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2023 Workplace Violence Survey

The Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario

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**Methodology & Reporting**

These are results from an online survey of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario members from February 8th to March 22nd, 2023, conducted by Stratcom.

The sample of 24,872 ETFO members is statistically weighted to match the gender, region and member type of the ETFO membership as per most recently available data. Invites and reminders were sent to 76,409 ETFO members, resulting in a completion rate of 32.6%.

The margin of error for a sample of this size is +/-0.4 %, 19 times out of 20. Margin of error is larger for sub-samples.

Some charts and tables might not total 100% due to rounding.

All figures are percent unless indicated otherwise.

All research conducted by Stratcom

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Sample Composition

The survey sample is representative of the ETFO membership by gender, region and member type.

79% of survey respondents are female, 19% are male.

Asked about whether they were members of designated groups, 12% indicated they are Racialized, 4% are 2SLGBTQ+, 3% indicated they have a disability, and 2% are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (FNMI).

17% of participants have been working in Ontario’s public elementary school system for 5 years or less, 53% for 6 to 20 years, and 29% for more than 20 years.

93% of the participants are teachers (13% of those in long term, and 13% in daily occasional jobs), 4% are Designated Early Childhood Educators, and 1% are Education or Professional Support Personnel.

15% of the teachers are working in special education roles.

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**Summary of Results**

The majority of members think violence against educators is a serious problem in their school with a mean response of 6.26 on an 11-point scale where 0 = ‘not a problem’ at all and 10 = ‘serious problem’. Just over half (52%) rate the problem between 7 to 10 on the scale (compared to 20% at the other end of the scale, 0 to 3).

* This same question in a 2017 on violence had a lower mean response of 5.58 (43% rating between 7-10).

Almost three-quarters think the number of incidents of workplace violence against educators in the Ontario public elementary school system have increased a great deal (38%) or somewhat (34%) since before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

80% think there are more incidents of violence since they have been working in the Ontario public elementary school system and 66% think the severity of the violence is worse.

A majority of members (52%) have experienced an attempt of physical force against them in the 2022-2023 school year. Over two-in-five members (44%) have experienced actual physical force against them. A majority of members (56%) have experienced a statement or behaviour that could be interpreted as a threat to exercise physical force against them.

• This disproportionally affects Women, Persons with a disability, First Nations/Métis/Inuit, 2SLGBTQ+ and DECE/ESP/PSP members.

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Summary of Results - continued

Among members who submit written/online or verbal reports, almost half (47%) think the actions or steps taken were ineffective in preventing a recurrence of the violent incident(s). Only 8% deem it effective.

When subjected to actual physical force against them, 13% never or only sometimes submit a report in writing/online.

Only 58% of incidents of actual physical force against members are reported in writing, online or verbally to administrators.

The vast majority (88%) have experienced harm as a result of violence against them (actual, attempted or threats).

Approximately 30% of ETFO members’ injuries warranted a WSIB claim. However, among those who could have filed a WSIB claim, only 17% did.

Members report that in-class supports, board supports, in-school supports, students spaces and community supports have all decreased significantly. The only support that has increased is student tools (e.g., access to technology, sensory tools).

More than one-third of members (35%) participated in a classroom evacuation due to a violence incident.

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**Seriousness of the problem of violence against educators in your school(s) during this school year (2022-2023)**

Chart showing the following:

**Result as a table to question 16: Using an 11-point scale, where 0 means not a problem at all and 10 means a serious problem, please rate the seriousness of the problem of violence against educators in your school(s) during this school year (2022-2023). (n=24,668) –**

Serious problem – 10 = 20 percent, 9 = 6 percent, 8 = 14 percent ,7 = 14 percent, 6 = 9 percent, 5 = 10 percent. 4 = 5 percent, 3 = 6 percent, 2 = 5 percent, 1 = 4 percent and not a problem at all 0 = 5 percent

54 percent - A problem

24 percent neutral

20 percent – not a problem

Mean Response

6.26

2017 Mean Response

5.58

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**Changes in Violence in Schools**

Two Bar Graphs:

**Result as a bar graph to question 18. How would you say that violence in schools has changed since you have been working in the Ontario public elementary school system?: (n=24,872)**

Incidents of Violence and Severity of Violence

Incident of Violence:

There are more incidents of violence 80 percent

There are the same number of incidents of violence 8 percent

There are fewer incidents of violence 1 percent

Do not know 11 percent

Severity of Violence:

The Severity of violence is worse 66 percent

The severity of violence is the same 19 percent

The severity of violence is reduced 1 percent

Do not know 14 percent

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**Agreement with statements about violence in schools**

Bar graph

**Result as a bar graph to question 19: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (n=24, 668)**

Violence in my school(s) makes teaching / working with students more difficult:

STRONGLY AGREE 61 percent

SOMEWHAT AGREE 26 percent

SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 4 percent

STRONGLY DISAGREE 4 percent

DO NOT KNOW 5 percent

Violence in my school(s) often interferes with classroom management:

STRONGLY AGREE 54 percent

SOMEWHAT AGREE 29 percent

SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 6 percent

STRONGLY DISAGREE 6 percent

DO NOT KNOW 5 percent

Violence is a growing problem at my school(s):

STRONGLY AGREE 47 percent

SOMEWHAT AGREE 33 percent

SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 7 percent

STRONGLY DISAGREE 5 percent

DO NOT KNOW 8 percent

School administrator(s) do not take the problem of violence in the classroom as seriously as they should:

STRONGLY AGREE 31 percent

SOMEWHAT AGREE 32 percent

SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 15 percent

STRONGLY DISAGREE 15 percent

DO NOT KNOW 7 percent

Violence does not affect my school(s) very much:

STRONGLY AGREE 5 percent

SOMEWHAT AGREE 13 percent

SOMEWHAT DISAGREE 22 percent

STRONGLY DISAGREE 55 percent

DO NOT KNOW 5 percent

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**Personally experienced violence [excluding ‘don’t know’]**

**Bar Graph:**

**Result as a bar graph to question 21: In the 2022 – 2023 school year, how many times were you personally subjected to the following? (n=24, 668)**

Actual physical force (against you)

Never 56

1 to 10 times 36

11 to 20 times 5

More than 21 times 4

An attempt of physical force (against you)

Never 48

1 to 10 times 40

11 to 20 times 7

More than 21 times 6

A statement of behaviour that you interpreted as a threat to exercise physical force against you

Never 42

1 to 10 times 44

11 to 20 times 8

More than 21 times 6

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**Do you inform your administrator of violent incidents? When you witness violence, attempted violence, or threatened violence**

Bar Graph:

**Result as a bar graph to question 24a. (if witnessed or personally experienced any violence in question 20 or question 21)** When you witness violence, attempted violence, or threatened violence – Do you inform your administrator or violent incidents? (n=17,788)

Total Admin aware: 68 percent

Always verbally 36 percent

Usually verbally 22 percent

Always in writing / online reporting 21 percent

Sometimes in writing / online reporting 18 percent

Sometimes verbally 13 percent

Never in writing / online reporting 4 percent

Not sur3e 2 percent

Never verbally 2 percent

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**Effectiveness of actions**

Chart showing the following:

**Result as a table to question 26: Were the action or steps effective in preventing a recurrence of the violence incident? Please use an 11-point scale where 0 means not at all effective and 10 means very effective. (n=17,824) If always, usually, or sometime writing / online (or verbal reporting @ question24).**

Not at all effective – 0 = 23 percent, 1 = 10 percent , 2 = 14 percent, 3 =12 percent, 4= percent, 5 = 11 percent, 6 = 5 percent, 7 = 4 percent, 8 = 2 percent, 9=1 percent, Very effective - 10 = 1 percent, Do not know = 9 percent, Prefer not to answer = 1 percent

47 percent Ineffective

24 percent neutral

8 percent effective

Mean Response

2.79

2017 Mean Response

4.18

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**Harm experienced as a result of violence.**

**Total of 65 percent**

Bar Graph:

**Result as a bar graph to question 29. (if witnessed or personally experienced in violence question 21)**

Have you experienced harm as a result of violence against you? Select all that apply (n=15,969).

The no response option was missing from this question, so respondents must have used these categories in its place.

Yes, I ‘ve experienced a physical injury 24 percent

Yes I’ve experienced other physical illness or health effects 11 percent

Yes, I’ve experienced a psychological injury / illness (e.g., mental stress, psychological or emotional harm) 53 percent

“Other” 16 percent

Prefer not to answer 21 percent

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**Type(s) of leave taken to recover from physical injury**

Bar Graph:

**Result as a bar graph to question 37 (If took time off to recover from physical injury due to violence at question 36)**

Sick leave 70 percent

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) related leave 25 leave

Long Term Disability leave 6 percent

Other responses 1 percent

Prefer not to answer 8 percent’

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**Type(s) of leave taken to deal with the psychological or emotional ramifications of the violence**

Bar Graph:

**Result as a bar graph to question 37 (If took time off to recover from psychological or emotional ramifications due to violence at question 36)**

Sick leave 73 percent

Long Term Disability leave 4 percent

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) related leave 2 leave

Other responses 17 percent

Prefer not to answer 13 percent

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**How frequently were each of the following available to educators in your school(s) when you needed them?**

Bar Graph:

**Result as a bar graph to question 39: In the 2022- 2023 school year, how frequently were each of the following available to educators in your school(s) when you needed them? N=24,688)**

Educational assistant(s) always available 8 available most of the time 18 available some of the time 35 rarely available 20 never available 6 don’t know 7 didn’t need 4

Speech -language Pathologist(s)) always available 2 available most of the time 5 available some of the time 24 rarely available 24 never available 9 don’t know 25 didn’t need 11

Child and Youth Worker(s) (CYW) always available 3 available most of the time 7 available some of the time 18 rarely available 16 never available 19 don’t know 28 didn’t need 10

Social worker(s) always available 1 available most of the time 4 available some of the time 14 rarely available 22 never available 16 don’t know 30 didn’t need 10

Occupational Therapist(s) always available 1 available most of the time 2 available some of the time 13 rarely available 22 never available 17 don’t know 32 didn’t need 13

Child and Youth Councillor(s) always available 1 available most of the time 3 available some of the time 11 rarely available 15 never available 24 don’t know 36 didn’t need 11

Psychologist(s) always available 1 available most of the time 2 available some of the time 9 rarely available 19 never available 24 don’t know 35 didn’t need 12

Guidance counsellor(s) always available 2 available most of the time 3 available some of the time 6 rarely available 8 never available 35 don’t know 30 didn’t need 17

Attendance Counsellor(s) always available 1 available most of the time 2 available some of the time 5 rarely available 10 never available 28 don’t know 39 didn’t need 17

Physiotherapist(s) always available 1 available most of the time 1 available some of the time 4 rarely available 11 never available 27 don’t know 39 didn’t need 17

Psychometrist(s) available most of the time 1 available some of the time 2 rarely available 8 never available 25 don’t know 48 didn’t need 16

Psychiatrist(s) available most of the time 1 available some of the time 2 rarely available 10 never available 33 don’t know 39 didn’t need 14

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**Changes of staffing and support availability**

Bar Graph:

**Result as a bar graph to question 39b: How has availability of staffing and supports changed during your time working in the public school system?**

Student tools (e.g., access to technology, sensory tools) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED 5 INCREASED 29 STAYED THE SAME 24 DECREASE 17 SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE 14 DON’T KNOW 11

Student spaces (e.g., calming spaces, specialized classes) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED 3 INCREASED 19 STAYED THE SAME 22 DECREASE 23 SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE 24 DON’T KNOW 10

In class supports (e.g., Educational Assistants/Support Personnel)) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED 2 INCREASED 5 STAYED THE SAME 11 DECREASE 27 SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE 50 DON’T KNOW 6

Board supports (e.g., Behaviour specialists, Itinerant staff) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED 1 INCREASED 5 STAYED THE SAME 13 DECREASE 26 SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE 34 DON’T KNOW 21

In school supports (e.g., Child & Youth Counsellors, Guidance Counsellors) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED 1 INCREASED 5 STAYED THE SAME 13 DECREASE 24 SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE 35 DON’T KNOW 22

Community supports (e.g., treatment, professionals) SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED 1 INCREASED 4 STAYED THE SAME 16 DECREASE 22 SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE 24 DON’T KNOW 33

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**Question 44: During the 2022-2023 school year, have you participated in a classroom evacuation due to a violence incident?**

**35% reponed yes**

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Share stories about violence in schools  
[coded random selection of open-end responses - top 5 response categories]

Bar Graph:

Result as a bar graph to question 45 Do you have a situation or story you would like to share about violence in your school(s) that would help your union better understand and/or support members? (n=2,000)

I have experienced/Know of violent incidents in the classroom (general) 38

Need more in-class help / More EAs / More Social Workers, etc. 32

Incidents are far too frequent / Stressful for teachers and education workers / Not fair and scary for other students 27

Aggressive students should not be back in classroom so quickly after violent incidents 22

Admin and principals need to be more supportive / Must not download entire problem to teacher or education worker 16

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