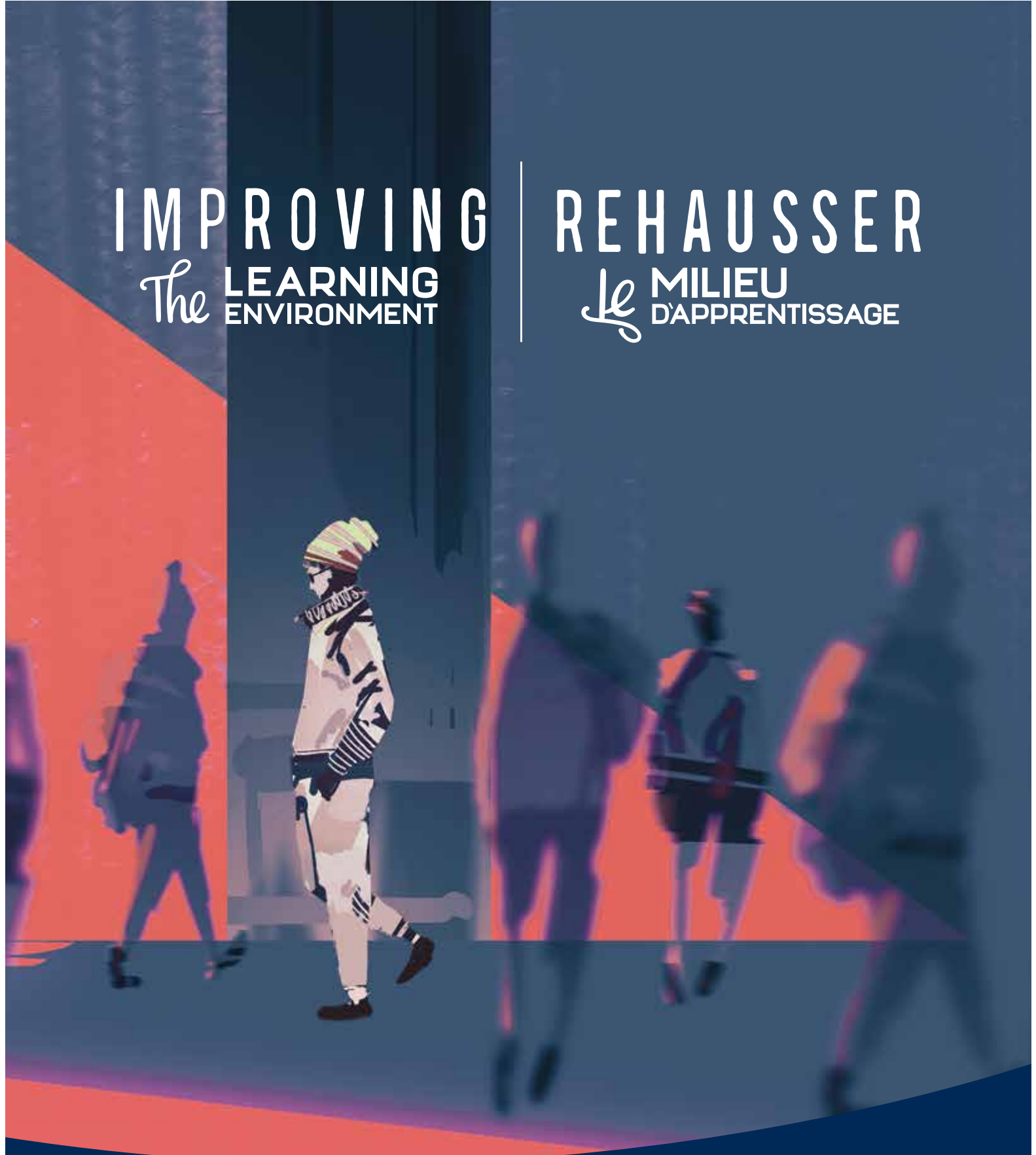


IMPROVING

The LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

REHAUSSER

Le MILIEU D'APPRENTISSAGE





IMPROVING
The LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT

OSSTF/FEESO lobby day | March 29, 2017

Agenda

Day One—Lobby Workshop

Tuesday, March 28, 2017

Courtyard Marriott Toronto Downtown

5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

Delegate registration ■ Courtyard Hall Foyer

6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

Working dinner and lobby workshop ■ Courtyard Hall
Paul Elliott, OSSTF/FEESO President ■ opening remarks

9:00 p.m.–11:00 p.m.

OSSTF/FEESO Hospitality Suite ■ Alexander B Room

Day Two—Lobby Day—Queen's Park

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

7:00 a.m.

Breakfast Reception opens to OSSTF/FEESO members in the
Legislative Dining Room ■ Queen's Park basement

7:30 a.m.

Breakfast reception opens to MPPs

9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Appointments throughout the day

9:00 a.m.–10:15 a.m.

Legislative proceedings ■ Basement elevators to 4th floor

10:15 a.m.

Line-up for Question Period begins ■ Basement elevators to 4th floor

10:30 a.m.–11:40 a.m.

Question Period

11:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Laid-on lunch is available in the Legislative Dining Room side bar ■ Basement

3:00 p.m.

Afternoon legislative proceedings resume ■ Basement elevators to 4th floor

4:00 p.m.

Most Lobby Day meetings conclude

Lobbyist Speaking Notes



Letter from Paul Elliott, President OSSTF/FEESO
A short thank you for having us come to speak to you today.



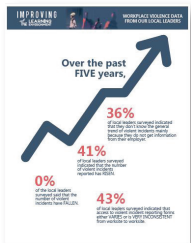
Definition

This is part of why we are here to speak with you today. Currently, the definition of a violent incident varies from school to school and board to board. We're going to talk about this later.



Fact Sheet

Here are our statistics we've collected through discussions with members in Districts with a particular problem with violent incidents and through surveying each of our leaders in every District in the province. Our main focus of training, reporting and staffing shows the need for action as reflected in some of the statistics like "30% of our members indicated they have not received violence training." "80% of our members said that they were unsure of where to find violence reporting forms or those forms were inaccessible." If you look on the back of our statistical data form you can see that "Over the past FIVE years "41% of local leaders surveyed indicated that the number of violent incidents has RISEN" and "43% of local leaders indicated that access to violent incident reporting forms either varies or is very inconsistent from worksite to worksite."



Venn Diagram

This is our VENN Diagram and the main piece we'd like you to focus on. This diagram is a summary of our three 'elements,' Training, Reporting and Staffing. The nucleus of this molecule is the Education Sector Regulation which we feel is the solution to the epidemic of violence in our schools.



Training

Mandatory face to face training for all school staff.

ASK; Training should be mandatory for all staff from frontline education workers to administrators. Online training is not adequate.

WHY? Face to face training gives the opportunity for education worker feedback and deepens the understanding of the training. Training all staff in a school ensures that program delivery to students is consistent.

Access to information for all workers.

ASK; Access to information for education workers will keep workers and students safe and is a right under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*.

WHY? Under the OHSA a worker must be given all information regarding a potential risk. With the student being the risk, all information regarding past behaviour, triggers and relevant medical information should be shared with every person working with the student.

Funded supports for all education workers

ASK; Dedicated funding for mental health and wellness programs for education workers who are dealing with violence or may be living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

WHY? When an education worker experiences violence in the school, it affects them the same ways as if a violence incident occurred in the home or in the community. Therefore, education and recognition of the seriousness of being involved in a violent incident should be part of education worker training and support initiatives.

****Give a personal/local example of the effect of violence on staff or another true and appropriate example that aligns with our points of discussion.**



Reporting

What is a violent incident? Use the OHSA definition of a violent incident.

ASK; *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* definition of a violent incident should be standardized across Ontario as the only recognized definition for violent incidents.

WHY? The reason we want the definition standardized is because there are too many definitions which employers use as loopholes to persuade education workers to not report and to minimize the seriousness of the incident.

No reprisals for reporting.

ASK; No flexibility for administration to decide whether the violent incident report is filed or whether it meets employer definition of a violent incident.

WHY? Education workers are coerced, blamed and discouraged from filling in violent incident reports to keep the employer's incident numbers low and to protect school's/administrator's "reputation." Without the reports, appropriate adjustments to student's program or the development of safety plans do not occur which affects student's success.

Reporting forms are too onerous and a barrier to reporting.

ASK; An online, easily accessible, fillable form for violence reporting should be standardized across the province.

WHY? Often education workers don't have time to fill in multiple forms for one incident. Reports are onerous and difficult to access. Online reporting eliminates the possibility of administration coercion or not reporting. Follow-up and appropriate debriefing are paramount to the process because the education worker or student may need care after the incident and both need to know that the incident was taken seriously.

****Give a personal/local example of reprisals against staff for reporting or another true and appropriate example that aligns with our points of discussion.**



Staffing

Fully funded programs to meet all student needs.

ASK; Fully fund programs to support all students and meet their educational needs.

WHY? Funding only high needs students causes other students with different needs to fall through the cracks. Without enough staff, due to funding constraints, each student may only receive some of the program supports that ensure their success. Funding should address and be directed to provide skills and strategies for frontline education workers to deal with students mental health, bullying, self-regulation and anger management.

Appropriate violence prevention resources and space. Frontline education workers need input into student safety plans.

ASK; Appropriate violence prevention resources and space.

WHY? Violence should not be an expectation of the job. Proactive intervention, with input from frontline education workers, and regular risk assessments ensure that students safety plans are always up to date and create a safe learning environment which reduces the risk of violent incidents occurring. When a student is in crisis, adequate space and classroom design are essential to assist with de-escalation and ensuring everyone in the learning environment is safe.

More qualified and trained adults with our students.

ASK; More qualified and trained education workers with our students.

WHY? Trained and qualified education workers, whether they work at the front of the classroom teaching, in the classroom looking out for triggering behaviours while supporting three other students in the class, or in the front office de-escalating situation all provide a high level of care and security for the entire school community. Each staff member and administrator is exposed to some level of violence and must all be fully trained. The number of special needs students are consistently increasing but professional student service personnel numbers do not reflect the mental health/behaviour needs and long waiting lists for service. Fewer support staff education workers impact the student's ability to succeed and most definitely have impacted the epidemic of violence that we now see in our schools.

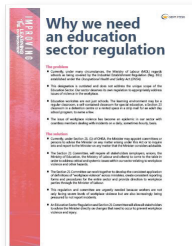
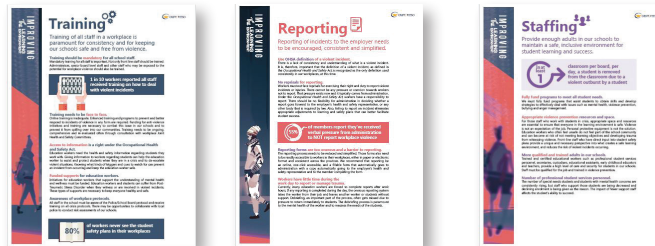
A few stats on mental health:

- It is estimated that 10–20% of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness or disorder—the single most disabling group of disorders worldwide.
- Surpassed only by injuries, mental disorders in youth are ranked as the second highest hospital care expenditure in Canada.
- In Canada, only one out of five children who need mental health services receives them

All mental health statistics courtesy of: www.cmha.ca/media/fast-facts-about-mental-illness/#.WNQiHm_yt0w

****Give a personal/local example of the lack of funding of every student with special needs or another true and appropriate example that aligns with our points of discussion.**

Please reference the three sheets on training, reporting and staffing for more information.



Why we need an Education Sector Regulation

ASK: An Education Sector Regulation under *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA)

WHY? The Education Sector is unique in scope and has a variety of worksites (regular classroom, a self-contained classroom for special education, classroom in a detention centre or a rented space in a strip mall). Currently, being covered under the Industrial Regulation 851 does not allow the epidemic of workplace violence to be addressed properly. An Education Sector regulation would provide clarity for all parties within the sector on how to address the significant hazard of workplace violence. A committee as outlined in section 21 of the OHSA would bring together all workplace parties along with the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education to discuss concerns, recommend solutions and provide advice directly to the Minister of Labour in order to prevent workplace violence.

Closing Remarks

You will notice three sheets of more detail on Training, Reporting and Staffing as well as why it's important for student safety to have an Education Sector Regulation. Please feel free to read those sheets and if you have any further information, we would be happy to talk to you in your constituency office.

Twitter Sign

I know you can see how important preventing violence in our schools is to us. We care about our members and of course, we care about our students and the impact that seeing and experiencing daily violence has on them. Could you please pose for a picture with us as a commitment to ending violence in our schools. (USE PLACARD, TAKE A SELFIE WITH YOUR CELL AND SEND IMMEDIATELY TO Michael.Young@osstf.ca for social media)

At this point, you can give them a business card and thank them for their time.

DON'T FORGET TO GET THE PICTURE!





OSSTF/FEESO lobby day | March 29, 2017

Dear Member of Provincial Parliament,

Thank you for agreeing to be part of our discussion on workplace violence and violence prevention in our schools. Our members are telling us that this is one of the most important issues affecting their work life which also impacts the learning experience of all of our students.

In our short time together, we hope to illustrate the seriousness of the issue, suggest some areas of improvement and finally come to an understanding of the need to stand together against violence in our schools.

We draw your attention to the *Education Forum* article included in your package, which gives first-hand accounts of a typical day for many of our educational assistants and the challenges they face on a regular basis protecting themselves from violence. Despite the risks, they are enormously dedicated to the success of the students with whom they work.

We have created a task force on violence in the workplace and some preliminary data will be shared with you to quantify the magnitude of the problem. We will also outline some of the ways, we can improve the learning environment by examining the areas of training, reporting and staffing.

We agree that the promotion of a violence-free teaching, working and learning environment benefits students, education workers and teachers.

Sincerely,

Paul Elliott
President



Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
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des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario
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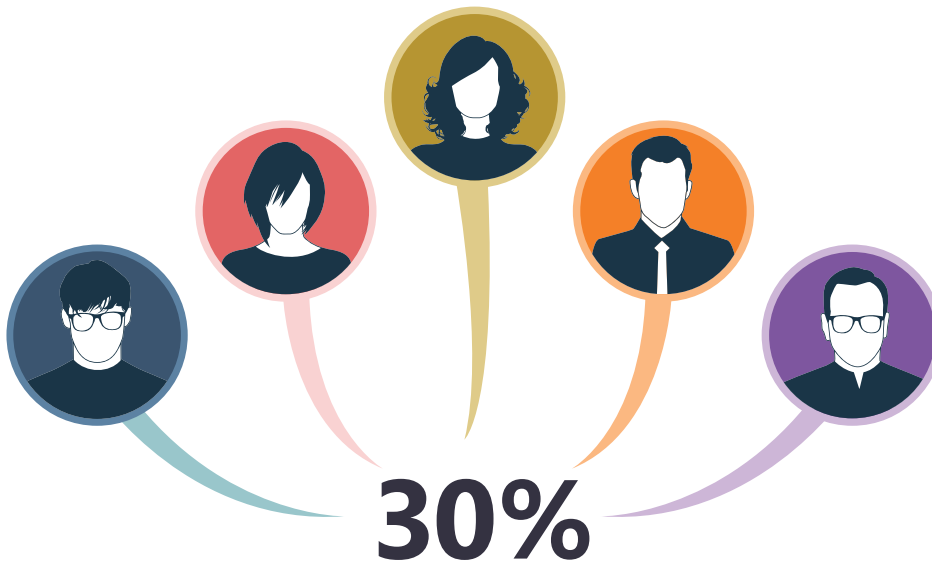
Definition of a violent incident under the **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT**

Workplace violence is defined in the OHSA as

the exercise or attempted exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker, or a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker. This definition of workplace violence is broad enough to include acts that would constitute offences under Canada's Criminal Code.



A lack of training

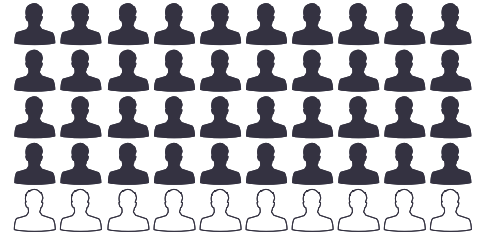


30% of members indicated they have received no training related to workplace violence



80%

of members said the violence reporting form was either inaccessible or they were unsure where to find it



Barriers to reporting violent incidents

IMPROVING
The LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE
DATA FROM OUR MEMBERS

Staff being told to "not report"

55% of members indicate that their employer often pressures them to not report a violent incident.

Little consultation on violent incidents with staff **90%**



90% of members indicated there was either no consultation or only verbal consultation regarding the incident form they submitted

10%

Only 10% of members are always involved in giving input into student safety plans



Staff not being part of student safety plans



Over the past
FIVE years,

36%

of local leaders surveyed indicated that they don't know the general trend of violent incidents mainly because they do not get information from their employer.

41%

of local leaders surveyed indicated that the number of violent incidents reported has **RISEN**.

0%

of the local leaders surveyed said that the number of violent incidents have **FALLEN**.

43%

of local leaders surveyed indicated that access to violent incident reporting forms either **VARIABLES** or is **VERY INCONSISTENT** from worksite to worksite.

IMPROVING The LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

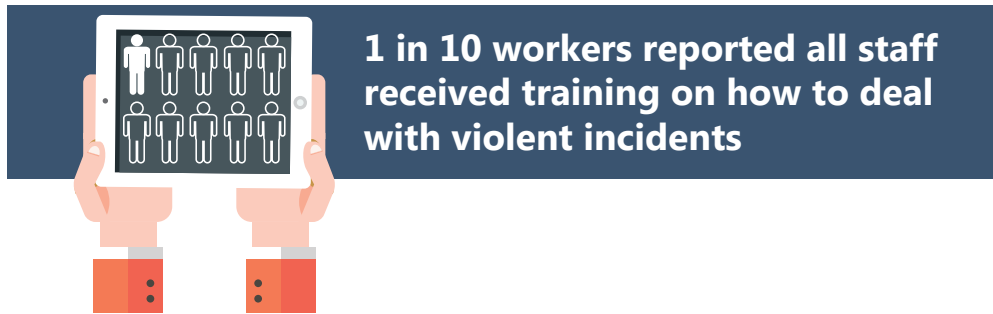


Training

Training of all staff in a workplace is paramount for consistency and for keeping our schools safe and free from violence.

Training should be **mandatory** for all school staff.

Mandatory training for all staff is important. Not only front line staff should be trained. Administrators, senior board level staff and other staff who may be exposed to the potential for workplace violence should also be trained.



Training needs to be **face to face**.

Online training is inadequate. Enhanced training and programs to prevent and better respond to incidents of violence in any form are required. Funding for anti-violence initiatives and training are necessary to combat this issue in our schools and to prevent it from spilling over into our communities. Training needs to be ongoing, comprehensive and re-evaluated often through consultation with workplace Joint Health and Safety Committees.

Access to information is a right under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act**.

Education workers need the health and safety information regarding students they work with. Giving information to workers regarding students can help the education worker to assist and protect students when they are in a crisis and to de-escalate violent situations. Knowing what kinds of triggers and cues to watch for can prevent an incident from occurring and keep the education worker safe.

Funded supports for education workers.

Initiatives for education workers that support the understanding of mental health and wellness must be funded. Education workers and students can suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder when they witness or are involved in violent incidents. These types of supports are necessary to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Awareness of workplace protocols.

All staff in the school must be aware of the Police/School Board protocol and receive training on all crisis protocols. There may be opportunities to collaborate with local police to conduct risk assessments of our schools.



Reporting

Reporting of incidents to the employer needs to be encouraged, consistent and simplified.

Use OHSA definition of a violent incident.

There is a lack of consistency and understanding of what is a violent incident. It is, therefore, important that the definition of a violent incident, as defined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, is recognized as the only definition used consistently in our workplaces, at this time.

No reprisals for reporting.

Workers must not face reprisals for exercising their right and duty to report violent incidents or injuries. There cannot be any pressure or coercion towards workers not to report. That pressure exists now and it typically comes from administration. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, workers have a responsibility to report. There should be no flexibility for administration in deciding whether a report goes forward to the employer's health and safety representative, or any other body that is required by law. Also, failing to report an incident eliminates appropriate adjustments to learning and safety plans that can better facilitate student success.



of members report they've received verbal pressure from administration to NOT report workplace violence

Reporting forms are too onerous and a barrier to reporting.

The reporting process needs to be reduced and simplified. Those forms also need to be readily accessible to workers in their workplaces, either in paper or electronic format and consistent across the province. We recommend that reporting be an online, one-click accessible, and a fillable form that automatically goes to administration with a copy automatically going to the employer's health and safety representative and to the member completing the form.

Workers have little time during the work day to report or manage trauma.

Currently, many education workers are forced to complete reports after work hours. If any reporting is completed during the day, the onerous reporting system takes the worker from their job and leaves another worker or students without support. Debriefing, an important part of the process, often gets missed due to pressure to return immediately to students. The debriefing process is paramount to the mental health of the worker and to reassess the needs of the students.



Staffing

Provide enough adults in our schools to maintain a safe, inclusive environment for student learning and success.



classroom per board, per day, a student is removed from the classroom due to a violent outburst by a student

Fully fund programs to meet all student needs.

We must fully fund programs that assist students to obtain skills and develop strategies to effectively deal with issues such as mental health, violence prevention, bullying and anger management.

Appropriate violence prevention resources and space.

For those staff who work with students in crisis, appropriate space and resources are essential to ensure that everyone in the learning environment is safe. Violence is not an expectation of the job. Personal protective equipment is not the solution. Education workers who often feel unsafe do not feel part of the school community and can become at risk of not meeting learning objectives and developing trauma from witnessing violence. Front-line staff who have direct input into student safety plans provide a unique and necessary perspective into what creates a safe learning environment, and reduces the risk of violent incidents occurring.

More qualified and trained adults in our schools.

Trained and certified educational workers such as professional student services personnel, secretaries, custodians, educational assistants, early childhood educators and teachers, provide a high level of care and security for students in our schools. Staff must be qualified for the job and trained in violence prevention.

Number of professional student services personnel.

The number of special needs students and students with mental health concerns are consistently rising, but staff who support those students are being decreased and declining enrolment is being given as the reason. The impact of fewer support staff affects the student's ability to succeed.

Why we need an education sector regulation

The problem

- Currently, under many circumstances, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) regards schools as being covered by the Industrial Establishment Regulation (Reg. 851) established under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS)*.
- This designation is outdated and does not address the unique scope of the Education Sector. Our sector deserves its own regulation to appropriately address issues of violence in the workplace.
- Education worksites are not just schools. The learning environment may be a regular classroom, a self-contained classroom for special education, a Section 23 classroom in a detention centre or a rented space in a strip mall for an adult day school program, to name a few.
- The issue of workplace violence has become an epidemic in our sector with countless members dealing with incidents on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis.

The solution

- Currently, under Section 21. (1) of OHS, the Minister may appoint committees or persons to advise the Minister on any matter arising under this Act or to inquire into and report to the Minister on any matter that the Minister considers advisable.
- The Section 21 Committee, will require all stakeholders (employers, unions, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and others) to come to the table in order to address critical and systemic issues within our sector relating to workplace violence and other hazards.
- The Section 21 Committee can work together to develop the consistent application of definitions of “workplace violence” across ministries, create consistent reporting forms and procedures for the entire sector and provide direction to workplace parties through the Minister of Labour.
- This regulation and committee are urgently needed because workers are not only facing severe levels of workplace violence but are also increasingly being pressured to not report incidents.
- An Education Sector Regulation and Section 21 Committee will allow all stakeholders to advise the Minister directly on changes that need to occur to prevent workplace violence and injury.

**I stand with
#OSSTF to
#StopViolence
in our schools.**

