, Royal St. George's College

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"If you stay on top of things and balance your month-to-month work, reconciling in December is quite effortless," adds Andrew. "Thanks in large part to TIM, the whole process is 1,000 times better than it was when we only looked at a huge stack of paper once per year."

Andrew shares pension reporting duties with Sandra Skinner, Bursar. Sandra has worked at RSGC for over 20 years and according to Andrew, she is "the" HR department.

He is quick to acknowledge that web-based reporting employers don't face the same volumes of issues as their school-board colleagues. Even so, Andrew is thrilled to be recognized for RSGC's commitment and dedication to pension reporting excellence.

Greenwood College School

Kelly Giannoccaro wasn't about to let Andrew one-up her – she shared the spotlight with Andrew and Sandra last year and rejoins them after another stellar year of results.

"We are not pension specialists, pension reporting is only one of the multiple demands small staff at independent schools face. Having TIM makes that part of our jobs so much easier."

Kelly Giannoccaro, Vice-Principal of Finance & Operations, Greenwood College School

"It was definitely a pleasant surprise when Marija called," says Kelly, Vice-Principal of Finance & Operations at Greenwood.

Through their independent school connections, Andrew and Kelly have had a healthy rivalry for the past several years. When Andrew reconciled 2009 before it was over, he phoned Kelly to share the news. As he was preparing to do the same for 2010, he encouraged Kelly to try and match his accomplishment.

"Royal St. George's payroll is run five days before our payroll so he will always have a five-day head start," jokes Kelly. "I was trying to tie up a bunch of loose ends before our break for the holiday and reconciling 2010 wasn't on my list." Not until Andrew called.

At last year's employer recognition event, Kelly received her award from the EIS management team. Left to right: Greg Carroll, Lorie Bissonette, Kelly, Catherine Panisales, Rita Panici and Mila Babic.

"I just couldn't say no to the challenge!" exclaims Kelly. Instead of waiting until January, Kelly added reconciliation to her to-do list and closed her account on Dec. 17, just a few days after Andrew.

It's all about TIM

As someone who has worked with Teachers' for over 20 years (previously at Crescent School), Kelly cites TIM as the main reason she can work so efficiently.

"It's made a huge difference!" says Kelly. "I can enter all of our information in a timely manner, and make changes as I work," adds Kelly. "By committing to going into TIM at least once per month, it's much easier to stay on top of things."

She adds, "We are not pension specialists, pension reporting is only one of the multiple demands small staff at independent schools face. Having TIM makes that part of our jobs so much easier."

Valuable partner

Kelly values the great partnership she has with everyone at Teachers'. "I love that Teachers' always asks for our opinions and input. They are very committed to continuous improvement and often make the changes we ask for."

Honourable mention

Several employers were very close to the results of this year's winners. We'd like to congratulate the following 11 employers for their pension reporting excellence.

PBR – completed 2009 reconciliation, very proactive in reporting absences and continued overall excellence:

Avon Maitland District School Board

Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board

Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board

Simcoe County District School Board

WBR – reconciled 2010 and perfect scores on many pension reporting requirements:

Albert College

Country Day School

Hillfield Strathallan College

St. Andrew's College

Toronto Montessori Schools

Toronto & Region Conservation Authority

Upper Canada College

"With the introduction of online reporting, and continued enhancements, employer results have improved."

Mila Babic, Director, Employer Information Services

What's happening with re-employment?

Looking for volunteers to test new reporting process.

Recap

In May 2010, the Ontario Teachers' Federation and Ontario government agreed to several amendments concerning re-employment in education. The first of the three amendments, an expanded definition of re-employed pensioner, became effective Sept. 1, 2010. The final two kick in Sept. 1, 2012: a new 50-day limit and requirement for employers to report re-employment service.

Of the three re-employment plan changes that were announced last year, the requirement to report re-employment service has the greatest impact on the way we work today.

Thanks to the prospective effective date, we've had the opportunity to review various options since the changes were announced. We've spoken to many of you directly and also conducted a survey with our designated employers to get a pulse on their re-employment trends.

With plan changes taking effect in less than 18 months, we've made a few decisions about how re-employment service will be reported. We'll also be launching a pilot project this fall to test our proposals and iron out the kinks.

Modifying current practice

Our goal is to enable members to view their re-employment service in *i*Access Web, our secure member website. In addition, the plan partners have also requested statistics to help them better understand re-employment trends.

To make this possible, all employers will be required to make the necessary changes so they are ready to begin reporting re-employment service no later than Sept. 1, 2012. The new reporting requirements for you will depend on your method of reporting and employee circumstance:

- **Payroll-based reporting (PBR)** – populate field in your regular payroll file. There are currently filler fields in the files you send us. We will modify the file specifications and assign one of the filler fields for re-employment service – you won't need to send us a separate file, simply add "Y" for re-employment service and "N" if it isn't. We will provide all PBR employers with modified file specifications by the end of this month.
- **Web-based reporting (WBR) and non-payroll employees** – report directly through TIM. If you report monthly or have employees who are not paid through your regular payroll process, we will provide new functionality in TIM.

We continue to develop new functionality in both TIM and *i*Access Web to prepare for the fall of 2012. Find out how you can help.

See page 8 for details on volunteering

Checking-in on buybacks

A work in progress.

Keep it coming!

Seven months ago, we introduced a whole new way of reporting absences. Since launching the new Absences section in TIM, you have reported more than 9,000 absence events!

Tweaks here and there

We've been learning right along with you the past few months. Between phone calls and visits to your office, we're finding out what's working and what isn't. Here's how we've resolved some of the common concerns.

- **Overlapping absences** – you can no longer submit an absence event that overlaps with an existing one. To submit successfully, adjust the dates on the existing absence to reflect the correct total period of absence, including extensions.
- **Extending absences** – when an employee extends an absence for which an event already exists, modify its end date to reflect the extension period (don't add a new absence event). The exceptions are for types of events labeled "ESA via TIM" and "Payroll ESA". If there is an extension to an absence with one of these labels, add a new absence event.
- **Short absences** – we understand that short absences are common for most of you. We continue to work on a solution for collecting this information.

Thanks!

Your ongoing feedback is invaluable for launching and enhancing all of our reporting tools. Keep telling us what you think!

Best practices

- Report absence events to us as soon as you are aware of them.
- Advise your employees that they can continue to contribute while on leave.
- Update events when a change occurs, especially for maternity leaves (e.g., employee leaves earlier than anticipated).
- Focus on reporting and maintaining maternity leaves and longer employer-approved leaves.
- Tell your employees to go to their Buyback Centre in *i*Access Web. They can find all of the tools and information they need to make their buyback decisions on our secure member website.

Q. Once I add an absence event, when will you contact the employee?

A. Approximately three days after you add a new event, we will notify your employee that a buyback opportunity exists. If they don't hear from us in that time frame, tell them to contact our Client Services department directly.

Q. How do I report a reduced workload or partial leave using the Absence section?

A. Do not report these types of absences – your employees aren't eligible to buy back credit for reduced workloads or partial leaves. If you notice such an event reported by the employee, please delete it.

Q. How can I enter an end date when I don't know when the absence will end?

A. If you approve a leave without a definite end date (e.g., sick leave), enter an end date of June 30 of the applicable school year. This will allow us to provide the member with a buyback cost. When you know the end date, remember to update it in TIM so we can adjust the buyback cost accordingly.

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

To help ensure the new functionality works, we are looking for volunteers to participate in a pilot project this fall.

"Before we introduce new functionality to everyone, we want to spend a few months testing our approach," explains Lorie Bissonette, Manager in Employer Information Services. "In addition to preparing your systems to gather and send re-employment service, we have to ensure our systems are set up properly to receive your information and make it available for members."

Going through a test run with a small group of employers will be a critical step toward implementation of the new reporting requirement. Here's what we're looking for:

- **Three to five PBR employers**
- **Variety of payroll systems**
- **Mixture of small, medium and one large employer**

The pilot project will kick off in September 2011, and run until December 2011 (there are also set-up requirements prior to September). We'll be relying on you to respond to questions on the test data and provide feedback on new features in TIM once they are up and running in early fall.

If you are interested in participating or have additional questions, contact Lorie directly at 416-730-6327 or 1-877-812-7989, ext. 6327.

IT TAKES TWO

Reconciliation focused on 2009 and 2010.

EMPLOYERS OFF TO A GREAT START!

TOTAL COMPLETED

- **2009 – 62%**
- **2010 – 21%**

The results are staggering and we've only just begun!

When we committed to reconciling two years in 2008 (2005 and 2006), we were simply trying to catch up. However, we know you are anxious to be current – you've told us at workshops, during visits to your office and on the phone. By reconciling 2009 and 2010 this year, employers will be able to close their accounts on the past and focus on the present.

LTIP EMPLOYEES? NO PROBLEM!

If you have employees receiving long-term income protection (LTIP) benefits, feel free to start working on 2010 reconciliation now.

You no longer have to wait to reconcile the previous calendar year. Complete the process for all of your other employees and once the school year is complete, we will follow up with you to ensure there were no underpayments for your LTIP employees.

HOW TO REACH US

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Contact us if you need assistance or experience any technical difficulties while using our web applications.