



## Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)

Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants  
de l'élémentaire de l'Ontario (FEEO)

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Executive Members

**FROM:** Sharon O'Halloran, General Secretary  
Lisa Mastrobuono, Deputy General Secretary  
Elizabeth Mitchell, Executive Assistant, Health and Safety Services

**DATE:** May 29, 2023

**RE:** **Report re: ETFO's Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools**

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Since 2017, the Federation has been engaged in a strategy to address violence in schools, i.e., *ETFO's Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence*. The strategy was originally planned for three years and then was extended from 2020 to 2023. In order to consider next steps as the 2022-2023 school year draws to a close, staff have reviewed:

- work done on the strategy over the last six years;
- Health and Safety Services workshops, conferences and budgeted activities planned for the 2023-2024 year;
- the results of ETFO's 2023 All-Member Violence Survey conducted in February and March 2023; and
- May 2023 Representative Council delegates' facilitated small group discussion on violence in schools.

### Strategy Background

In 2016, a seven-member multi-service area working group conducted a study and reported to the Executive in October 2016 Executive memorandum 12:12 (**Appendix A**) regarding a comprehensive strategy to address violence in public elementary schools. The Executive approved the report's recommendation to create a comprehensive multi-year strategy, composed of four components:

1. **Internal:** concerted development of a program for member education and training for locals.
2. **External:** continue working with education stakeholders and the Ministries of Labour and Education to strengthen adherence to relevant legislation and policies.
3. **Public Partnerships:** working with allies in a public way to advocate for change in

staffing and supports for students with high needs.

4. **Lobbying:** implement a lobby campaign for education funding formula changes and greater access to mental health services for students and families.

May 2020 Executive memorandum 13:16 (**Appendix B**) is an interim report that highlighted the accomplishments of the strategy, including:

- the creation of *ETFO's Action on Violence in Schools* member resources: poster, brochure, wallet card, and glossary;
- the initiation of a common online reporting tool for violence incidents, from work with the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety (PWGHS);
- a resource on the application of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* Section 32 on Violence and Harassment in schools from work with the PWGHS;
- Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development (MOL, now the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development) consultation visits regarding OHSA compliance in school boards in 2018;
- media and public awareness, raised in part by the results of an All-Member Violence Survey conducted in 2017 and ETFO's 2019 Violence Symposium; and
- the *Building Better Schools* campaign's inclusion of funding formula changes, which would be essential to ensure appropriate resources in schools to prevent violence.

February 2021 Executive memorandum 13:14 (**Appendix C**) proposed the extension of the strategy into 2019-2023 and outlined next steps. Those next steps guided the work of the strategy over the past three years across six different areas of action and included:

- **Communications:**
  - Regular updates to ETFO leadership, both local and provincial.
  - Information and regular messaging made available to members through branded resources available at [etfohealthandsafety.ca](http://etfohealthandsafety.ca) and ETFO's newsletter.
  - Resources, tools, and documents on ETFO Secure, Health and Safety section.
- **Capacity Building:**
  - Including health and safety issues in bargaining central and local agreements.
  - Working with the Ministry of Education and the MOL alongside other education affiliates, especially at the PWGHS.
  - Meeting with local leaders to discuss compliance by their boards with Memorandum SB06 and central agreement terms on collection of violence data through an online reporting tool.
  - Preparing local leaders for the MOL's compliance initiative in February and March of 2023.
  - Monitoring and sharing MOL reports and, in some cases, taking action through the Ontario Labour Relations Board.
  - Coordinating with other services areas to ensure that all staff is aware of the intersection of their work and workplace violence concerns.
- **Training and Resources:**
  - Inclusion of workplace violence information in all Health and Safety Services programs, and presentations at the programs of other services areas.
  - Providing workshops and webinars for local leaders and health and safety representatives.
  - Developing and sharing resources for local leaders including a work refusal guide

- and a violence risk re-assessment checklist.
- Updating 'Action on Violence in Schools' publications (glossary, poster, brochure, wallet card).
- Responding to individual requests for support from local leaders supporting members experiencing violence at work.
- **Multi-Media Resources:**
  - Maintenance of and additions to the etfohealthandsafety.ca page and ETFO Secure.
  - Creation of a work refusal video, work refusal poster, work refusal bookmark, worker rights poster, work refusal checklist (promoted in enewsletters and/or included in stewards' mailings).
  - Articles in Voice Magazine.
- **Lobbying:**
  - Through the PWGHS, lobbying for school boards' increased compliance with the OHSA.
  - Through the PWGHS, raising concerns about the gathering and sharing of violence data with the online reporting systems, that didn't yet meet requirements.
  - With representatives of the MOL, raising concerns about compliance with the OHSA generally, and raising specific issues when applicable.
  - Discussions with the Ministry of Labour regarding the updates to their resource *Workplace Violence in School Boards: A guide to the law* and their compliance initiative in February and March of 2023.
- **Building Better Schools:**
  - Directing members and other interested parties towards Building Better Schools, highlighting the calls for smaller class sizes, more resources for students with special needs, and improving the funding formula.

### **The Strategy in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023**

Since March 2020, Health and Safety Services staff were, out of necessity, focussed on health and safety issues related to the pandemic. During periods of remote learning, physical violence was not as significant an issue for members, even in the special education settings that remained open. This was reflected in the results of ETFO's All-Member Survey conducted in June 2021. Violence had changed from the number one health and safety concern for 31% of ETFO members in 2020 to being the top issue for only 9% of members in 2021.

However, upon members' return to in-person learning since September 2021, local leaders and health and safety representatives noted that violence had returned to pre-pandemic levels or worse. As part of the strategy, in 2022 a twelve-month plan was initiated to highlight topics and share resources with members related to workplace violence in schools each month. The communication plan capitalized on work already done in the strategy to inform and educate members on the issue of violence in schools and how violence could be addressed. Topics highlighted were as follows:

January 2022:	Incident reporting, PPMs 144 and 145, work refusals
February 2022:	Risk assessments, workplace harassment policies
March 2022:	Work refusals
April 2022:	Emergency procedures (e.g., lockdowns)

May 2022:	Violence and the inadequate provincial funding provided for schools
June 2022:	Psychological impact of workplace violence
July 2022:	Workplace violence year in review
August 2022:	Ministry of Labour's <i>Workplace Violence in School Boards: A Guide to the Law</i>
September 2022:	Risk assessments, Ontario Student Records
October 2022:	Workplace violence and how your union supports you
November 2022:	Domestic violence
December 2022:	Emotional regulation and violence

Information and resources related to the monthly topic were shared through the ETFO enewsletter, the ETFO Health and Safety website and ETFO's main website, ETFO social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), and other multi-media resources (videos, narrated PowerPoints).

ETFO 2022 Annual Meeting delegates passed a motion for the creation of a budget line to address violence in schools (Budget Line 31126 – Addressing Violence in Schools). Delegates assigned \$175,000 to that budget line for the 2022-2023 year. In 2022-2023, the budget line funding was used for the creation and distribution of resources related to violence in schools and, most significantly, the collection of data in ETFO's 2023 All-Member Violence Survey. That survey included two components:

- an all-member online survey; and
- member focus groups.

Member participation in the survey was encouraged through enewsletter alerts, text messages and voicemail messages (robocalls). Almost 25,000 ETFO members participated the all-member online survey.

Some of the results of the survey were shared with members and the public during a press conference held on May 15, 2023, that generated significant media coverage. Local leaders were also provided with speaking notes about the survey and a template letter to the editor to use when contacting local media about the survey results. Social media shareables amplified survey results.

Other items developed to support the strategy in the 2022-2023 school year include:

- the distribution of work refusal bookmarks sent to members through an ETFO stewards' mailing in January 2023;
- a podcast published in February 2023 featuring an interview with Lisa Dunbar, an ETFO member who supports teachers, education workers and students to help reduce violent behaviour and Dr. Chris Bruckert, a professor at the University of Ottawa who studies workplace violence against teachers and education workers; and
- a poster, data and a president's letter regarding the results of ETFO's All-Member Violence Survey. The items will be sent to members in June 2023 through a Presnet message and an electronic stewards' mailing.

## **A Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools from 2023 to 2026**

Given the amount of information, resources and work about the topic developed by ETFO since 2016, and given the significant need to address the issue of violence as demonstrated by the results of the 2023 All-Member Violence Survey, ETFO's multi-year strategy should continue from 2023 to 2026.

However, in an effort to contextualize the subject and move it away from being seen as an occupational health and safety issue to a more general, education-related topic of concern that is more accessible to members, parents, community groups, allies, members of the public, and the media, it is suggested that the name of the strategy be amended to the ***ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools***.

The next steps in the strategy for 2023-2024 will continue to be informed by:

- the results of the 2023 All-Member Violence Survey (see Confidential June 2023 Executive memorandum 13:16 for detailed information about the 2023 All-Member Violence Survey); and
- input from May 2023 Representative Council small-group, facilitated discussions on violence in schools (see June 2023 Executive memorandum 13:21 for more information about the Representative Council facilitated discussion).

The work will continue across all four of the original components: internal, external, public partnerships, and lobbying. Mid-way through the extension period (January 2025), an interim report will evaluate the progress and adjust the course of the strategy, if necessary.

The six areas of action identified in February 2021 Executive memorandum 13:14 (**Appendix C**) will continue. In addition, the following specific strategies within each will be added:

- **Communications:**
  - Implementing a telephone town hall with members in the fall of 2023 to review survey results, discuss next steps and provide legal advice/information on how members can engage in work refusal process when confronted with violence in schools. The town hall will be stored as an audio file in the secure section of the ETFO website so that it can be accessed by members throughout the year.
  - Developing a year-long communication strategy for local leaders and members. The strategy for members will include a webinar/narrated PowerPoint and podcasts that demystify the topic of violence in schools and encourage members to address the subject. The strategy for local leaders will include scripts to discuss the topic of violence in schools with trustees and senior board staff, and speaking notes to use when communicating with local media around the topic of violence.
  - Creating campaign messaging to encourage reporting, address the fear of reprisals, and push back on the normalization of violence. The messaging will be supported and amplified through the use of social media (shareables, etc.).
  - Developing a member engagement and public relations strategy around the focus group report results from the 2023 All-Member Violence Survey.
  - Ensuring members are aware that violence is a top-of-mind issue for ETFO by sending out short (one or two question) SurveyMonkey surveys to members

about topics related to violence in schools throughout the year.

- **Capacity Building:**
  - Promoting ETFO Secure resources for local health and safety representatives, in particular the work refusal guidance document and the ability to search MOL reports and use them for local advocacy.
  - Supporting locals to push school boards for increased compliance with the OHSA, using the results of the MOL's Workplace Violence Compliance Initiative.
  - Increasing the use of metrics (e.g., website/newsletter analytics, survey results, etc.) to determine whether ETFO's information and resources are being accessed by members and others.
- **Training and Resources:**
  - Holding a workshop at Leadership 2023 supporting local leaders in the development of a year-long local action plan, with a particular focus on reaching vulnerable members (e.g., occasional teachers, new members, etc.).
  - Developing an easy-to-follow work refusal checklist for members to accompany the 'Health and Safety Rights' suite of resources.
  - Providing ongoing updates of the 'Action on Violence' and 'Health and Safety Rights' series of resources on the ETFO Health and Safety website.
- **Multi-Media Resources:**
  - Creating video resources to be used in the new program as well as other trainings that illustrate health and safety processes (e.g., online reporting, work refusals).
- **Lobbying:**
  - Using the results of the Workplace Violence Compliance Initiative to advocate for education sector regulations, with specifics on workplace violence in schools.
  - Collaborating with education stakeholders and unions from other sectors to investigate the root causes of violence in schools and across society.
- **Building Better Schools:**
  - Highlighting ETFO's relevant calls for action (e.g., smaller class sizes, resources for students with special needs) in all public-facing materials. Focus on involving parents and other groups in the lobby campaigns for safer public schools.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the Addressing Violence in Schools budget line (31126) will fund activities that will form part of the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools*, and specifically:

#### Violence in Schools Writing Team

To build on the 2023 All-Member Violence Survey process, a writing team will be assembled to develop a program and resource designed to inform members of their general rights under the OHSA, for example:

- the right to know;
- the right to participate; and, especially
- the right to refuse unsafe work.

Increasing members' knowledge around risk assessments and reassessments, notifications of risk, safety plans, reporting requirements, and investigations is necessary for advocacy and

self-advocacy with respect to violence in schools. Both health and safety representatives and members will be able to hold the employer to account for their responsibility to take every precaution reasonable for the protection of workers. The program/resource will be designed to make schools safer for members, may reduce the need for work refusals and, when work refusals do happen, will ensure that the proper steps are followed to result in improvements to the precautions in place and our ability to challenge the lack of enforcement by the MOL, if necessary.

### Violence in Schools - Facilitator Training

After the program and resource are developed by the writing team, a facilitator training session will be held by Health and Safety Services staff to review and refine the learning materials created by the writing team. The facilitator training session will be open to one member from each school board (aiming for representation from different working groups) to enable these facilitators to deliver the program to members working in that board. Part of the training will include scenarios with small group discussions. By making use of members working within each board, information that may vary across the province (e.g., method of notification of risk, online reporting tools for violent incidents) can be made specific to the audience.

In the subsequent year (2024-2025), the facilitators will deliver the training locally after school hours, so that members in every local will have the opportunity to participate in the program (aiming for a participant from each school/worksite, where possible). The development of local expertise across the working groups (teachers, occasional teachers, Designated Early Childhood Educators, Education Support Personnel, Professional Support Personnel) will allow members to understand the unique issues in their board, and to exercise their rights to work in an environment that is free from violence.

### Video Resources Addressing Violence in Schools

Videos will be created in 2023-2024 that will be used in ETFO programs (i.e. Health and Safety Services conferences and workshops, Fall Leadership, New Presidents Training, steward training conducted by CB and PRS staff, etc.). The videos will demonstrate processes that are consistent across school boards (e.g., a mock work refusal video centred on a violent incident at school, understanding the type of information that is provided to workers and Joint Health and Safety Committees about violence, etc.).

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Executive approve the 2023-2026 extension of the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools*.
2. That an interim report to evaluate the progress of the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Violence in Schools* be provided to the Executive in January 2025.



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Executive Members

**FROM:** Sharon O'Halloran, General Secretary  
Nancy Baldree, Executive Assistant, Professional Learning Curriculum  
Valerie Dugale, Executive Assistant, Communications and Political Action  
Donna Howey, Executive Assistant, Professional Relations Services  
Jason Johnston, Executive Assistant, Professional Learning Curriculum  
Lynn McClean, Executive Assistant, Collective Bargaining  
Carolyn Walker, Executive Assistant, Collective Bargaining  
Valence Young, Executive Assistant, Collective Bargaining

**DATE:** October 3, 2016

**RE:** **June 2016 Executive Motion 41 re ETFO provincial study and report on a comprehensive strategy to address violence in public elementary schools**

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At the June 2016 Executive Meeting, the following motion was referred to the General Secretary for study and report to the October 2016 Executive Meeting,

- (41) That the General Secretary study and report, with recommendations, on a comprehensive strategy to address violence in public elementary schools, to the October 2016 Executive Meeting.

A seven member staff work group representing various service areas within ETFO was created to address this motion. The work group met on July 18, August 12, August 30 and September 12, and engaged in research and numerous online exchanges between meetings. The issue of workplace violence in public elementary schools and in other worksites where ETFO members are employed is complex and challenging. The health, safety and well-being of both educators and students are adversely impacted when violence occurs in our workplaces. The need to address this Gordian knot is both compelling and urgent and requires a multi-layered approach.

### Background

***June 2016 Executive Report re: the increasing impact of aggressive and violent behavior in elementary schools***



In June 2016, a report on the increasing impact of aggressive behaviour and violence in elementary schools was provided to the provincial executive. This report provided a summary of issues regarding workplace violence with particular emphasis on:

- Inter-ministerial cutbacks which are delaying support for students with high risk behaviours;
- Constraints on reporting workplace violence, serious student incidents, injury and illness including active discouragement and/or lack of support from school boards and principals;
- The need for school boards to make risk assessments and safety plans a priority instead of relying heavily on behaviour management for students with high risk behaviours;
- The need for reliable data to better inform school safety at the school board and Ministry levels; and
- ETFO local and provincial supports for members.

Included in the report were the following practical strategies. During the 2016-2017 school year it will be critically important for ETFO to;

- 1) Continue to actively support members in the reporting of workplace violence and serious student incidents, as well as related accident, injury and illness reporting. This active support includes consideration for grievance and/or Ministry of Labour engagement.
- 2) Continue to actively support members in requesting and getting the assessment or re-assessment of the risks of violence, and the revision of safety plans. This active support includes consideration for grievance and/or Ministry of Labour engagement.
- 3) Hold the Ministry of Education to account for: ensuring school board compliance with school safety legislation and policy requirements; and for measuring and reporting on the effectiveness of activities to improve the safety of elementary schools where ETFO members are working.
- 4) Continue to engage: the key terms of the Central Agreements for member health and safety; the implementation plan for the recommendations in the *ETFO MOU Task Force on Health and Safety Report*; and new opportunities at the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety, to ensure stronger protections for ETFO members on workplace violence and serious student incidents.

### ***External Environmental Scan***

#### Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF)

Outreach to the Canadian Teachers Federation confirms that the issue of aggression and violence in schools is of concern nationwide. A summary of the approaches of various CTF member organizations is attached as Appendix B.

In July 2016, the CTF hosted the Canadian Forum on Public Education on the theme of Wellness in our Schools: Time to Act. One of its main messages was “student wellness and teacher wellness.” The Manitoba Teachers Society has produced a wellness magazine for its members and there is a provincial wellness coordinator. Saskatchewan has a wellness contact in every school funded by the government.

#### Education International (EI)

Education International confirms that the issues of violence and aggression are not unique to the schools in Ontario, nor to those within Canada. A sample of a comprehensive document designed to educate and support members of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association is attached as Appendix C: School Anti-Violence Toolkit. Aspects of this document such as the chart identifying issues on page 13 and the flowchart found on page 26 giving guidance in the event of an assault would be useful models for further education and training of ETFO members and local leaders.

#### Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP)

Consultations with OTIP to explore any data related to workplace violence and/or student aggression as a causal factor of Long Term Disability (LTD) claims were inconclusive as medical claims are tracked by medical codes and the cause of a medical issue is not tracked. In a recent report by OTIP, tracking of overall claims indicates that Kindergarten teachers have nearly three times more claims than teachers in any other grade. When data is examined by assignment, Special Education teachers and multi-grade teachers have significantly more claims than any other type of teacher.

#### Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)

Available WSIB data on the effect of workplace violence on Lost Time Injury (LTI) indicates that “teacher assistants” have a higher rate by the number of LTIs for workplace violence than police officers. Elementary teachers have more than twice the rate of LTIs due to workplace violence than secondary teachers. Collectively education workers have a significant percentage of LTIs among all identified occupations on this list.

### **Highest Count of Workplace Violence Events in Public Services Health and Safety Association Occupations (2014)**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b># LTIs</b>	<b>% WV LTIs</b>
Elementary and Secondary School Teacher Assistants	271	15%
Police Officers (except commissioned)	259	14%
Nurse Aides and Orderlies	234	13%
Community and Social Service Workers	196	11%
Registered Nurses	148	8%
Correctional Service Officers	141	8%
Elementary School and Kindergarten Teachers	87	5%
Registered Nursing Assistants (RPNs)	82	4%
Bus Drivers and Subway and Other Transit Operators	64	3%
Secondary School Teachers	33	2%
All others	337	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1852</b>	

Data Source: WSIB EIW Claims Costs Analysis Schema. June 2015 snapshot

## ***Internal Environmental Scan***

An internal environmental scan confirmed that while ETFO staff in Professional Relations Services and Collective Bargaining Services are most likely to be actively involved in supporting members and local leaders on a day to day basis, there are a myriad of undertakings throughout the organization to support ETFO's work in the area of Health and Safety and protection of members.

Staff in the Communications and Political Action Service Area support the public face of ETFO's advocacy: organizing lobby activities and political outreach; ensuring that members and the public have a firm understanding of issues such as support for students with special needs through the *Building Better Schools* ongoing campaign; populating websites, issuing electronic communications such as e-newsletters and ETFO VOICE with relevant information to support members; and reinforcing connections of members with the Federation.

Professional Learning Curriculum staff and Equity and Women's Services staff provide learning opportunities for members where support for student needs, student wellness, class management and personal safety issues are addressed; meet with outside agencies; participate in task forces and work groups that result from central bargaining; and advocate on behalf of ETFO members in various meetings with Ministry stakeholders.

Professional Relations Services (PRS) staff are involved in ongoing work on the issue of violence and student aggression in schools through PRS on-call support; by providing conferences for members such as An Ounce of Prevention and Women's Legal and Health Conferences; by providing training programs for local leaders such as New Presidents' Training, Fall Leadership Training, PRS Leadership Training for Released Leaders, and PRS – Beyond the Basics WP. PRS staff also deliver workshops on these issues in locals based upon requests.

Existing PRS Matters Bulletins providing advice to ETFO members on a wide variety of topics relating to violence and student aggression in our schools include:

- Volume 80: The Student Safety Plan;
- Volume 68: Bill 13 – Accepting Schools Act;
- Volume 56: Safe Schools Teams – One Year Later, Any Progress?;
- Volume 53: Bill 168 Protects Educational Personnel from Violence & Harassment in the Workplace;
- Volume 51: Bill 157 – Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act;
- Volume 47: Use of Restraint – Advice to Members;
- Volume 43: Changes to the Safe Schools Act;
- Volume 37: Dealing with Conflict;
- Volume 36: Workplace Harassment & Bullying;
- Volume 20: Reporting Workplace Accidents; and
- Volume 8: The Special Education Teacher and Student Aggression.

Collective Bargaining and Professional Relations Services Executive Assistants lobby both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour; working to ensure follow-through on key health and safety outcomes from Central Bargaining.

Collective Bargaining staff engage at the local level to pursue corrective action and advocate for proactive measures. The Collective Bargaining service area actively upholds the health and safety of ETFO members through the provincial and local collective agreements. This service area includes an executive assistant assigned the health and safety portfolio.

Workplace violence, harassment, and serious student incidents are important health and safety issues in the work of the Collective Bargaining service area staff. Although these issues may be addressed through successful reporting and response actions, labour management relations and the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), in some cases, grievance and/or Ministry of Labour investigation and/or police intervention may be necessary.

The Collective Bargaining service area is extensively engaged with education partners including government, school board organizations and other labour unions on matters related to workplace violence.

Some highlights of recent Collective Bargaining service area work related to workplace violence, harassment and serious student incidents include:

- Case by case supports for local leaders;
- Development of the Implementation Plan for recommendations in the ETFO MOU Task Force on Health and Safety Report (ETFO MOU 2015);
- The Provincial Working Group for Health and Safety, an ongoing structure with provincial stakeholders;
- Ongoing development and delivery of workshops and conferences where training is provided on workplace violence, harassment, serious student incidents;
- Surveys of local leaders (Keys for OTs, 9 local pilot surveys on workplace violence, harassment and serious student incidents, PA Day effectiveness);
- Government submissions and consultations on workplace violence and harassment;
- Participation on the OFL Health and Safety committee and subcommittee for education sector health and safety; and
- Advocacy at Ministry of Finance Budget consultations for greater supports for students with emerging and identified needs.

## **Identification of Stakeholders and Allies**

ETFO is not alone in a desire to work toward improvement in the area of workplace violence. No one wants students or education workers to be subject to violence or to witness violent incidents on a daily basis. Stakeholders and potential allies include:

### Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

- ETFO Provincial Office
  - Provincial Executive
  - Provincial Office Staff
  - ETFO Standing Committees

## ETFO Locals

- Leaders
- Local Executives
- Members
- Member groupings by, for example, designated group, career choice, job, interest, culture, preferences, professional development, training, leadership, vulnerabilities
- Stewards
- Representatives to school board Joint Health and Safety Committees
- Health and Safety representatives in schools

## ETFO Representative Council

## ETFO Annual Meeting

## Union Affiliates

- Individual trade unions and bargaining agencies
- Provincial, federal and international affiliations of trade unions

## Federation Affiliates

- Ontario Teachers' Federation
- Canadian Teachers' Federation

## School Board Organizations

- Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)
- Ontario Public Supervisory Officers' Association (OPSOA)
- Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)
- Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
- School Councils
- Special Education Advisory Councils (SEAC)

## College and University Faculties for Education Professionals

- Teachers
- Designated Early Childhood Educators
- Professional Support Personnel
- Educational Support Personnel
- Additional qualifications, additional basic qualifications
- Graduate studies

## Government of Ontario

- Members of Provincial Parliament
- Ontario Legislature with Ministries related to education such as:
  - Ministry of Children and Youth Services
  - Ministry of Community and Social Services
  - Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- Ministry of Labour
- Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- The Ombudsman of Ontario
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission

#### Allies and Advocacy Groups

- Children's Mental Health Ontario
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- People for Education
- Fix Our Schools

#### Families, Educational Communities and the General Public

#### Media

### **Current ETFO Structures and Initiatives Addressing Workplace Violence**

#### ETFO Standing Committees

- Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- Other standing committees with health and safety concerns such as ESP/PSP/DECE, Occasional Teachers, Early Years and Special Education

#### ETFO local and provincial conferences, workshops, and programs

- Focusing on health and safety
- Including health and safety as part of the theme or agenda
- ETFO Provincial Health and Safety Conference
- ETFO Classroom Management Course
- ETFO Classroom Management for the Occasional Teacher

#### ETFO resources on health and safety including workplace violence

- ETFO Health and Safety webpage at <http://etfohealthandsafety.ca/>
- PRS Matters resources

#### The ETFO Education Platform

- The ETFO *Building Better Schools* Education Agenda

#### ETFO Communication Tools

- ETFO website(s)
- VOICE magazine (print and e-version)
- Member e-newsletter

- Steward packages
- Direct member communications

### ETFO Lobbying

- Provincial staff representatives met with Premier's policy advisor to discuss workplace violence issues, August 2016
- MPP Breakfast included focus on workplace violence
- Ontario Legislature Standing Committee presentations and briefs regarding amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (i.e., Bill 168 workplace violence and harassment, Bill 132 sexual harassment and violence).
- Consultations with Ministry of Labour on changes to its guidance document on workplace violence and harassment, and the development of a code of practice on harassment.

### ETFO Central Agreement Outcomes

- Memorandums related to health and safety, for example; professional development for teachers on Occupational Health and Safety, Occasional Teacher training on workplace violence, keys for Occasional Teachers, resource development for support staff on workplace violence, provincial working group for special education
- ETFO MOU Task Force for Health and Safety Report and Recommendations (2014)
- Implementation Plan for the recommendations in the ETFO MOU Task Force for Health and Safety Report and Recommendations (pending)
- Provincial Working Group for Health and Safety, an ongoing structure for education partners including ETFO and most education sector unions, all four school board agencies and Ministry of Education

### Upcoming ETFO events in the 2016-17 school year that include a component of workplace violence education:

- Workshop: Policy grievance – Health and Safety Leadership, September 29, 2016
- ETFO staff officer is a member for: Practical Strategies Initiatives & Challenges OFL Violence & Harassment in the Workplace Conference, October 6, 2016
- Workshop: Student behaviour and safety issues Protect Yourself WP, November 10, 2016
- Provincial Health and Safety Conference, November 2016
- Webinar: Risk Assessments and Safety Plans – Making Them Work Better ETFO Local Leader Virtual Academy, December 7, 2016
- ETFO Collective Bargaining Academy Health and Safety Issues Training Session II February 2017

- ETFO Collective Bargaining Conference  
April 19 and 20, 2017
- Health and Safety Training WP  
Up to four regional training programs will be offered during the school year.
- Health and Safety in the Workplace  
This regional workshop will be offered up to two times during the school year.

#### Working With Education Stakeholders

- Implementation Plan for the recommendations in the ETFO MOU Task Force for Health and Safety Report and Recommendations (pending)
- Provincial Working Group for Health and Safety, an ongoing structure for education partners including ETFO and most education sector unions, all four school board agencies, and Ministry of Education
- Consultation about Ministry of Education: Well-Being Strategy
- Partnership with School Mental Health ASSIST on resource development for student mental health

#### Examples of Legislative and Policy requirements for health and safety including violence, harassment, and serious student incidents

- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Education Act and Regulations
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- PPM 120, Reporting Violent Incidents to the Ministry of Education,  
Ontario Ministry of Education, May 16, 2011
- PPM 144, Bullying Prevention and Intervention  
Ontario Ministry of Education, December 5, 2012
- PPM 145, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour  
Ontario Ministry of Education, December 5, 2012
- Provincial Model for a Local Police/School Board Protocol  
Ontario Ministry of Education, 2015
- School Climate Surveys - School boards are required to conduct school climate surveys of students, school staff and parents at least once every two years.



- Safe Schools Teams - Every public school in Ontario is required to have a safe schools team.

## **A Change Campaign**

The components of any change campaign are to accurately assess the current landscape and issues, educate, motivate and provide tools for action.

### ***School Board, Government Impediments***

Effectively addressing violence is being impeded for the most part by a lack of enforcement policies and provision of supports by school boards, individual schools and the government:

- School boards indicate that they require more support through the provincial funding formula to address concerns.
- Ministry of Education officials continue to report that their data indicates that things are working relatively well.
- In many cases, required policies and procedures are in place but they're not working effectively.
- There is an organizational culture in school boards and school sites that deters reporting and response for health and safety concerns, incidents and near misses – including workplace violence. There are subtle and explicit barriers to reporting and response that leave our members with a sense of defeat. When workplace violence prevention and protection are not priorities, members and students are more vulnerable to harm in high-risk situations where physical and mental injuries could occur. When issues of aggression and violence are reported, they are often not acted upon to the fullest extent possible.
- Superintendents and principals lack the training and the resources to effectively engage in leading and implementing risk assessment and associated safety plans.
- Underfunding of the education system for critical elements such as support staffing, specialized services and supports, and adequate space for special programs is a long-standing issue.

First aid, injuries and mental stress resulting from workplace violence are under-reported to the school boards. A number of school boards under-report serious violent incidents to the Ministry of Education despite the requirement to file this data annually (PPM 120, 2012). Injuries resulting in medical attention, lost time, or alternate work arrangements are under-reported to WSIB. This under-reporting is also part of the organizational culture that minimizes harms or potential risks from health and safety hazards including workplace violence. Under-reporting not only produces gaps and misinformation in data management systems designed to predict, control and prevent workplace injury; it also means that members who have been made sick or injured by workplace violence may be suffering without adequate medical attention, accommodations or return to work plans.

### ***Messaging Considerations***

While some other public sector unions have launched media campaigns regarding workplace violence, it is important to note that majority of those campaigns are aimed at

changing behaviours of adult clients, patients and customers of services such as health care and transit. An ETFO media campaign about workplace violence would not serve public elementary schools' communities. It is critical to address the issue without dividing interest groups, victimizing students or driving parents to take their children out of the public school system. It is particularly difficult for school boards already in a declining enrollment situation to suffer further reductions in staffing when families move their children to alternative education settings such as a coterminous board, a private school or home schooling.

Ongoing government cutbacks to staffing and supports for students with special needs remain a significant contributing factor to rising rates of workplace violence. Families face delays and wait list when seeking mental health supports for their children. Students in crisis may be engaged in high-risk behaviours including workplace violence that place themselves and others at risk of harm. ETFO messaging on workplace violence must not stigmatize students with special needs and their families; rather it should focus on cutbacks to staffing and supports.

### ***Impacts on ETFO Members***

It is important to understand and emphasize that workplace violence is not inherent to the work of ETFO members. In some school boards, we have underserved children with special needs who are denied access to special education assessment and supports during kindergarten and the primary grades. 'Mitigating factors' (Regulation 472/07) that are taken into account when a serious student incident has occurred do not limit reporting requirements for workplace violence or serious student incidents. Mitigating factors may be a consideration when suspension or expulsion are considered by a principal. However, mitigating factors cannot be used to side-step legislative and policy requirements for reporting and addressing workplace violence, harassment or serious student incidents. Mitigating factors cannot be used to deny ETFO members their right to a safe workplace or to be accepting of aggression in the workplace as something to be tolerated.

ETFO needs to continue to support locals and members in better understanding their rights and responsibilities about the hazards in workplace violence. In addition, they need to know the duties of the principal and school board to protect them from hazards including workplace violence, and to uphold an effective workplace violence program.

ETFO would benefit from better data from OTIP to explore the intersection of workplace violence, mental health and members accessing LTD and related services. It would be helpful if OTIP could expand their claims tracking and data to include tracking when the illness/injury which gives rise to a claim is attributed to workplace aggression/violence. In addition, it would be constructive to request specific data on workplace violence, injuries and illnesses from WSIB.

### ***Proposed ETFO Strategy***

Continued education, training and support for members and local leaders must be an organizational priority. This would include a focus on those members who may be in increased risk of harm such as new hires, occasional and itinerant staff, members with Special Education and Kindergarten assignments and members with high needs students integrating into the regular classroom.

ETFO would benefit from adopting a comprehensive multi-year strategy to address the pressing issues of aggression and violence in our workplaces and which fosters the creation of education environments that are physically and psychologically safe for all. Such safe spaces contribute to optimal learning and working environments for well-being and success.

The strategy would be comprised of four components:

1. Internal: concerted development of a program for member education and training for locals
2. External: continue working with education stakeholders and the Ministries of Labour and Education to strengthen adherence to relevant legislation and policies.
3. Public partnerships: working with allies in a public way to advocate for change in staffing and supports for students with high needs.
4. Lobbying: implementing a lobby campaign for education funding formula changes and greater access to mental health services for students and families. (Note: There would be integration here with the proposed Building Better Schools campaign.)

The strategy would have the following goals:

1. To promote the health, safety and well-being of members and students in school communities by ensuring that violence prevention and control is dealt with appropriately within current legislative and policy frameworks.
2. To support ETFO members while they engage in the process to resolve or seek assistance regarding violence issues.
3. To ensure that reporting structures and other policy mechanisms are being implemented and followed by working with school board representatives, the Ontario Ministries of Education and Labour and other education unions.
4. To help alleviate violence issues and build support for students with special needs by working with community allies to advocate for changes to the education funding formula that would better identify students requiring support and would better support students with identified needs with provisions for inter-Ministerial integration of support.

A graphic tool is attached as Appendix A showing filters for allocation of Federation resources throughout the comprehensive strategy for high yield deliverables.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That ETFO continue implementation of the four practical strategies identified in June 2016 *Executive Memo 12.11* to ensure that: violence prevention and control is dealt with appropriately within current legislative and policy frameworks; reporting structures and policy mechanisms are implemented; ETFO members are supported in resolving violence issues; and community alliances are built to advocate for change.

2. That ETFO examine its organizational capacity to immediately address aggression and violence in public elementary schools and make advocating for 'Health, Safety and Wellness for All' in public elementary schools an organizational priority.
3. That ETFO adopt a comprehensive strategy for the 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years to promote health, safety and wellness for all including protections from aggression and violence in public elementary schools.
4. That ETFO provide a comprehensive program that would educate members on their rights and responsibilities regarding workplace violence including the legislative and policy frameworks currently in place.
5. That ETFO establish a common language and understanding for members and locals to deal with issues of violence. (e.g., 'high risk behaviour')
6. That training be provided to ETFO Executive staff so that there is a consistent messaging from the provincial office on such issues.
7. That ETFO provide members and local leaders with the guidance and tools to assist in understanding the roles and responsibilities of school boards, principals and staff under the workplace violence program; the assessment and reassessment of the risks of violence, and the provision of information about persons with a history of violence. This will include development of new education resources in a variety of formats for members, and additional resources and training for stewards and local leaders.
8. That ETFO provide training and information to local leaders so that they can support members in engaging in timely risk assessment, responding when violent behaviours and incidents occur, and working with principals and other staff on appropriate responses and strategies to solve problems. Such training will also include training local leaders to critically review their Board local forms and procedures in comparison with exemplars.
9. That ETFO place the Health and Safety links on the ETFO website in a prominent location on the ETFO website home page and continue to build website accessibility and capacity.
10. That ETFO develop additional specific content on workplace violence for regular provincial communication channels such as VOICE, e-newsletters and the ETFO website, and embed workplace violence and harassment training and information into existing outreach.
11. That ETFO develop multimedia resources for proactive steps to assist members and local leaders when dealing with concerns about actual or potential workplace violence. Such resources could include; brochures for members, wallet cards for members similar to those when facing an allegation, self-advocacy language and/or scripts, and online resources such as short videos or webinars.
12. That ETFO lobby for a common workplace violence reporting form for use across the province.

13. That ETFO imbue all training and programs with aspects of health, safety and wellness for all, as appropriate.
14. That in 2016-17, ETFO use the Building Better Schools Campaign as an avenue for two-way communication regarding student supports and as a starting point for building a broader lobbying campaign.
15. That ETFO continue to lobby the Ministry of Labour to train inspectors to better understand the school as a workplace and to train more inspectors for enforcement.
16. That ETFO seek opportunities to work with School Board related organizations such as the Ontario Principals Council, the Ontario Public Supervisory Officers' Association and the Council of Directors of Education to increase compliance with current policies and regulations and support for concerns and issues in school environments.
17. That ETFO lobby the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to provide solid training in education pre-service programs for health, safety and well-being for all.

SO:CW:NM



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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Executive Members

**FROM:** Sharon O'Halloran, General Secretary  
Bobbi Taillefer, Deputy General Secretary  
Nicolette Lane, Executive Assistant, Health and Safety Services

**DATE:** April 28, 2020

**RE:** **ETFO Multi-Year Strategy on Violence in Schools - Interim report and proposed next steps**

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At the June 2016 Executive meeting, the following motion was referred to the General Secretary for study and report to the October 2016 Executive meeting:

- (41) That the General Secretary study and report, with recommendations, on a comprehensive strategy to address violence in public elementary schools, to the October 2016 Executive Meeting.

A seven-member, cross-service area working group engaged in research and assessment of the complex and challenging issues leading to increased violence in schools. In October 2016, the Executive accepted all recommendations of the working group set out in its 59-page report on actions needed to address violence and the health, safety and well-being of both educators and students.

In the fall of 2019, staff involved in ETFO's Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence reviewed the accomplishments in each of the strands from March 2017 to now.

Overall, ETFO's multi-year strategy to address violence in schools has yielded results, among them:

- There has been movement from the Ministries of Labour and Education to implement a common reporting tool for workplace violence, serious student incidents and injuries, as well as the MOL's guidance document;
- School boards and members are much more focused on reporting requirements;
- The MOL has made initial consultation visits with school boards; and
- Media and public awareness of the relationship between violence and the lack of government funding supports for students with unique needs is high.

## **Proposed Next Steps 2019-2022**

Violence in elementary schools continues to be a pervasive and critical issue, affecting ETFO members across the province. There is no doubt that continuing government cuts to education is the biggest barrier in reducing violent incidents through proper supports for students with unique needs.

In surveying how far ETFO has come in meeting the goals of its multi-year strategy, some gaps were identified, particularly with regard to supporting local efforts and the training of members. Below are some initial considerations for new action items pertaining to the motions of the strategy; these items include but are not limited to:

- Development of a checklist and resources to help guide local leaders and health and safety representatives in dealing with workplace violence;
- Ongoing stewards' training;
- A pilot online webinar with an accompanying resource booklet to support site-based Joint Health and Safety Committees;
- Distribution of the Risk Re-Assessment Checklist currently being piloted and reviewed by the OFL H&S committee;
- Continue working with the PWGHS on developing the training to accompany the notification of risk template in the MOL Guide;
- Lobbying the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development for an Education Sector Workplace Violence Prevention Initiative;
- Lobbying the Ministry of Labour to gather quantifiable data on what school boards are doing to address violence, e.g. safety plans, risk assessments, classroom evacuations, temporary exclusions or other measurements of school board accountability for addressing violence issues;
- Lobbying to establish a leadership table of ministers, unions and other stakeholders to deal with violence prevention in children and youth; and
- Further supports for members dealing with students' high risk behaviours, for example a Health and Safety Special Topics Conference for special education teachers and health and safety representatives.

Further strategies will be informed by a mid-strategy evaluation and the ETFO Violence Symposium report, which was received in March 2020.

### ***Mid-Strategy Evaluation:***

In order to fully realize ETFO's continuing multi-year strategy on violence, a more in-depth assessment and analysis needs to be undertaken. That would include:

- Any quantifiable data on increases in member reporting of violence, including data from FOI requests to school boards and data received by ETFO locals from school boards;
- Data on turnover of ETFO stewards to help assess training needs;
- Analytics on ETFO video views, visits to [etfohealthandsafety.ca](http://etfohealthandsafety.ca) workplace violence pages, member e-newsletter views of workplace violence articles etc.;
- Audit of school board's online reporting tool;
- Any quantifiable data from the University of Ottawa summary report;
- Any information revealed from the root causes of violence literature review; and

- Any recommendations that result from the report of ETFO's Workplace Violence Symposium.

ETFO's multi-year strategy to address workplace violence should continue to build on the recognized, ongoing actions established in the initial phase of the strategy, and the development of new action items for continuing the strategy. This interim memo will be followed up with a more detailed final memo outlining the next steps for the strategy.

**Recommendation:**

Nil.

SO:NL:DP





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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Executive Members

**FROM:** Sharon O'Halloran, General Secretary  
Lisa Mastrobuono, Deputy General Secretary  
Nicolette Lane, Executive Assistant, Health and Safety Services

**DATE:** January 19, 2021

**RE:** **ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence - Final Report**

---

At the June 2016 Executive meeting, the following motion was referred to the General Secretary for study and report to the October 2016 Executive meeting:

- (41) That the General Secretary study and report, with recommendations, on a comprehensive strategy to address violence in public elementary schools, to the October 2016 Executive Meeting.

A seven-member, cross-service area work group engaged in research and assessment of the complex and challenging issues leading to increased violence in schools. In October 2016, the Executive accepted all recommendations the working group set out in its 59-page report. The report delineated actions needed to address violence and the health, safety and well-being of both educators and students.

In the ensuing year, a comprehensive multi-year strategy to address workplace violence in elementary schools in Ontario was developed based on motions passed by the Executive. In the spring of 2017, the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence* was implemented.

In the fall of 2019, staff involved in the multi-year strategy began a review of the accomplishments in each of the multi-year strategy's strands implemented between March 2017 and April 2020. The resulting Interim Report, outlined in May 2020 Executive memorandum 13:16, identified:

- gaps and proposed next steps;
- the need for a mid-strategy evaluation assessment and analysis; and
- the need to continue to build on the recognized, ongoing actions established in the initial phase of the strategy, and to extend the strategy with new action items based on the analysis.

## Proposed Next Steps:

The proposed next steps outlined in the Interim Report included new action items pertaining to the motions of the strategy. All of those next steps have now been included in the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence*.

## Mid-Strategy Evaluation

In order to fully realize ETFO's continuing multi-year strategy on violence in schools, a mid-strategy evaluation was undertaken. A variety of sources, data and information pertinent to addressing workplace violence in schools that could inform the direction of the multi-year strategy were assessed and analyzed. This evaluation included:

- Any quantifiable data on increases in member reporting of violence, including data from freedom of information (FOI) requests to school boards and data received by ETFO locals from school boards:
  - FOI requests to school boards and data received by ETFO locals from school boards did not yield enough quantifiable data for substantive analysis to inform the strategy. Going forward, ETFO locals will be provided with violent incident reporting data through aggregated summary reports generated from a school board's online incident reporting tool, which school boards are now required to provide to locals in compliance with central agreement terms.
- Data on turnover of ETFO stewards to help assess training needs:
  - Data on the turnover of ETFO stewards is not currently collected, so it was not available to help assess training needs.
- An audit of school boards' online reporting tool:
  - The audit found 11 school boards were not in compliance with Memorandum SB06 (i.e., the Ministry of Education's April 2018 memo regarding funding to school boards to support the adoption of an online incident reporting tool). Teacher/occasional teacher and education worker central grievances have been filed as a result of this non-compliance.
- Any information on the root causes of violence revealed by OISE researchers in their literature review, prepared for ETFO in 2019, called *Youth violence at school in the early grades: A critical review of the literature on root causes*:
  - The literature review indicated an assessment of violence in schools in the early years encompasses a range of complex issues: workplace safety, child development, inclusion, discipline/classroom management, and special education needs and support;
  - The following two quotes are from that review and provide guidance on how the root causes of violence in early grades need to be effectively addressed:

- “Any serious interest in addressing violence in early grades classrooms and schools will require multiple, time-intensive investments that will include but not be limited to: support for teachers’ work and working conditions, including attention to class size and classroom supports; professional training for educators on a range of strategies of relationship building, conflict and classroom management, and peacebuilding.”
  - “There is not only one root cause to the problem of violence in the early grades. We say this not only because of the complexity of defining the problem or identifying the cause. We say this to point a direction forward for changes and improvements: Because the sources of the problem are multiple, the remedies for addressing it must also be multiple. Addressing root causes will require a range of investments: in teacher practice, in classroom and family supports, in schooling routines, in the way we understand children’s behaviours. Readers hoping for a single instruction on which direction to move will be disappointed by this conclusion but we suggest that many interventions may be necessary; none on its own is likely to be sufficient.”
- Any recommendations that resulted from the summary report of ETFO’s Workplace Violence Symposium:
  - In addition to a number of proposed specific next steps, the summary report indicated that “schools cannot deal with the issues of violence and mental health on their own so there needs to be an interconnected system approach that engages the support of ministries, public health, school boards, agencies, organizations, families and students.”
    - These partners would first need to meet to “draft a framework for what is possible to address violence in schools.”
    - The next step requires the “establishment of a provincial leadership table for the prevention of violence in schools with the mandate and the expertise to address the health, safety and well-being of *everyone* in the school community.”
- Any quantifiable data from the University of Ottawa summary report called *Facing the Facts: The Escalating Crisis of Violence Against Elementary School Educators in Ontario*.
- The report can be found here: <http://educatorviolence.net/>
  - Data from the University of Ottawa summary report highlighted a number of key findings and provided the supporting data to confirm much of what we know about violence in schools. The following key findings have been assessed as actionable items for the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence*:
    - workplace harassment and violence in schools is an escalating crisis;

- vulnerability to workplace harassment and violence can be heightened by factors such as gender, race, disability and sexual orientation;
  - there are concerns about the effects of witnessing school violence for staff and students;
  - there are systemic barriers to reporting harassment and violence;
  - there are a number of societal factors that correspond with the rising rate of harassment and violence in elementary schools; and
  - “Educators overwhelmingly identify the need for more and better allocation and access to staff, supports (e.g., educational assistants, mental health specialists), and the earlier identification of student needs. They also note the need for more educational resources, clear policies that are followed, consistently applied consequences for violent, harassing, and inappropriate behaviour, and better trained, supportive, and more responsive administrators.”
- Public Health Ontario released a literature review in August 2020 called *Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Interventions to Prevent and Mitigate the Impact of ACEs in Canada*. The literature review can be found here: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/a/2020/adverse-childhood-experiences-report.pdf>
  - The literature review includes the following statement:
    - “The second part of this initiative is an environmental scan of the current activities to address ACEs that are being planned or implemented in Ontario. The environmental scan report will follow the publication of this review. Together, it is the hope of the ACEs Collaborative Working Group that these documents provide the foundation for future planning and implementation of evidence-based programming to prevent and mitigate the impact of ACEs in Ontario and Canada.”

ETFO members have told us they are deeply concerned about the escalating incidents of violence in their schools. Data from the Workplace Violence Survey in the fall of 2017, the University of Ottawa survey from December 2018, and from the Member Poll conducted each spring confirm that these are ongoing, persistent concerns for our members.

The results of the University of Ottawa study suggest that in the past 12 years, since the first Canadian surveys examining violence against educators were conducted, there has been “an almost seven-fold increase in the experience of violence against educators.” This is clearly evidence that the training and advocacy required to support members dealing with workplace violence must continue.

### **ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence 2019-2023**

The *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence* should continue to build on the recognized, ongoing actions established in the initial phase of the strategy. In addition, it should incorporate the development of new actions to renew and continue

that strategy. This memo is the more detailed final memo outlining the next steps for the strategy.

## Communications

- Status reports to Admin Team, Executive and Representative Council:
  - Ongoing regular updates.
- Communications Template:
  - Continue to incorporate visual branding (graphic design and word moniker) and messaging (common language; key issues and actions) in communications, trainings, programs and materials;
  - Continue to use the eNewsletter for communications;
  - Ongoing updates to the health and safety section of the ETFO website and the [etfohealthandsafety.ca](http://etfohealthandsafety.ca) website; and
  - Continue to provide access to workplace violence related resources, tools and documents on ETFO Secure for local leaders and health and safety representatives.

## Capacity Building

- Continue to maintain and build health and safety capacity in ETFO's central and local agreements, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD).
- Also, continue ETFO's association with other labour and education affiliates, including participation in the Provincial Working Group on Health and Safety (PWGHS):
  - Continue working with the PWGHS on training to accompany the notification of risk template in the Ministry of Labour's (MOL's) document *Workplace Violence in School Boards: A Guide to the Law*;
  - Continue to press the Ministry of Education, through the PWGHS, for a review of Policy and Program Memoranda (PPMs) 144 and 145, including assurances of supports for students involved in serious student incidents required in PPM 145;
  - Advocate that the Ministry of Education agree to a common online reporting tool audit for compliance with Memorandum SB06 and central agreement terms in order to facilitate the provincial collection of this data;
  - Follow up on school boards' online reporting tool compliance and analysis of data collected in the aggregated summary reports;
  - Continue to monitor MLTSD reports, orders and challenge orders (or lack of orders) through the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) appeal process as an appellant or intervener;
  - Monitor compliance with *Occupational Health and Safety Act* Section 52(1) in each school board and, when there is non-compliance, ensure that the MOL is involved through the complaints process;
  - Follow up with the MLTSD on the Workplace Violence in Education initiative (which was planned for 2020-2021 but was postponed);

- Continue to submit written and in-person input around addressing workplace violence in the education sector to the annual MOL Consultation: Safe At Work Ontario; and
  - Monitor the addition of mental health to the MLTSD's five-year strategy and advocate for continued recognition of psychological injury.
- Continue to maintain and build ETFO organizational capacity in relation to the multi-year strategy:
    - Health and Safety Services will continue to be responsible for the planning, implementation and oversight of the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence* and *ETFO's Action on Violence in Schools*;
    - Health and Safety Services will engage in cross-service area collaboration when appropriate to ensure a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing workplace violence in schools is maintained. That includes incorporating an anti-oppression framework in the approach;
    - Health and Safety Services will investigate whether the turnover of stewards and/or health and safety representatives can be tracked by ETFO, as this data would help assess training needs;
    - Training would be provided to both new and experienced ETFO Executive staff so that there is consistent messaging from the provincial office;
    - ETFO training and programs will continue to be imbued with aspects of health, safety and wellness for all, as appropriate; and
    - The capacity to develop strategies to address the vulnerability of designated groups, including gender-based violence and anti-Black racism, will be investigated in conjunction with Equity and Women's Services.

## **Training and Resources**

- Continue to provide guidance, tools, training and information:
  - Develop a checklist and resources to help guide local leaders and health and safety representatives in dealing with workplace violence;
  - Distribute the "Violence Risk Re-Assessment Checklist for Elementary and Secondary Schools" that has been reviewed and approved by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) Health and Safety Committee;
  - Pilot an online webinar with accompanying resource booklet to support site-based Joint Health and Safety Committees;
  - Provide additional supports for members dealing with students' high risk behaviours, including the Health and Safety Special Topics Conference for special education resource teachers/learning support teachers, ESPs, health and safety representatives and local leaders;
  - Investigate the possibility of maintaining the Women Addressing Gender-Based Workplace Violence WP Conference for women members as an annual event for the next few years;
  - Continue to provide training through workshops and webinars for local leaders, health and safety representatives and members, e.g., rights and responsibilities, reporting, work refusals, risk assessments, etc.;

- Provide ongoing steward training and update workplace violence training modules, as needed; and
- Continue to provide information on workplace violence to local leaders and health and safety representative at the provincial health and safety conference and at regional health and safety trainings so they can support members who are experiencing violent incidents.

## **Multi-Media Resources**

- Continue to maintain and build multi-media access, capacity, outreach and resources:
  - Update and continue to build ETFO website and ETFO health and safety website accessibility and capacity;
  - Identify opportunities to develop specific content on workplace violence and harassment in regular provincial outreach channels including the eNewsletter, *Voice* magazine, *Voice* online and steward mailings;
  - Update the member brochure, poster, wallet card, video, interactive flowchart and Glossary of Definitions, as needed; and
  - Investigate the development of new multi-media resources.

## **Lobbying**

- Continue lobbying the government and school board-related organizations:
  - Lobby the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to gather quantifiable data on what school boards are doing to address violence, (e.g., safety plans, risk assessments, classroom evacuations, temporary exclusions or other measurements of school board accountability for addressing violence issues);
  - Engage in lobbying to establish a leadership table of ministers, unions and other stakeholders (including public health) to deal with violence prevention in children and youth;
  - Lobby the Ministry of Education for earlier identification of and intervention on behalf of students in the early years grades;
  - Lobby the Ministry of Education for the establishment of a round table to discuss the complex issues affecting the early years;
  - Lobby the Ministry of Education for additional training for school administrators on school board policies and procedures concerning harassment and violence. To eliminate barriers to reporting, the training should be conducted alongside union leaders and Joint Health and Safety Committee members;
  - Lobby the Ministry of Education to increase resources and supports for students and staff impacted by violence in schools, particularly for racialized students; and
  - Continue to seek opportunities to work with school board-related organizations to increase compliance with current policies and regulations and expand support for concerns and issues in school environments.

- Continue to build relationships with organizations:
  - Engage in collaborative discussion with Children’s Mental Health Ontario and People for Education about supporting a whole school approach to student mental health; and
  - Build partnerships with Public Health Ontario and local public health authorities.

### **Building Better Schools**

- Continue to use the *Building Better Schools* campaign as an avenue for two-way communication regarding student supports, and as a starting point for building broader lobbying campaigns:
  - Update, as needed, outreach flyers that include information about violence in schools;
  - Evaluate a possible campaign about student mental health;
  - Work with Communications staff on possible mental health lobby action to engage MPPs on Lobby Day; and
  - Continue advocacy around fixing the funding formula and providing supports for Special Education.
- Continue to build engagement for student support with community stakeholders:
  - Continue to build a database of parents and organizations focused on student supports.

Violence in elementary schools continues to be a pervasive and critical issue affecting ETFO members across the province. Health and Safety Services will continue to take the lead on cross-service area initiatives to address this issue. The service area will review progress on these initiatives annually, and will undertake another full review of the *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence* in 2023.

### **Recommendation:**

1. That the Executive approve the 2019-23 *ETFO Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence* as outlined in February 2021 Executive memorandum 13:14.

SO:LM:NL:DP