

Victoria Botelho ? Current work-to-rule at schools is ?out of hand?

?Work-to-rule is an industrial action in which employees do no more than the minimum required by the rules of their contract, and precisely follow safety or other regulations in order to cause a slowdown, rather than to serve their purposes.?

The work-to-rule motion that has been in place for schools has gotten completely out of hand. Seeing as I am a current student in Orangeville, I get to experience how outrageous this action has become. It has gotten to the point where teachers are anxious to walk down stairs in fear of slipping on the piles of dirt and students are irritated at the mess that is everywhere they look. This issue has become so bad that witnesses say that one of the younger students went to Dollarama on lunch, bought a broom with her own money, and began sweeping the halls. Teenagers are stereotyped as being ?lazy and messy,? but when a teen goes out of her way to clean the hallways because of how tired she is of the filth everywhere, it is evident that this has become a huge problem and it desperately needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.

This work-to-rule action clearly states in the definition that ?employees do no more than the minimum required by the rules of their contract, and precisely follow safety and other regulations . . .? key point being safety. Now, I am not part of the janitorial staff, so I am unsure of the rules of their contract, but I can guarantee that they are not following the safety regulations at all, let alone precisely. With the constant building up of dirt in the hallways, the dust bunnies that are the size of a grown man's fist and the poorly swept cafeteria, the school is becoming a completely unacceptable learning environment. As a student who also has mild asthma, which acts up a lot more frequently in the colder seasons, the unclean hallways at my school are not what I consider to be ?a healthy learning environment.? As odd as it was to walk into a school that smells like vinegar, I would much rather the vinegar scent than the constantly airborne dirt and dust combination.

In high school, or any school for that matter, students are encouraged to reach for the stars and to set high goals for themselves so we are able to grow as young adults. We are encouraged to achieve the ambitions we make for ourselves and to always go above and beyond in everything we do, especially our schoolwork. How are we expected to do such wonderful things and go above expectations if our janitors are following a work-to-rule motion that states, ?Employees do no more than the minimum required??

What kind of example is this setting for the younger students who are just starting or haven't even made it to high school yet? Being a student, I don't fully comprehend what the work-to-rule action is trying to do for staff members, but I do know that this action is doing more harm than good. Not only is it utterly disgusting to walk in five out of the seven days a week, it is also demonstrating to the students that it is okay to do the bare minimum on everything we do. Had I started high school when work-to-rule was still in action and continued through while this motion was still in place, I know for a fact that it would have impacted who I am as a person today in an extremely negative way. I wouldn't have received honor roll the past three years and I definitely wouldn't have reached my full potential the way I have because of the fact I would be doing ?the bare minimum required.?

In my opinion, this work-to-rule action has gotten completely out of hand and it needs to be stopped before it gets worse. It is one thing to protest to change something that will benefit the majority of people such as stopping animal cruelty. It is a completely different thing to protest to change something that will benefit the minority of people and, in doing so, putting others in danger, such as this work-to-rule action that has been put in place.