

Employer Award

Dawn Watkins

Dawn oversees the workers compensation program covering approximately 60,000 employees in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Her responsibilities include absence management, reasonable job accommodations, return to work and protected leave.

Dawn is widely recognized for her innate ability to leverage her position to make a positive difference in the lives of others. With 25 years of professional experience, she has earned her well-deserved reputation for caring deeply about the welfare of the district's highly diverse workforce and its mission: educating 664,000 children from pre-school through high school at over 900 schools in the Los Angeles area.

Dawn describes her nomination and selection as a Comp Laude® Award winner as "humbling" and an "unexpected" honor. "I never want to lose sight of the individual experience of the injured worker," she said. "I am dedicated to improving their experience as they recover. Receiving this award inspires me to want to do more."

Dawn attributes consistently favorable outcomes to what she calls the "family rule." She expects every injured worker to be treated as others would want their loved ones to be treated – with respect and concern about their health and well-being. This includes prompt, compassionate, high-quality medical care and actively working to facilitate healing and recovery. Dawn's benefits background ensures the process is coordinated and multi-disciplinary in its approach.

"We can't forget that people want to get back to work," she said. "Sometimes there is a motivation that is not clearly apparent. It might be a teacher who wants to get back to work in time for graduation or a desire for a maintenance worker to dance at a family wedding. We need to rally the care team around that individual's particular goal."

Dawn demonstrates her commitment to the welfare of all injured workers through her participation in numerous professional organizations and industry advisory boards. In addition, she holds designations as an Associate in Claims, Associate in Risk Management for Public Entities, Professional in Human Resources and Society for Human Resource Management – Certified Professional. She actively draws from these organizations to stay abreast of industry trends. Colleagues say she sets a high bar within the school district and throughout the workers compensation industry.

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