

WORKLOAD AND  
VOLUNTEERISM  
OF EDUCATORS



**EDUCATION  
WATCH**

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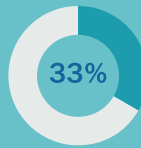
## BACKGROUND

Over 7,600 members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) participated in a Workload and Volunteerism of Educators (WAVE) survey. This comprehensive survey of teacher and support staff at all levels of education in Ontario showed that most spend a considerable amount of their own personal time volunteering for extracurricular activities, and that almost all of our members take work home with them outside of regular working hours.

Education workers clearly struggle each day with a long list of challenges and problems. Despite this, a majority of our members manage their frustration and continue to focus on student achievement. Our survey showed that most of our members go above and beyond to create community, support students and share their talents and passion.

## MINISTRY AND BOARD INITIATIVES— TOO MANY FOR POSITIVE IMPACT

The number of new ministry and board-level initiatives that have been introduced and implemented in public education has been steadily increasing over the past two decades. This is a continuing source of frustration because many educational workers have seen little positive impact for their professional practices and for their students. Initiatives are introduced with limited support or resources, and lack follow-up training or professional learning. Successful implementation is rarely achieved because another new initiative quickly follows and becomes the focus of attention.



OVER **33%** OF MEMBERS  
WORK AT HOME AT LEAST  
**5 HOURS** OF EACH WEEK

**AND**

OVER **20%** SPEND OVER **10 HOURS**  
EACH WEEK WORKING AT HOME



MEMBERS SPEND AN AVERAGE OF **15 HOURS**  
**PER WEEK** BEYOND THEIR ASSIGNED WORK  
TIME **DOING JOB RELATED WORK.**

NOT INCLUDING TIME SPENT ON  
VOLUNTEERING FOR ACTIVITIES.

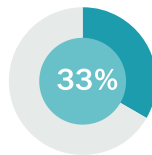
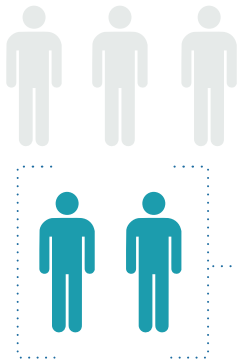


**ONLY 8% OF MEMBERS FOUND**  
**MINISTRY AND/OR SCHOOL**  
**BOARD DIRECTED ACTIVITIES**  
and initiatives to be of any  
benefit to their daily classroom  
practices and responsibilities  
which support student  
achievement.

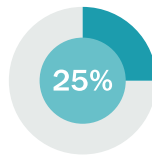
## VOLUNTEERING FOR EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Almost every member volunteers for at least one extracurricular activity annually; most volunteer for more than one activity. These are not just for sports activities or clubs. There are over 30 different types of extracurricular activities that members volunteer to participate in outside of their regular duties to support the running of a school.

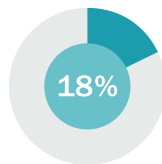
**92%**  
of teachers volunteer their time to run and support extracurriculars



extracurricular activities are **SPORTS-RELATED**



members work on **COMMITTEES**



help with **FUNDRAISERS & CAMPAIGNS**

**2 OUT OF 5 MEMBERS** facilitate, coach or lead **3 OR MORE** extracurricular activities



Over **90%** of members reported they take their work home

## UNREALISTIC WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS

Most educational workers sacrifice a considerable amount of personal and family time to do some of their regularly assigned work in their homes. In tandem with these findings, teachers and support staff have reported significant increases in personal stress levels because of the workload and volunteer demands put upon them. Additional stresses result in increases in illness and time lost at work.

## CONCLUSION

The results showed a clear increase in stress levels and frustration with the sheer volume of ministry and board initiatives on top of the significant amount of volunteer hours that members put in on behalf of students. The increases in workload and stress have taken a significant toll on the personal lives of education workers. They continue to feel the pressure to meet ever increasing expectations from their employers to volunteer to run and organize extracurricular activities. Positive working conditions for education workers result in better learning conditions for students.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **WORK WITH EDUCATION WORKERS' FEDERATIONS** TO FIND WAYS TO BETTER MANAGE WORKLOAD ISSUES
- **DEDICATE APPROPRIATE TIME, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY MINISTRY AND BOARD LEVEL INITIATIVES**
- **SIGNIFICANTLY DECREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW INITIATIVES**
- **INCREASE THE LEVEL OF SELF-GUIDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR EDUCATION WORKERS**
- **CONTINUE TO RECOGNIZE THAT STAFF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IS VOLUNTARY**

For more information please call  
416-751-8300 or 1-800-267-7867  
or visit [www.osstf.on.ca/contact](http://www.osstf.on.ca/contact)