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Report

# **BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE SURVEY**



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***Objectives and Methodology***

Three Ontario education worker unions—the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA)—retained James Matsui Research to conduct a survey to gather information about the bullying of their members. Bullying is defined as persistent or repeated incidents of abuse, threats, insults or humiliation that are intended to hurt other individuals physically, emotionally, psychologically or socially.

The two specific objectives of the research are to:

1. Establish the incidence of bullying of the members of the three sponsoring organizations; and,
2. Describe bullying incidents from the perspective of their instigation, the nature of the bullying, the reporting of the bullying incidents, actions taken to halt bullying and the outcomes of these actions.

In total, 1,217 members of the three organizations were contacted by telephone and interviewed in March 2005. Each organization contributed equally to the overall sample which subsequently was weighted at the analysis stage. For the representative sample of 1,217 education workers in Ontario, the margin of error is  $\pm 2.8$  percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.

The sample of 411 randomly-selected OSSTF members has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.8$  percent at the 95 percent confidence interval and is itself composed of two subsamples. The subsample of 350 OSSTF teacher members has a margin of error of  $\pm 5.2$  percent and the subsample of 61 OSSTF support staff members has a margin of  $\pm 12.5$  percent. The margins of error should be used as guides when comparing the results from different questions and groups of members.

### ***Findings: The Incidence of Bullying***

Overall, one out of every two OSSTF members has been bullied at some point in their career in education. The one in two bullying incidence level is found whether a person teaches or works in a support staff position, whether the person is female or male, regardless of the region of the province or the size of the community in which a person works, or whether a person works full-time or part-time. A higher proportion of OSSTF

members—close to six in ten individuals—has been subjected to bullying if they have been working in education for more than five years but less than 20 years.

More members have been bullied by a student than any other kind of bullying. Over one-third of members has been bullied by a student. Bullying by students most often takes the form of repeated disruptions in the workplace or disrespectful behavior, or vandalizing personal belongings or property.

The next highest incidence of bullying is bullying by someone in a superior position. Slightly less than one-quarter of members has been bullied by a principal, vice-principal, supervisor or administrator. Bullying by a person in a superior position most often takes the form of persistent unfair criticism or trivial fault-finding, or excessive monitoring.

About one in five members has been bullied by a parent or guardian. Support staff members are more likely than teacher members to be bullied by a parent or guardian. Parents or guardians are most likely to bully members with threats of reporting them to a school administrator or the local school board, or repeated workplace disruptions or disrespectful behavior.

The least common form of bullying is bullying by a colleague. One in five members has been bullied by a colleague at some time in his/her working career. The two bullying tactics used most often by colleagues are repeated unfair criticism and trivial fault-finding, or attempts to isolate or exclude bullied individuals.

### ***Findings: The Experience of Being Bullied***

Of the four types of bullying, the bullying of members by students or parents/guardians is most often reported formally to school administrators. Alternatively, bullying incidents involving colleagues tend to be mentioned informally to others, while bullying by administrators is more likely to go unreported or unmentioned. In most cases, the reporting of bullying incidents, together with the subsequent disciplinary action, leads to the termination of the bullying. In a small percentage of instances, the bullying either continues despite the actions taken or restarts after some time has passed.

When a person has been bullied, the research indicates that the impact on the bullied individual is consequential.

- 10 percent of those who have been bullied take time away from work.
- 53 percent of bullied individuals report that they suffered psychological, health-related or other personal impacts as a result of the bullying—most often irritability, loss of sleep or loss of self-confidence, but sometimes severe anxiety attacks, loss of appetite, diagnosed depression or increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other substances.

- 34 percent of members who have been bullied have sought professional help in order to recover from a bullying incident.

*Recap*

The one out of two incidence of bullying occurs among OSSTF members regardless of where they work, whether they teach or occupy a support staff position, or whether they work on a full-time or part-time basis. While the incidence of bullying by students or parents/guardians tends to be higher, these bullying incidents typically are reported, actions are taken and the impacts on bullied individuals tend to be less severe. In contrast, bullying by colleagues or administrators, while less common, tends to have fewer formal avenues for handling the problem. At the same time, bullying by colleagues or administrators produces more serious personal consequences to the individual who has been bullied.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION: STUDY OBJECTIVES**

Three of Ontario’s teacher unions—the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA)—retained James Matsui Research, associated with Lang Research, to conduct a survey among their members. The overall objective of the survey is to document that nature of bullying of OSSTF, ETFO and OECTA members within their workplaces.

One of the main objectives of the survey was to establish the overall incidence of the bullying of teachers and education workers across the province. Bullying is defined as “persistent or repeated verbal abuse, threats, insults or humiliation” that has the specific intent of hurting others. From the perspective of the individuals who are the targets of bullying, the bullies potentially are colleagues, administrators, parents or guardians or students.

A second objective of the research is to describe the relevant aspects of the bullying that has occurred in Ontario’s elementary and secondary schools by finding answers to the following questions.

- In what way have teachers and education workers in Ontario been bullied?
- When did the bullying start and is it still ongoing?
- Who was involved in the bullying?
- Was the bullying reported formally?
- What actions, if any, subsequently were taken?
- What were the personal consequences of being bullied—that is, the emotional, social, psychological and physical impacts of having been a target of bullying?

Of those who had not been bullied personally, the study also found out how many teachers and education workers had been exposed to bullying situations by witnessing bullying incidents of others. The two pieces of information together show how many teachers and education workers have been exposed to bullying either through being a target of bullying or by witnessing the bullying of others.

Finally, the study examines whether bullying incidents have escalated into incidents involving physical violence or assault. When violent incidents have occurred in schools, the research looks at the nature of the violence and the actions that were taken subsequently.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

Since quantitative research into bullying of teachers and education workers was new for the three unions, we were assisted in the questionnaire design by the extensive background material collected by the member organizations. As well, the drafting of the study questionnaire involved the input of the representatives of the three organizations.

Since one of the main goals of the project was to determine the incidence of bullying of teachers and education workers, all respondents were read a definition of bullying prior to being asked any questions about bullying incidents. In this way, all survey participants would start with a common definition of bullying. Respondents were read the following:

*The next questions in this survey have to do with the treatment of staff/employees in your place of work. We specifically are interested in instances where staff/employees have been hurt through persistent or repeated verbal abuse, threats, insults or humiliation. This is commonly referred as bullying and may have been brought on by colleagues, administrators, parents or students.*

The questionnaire was designed specifically to measure the way in which bullying activities had been carried out and who had incited the bullying incidents. In total, we asked respondents whether they had been the target of 17 different types of bullying activities. The respondents were asked to associate each type of bullying with four groups of individuals who might have instigated the bullying.

Subsequently, the questionnaire was pre-tested among the members of the three organizations in order to make sure the questions were both meaningful and understandable. The pre-test also helped to determine the average length of the interview and the potential incidence of bullying among teachers.

The sampling procedure involved obtaining representative and random samples of members from each of the three unions. Although each organization represents a different number of members, the final sample was equally divided among the three.

The telephone interviewing was subcontracted to BBM/ComQUEST. The interviewing took place during the first week of April 2005 from BBM/ComQUEST's computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) facilities in Toronto and Moncton. The telephone interviewing, supervision and verification were conducted according to the standards of the Canadian Association of Marketing Research Organizations (CAMRO). Given the sensitive nature of the research, a contact for each organization was provided to respondents if they wished to verify any aspect of the project.

At the conclusion of the interviewing, the responses for each organization were weighted according to the number of FTEs of each organization in order to produce a

representative sample of elementary and secondary teachers in the public and Catholic systems across Ontario. The total sample of 1,156 teachers has a margin of error of  $\pm 2.9$  percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.

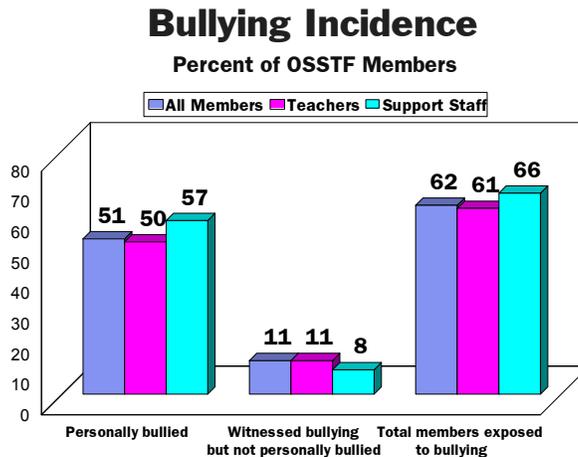
The sample of OSSTF members (411 interviews) has a margin of error of  $\pm 4.8$  percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. The OSSTF sample is itself divided into 350 teachers (margin of error of  $\pm 5.2\%$ ) and 61 support staff members (margin of error of  $\pm 12.5\%$ ). The following findings and report are based on the sample of OSSTF members.

### **3.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS REGARDING BULLYING**

#### ***3.1 The Incidence of Bullying***

Fifty-one percent of OSSTF teacher and support staff members in Ontario have been bullied either by someone in a superior position, by a colleague, by a parent or guardian or by a student. Another 11 percent of OSSTF members have not been bullied themselves but have witnessed bullying of others. In total, 62 percent of OSSTF members have been exposed to the bullying of school staff either by being bullied themselves or by witnessing the bullying of another person. Both the percentage of OSSTF members who have been bullied or who have been exposed to bullying is four percentage points below the provincial average for all teachers and education workers.

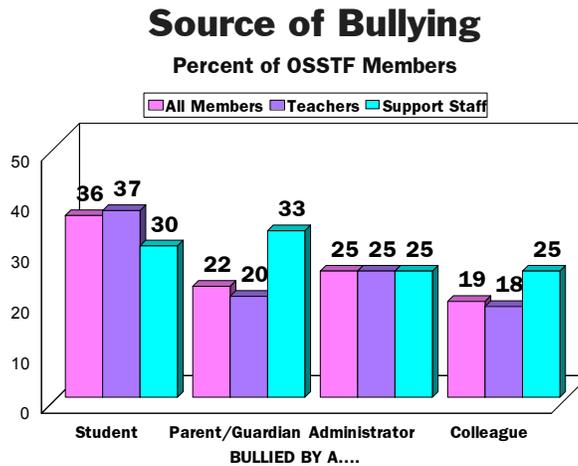
The incidence of bullying is higher among support staff members than teachers. Fifty-seven of support staff members have been bullied and sixty-six percent have witnessed bullying. By way of contrast, 50 percent of teachers have been bullied and 61 percent have been exposed to bullying.



There are significant differences in the percentages of OSSTF members who have been bullied given who has been responsible for the bullying.

- Thirty-six percent of OSSTF members have been bullied by a student (37% among teachers, 30% among support staff).
- Twenty-two percent of OSSTF members have been bullied by a parent or guardian (20% among teachers, 33% among support staff).

- Twenty-five percent of OSSTF members have been bullied by a person in a superior position—individuals such as administrators, supervisors, principals or vice-principals (25% among teachers, 25% among support staff).
- Nineteen percent have been bullied by a colleague (18% among teachers, 25% among support staff).



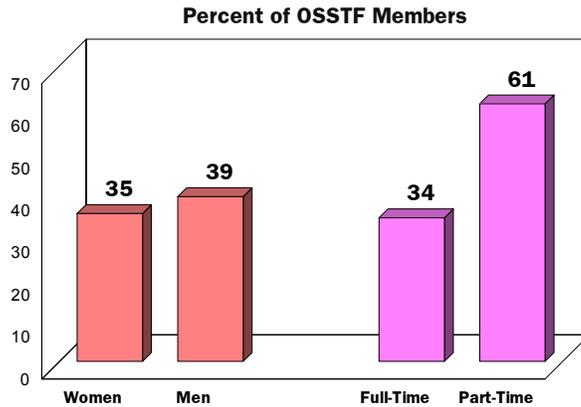
### ***3.2 Bullying by Students***

#### **3.2.1 Identifying OSSTF Members Bullied by Students**

Bullying of OSSTF members by students is more prevalent than any other form of bullying. Just over one of every three OSSTF members (36%) has been bullied by students. As reported previously, teachers are more likely to be bullied by students than support staff. Bullying by students is relatively widespread across the province and different groups of members given their demographic characteristics or attributes of their work experience.

Despite the widespread prevalence of bullying by students, there are some groups who are somewhat more likely to have been bullied. In particular, part-time teachers (61%) are much more likely to be bullied by students than full-time teachers (34%) or support staff (30%). Men (39%) are slightly more likely than women (35%) to have been bullied by students.

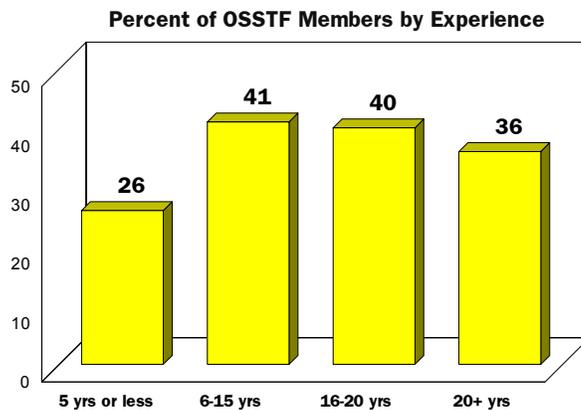
### **Bullying by a Student**



Bullying by students is highest in the Central region (43%) and in Toronto (40%). Alternatively, it is lowest in the Hamilton-Niagara region (22%) and Northern Ontario (29%). OSSTF members who work in small communities are equally likely to be bullied by students than those working in larger communities across Ontario.

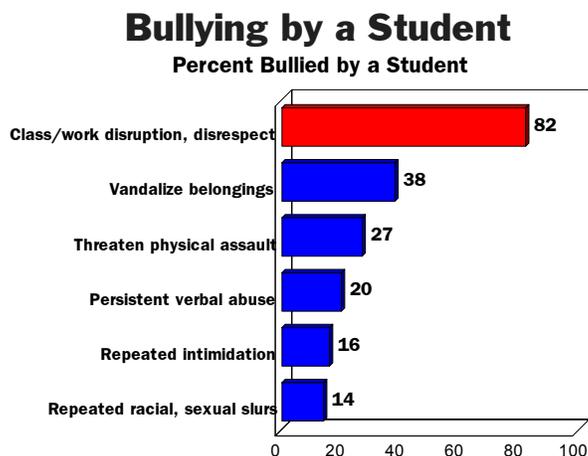
Work experience has a curvilinear relationship with the likelihood that a person has been bullied by a student. By this we mean that the highest incidence of bullying by students occurs among members with mid-range experience (41% among members with 6 to 15 years experience, 40% among those with 16 to 20 years experience). The lowest incidence of bullying is found among those with the least work experience (26% among members with 5 or less years) followed by those with the most experience (36% with more than 20 years).

### **Bullying by a Student**



### 3.2.2 Specific Forms of Bullying Used by Students

Of the OSSTF members who have been bullied by students, 82 percent have been subject to repeated workplace disruptions or repeated disrespectful behaviour. Part-time teachers (91% of those bullied by students) and teachers without a regular grade assignment (88%) are most likely to be subject to this particular kind of bullying. As well, OSSTF members working in the Central region (88%), in Northern Ontario (88%) and in towns and villages (89%) tend to be the targets of disruptive or disrespectful behaviour.



Thirty-eight percent of those bullied by students have had their personal belongings or property vandalized and 27 percent have been threatened or physically assaulted on more than one occasion. Men (49% of members bullied by students) and individuals working in Northern Ontario (63%) are likely to have their belongings vandalized by students. Threats of physical assault are highest among support staff (56%), those working in Northern Ontario (50%), the Hamilton-Niagara region (36%) or in schools located in suburban areas (38%).

Other forms of bullying by students include persistent verbal abuse (20%), repeated attempts at intimidation (16%) and repeated racial, sexual or religious slurs (14%).

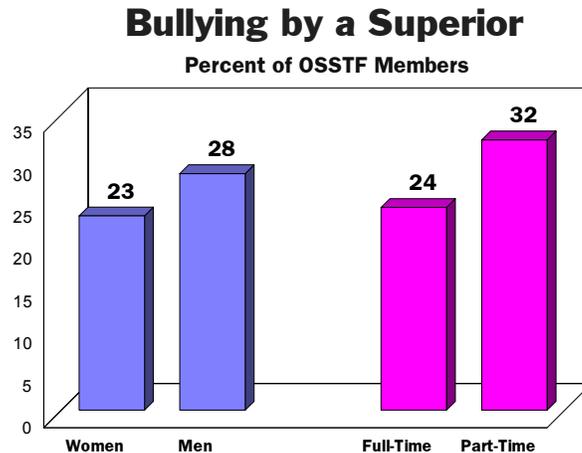
### 3.3 *Bullying by a Person in a Superior Position*

#### 3.3.1 Identifying OSSTF Members Bullied by a Superior

Approximately one out of every four OSSTF members has been bullied by someone in a superior position. This type of bullying has the second highest incidence among OSSTF members.

There are several distinctive traits that help to identify the members who have been bullied by someone in a superior position. Thirty-two percent of part-time teachers report

being bullied by a superior. Twenty-eight percent of men in contrast to 23 percent of women indicate that they have been bullied by a superior.

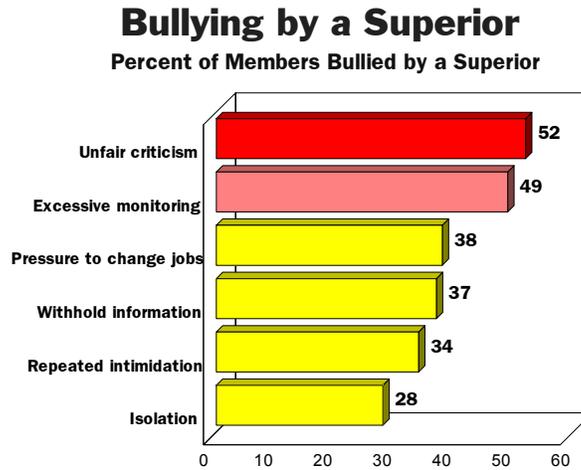


There are also differences in the incidence of bullying by a superior given the region of the province where a person works. This kind of bullying is highest in Northern Ontario (32% have been bullied by superiors) and in the City of Toronto (30%). Bullying by a superior is lowest in the Hamilton-Niagara region (17%). The incidence of this type of bullying is highest in rural areas (47% of 19 respondents) and in suburban communities (33%).

### 3.3.2 Specific Forms of Bullying by Administrators

Of the OSSTF members who have been bullied by someone in a superior position, the most common form of bullying is repeated instances of unfair criticism or trivial fault finding (52% of members bullied by a superior). Seventy-three percent of support staff have suffered from repeated unfair criticism by administrators. OSSTF members who have been exposed to repeated unfair criticism by administrators are more likely to work in suburban schools (60%) and in Eastern (63%) or Northern (67%) Ontario. Compared to all others given their work experience, members with more than 20 years experience report the highest incidence of unfair criticism by someone in a superior position (68%).

The next most frequent kind of bullying by administrators is excessive monitoring or supervising of work (46% of members bullied by someone in a superior position). This form of bullying tends to be more frequently reported by men (52%), those who teach on a part-time basis (50%) and those with the least amount of work experience (52%). Seventy-four percent of members working in Eastern Ontario report that they have been the object of excessive monitoring.



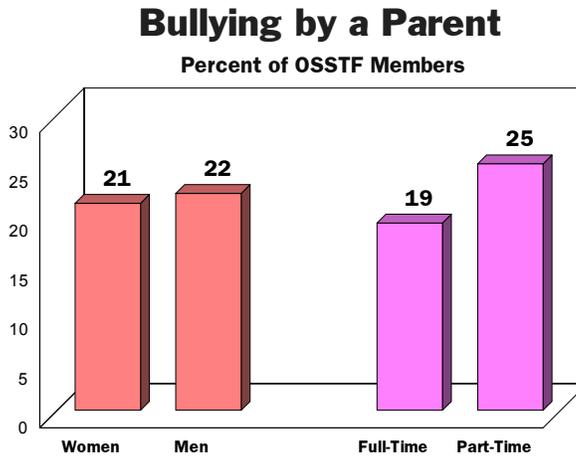
Thirty-eight percent of OSSTF members who have been bullied by an administrator report that they have been pressured to change jobs or workplace. Thirty-seven percent have felt that information has been repeatedly and deliberately withheld from them and 28 percent have been objects of isolation tactics.

### ***3.4 Bullying by Parents or Guardians***

#### **3.4.1 Identifying OSSTF Members Bullied by Parents or Guardians**

Bullying by the parents or guardians of students is the third most prevalent form of bullying to which OSSTF members are exposed. As we have found with the bullying of OSSTF members by students, bullying of members by parents or guardians is widespread but at a much lower incidence level.

Male (22%) and female (21%) OSSTF members are equally susceptible to bullying by parents or guardians. Support staff (33%) and part-time teachers (25%) are more likely to be bullied by parents than full-time teachers (19%).

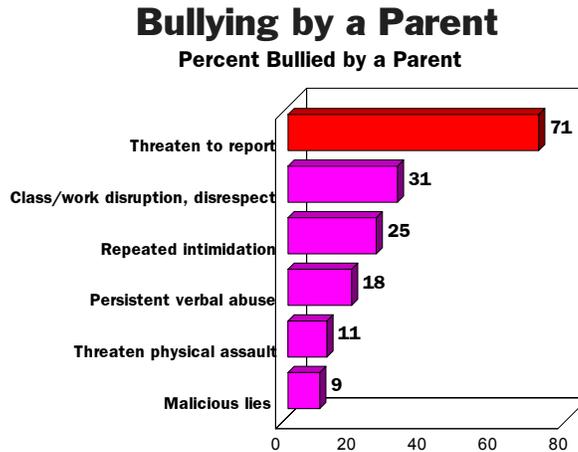


The incidence of bullying by parents or guardians is somewhat different across the seven regions of the province. The incidence of this form of bullying is highest in Eastern Ontario (26%), the GTA outside of Toronto (25%) and Northern Ontario (25%). Bullying by parents is lowest in Toronto (16%). Thirty-two percent of OSSTF members who work in suburban areas have been bullied by a parent.

OSSTF members with 16 to 20 years work experience are the most likely to be bullied by parents. Thirty percent of individuals in this experience group have been bullied by parents or guardians—an incidence level that is six percentage points higher than among members with six to 15 years experience and ten percentage points higher than members with more than 20 years experience. Only 15 percent of members with five years or less experience have been bullied by a parent.

### 3.4.2 Specific Forms of Bullying Used by Parents or Guardians

Of the OSSTF members who have been bullied by parents or guardians, 71 percent have been threatened by reports to a school administrator or to the local school board. It is an action that is most likely to be used by parents in the Hamilton-Niagara region (92% of members bullied by parents).



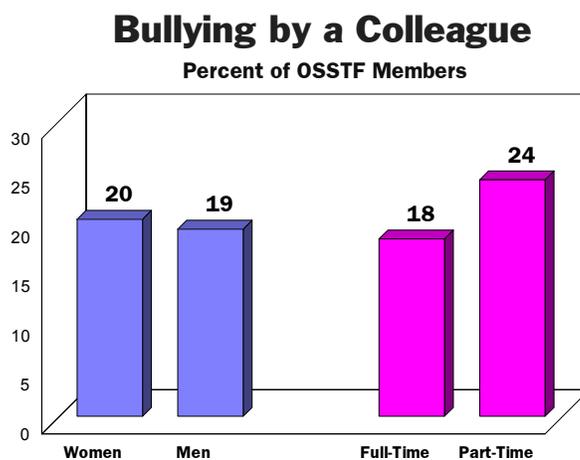
Slightly less than one-third of OSSTF members bullied by a parent (31%) has had to deal with the tactic of repeated disruptions in the workplace or disrespectful behaviour. It is a form of bullying that is more likely to be found in the Southwestern region (54%) and the Hamilton-Niagara region (50%). Support staff members (40%) are more likely than other OSSTF members to have encountered this type of bullying.

Twenty-five percent of OSSTF members who have been bullied by parents have been subject to repeated attempts at intimidation and 18 percent have encountered persistent verbal abuse. Twelve percent have been repeatedly humiliated in front of others and 11 percent have been threatened physically or assaulted on more than one occasion. One percent has been threatened by the use of email or via the Internet.

### 3.5 Bullying by a Colleague

#### 3.5.1 Identifying OSSTF Members Bullied by a Colleague

Of the four major ways by which an OSSTF member can be bullied, bullying by a colleague has the lowest reported incidence. Less than one in every five OSSTF members reports being bullied by a colleague or co-worker. Support staff (25%) and part-time teachers (24%) are somewhat more likely to be bullied by co-workers than full-time teachers (18%).



Bullying by colleagues or co-workers affects fairly equal percentages of female and male OSSTF members (19% of males, 20% of females). There are, however, some differences in bullying by colleagues related to where a person works. Bullying of this type is highest in the City of Toronto—27 percent of OSSTF members report that they have been bullied by a colleague—and the Central region (25%).

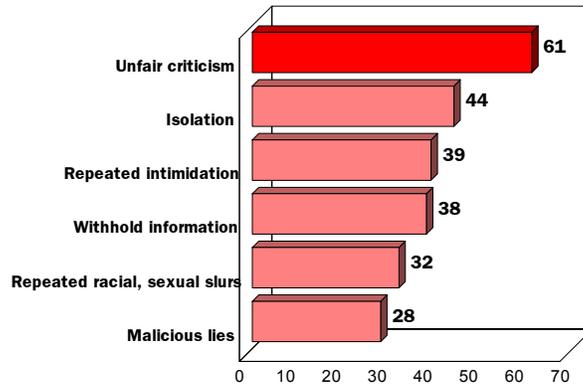
Members with more than 20 years in education (23%) and those with six to 15 years experience (24%) are more likely than others to have been bullied by a colleague. Only nine percent of those with five years of less work experience have been bullied by a co-worker.

#### 3.5.2 Specific Forms of Bullying by Colleagues

Of those who have been bullied by their colleagues, the four most common forms of bullying are repeated unfair criticism or trivial fault-finding (61% of OSSTF members bullied by colleagues), attempts at isolating the targeted person (44%), repeated attempts at intimidation (39%) and repeatedly and deliberately withholding information (38%). Other forms of co-worker bullying include persistent verbal abuse (32%), continued malicious lies (28%), persistent humiliation in front of others (23%) and pressure to change schools (22%). Due to the small number of cases in the subgroups of members who have been bullied by a colleague, it is not feasible to breakdown the data any further.

### **Bullying by a Colleague**

**Percent of Members Bullied by a Colleague**



## **4.0 THE NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES OF BULLYING**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

In total, 209 study respondents had been bullied either by students, parents or guardians, administrators or colleagues. In cases where the individual had been subject to more than one incident of bullying, we asked them to refer to the most serious incident in which they were involved.

These respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the nature of the bullying and its eventual resolution. Included in the sequence of questions is a list of psychological, emotional, social and physical impacts to the individual as a result of the bullying. Each OSSTF member who has been a target of bullying is asked to recall how they reacted to the bullying incident.

### ***4.2 Nature of the Bullying***

When respondents are asked to report on the most serious bullying incident, 36 percent tell about an incident involving students, 25 percent provide more information about an incident involving administrators, 21 percent describe an incident involving parents or guardians and 15 percent describe an incident involving colleagues. OSSTF members who have been bullied are most likely to report that the bullying incident involved verbal abuse (47%). Whether the instigator of the bullying was a parent or guardian (47% of members report parents verbally abused them), a student (52%), a colleague (63%) or an administrator (37%), the bullying incident most often involved some form of verbal abuse.

The next most frequent form of bullying has involved the threat of physical violence or assault. Ten percent of members who have been bullied report the threat of physical violence. Members who have been bullied by students are most likely to cite this type of bullying (26% of members who have been bullied).

No other specific form of bullying is mentioned by more than 10 percent of individuals who have been bullied. Nine percent of members who have been bullied report that they have been subjected to disruptions within their workplace or disrespectful behavior (mostly by students—20%), nine percent have been bullied by intimidation tactics (mostly by administrators—18%, or colleagues—12%) and seven percent have been unfairly criticized or exposed to trivial fault-finding (mostly by colleagues—16%, or administrators—15%). Six percent of members who have been bullied indicate that they have had their belongings vandalized (by students—16%) and five percent have been subjected to excessive monitoring (by administrators—18%).

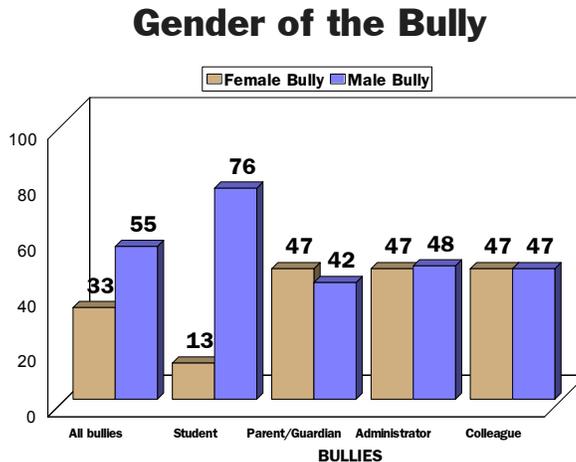
### ***4.3 Time of Occurrence***

The majority of members who have been bullied are referring to an incident that has occurred within the past five years (70%), while a much smaller percentage are referring to an incident that happened more than 10 years ago (26%). In fact, 22 percent of members who have been bullied report that the incident started between one and two years ago and 15 percent since the beginning of the current school year. Bullying incidents involving students (19% of members who have been bullied), or parents or guardians (17%), tend to be recent.

Nineteen percent of those who have been bullied report that the bullying is still ongoing. Members who have been bullied by their students (26%) or by administrators (25%) indicate that the bullying is still unresolved.

### ***4.4 Instigator of Bullying Incident***

Men have greater responsibility than women for instigating bullying incidents involving OSSTF members as targets. Fifty-five percent of members report that the person who instigated the bullying was male and 33 percent report that the instigator was female.



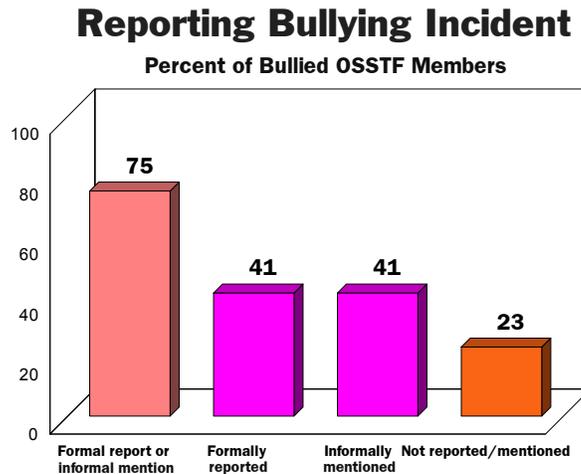
Regardless of the gender of the OSSTF member, members are more likely to be bullied by men than women. Fifty-three percent of female members have been bullied by a male and 38 percent have been bullied by a female. Fifty-nine percent of male members have been bullied by a male and 26 percent have been bullied by a female

Full-time teachers (57% bullied by a male), part-time teachers (54% bullied by a male) and support staff (49% bullied by a male) are more likely to have been bullied by a male than a female bully.

There is also a gender component to the type of bullying to which members are exposed. Members who have been bullied by students are much more likely to be bullied by male students (76%) than by female students (13%). Members who have been bullied by a parent are somewhat more likely to be bullied by a mother or female guardian (47%) than by a father or male guardian (42%). Members who have been bullied by either an administrator or by a colleague are equally likely to be bullied by someone who is female as male.

#### ***4.5 Reporting the Bullying Incident***

Three-quarters of OSSTF members who have been bullied (75%) have reported to someone else the bullying incident in which they were involved. Alternatively, 23 percent have kept the bullying incident to themselves.



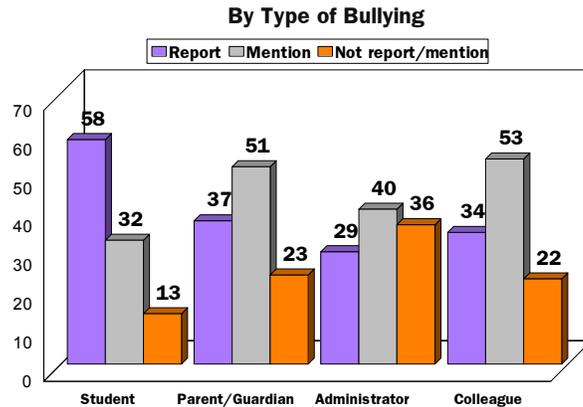
Members who have been bullied are just as likely to mention the bullying incident informally (41%) as reporting it formally (41%). Six percent of those who have been bullied both report the incident formally and mention it informally.

Women members (80%) are more likely to talk about bullying incidents than men teachers (69%). Women members (9%) are also more likely than men (3%) to report the incident formally and mention it informally.

Support staff who have been bullied both talk about the incident (83%) and report the incident formally (46%). Full-time teachers (75% formally report or informally mention) and part-time teachers (68%) are more reluctant to talk about bullying incidents.

Fifty-eight percent of members who have been bullied by students have formally reported the incident. Bullying by parents (51% informally) and colleagues (53% informally) is more likely to be mentioned informally. Thirty-six percent of members who have been bullied by administrators have not mentioned this to anyone.

### Reporting Bullying Incident

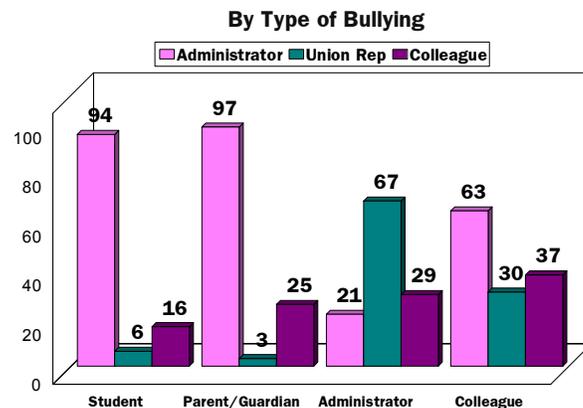


Of those who report or mention to others that they have been bullied, almost three-quarters (74%) have talked to administrators including principals, vice principals and school boards. An additional eight percent of those bullied have talked about the incident to a department head or to a supervisor. All members who have been bullied, regardless of their position, seek the help of school administrators.

Twenty-two percent of members who have been bullied have reported the incident to their union representative. Men (29%), part-time teachers (28%) and those who have been bullied by administrators (67%) are the most likely to turn to their union representative.

Finally, regardless of who was the instigator of the bullying, members are most likely to go to their school administrators. Ninety-four percent of those who are bullied by students, 97 percent of those bullied by parents and 63 percent of those who are bullied by colleagues seek the help of school administrators. Even in cases where members have been bullied by an administrator, 21 percent still report the incident to an administrator.

### Recipient Bullying Information



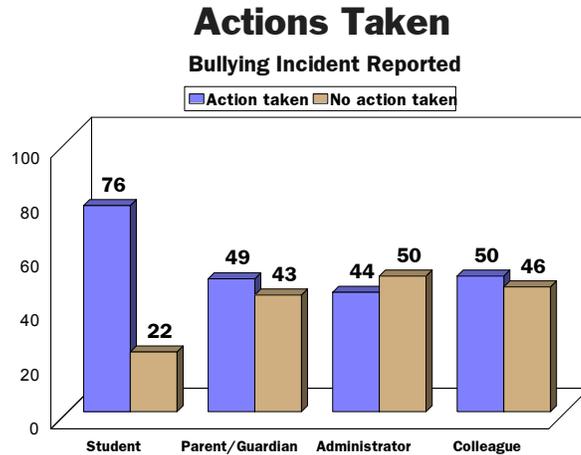
#### **4.6 Subsequent Actions**

Of those who formally reported or informally mentioned the bullying incident to another person, 60 percent indicate that subsequent action was taken with respect to the bullying. Alternatively, 36 percent report that no action was taken. Four percent are unable to recall what subsequently happened.

There are differences given the gender of the member whether subsequent action was taken. Sixty-five percent of women report that there was subsequent action taken, as opposed to only 49 percent of men.

There is a slight difference between teachers and support staff whether subsequent action was taken. When a teacher is involved (61% for full-time, 63% for part-time), there is a slightly greater likelihood of subsequent action than when support staff is involved (52%).

Members who have been bullied by students are most likely to report that action was taken (76% of members reporting bullying by students). The percentage drops to 50 percent of those bullied by a colleague and 49 percent bullied by a parent or guardian. Only 44 percent of those who reported being bullied by an administrator indicate that there was any subsequent action taken.



Actions taken as a result of reporting a bullying incident tend largely to exclude formal sanctions. Thirteen percent of those who report the some action was taken indicate that there was a formal reprimand, 21 percent a suspension, four percent legal action, two percent firing and one percent probation. Fifteen percent indicate that the bullying led to an informal warning, while 53 percent indicate that some other kind of action was taken.

Roughly the same kinds of consequent actions were taken regardless of the type of bullying that had occurred. The one significant departure from this trend was that 39 percent of member reports of bullying by students led to suspensions.

In the instances where action was taken against the instigators of the bullying, 69 percent of respondents report that the bullying stopped. Five percent, however, indicate that the bullying restarted later. Eleven percent report that the bullying continued despite the actions taken.



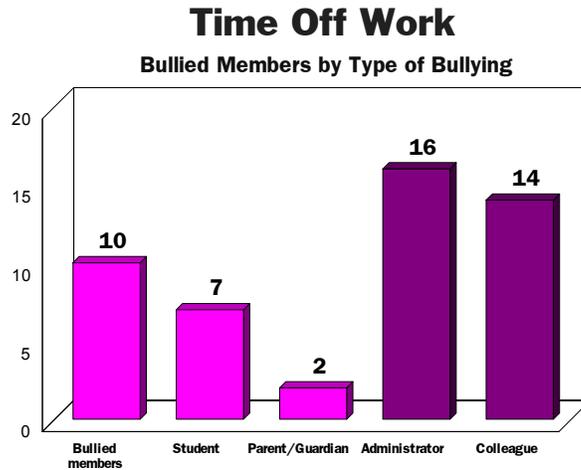
Nine percent of members for whom some action was taken report that they left their position because of the bullying. While the percentage differences are small and, therefore, the findings should be interpreted cautiously, 29 percent of members with 16 to 20 years work experience and 19 percent of part-time teachers changed jobs. Furthermore, individuals who had been bullied by an administrator (16%) were more likely to leave their position at work.

#### ***4.7 Personal Consequences of Bullying***

##### **4.7.1 Absence from Work**

The study explored a number of personal consequences of being bullied—impacts on a person’s mental and physical health. While 89 percent of OSSTF members who had been bullied did not take any time off from work, the remaining 10 percent did take time off from their teaching or support staff duties. Due to the fact that the sample size is small (N=24), the findings regarding part-time teachers should be interpreted cautiously. Nevertheless, individuals who teach on a part-time basis appear to be particularly vulnerable to bullying. In this case, 21 percent of part-time teachers took time off work because of a bullying incident.

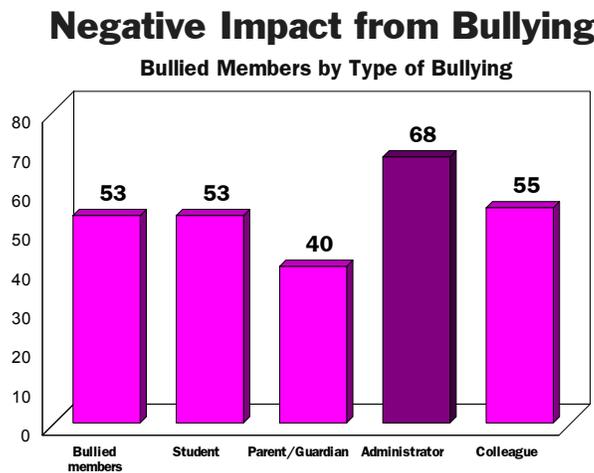
The loss of staff time because of bullying incidents is somewhat higher when the bullying involves administrators or colleagues. Sixteen percent of those who have been bullied by administrators and 14 percent of those bullied by their colleagues have taken time off from working.



Among the 20 OSSTF members who were bullied and consequently took time off work, the average absence from work is 26 days. The number of respondents is too small to breakdown this finding any further. There is, however, an indication that OSSTF members who have been bullied by administrators take the most time off work.

#### 4.7.2 Emotional and Stress-Related Consequences

Although only one in ten members who has been bullied is absent from work, mental, emotional, social or physical impacts are relatively common. The majority of members who have been bullied (53%) reports that they have suffered other stress-related symptoms as a result of bullying.



The majority of members, regardless of their demographic characteristics, reports that they have shown stress-related symptoms because of the bullying. There are several groups of members who have had higher than average incidences of stress-related symptoms.

- 56 percent of women compared with 49 percent of men have had stress-related impacts from bullying.
- 65 percent of members working in the GTA outside of Toronto have had emotional, mental, social or physical consequences because of bullying.
- 64 percent of individuals between 35 and 44 years age have had stress-related symptoms after being bullied.
- 71% of part-time teachers have had stress-related impacts.
- 68 percent of members who have been bullied by administrators are more likely to have suffered negative personal impacts.

### ***4.8 Reactions to Bullying***

#### **4.8.1 Introduction**

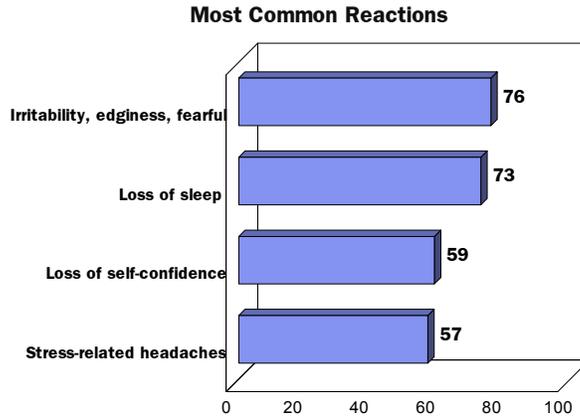
OSSTF members who have been bullied and who admit that the bullying had an emotional, mental social or physical impact are asked a series of 12 additional questions to identify the nature of the reaction. The 12 reactions to bullying divide into three groups based on their incidence. Reactions that have a higher incidence generally would be interpreted as less severe than reactions that have a lower incidence. Finally, we asked individuals who were bullied if they had used the help of a physician, their Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or counseling professional to deal with the bullying incident.

#### **4.8.2 The Top Four Reactions to Bullying**

Among those who have exhibited some form of personal reaction to being bullied, there are consequences or symptoms that at least 50 percent of teachers exhibit. The two most common reactions to being bullied are irritability or feeling edgy and loss of sleep. Seventy-six percent of those who have been bullied become irritable and 73 percent suffer from sleep loss. Irritability, edginess and sleep loss result from any form of bullying whether it has been instigated by administrators, colleagues, parents or students. Members who are 55 years or older are the most likely to suffer from sleep loss (84% of those bullied).

Fifty-nine percent of members who have been bullied report that they have suffered from a loss of self-confidence. In particular, individuals who have been bullied by an administrator are the most likely to report a loss of self-confidence. Seventy-nine percent of members who have been bullied by someone in a superior position state that they have lost self-confidence as a result of being bullied.

## **Emotional/Stress-Related Reactions**

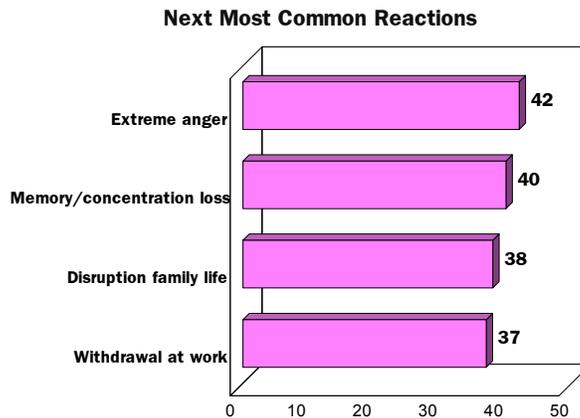


The fourth most frequent reaction to bullying is stress-related headaches. Fifty-seven percent of members who have been bullied report that they have subsequently suffered from headaches. Sixty-four percent of the members with more than 20 years work experience and 62 percent of women state that they have had stress-related headaches as a result of being bullied.

### **4.8.3 The Next Four Reactions to Bullying**

Between 35 and 50 percent of members who have been bullied report that they have had the next four reactions to being bullied. Forty-two percent of members state that they have reacted with extreme anger following the bullying incident. It is a reaction that is much more likely to be associated with men (53%) than with women (36%). Also, members 55 years or older (52%) and those with the least amount of work experience (53%) are more likely than others to react to bullying with extreme anger. Extreme anger as a reaction that is more likely to follow bullying by administrators (59% of those bullied reacted with extreme anger), parents (58%) or colleagues (48%) than bullying by students (16%).

## **Emotional/Stress-Related Reactions**



Four in ten members who were bullied suffered from memory loss or loss of concentration (40% of those bullied). As a stress-related consequence to bullying, memory or concentration loss tends to occur among those with the most work experience (45% with more than 20 years experience). It is also a reaction that is highest for those who have been bullied by an administrator (54%) or a colleague (54%).

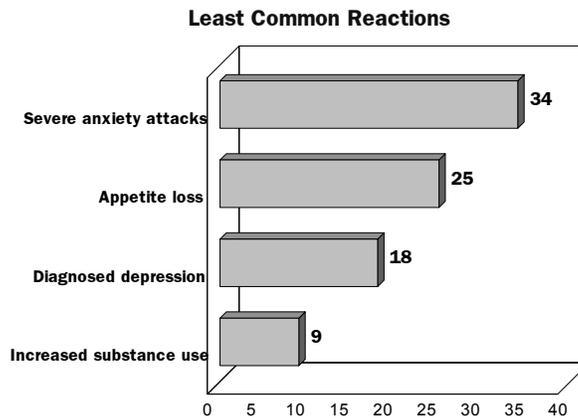
Thirty-eight percent of members who have been bullied indicate that the bullying incident led to disruption in their family or social life. Part-time teachers (51%) and those with more than 20 years work experience (57%) report that bullying led to disruptions in their family or social life. This is also the case for those who have been bullied by administrators (54%).

The fourth and last reaction to bullying comprising the second tier is withdrawal or avoidance of colleagues. Thirty-seven percent of members state that bullying resulted in their withdrawal from or avoidance of their colleagues at work. This reaction to bullying is much more likely to occur among men (45%) than women (32%) and individuals with the least work experience (47%). Needless to say, withdrawal from or avoidance of colleagues is generally a reaction to bullying instigated by a colleague (74%).

#### 4.8.4 The Third Tier of Reactions

The third tier is composed of reactions to bullying that would be regarded as the least common but possibly the most severe. One-third or less of those who had been bullied and had some personal reaction to the bullying mentions each of the remaining four consequences.

### Emotional/Stress-Related Reactions



Thirty-four percent of OSSTF members who were bullied and have had some reaction to the bullying have had severe anxiety or panic attacks. Although the percentage differences are not especially large, men (39%) are somewhat more likely than women (31%) to have suffered severe anxiety. The incidence of severe anxiety also increases

with the amount of working experience. Severe anxiety attacks are most likely to be suffered by members who have been bullied by administrators (48%).

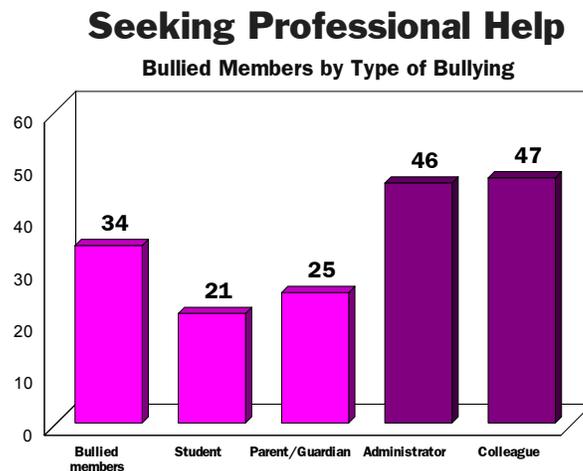
Twenty-five percent of those bullied report loss of their appetites because of the bullying. Loss of appetite is most likely to occur among the most experienced members (30%) and among men (30%). Individuals who have been bullied by their co-workers (36%) are most likely to have lost their appetites due to bullying.

Eighteen percent report that they suffered from depression that had been diagnosed as a result of being bullied. There is a greater tendency for members in the 45 to 54 age group (26%) and those with the most work experience (25%) to have become depressed as a result of being bullied. Depression is more likely to accompany bullying by an administrator (24%) or a colleague (22%) than bullying by a student (16%) or a parent (8%).

Less than one in ten OSSTF members (9%) who has been bullied reacted to the bullying by increasing their alcohol or tobacco consumption. There is a greater tendency for men (16%), those with more than 20 years working experience (21%) and support staff members (14%) to have reacted in this way. Members who have been bullied by administrators (21%) are more likely to have increased their alcohol or tobacco consumption.

#### 4.8.5 Seeking Help

Of all the OSSTF members who indicate that a bullying incident had a negative effect on them, 34 percent have sought the help of a physician, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or counseling professional. This also means that 66 percent of those who were involved in a bullying incident that had an associated negative reaction did not seek any professional help. The percentage of OSSTF members seeking professional help because of being bullied is higher than the provincial average.



Compared to other members, individuals with the greatest work experience (46% working more than 20 years) and support staff members (64%) are more likely to seek the help of a professional to deal with bullying. Individuals who have either been bullied by an administrator (46% sought professional help) or a colleague (47%) are much more likely than others to have sought the help of a physician, counseling professional or EAP.

### **4.8.6 Summary of Reactions to Bullying**

The findings from this study show that people react to the stresses of bullying in many different ways. The different ways that people react, when they are arranged according to incidence, contribute to an explanation how the different kinds of bullying impacts individuals. In some sense, the incidence of the reaction to bullying is also a gauge of the severity of bullying incident. For example, irritability and loss of sleep are relatively common reactions to bullying incidents, while anxiety attacks, loss of appetite and diagnosed depression are much less widespread. Irritability and loss of sleep would be considered less severe reactions to bullying than anxiety attacks, loss of appetite or diagnosed depression.

Put another way, all forms of bullying, when there is some reaction to the bullying, involve irritability, loss of sleep, loss of self-confidence and stress-related headaches. These reactions might be considered the normal response to a bullying situation whether the instigator is an administrator, a colleague, a student or a parent. Nevertheless, when we look at less frequent responses such as anxiety attacks, loss of appetite and diagnosed depression, we find that OSSTF members who have been bullied by administrators are much more likely to exhibit these particular reactions.

By linking the severity of response to different types of OSSTF members who have been bullied, we also locate the individuals who are most vulnerable to the stress of being bullied. We generally find that men and individuals who have spent the greatest amount of time working to exhibit more severe reactions to bullying.

## ***4.9 Witness to Bullying***

### **4.9.1 Exposure to Bullying**

Respondents who themselves had not been bullied are asked whether they had witnessed another person being bullied at their current workplace. Respondents were asked to exclude any incidents involving students bullying other students. Of the 49 percent of OSSTF members who had not been bullied, 22 percent had witnessed at least one bullying incident. Based on the entire sample, 11 percent of OSSTF members have witnessed a bullying incident involving an administrator, colleague, parent or student. When the two percentages are added together, 62 percent of OSSTF members have been exposed to bullying. Alternatively, 38 percent of OSSTF members have not been exposed to any form of bullying.

### 4.9.2 Demographic Characteristics

Typically, the youngest and oldest OSSTF members are more likely than others to have witnessed bullying but have not been bullied themselves (13% of teachers less than 35 years old, 13% of those 55 or older). Also, OSSTF members working in the GTA outside Toronto (17%), in the Central region (15%) and teachers without a specific grade assignment (17%) are more likely to be witnesses to bullying.

OSSTF members who have been exposed to bullying are most likely to have between 16 and 20 years work experience (72%) and to work in the Central region (75%) of the province. Part-time teachers (72%) are more likely than either full-time teachers (60%) or support staff (66%) to have been exposed to bullying in Ontario's schools.

### 4.9.3 Types of Bullying

In almost all cases, witnesses to bullying have seen a teacher or co-worker being bullied (94%). The instigator of the bullying was most often an administrator (33%) or a student (33%), followed by a parent or guardian (18%), a colleague or co-worker (12%) and a member of the school's support staff (2%). Compared to the incidence of bullying reported by those who have been the objects of bullying, witnesses to bullying are more likely to have seen administrative instigators.

### 4.9.4 Other Aspects of Witnessing Bullying

Sixteen percent of those who have witnessed bullying report that the bullying incident took place since the beginning of the current school year. Another 53 percent indicate that the incident took place within the past two years. Sixteen percent state the bullying is still ongoing.

Witnesses to bullying are much more likely to have noticed verbal abuse (67%) than any other type of bullying. Other forms of bullying are reported by small percentages of OSSTF members. Compared to the responses given by those who have themselves been bullied, witnesses to bullying are more likely to have heard verbal abuse. The lower incidence of other kinds of bullying reported by witnesses to bullying, especially classroom disruption and disrespectful behaviour, can be explained by the fact that some types of bullying occur behind closed doors.

OSSTF members who observe incidents of bullying are less likely than those who are bullying targets to report these incidents to others. Forty percent of bullying incident witnesses have either formally reported (9%) or informally mentioned (36%) the bullying to others.

Of those who reported the bullying incident, 72 percent have talked to an administrator and 20 percent have told colleagues. Only five percent have reported the incident to a union representative. Fifty-six percent have kept the bullying incident to themselves.

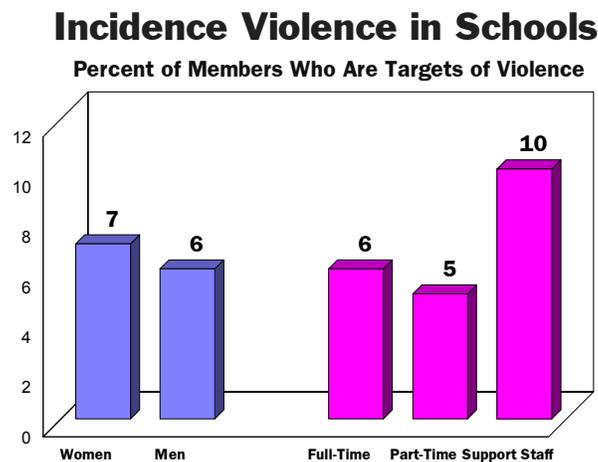
Once the bullying incident has been reported or mentioned, 77 percent of witnesses indicate that action was taken. This is a better outcome than the situation when a target of bullying reports the incident. When a bullying target reports the incident, 60 percent indicate that action was taken and this action is typically warnings or suspensions. Bullying witnesses indicate that suspensions are the most likely consequences of reporting bullying incidents.

#### **4.10 Violence in Schools**

##### 4.10.1 Incidence of Violence

The survey contains a line of questioning about physical violence or assault in Ontario’s elementary and secondary schools. When asked whether a respondent has been a target of physical violence or assault at their school, seven percent answer in the affirmative. Ninety-two percent report that they have not been a target of physical violence and one percent is uncertain.

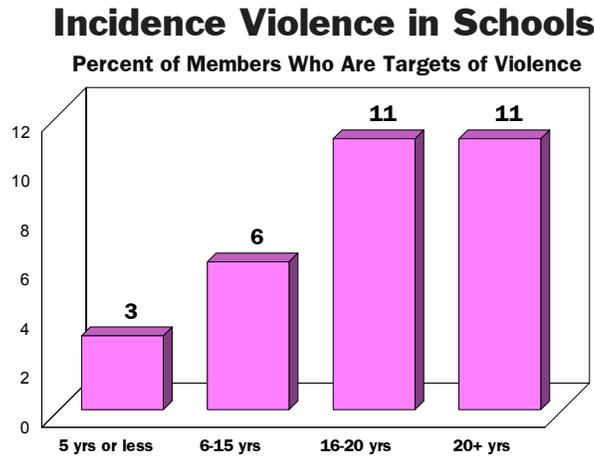
Using the seven percent as a provincial standard, we find that the incidence of physical violence is slightly higher for support staff members (10%) and slightly lower for full-time (6%) and part-time (5%) teachers. Also, 14 percent of teachers without a specific grade assignment have been targets of physical violence.



Across the seven regions of the province, the incidence of physical violence reaches a high of 18 percent in Eastern Ontario. This region is followed by Hamilton-Niagara region at nine percent. Only one percent of OSSTF members working in Toronto reports that they have been a target of physical violence. It is interesting to note that the

incidence of violence in rural communities (12%) is higher than in all other larger communities.

As an OSSTF member gains more experience working, he/she also gains greater exposure to the threat of physical violence. While three percent of members with five years or less experience have been a target of physical violence, the percentage grows to six percent of members with six to 15 years experience and 11 percent of those with 16 or more years experience.



The data analyses suggest that OSSTF members who have been bullied are slightly more likely to be targets of physical violence. Twelve percent of members who have been bullied by students also have been targets of physical violence—nine percent of members who have been bullied by parents have been violence targets.

#### 4.10.2 Nature of the Violence against OSSTF Members

Seven percent of OSSTF members or 28 respondents in this study have been the targets of violence. Twenty respondents are teachers and six respondents are support staff. Given the small sample size with which we are starting, the following findings that are used to describe the violence must be interpreted cautiously. Breaking down the findings even further by demographic characteristics is not advisable due to the small sample sizes.

OSSTF members who have been the targets of violence usually have been the targets of many acts of violence. Although 13 of the 28 respondents have been a target one time, 10 individuals have been targets at least five times. On average, OSSTF members who have been a target of violence have been targeted 5.8 times.

Eight of the 28 OSSTF members who have been targets of violence (27%) have been targets since the beginning of the current school year. The remaining 20 individuals have been targets of violence two or more years ago.

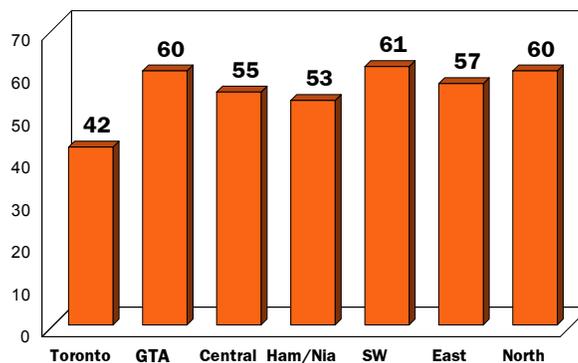
#### 4.10.3 Exposure to Violence

All OSSTF members participating in the survey are asked whether they have witnessed any acts of violence or assault at the school they are working. Over one-half of OSSTF members (55%) reports that physical violence has occurred where they have been working. Exposure to physical violence is higher among full-time teachers (58%) compared with either part-time teachers (46%) or support staff (46%).

Being a target of violence (12%) and witnessing violence (81%) is more likely to occur in rural communities than in larger communities. The incidence of exposure to violence is highest in Southwestern region (61%) followed by Northern Ontario (60%) and the GTA outside of Toronto (60%).

#### **Incidence Violence in Schools**

**Percent of Members Witnessing Violence**



When the 55 percent of OSSTF members who have witnessed violent acts where they work are asked about the number of incidents they have witnessed, the average is 8.1 incidents. OSSTF members in the Hamilton-Niagara region have been exposed to more violent incidents than members elsewhere in the province. Members in Hamilton-Niagara region who have been exposed to violence in their schools have witnessed, on average, 11 violent incidents.

#### 4.10.4 Nature of Violence that Has Been Witnessed

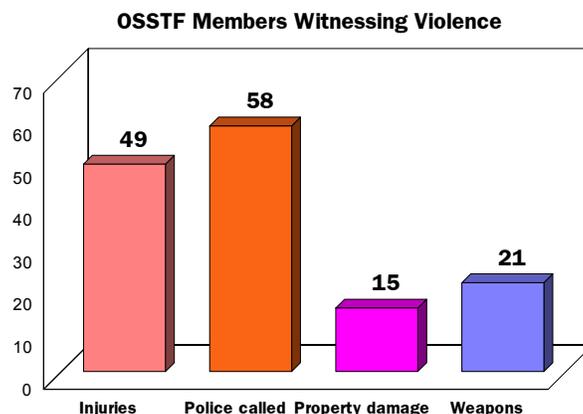
When OSSTF members who have witnessed at least one violent incident in their schools are asked when the most recent incident occurred, 46 percent indicate that it happened since the beginning of the current school year. Part-time teachers (58% since September 2004) and support staff (50%) who have been exposed to violence are somewhat more likely to have been exposed to violence recently than full-time secondary school teachers (44%).

Regions that have higher incidences of violence also have had more recent incidences. For example, 55 percent of Central region OSSTF members have witnessed at least one violent act since the beginning of the current school year. Fifty-seven percent of OSSTF members working in rural areas have witnessed a violent act since September 2004.

Overwhelmingly, violence in school involves students as the perpetrators. Ninety-eight percent of OSSTF members who have witnessed school violence report that students were responsible. Teachers or staff (4%) rarely are seen as the instigators of violence in schools.

About one out of every two OSSTF members (49%) who has been exposed to violence in their school reports that the violence resulted in injuries. Although the percentage difference is not especially large, 55 percent of members working in cities versus 40 percent working in smaller communities (suburbs, towns, villages and rural areas) report that the violence led to injury. Two-thirds of members (66%) who work in Toronto indicate that injuries resulted from violent incidents.

### **Injuries, Police, Damage, Weapons**



Of the 28 respondents who had indicated that they were targets of violence, one-half states that they had been injured because of the incident.

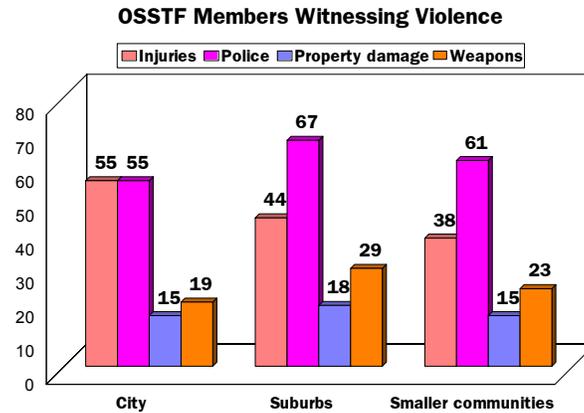
When injuries result from school violence, students are most likely to be injured. Eighty-six percent of OSSTF members reporting injuries from violent incidents indicate that one or more students were injured. Ten percent report teachers or staff injuries and two percent indicate administrators were injured. Although the sample size is small, 32 percent of support staff members indicate that teachers or staff injuries resulted from school violence.

OSSTF members who have witnessed violence in their schools indicate that property damage is relatively infrequent. Fifteen percent of those who have witnessed violence report that property damage occurred—82 percent indicate seeing no property damage. Property damage is more likely to be reported by OSSTF members in Eastern Ontario (30%).

Of the OSSTF members who witnessed violence, 58 percent indicate that the police intervened, while 33 percent report that the police were not called. Secondary school were asked to respond. Sixty-nine percent of OSSTF members working in Toronto who witnessed violence report the police being summoned.

Twenty-one percent of OSSTF members who have witnessed violence in their school report that weapons were involved. The percentage of members recalling the use of weapons in violent school incidents is higher in Toronto (32%) and the GTA outside Toronto (28%) than anywhere else in the province. Also, more OSSTF members who work in schools located in suburban areas report the use of weapons (29%).

### **Injuries, Police, Damage, Weapons**

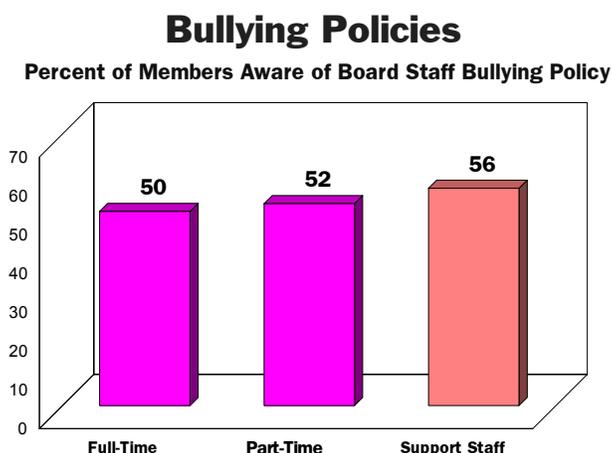


## **5.0 BOARD AND WORKPLACE BULLYING POLICIES**

### ***5.1 Awareness of Bullying Policies***

A slim majority of OSSTF members (51%) is aware that their school board has a policy regarding the bullying of staff. Forty-seven percent of members are unaware of a bullying policy and two percent do not know whether their board has a policy.

Somewhat more support staff (56%) than teachers (50%) are aware of board policies concerning bullying. Awareness is especially high among members working in the Hamilton-Niagara region (64%) and Southwestern region (57%).



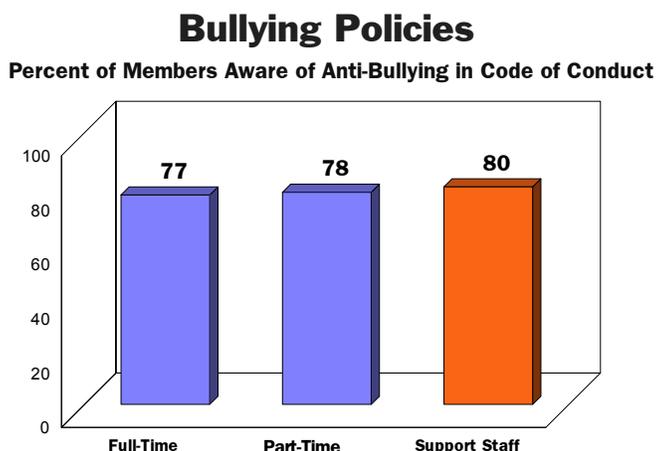
As one might expect, awareness of bullying policies increases with the age of the OSSTF member. While 39 percent of members who are less than 35 years old are aware of bullying policies, the percentage increases to 66 percent of members who are 55 or older.

Members who have been personally been targets of bullying do not have an appreciably higher awareness of the board bullying policies than members at-large. Fifty-four percent of members who have been bullied are aware of bullying policies. The highest awareness of bullying policies occurs among those who have been bullied by students (57%). Members who have not been bullied but have witnessed bullying incidents (68%) or have been a target of violence (70%), however, have the highest awareness of bullying policies.

### ***5.2 Anti-Bullying Section in the Code of Conduct***

Eight in ten OSSTF members (78%) are aware that their local school board Code of Conduct includes a section on anti-bullying. The 80 percent level of awareness is

achieved in four of the seven regions of the province. Eight-six percent of OSSTF members in Northern Ontario, 85 percent in Eastern Ontario and 80 percent in Central region are aware of anti-bullying in the Code of Conduct. Support staff (80%) and teachers (77%) share the same awareness levels.



OSSTF members who have themselves been targets of bullying are no more, or no less, aware of anti-bullying provisions in their board's Code of Conduct (78%). Awareness among members who have been bullied by parents, however, is particularly high (90%).

When those who are aware of their Code of Conduct are asked to whom the Code applies—staff, students or both staff and students, seven out of 10 of those aware (71%) indicate that it applies to both staff and students. Eighteen percent of those aware believe that the Code of Conduct applies to students only and two percent thinks that it applies only to staff. Nine percent cannot provide a response.

Support staff members exhibit the highest awareness that their board's Code of Conduct applies to both staff and students (78%). Teacher members are slightly less aware (70%).

Individuals who have been targets of bullying are no different than teachers in general regarding awareness of who the anti-bullying section of the Code of Conduct applies. Seventy-one of teachers who have been bullied are under the impression the Code of Conduct applies to both staff and students.