

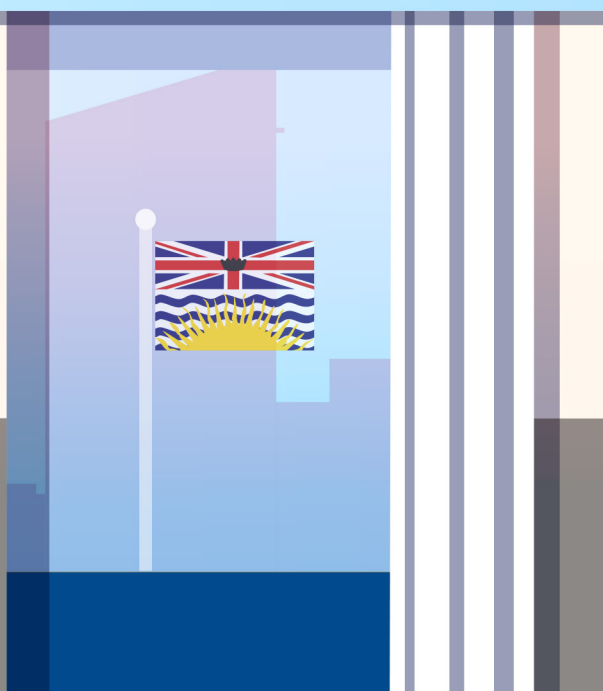
Principals' Work and Well-Being in British Columbia

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Dr. Katina Pollock

Booklet #3

Principals' Health and Safety



PART OF A SERIES OF 4 BOOKLETS

OVERVIEW

This booklet summarizes the findings of a research survey and explores principals' health and safety, including:

- **contributing factors,**
- **how the issues manifest, and**
- **actions that principals can take.**

THE RESPONDENTS

1239
invited

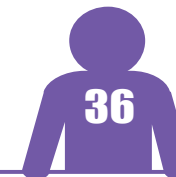
38.3%
response rate



**elementary
principals**



**secondary
principals**



**elem/sec
principals**

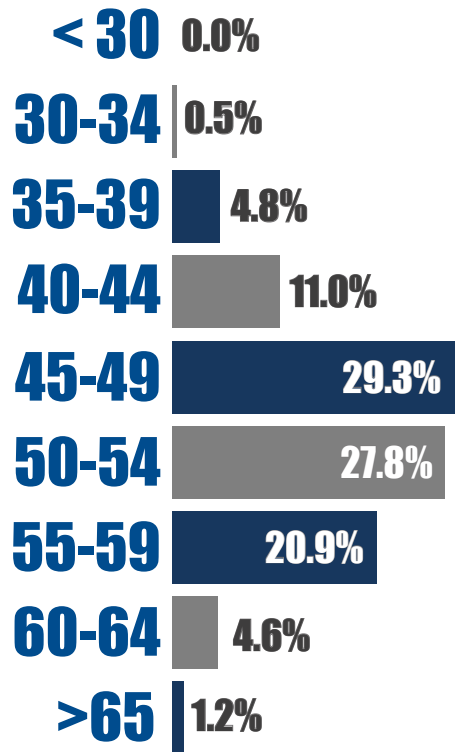


**middle school
principals**

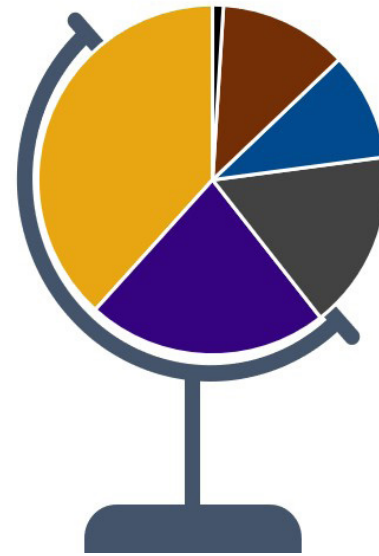
GENDER



AGE

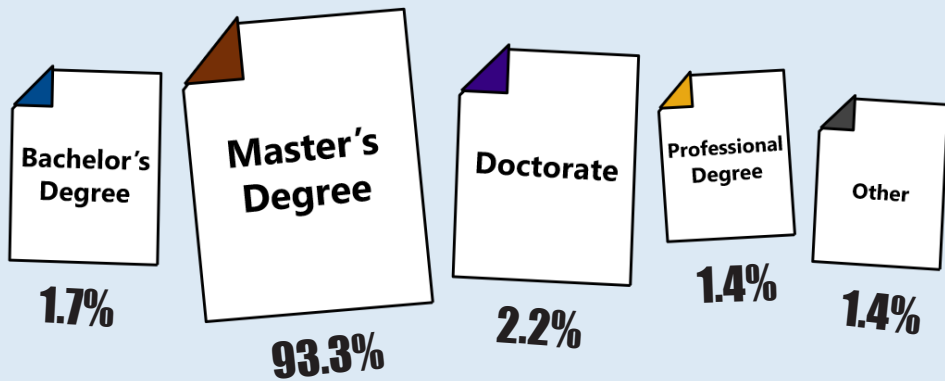


SCHOOL LOCATION

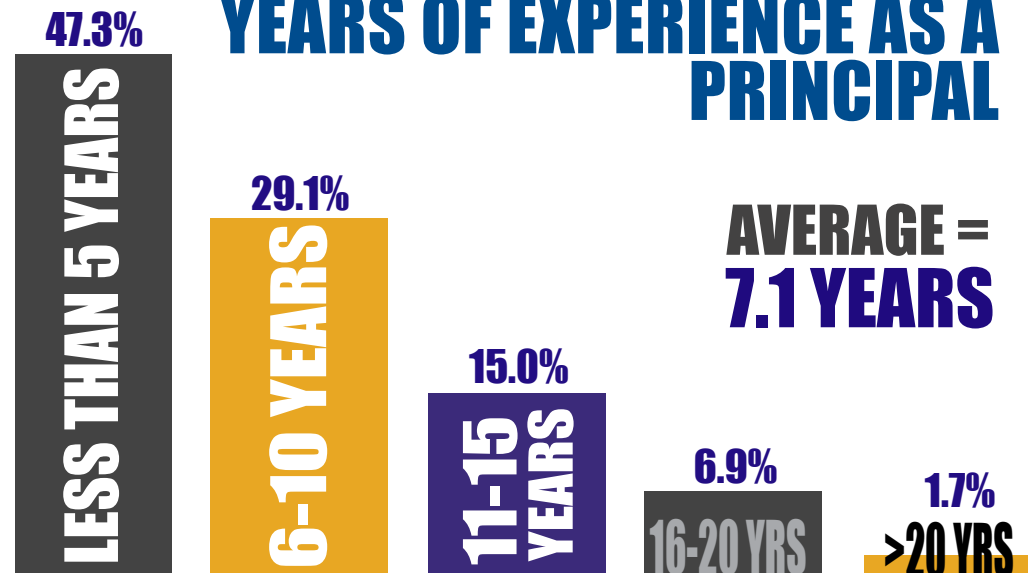


56 school boards

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ACHIEVED



YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A PRINCIPAL



CONTRIBUTORS TO DRAINING SITUATIONS AT WORK

For principals, these issues led to draining situations at work **OFTEN** or **ALWAYS**:

TOP 3



VOLUME OF
DAILY EMAILS

70.1%



MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
AMONG STUDENTS

68.9%



LACK OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION
SUPPORT/RESOURCES

63.2%

>50%

Teacher resistance to change
Mental health issues among teachers

45-50%

High levels of support needed by teachers

40-45%

Student discipline (excluding bullying)
Lack of recognition for principals throughout the system

35-40%

Union issues
Dealing with concerns about teacher performance

SCHOOL COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS TO DRAINING SITUATIONS AT WORK

Lack of special education resources & services in the community **53.6%**

Mental health issues among parents/ guardians **49.1%**

Parents/guardians not involved in their child(ren)'s education **36.7%**

Meeting with parents/ guardians **31.6%**

Social issues in school community **30.2%**

Lack of support from school's community **12.5%**

Racial or ethnic tensions in school community **7.6%**

These issues with the local school community led to draining situations at work for principals OFTEN or ALWAYS.

SAFETY

While many principals have not personally experienced discrimination in the workplace, others have faced various kinds.

43.1%
NONE

19.5%
AGE-BASED

7.6%
RACE-BASED

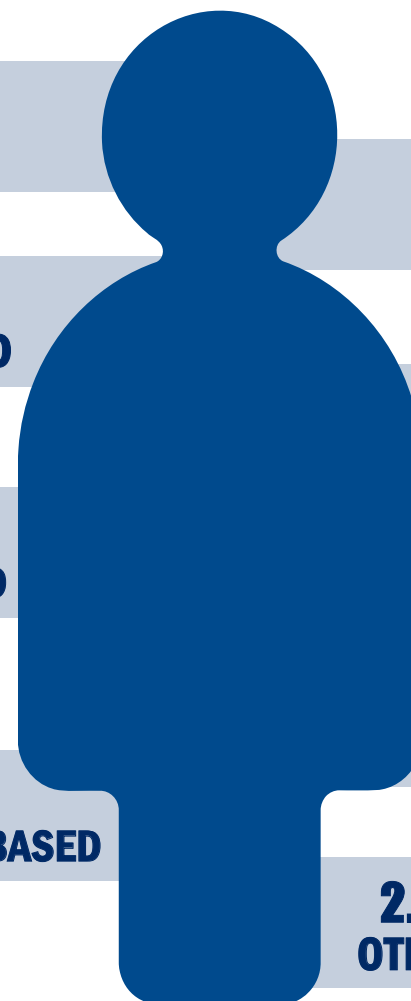
4.9%
RELIGION-BASED

27.5%
GENDER-BASED

8.2%
ABILITY-BASED

6.3%
SEXUAL
ORIENTATION
-BASED

2.8%
OTHER



SAFETY

Respondents have faced various safety situations in their careers. The following is the percentage who have experienced harassment, physical assault, and threats in their current role as principals and by which groups.

HARASSED	PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED	THREATENED	GROUPS
60.5%	2.5%	52.0%	PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)/FAMILY MEMBER(S)
28.5%	0.2%	11.8%	TEACHER(S)
19.4%	0.0%	6.6%	UNION REPRESENTATIVE(S)
17.8%	38.3%	39.8%	STUDENT(S)
16.7%	45.4%	20.3%	NONE
10.8%	0.0%	3.4%	EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT(S)
8.2%	0.0%	3.2%	SUPERINTENDENT(S)
5.5%	0.2%	1.3%	OTHER SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER(S)
4.9%	0.0%	1.1%	OTHER PRINCIPAL(S)
3.2%	0.0%	1.1%	TRUSTEE(S)
3.2%	0.0%	0.2%	FACILITY SERVICES
3.0%	0.0%	0.6%	SUBSTITUTE TEACHER(S)/TTOC
2.7%	0.6%	2.3%	OTHER
1.7%	0.0%	0.4%	VICE-PRINCIPAL(S)

SAFETY

AFTER BEING HARASSED, PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED, AND/OR THREATENED, PRINCIPALS WILL:

- Report to senior management/director/HR (53.9%)
- Talk with family members/friends (50.9%)
- Consult with other colleagues within the district school board (50.7%)
- Follow specific protocol (27.9%)
- Contact their professional association (22.8%)
- Report to the police (22.0%)
- Request support be brought on school site (13.3%)

9.9%
will do nothing

PRINCIPALS HAVE EXPERIENCED A VARIETY OF UNSAFE SITUATIONS IN THEIR WORKPLACES:



A FORTUNATE 2% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE NEVER HAD TO DEAL WITH THESE SITUATIONS.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Ministry of Education

- continue to strengthen its relationship with WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Labour, and BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) Health & Safety Centre to work together to implement the Health and Safety programs and initiatives (e.g., the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Workers Compensation Act, How to Implement a Formal Occupational Health and Safety Program, WorkSafeBC Compensation Practice Directives) as a part of BC public education system

For District School Boards

- create or update a quick and handy list for principals on any available policies, procedures, and contact information they might need for easy reference
- organize campaigns and programs to encourage safe and respectful behaviours and cultures within schools and communities
- build stronger working relationships with other public sector organizations to support employee wellness

For Professional Associations

- expand and diversify its member support services and Early Intervention Program to direct more attention and resources to principals' occupational health and safety
- expand legal and policy consultation services to school leaders on safety issues with students, parents, and teachers
- build working relationships with other organizations and institutions such as the WorkSafeBC, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, and university researchers to provide evidence-informed service

For Principals

- build a repertoire of healthy coping strategies that can promote physical, emotional, and psychological well-being—please see the Coping Strategies booklet
- know your rights and the processes in place that support you when there are safety issues at work

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For the full research report, visit:

<https://bit.ly/BCprincipals2020>

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