



Introducing an Employee Absence Management Program: The Rocky View Experience

Laurie Copeland- Assoc. Superintendent, HR
Heather Goodman – Director, HR & Wellness

AIM - Attendance Improvement & Monitoring:

Session Outcomes

- Why implement an attendance program?
- Identify Trends in Employee Absenteeism
- Understanding the Data Story
- The RVS AIM Program
 - Program Goals
 - Implementation Timeline
 - Year 1 Review

Table Discussion: The Impact of Absenteeism in Your District

Guiding Questions:

- a) Over the past year, what patterns have you noticed in staff attendance?

How has it impacted your Board's ability to meet your Education Plan goals?

- b) Are absences concentrated in certain departments or roles?
- c) Do absences tend to spike during specific times (e.g., Mondays, winter months)?
- d) How do absences affect morale, workload, or service delivery?

What is the impact?



Absenteeism is strongly correlated with burnout and attrition

- ↑ Increases workload and stress for remaining staff
- ↑ Increases hiring and substitute costs



Inconsistent staffing disrupts the learning process

- ↓ Reduced instructional quality
- ↓ Negative impact on relationships with students

Ontario Ministry of Education – Attendance Support Program (ASP)

Program Objectives and Principles

- The ASP promotes employee well-being through early intervention and coaching without disciplinary measures.

Absence Definitions and Thresholds

- Clear definitions distinguish non-culpable absences from culpable ones, with data-driven attendance thresholds.

Oversight and Evaluation

- Regular review and evaluation ensure the ASP remains effective, involving committees and employee feedback.

Implementation and Communication

- School boards must implement and publicly post their ASPs, supported by communication and training plans within 2 years of the policy date (June 26, 2024)

RVS Employee Absences: The Data Story

Teachers	Support Employees	Caretakers
17809 instructional days for individual Sick Days, Appointments and Leave Without Pay*	59700 hours of individual Sick Days, Appointments and Leave Without Pay*	8190 hours of individual Sick Days, Appointments and Leave Without Pay*
96% of teachers accessed at least one of these leaves	99% of support employees accessed at least one of these leaves	100% of caretakers accessed at least one of these leaves
average of 11.4 days per year per teacher	average of 71.9 hours per year (approx. 10.5 days each) per support employee	average of 56.8 hours per year (approx. 7 days each) per caretaker

*This is exclusive of employees on formal Short-Term Disability or Long-Term Disability Leaves or General Leaves

Determining Principles and Objectives of AIM

- Improve student learning and workplace well-being through increased staffing consistency and productivity
- Strengthen the workforce by identifying and addressing the needs of our employees
- Lowering the demand on the Substitute system
- Decreasing impact on budgets by reducing overtime and replacement costs

Defining Criteria

Culpable Absences:

Absences involving employee fault or wrongdoing. These absences are NOT addressed through AIM.

Examples include:

- excessive lateness, leaving work early without justification, or failure to report to work without following established procedures and without legitimate reason;
- absences that appear to be suspicious in nature and prove to be abuse;
- unsubstantiated absences where evidence of the reason for the absence is required and not provided;
- dishonest or not legitimate explanations, or failure to provide an explanation for absences.

Defining Criteria- cont'd

Non-Culpable Absences:

These are the absences AIM is designed to address.

These are authorized absences from work, where there are legitimate and valid reasons the employee is absent from work. These absences become a problem when the frequency of the absences detrimentally impacts workplace operations.

Examples include:

- sick leave with and/or without pay;
- appointments during working hours, with and/or without pay;
- absences from work for personal reasons with and/or without pay.

Processes in Developing AIM

1. Define program purpose and objectives
2. Definitions and criteria of absences
3. Determine the Attendance threshold
4. Define roles and responsibilities
5. Document processes and procedures
6. Monitor, evaluate and review processes

Important Concepts

AIM is designed to use attendance as a marker to identify employees who may be struggling or requiring support

AIM is **not** designed to address absences related to:

- Approved WCB, Sick Leave or Extended Disability Leaves
- Permanent approved accommodations
- Absences which appear to be suspicious, or suggest misconduct or culpability
- Progressive discipline policies address misconduct. This is separate from AIM.

AIM

- Attendance Improvement and Monitoring Initiative (AP455)

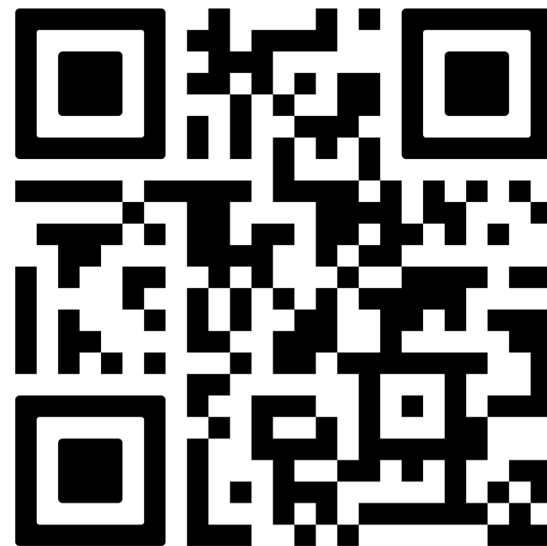


Table discussion:

- How do you see this fitting into your Division?
- What are your thoughts on how this procedure would fit in your division?

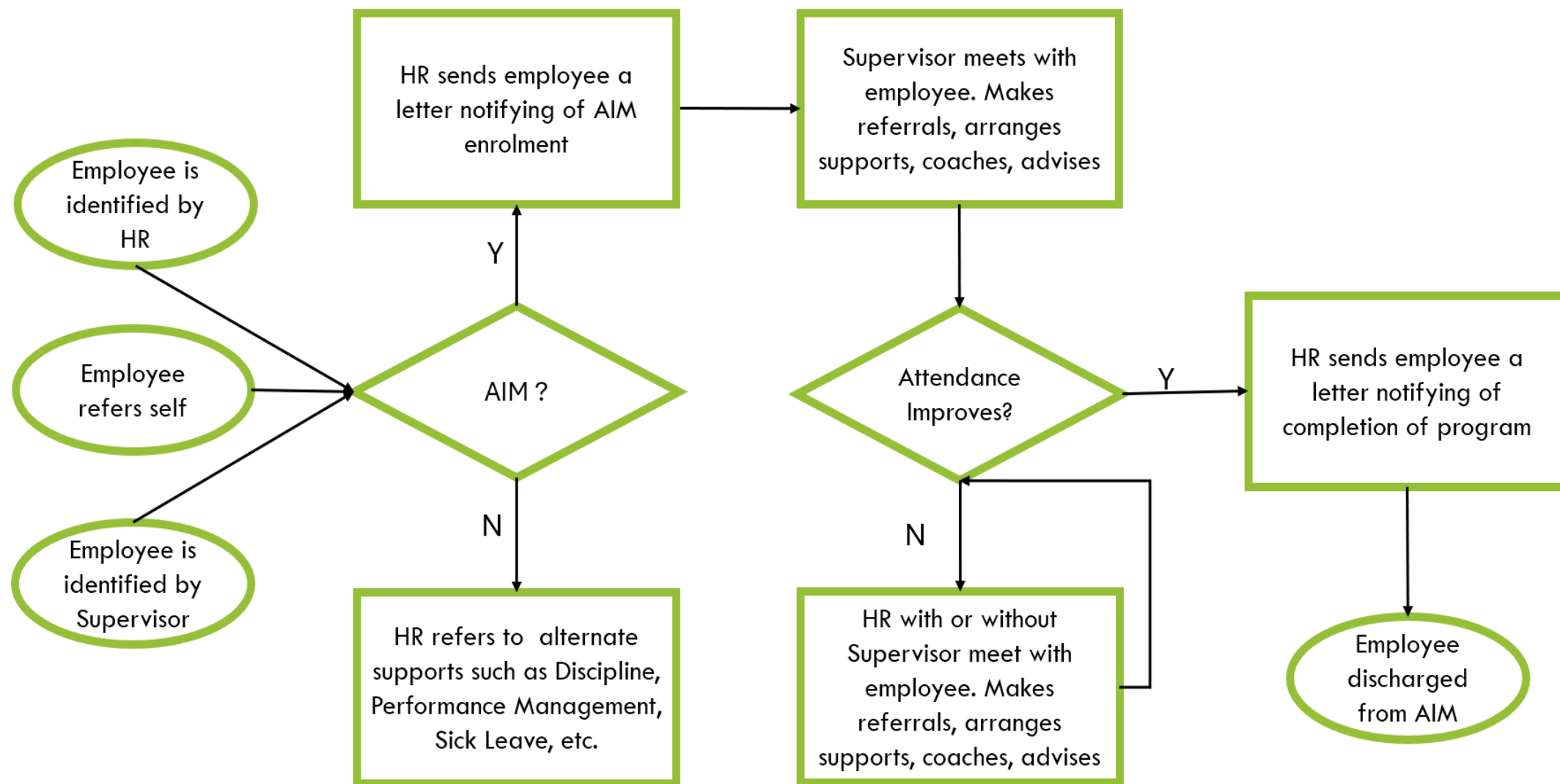
Determining Thresholds – Who qualifies?

RVS has determined the threshold to be the top 5% of absences at any given time.

In creating your own program, you will want to consider such data as:

- Number of Non-Culpable Absences
- Absence Frequency and Patterns
- Duration of Absences
- Comparison to Organizational Benchmarks
- Impact on Operational Needs
- Previous Support or Interventions
- Medical or Personal Context (if disclosed)

How Does AIM Work at RVS?



AIM Implementation Timeline





AIM

Attendance Improvement & Monitoring



AIM Initiative

Developed by RVS HR

Proactive approach to supporting employees

CONNECT with employees to provide

- ✓ referrals
- ✓ advice
- ✓ coaching
- ✓ support



Goals for AIM

STRENGTHEN the workforce

ENHANCE workplace well-being

IMPROVE student learning





AIM is DESIGNED to fertilize and water the trees

We know that life happens

Personal circumstances impact your ability to attend work

Most don't require additional support from RVS

Employees are generally able to **RETURN TO WORK** quickly

Did you know

RVS employees utilized ~11 days off last school year on average



Who is AIM for?

AIM is for employees in the top %

These employees utilize 25 or more days off per year for sick days, appointments and personal time

This indicates to us

- the employee may be struggling
- the workplace may be impacted
- student learning may be impacted



How will AIM work?

HR runs routine attendance reports for all employees

Once an employee is identified

- HR and the employee's Supervisor meet
- Employee will receive a letter from HR
- An informal **MEETING** is scheduled



How will AIM work?

At the first meeting

- attendance trends will be reviewed,
- work **TOGETHER** to identify supports that could assist

We will **not** ask employees to disclose any personal, medical diagnosis or treatment information

Employee's **PARTICIPATE** by identifying supports to return to work successfully



How will AIM work?

Supervisors & HR participate by

- Providing identified supports where possible
- continuing to **ENGAGE** and connect with employees

Employees will receive another letter from HR once their attendance **IMPROVES**

Employees can request to be included in AIM!



Will I be disciplined?

ALM is **not** a disciplinary initiative

ALM is designed to **COLLABORATIVELY** support employees

Absences involving employee fault or wrongdoing continue to be unacceptable and may be subject to discipline apart from ALM.



What about my Dr. note?

Employees with approved:

- Sick or Extended Disability Leaves
- Workers Compensation Board Leaves
- Permanent accommodations

These leaves are **not** included in attendance trends

We **ENCOURAGE** employees to directly connect with their Employee Health and Abilities Coordinator in HR



Does this mean I can't take a day off?

We want you to

- ✓ rest if you are sick,
- ✓ be where you are needed,
- ✓ handle emergencies that come up

We want you to **BALANCE** your work & life expectations



What's next?

We **ENCOURAGE** everyone to read the Administrative Procedure

CONNECT with your Supervisor if you have

- questions about your attendance
- questions about your work schedule expectations,
- if you want to participate in AIM

Contact HR if you have questions about the Administrative Procedure, how AIM works, or with any concerns you may have



Has AIM Been Effective?

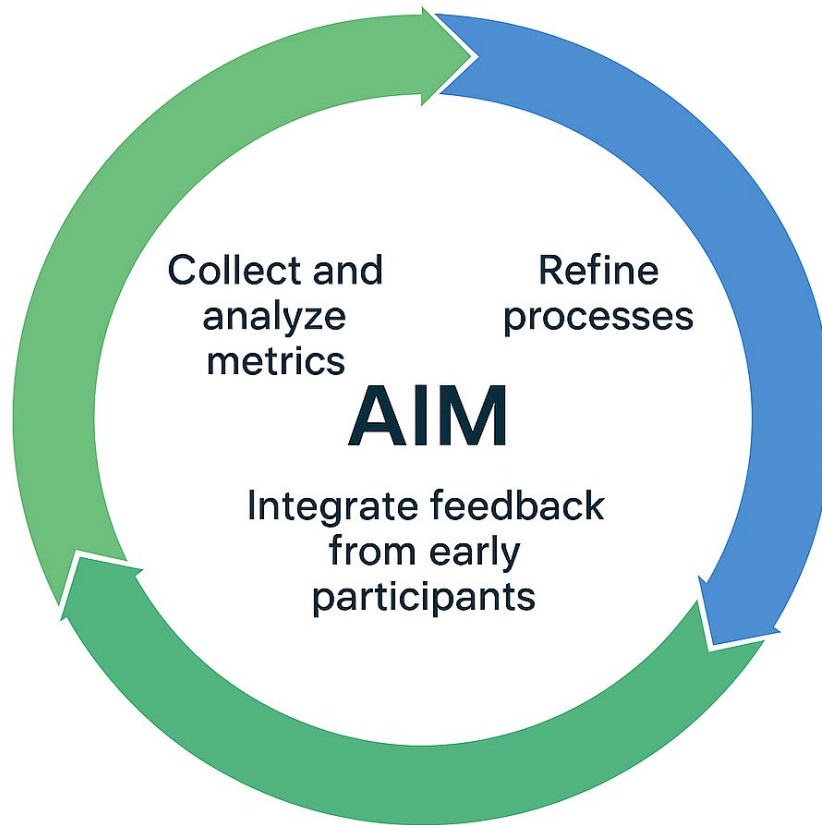
In 2024–25, the Absence Average decreased across all groups compared to 2023–24:

- **Teachers:** ↓ 7.7%
- **Support Staff:** ↓ 4.2%
- **Caretaking Staff:** ↓ 5.4%

What is preventing you from implementing an Absence Management Program?

- Have you considered a similar initiative?
- Will you consider it in the future?
- What are the barriers you are facing?

Next Steps for RVS



Next steps included:

- Continued coaching conversations
- Consistent documentation
- Ensuring all RVS employees understand the purpose and supports available through the program
- Integrating feedback from early participants to improve clarity and trust in the process.
- Ongoing monitoring of the data to ensure the procedure is effective.

Questions?

