

ETFO launches all-member survey, focus groups to address rise of violence in schools

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Toronto, ON – The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) will be launching an all-member survey this week to address the rise of violence and aggressive behaviours in elementary schools. The online survey will take place from February 8 to March 8; focus groups will be held at the end of March.

“Violence against ETFO members remains a concerning, pervasive and growing issue,” says ETFO President Karen Brown. “Many school spaces are not safe, especially for those working on the front lines with students whose needs are not being met. We hope the data collected will finally convince the Ford government to take action to address the unacceptable and troubling rise of violence in schools.”

An all-member survey on workplace violence conducted by ETFO in 2017 showed that violence was a significant and growing problem in elementary schools. Despite knowing teachers and education workers are being injured at an alarming rate, the provincial government continues to fail to address violence in schools.

School environments must be physically and psychologically safe. Students are not receiving the care nor the support they are legally entitled to because the province's funding for special education has not kept up with the growing and actual needs of students. Notes Brown, “At its core, this is a human rights issue. Without adequate funding of dedicated resources and supports for students who need them, violent incidents will continue to threaten safety, and compromise learning and working conditions.”

Results from this year's survey and focus groups, which is being conducted by Strategic Communications Inc., are expected in spring 2023. ETFO will use the data to continue to raise public awareness of the issue, advocate for change, and develop member resources and programs aimed at empowering members to assert their health and safety rights when faced with violence at work.

ETFO's [Multi-Year Strategy to Address Workplace Violence](#) publicly highlights the workplace violence ETFO members experience every day. To learn more about ETFO's multi-year strategy and workers' rights, visit etfohealthandsafety.ca.

[ETFO](#) represents approximately 83,000 members, including public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, and professional support personnel.

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