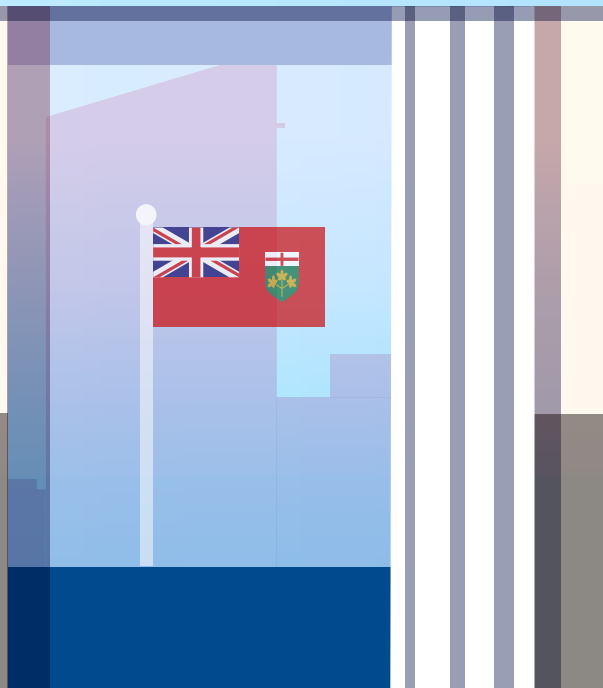
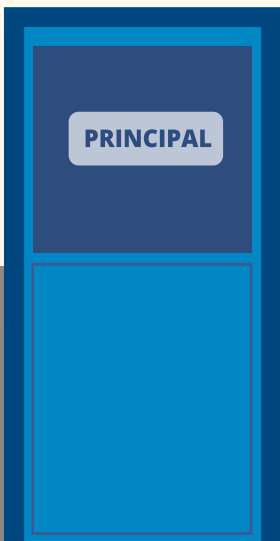


# Principals' Work and Well-Being in Ontario

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Booklet #2  
Well-Being of School Principals



**PART OF A SERIES OF 4 BOOKLETS**

# Overview

This booklet summarizes the findings of a research survey and describes principals' well-being along six dimensions:

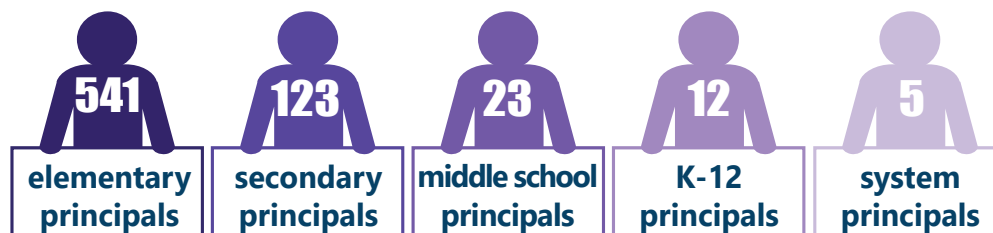
- physical
- cognitive
- psychological
- emotional
- social
- spiritual

and provides evidence-informed recommendations to better support principals' overall health and well-being.

## The Respondents

**2419**  
invited

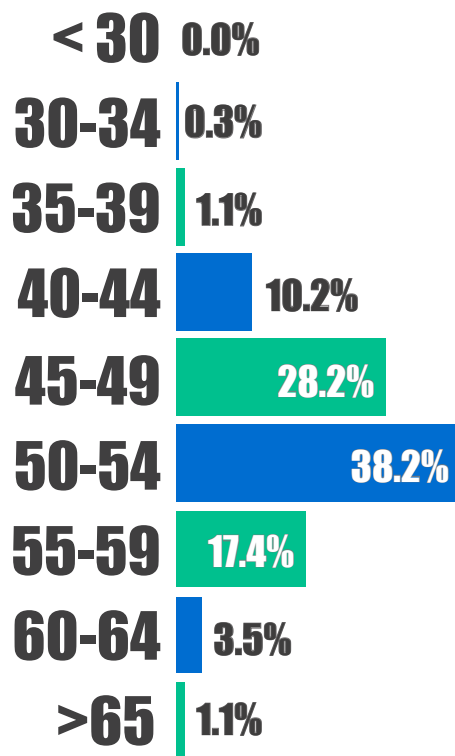
**35.6%**  
response rate



## Gender



## Age

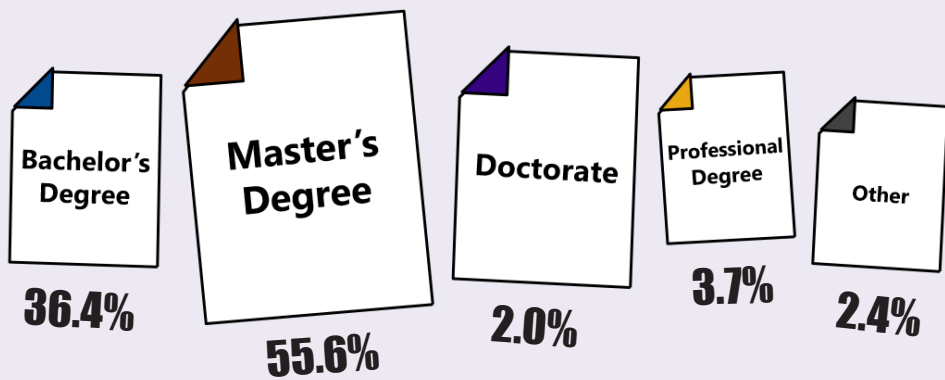


## School Location

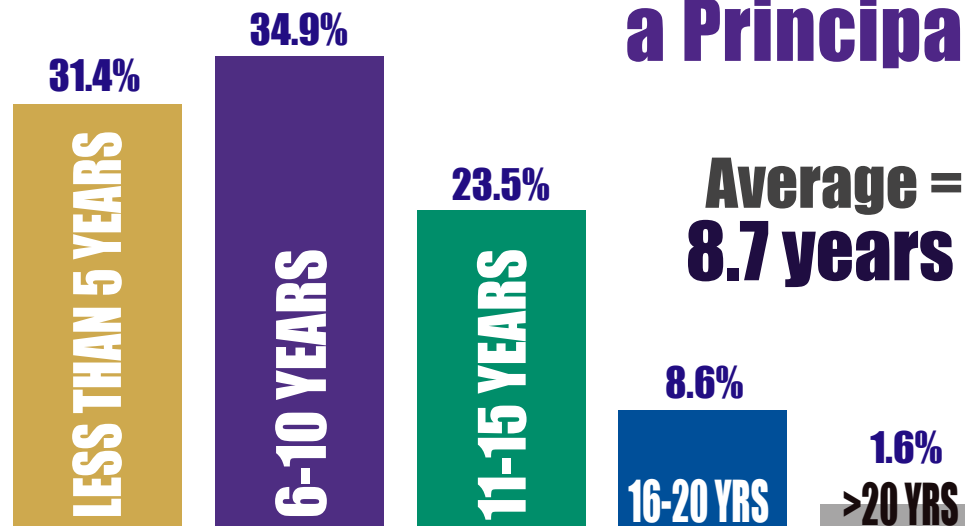


**33** school boards

## Highest Level of Education Achieved



## Years of Experience as a Principal



# Overall Well-Being

## Feelings of Overall Well-Being at Work

5.2%  
very poor 

25.1%  
poor 

25.3%  
neutral 

39.6%  
good 

4.8%  
excellent 

If principals felt drained by their work, this is the extent to which the following aspects of their well-being were **CONSIDERABLY** or **EXTREMELY** affected:

**Emotional** 64.7%

**Psychological** 45.9%

**Physical** 44.0%

**Social** 34.9%

**Cognitive** 34.2%

**Spiritual** 15.0%

When combining the **POOR** and **VERY POOR** feelings of principals toward each aspect of well-being, they felt the **worst PHYSICALLY** and the **best SPIRITUALLY**.

Overall Physical Well-Being 40.8%

Overall Emotional Well-Being 32.7%

Overall Psychological Well-Being 20.7%

Overall Cognitive Well-Being 15.8%

Overall Social Well-Being 11.3%

Overall Spiritual Well-Being 9.9%

# Physical Well-Being

## Feelings of Overall Physical Well-Being at Work

6.9%  
very poor 

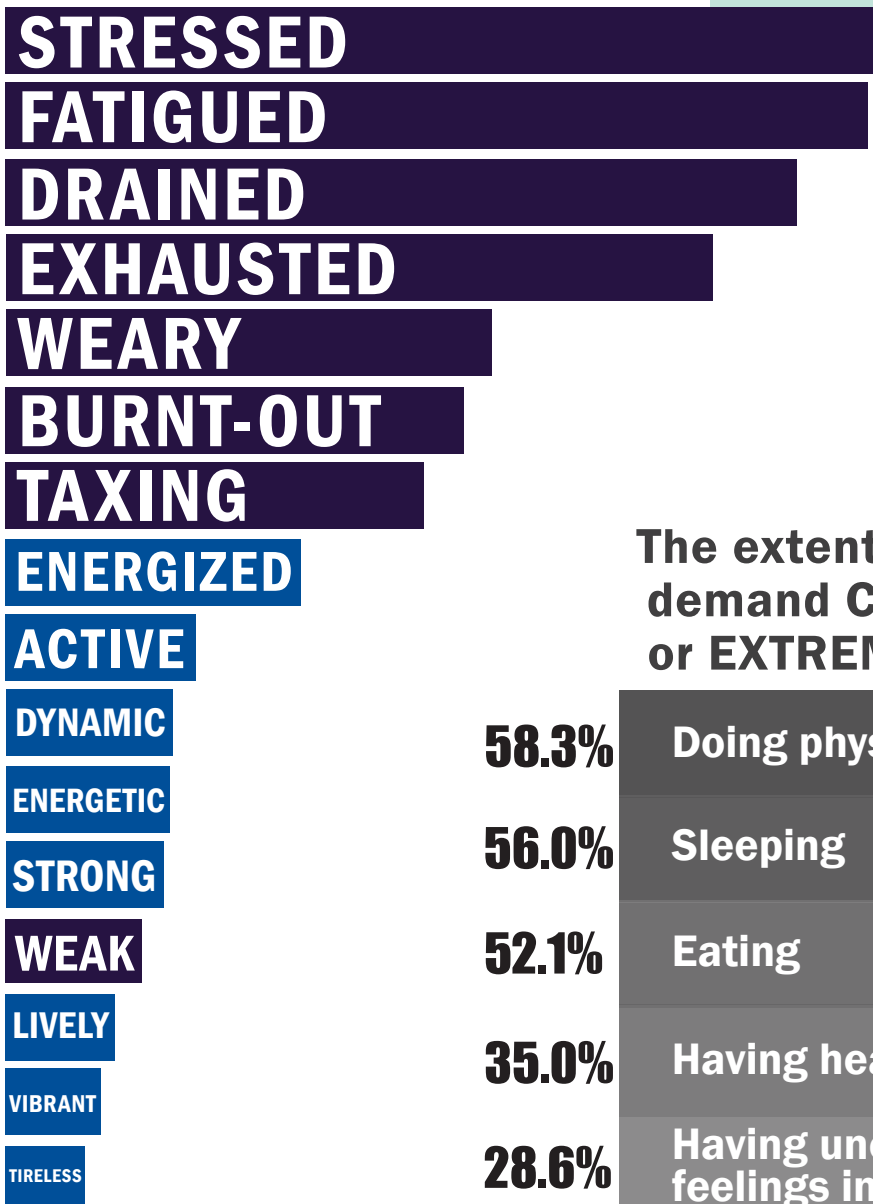
33.9%  
poor 

33.2%  
neutral 

23.8%  
good 

2.2%  
excellent 


How principals' work made them feel physically in the week prior:





When feeling drained from work, the extent to which these aspects of principals' physical well-being were **CONSIDERABLY** or **EXTREMELY** affected:


The extent to which work demand **CONSIDERABLY** or **EXTREMELY** affected:





ENERGY  72.9%


FITNESS  62.0%

SLEEP  58.6%

DIET  55.7%

WEIGHT  48.2%

PHYSICAL HEALTH  38.6%

STRESS-RELATED ILLNESS  30.1%

# Emotional Well-Being

## Feelings of Overall Emotional Well-Being at Work

7.1%  
very poor



25.6%  
poor



30.5%  
neutral



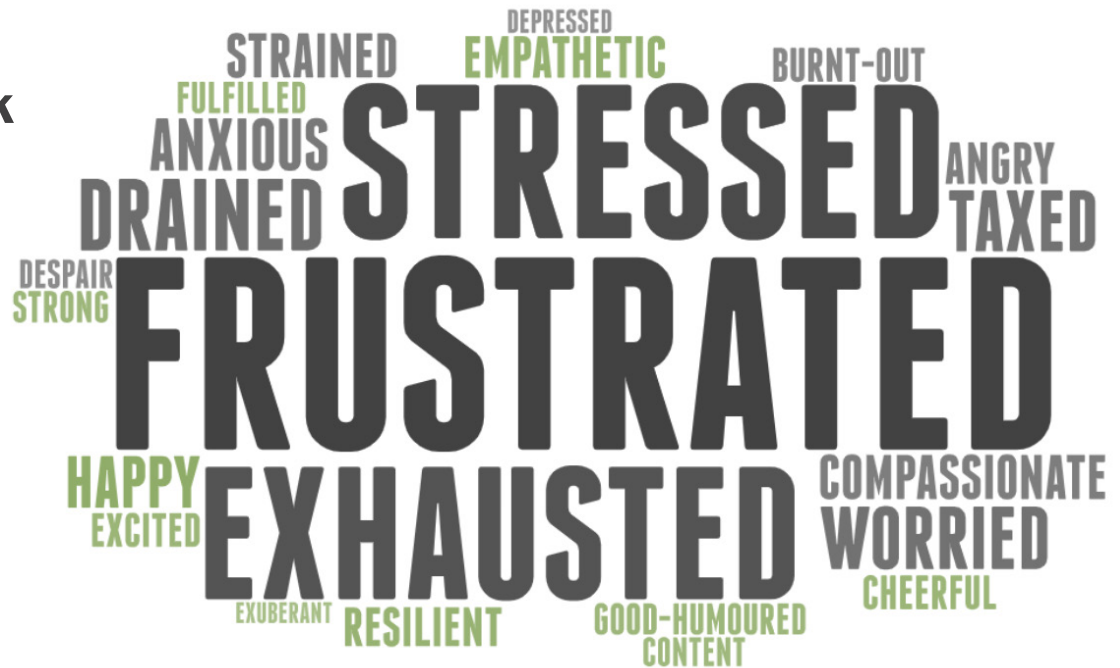
33.6%  
good



3.1%  
excellent



In the week prior, how principals' work made them feel emotionally:



If principals were feeling emotionally drained by their work, the extent to which each of the following described how they OFTEN or ALWAYS felt:

69.3%

I feel passionate about my work.

67.7%

I worry about work-related issues.

47.0%

I feel happy about my work.

44.8%

I feel satisfied about my work.

30.2%

I feel excited when thinking about going to work.

16.9%

I feel a sense of despair about my work.

The **TOP 10** ways principals' work made them feel cognitively in the prior week:

**Disorganized (41.0%)**

**Forgetful (41.0%)**

**Focused (39.3%)**

**Unfocused (39.0%)**

**Attentive (35.5%)**

**Mindful (33.0%)**

**Delayed memory retrieval (31.0%)**

**Absent-minded (31.0%)**

**Active/quick-witted (25.5%)**

**Indecisive (23.6%)**

# Cognitive Well-Being

The extent to which principals felt each of the following work-related statements **OFTEN** or **ALWAYS** applied to them.

## Feelings of Overall Cognitive Well-Being at Work

**2.1%**  
very poor 

**13.7%**  
poor 

**30.2%**  
neutral 

**47.8%**  
good 

**6.2%**  
excellent 

**MOST**

I am able to make difficult work-related decisions

I am able to make decisions under high pressure

I am able to initiate tasks

I am able to think clearly about work-related issues

I am able to follow complex procedures at work

I am able to prioritize competing demands

I am able to connect abstract thought to concrete issues

I am able to engage in higher order thinking

I am able to make decisions in a fast-paced manner

I am able to self-monitor

I am able to multi-task

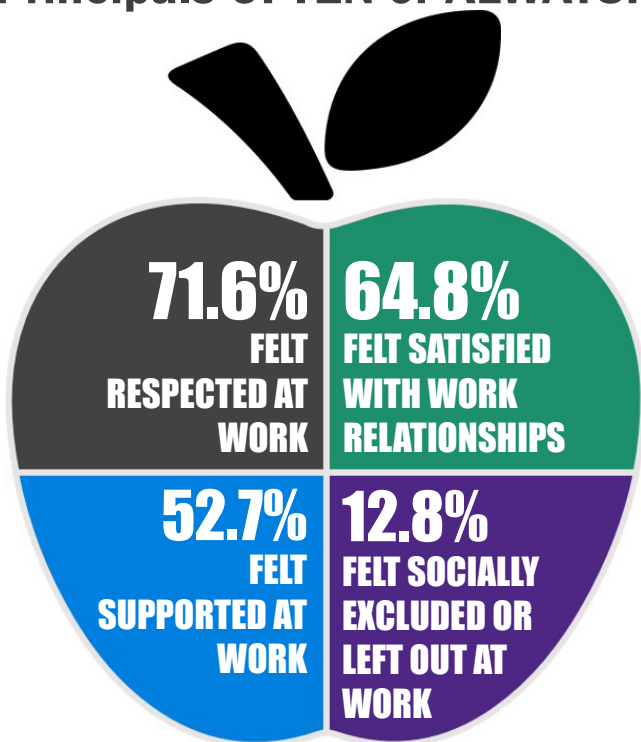
I am able to hold attention in a hectic environment

I find my memory recall is challenged

**LEAST**

# Social Well-Being

Principals OFTEN or ALWAYS:



Ranking of groups principals felt they OFTEN or ALWAYS have positive relationships with:

- Students (96.4%)
- Vice-principals (92.1%)
- School support staff (88.4%)
- Administrative assistants (87.5%)
- Teachers (87.2%)
- Community leaders (83.0%)
- Parents/guardians (81.7%)
- Board office staff (71.8%)
- Superintendents (70.8%)
- Trustees (61.8%)
- Union reps (54.3%)

Note: Data was collected during labour dispute.

How the work of principals made them feel socially in the prior week:



## Feelings of Overall Social Well-Being at Work

**1.8%**  
very poor

**9.5%**  
poor

**26.8%**  
neutral

**51.9%**  
good

**10.0%**  
excellent



# Psychological Well-Being

## Feelings of Overall Psychological Well-Being at Work

4.6%  
very poor



16.1%  
poor



33.2%  
neutral



42.4%  
good



3.7%  
excellent



The extent to which principals felt each of the following work-related statements **OFTEN** or **ALWAYS** applied to them:

**92.0%** My colleagues know they can trust me

**86.2%** I have the sense that I have developed a lot as a principal since I began the role

**76.4%** In general, I feel confident and positive about myself as a principal

**67.7%** I know that I can trust my colleagues

**67.5%** I enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things

**65.2%** I judge myself by what I think is important to get the job done, not by what others think is important

**62.6%** In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I work

**60.2%** I am not afraid to voice my work opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of stakeholders

**58.4%** I feel a sense of fulfillment

**53.0%** I have been able to build a work environment and a work-style for myself that is much to my liking

**50.6%** I enjoy making work plans for the future

**42.1%** I feel comfortable challenging the implicit "rules of the game"

**33.6%** I feel comfortable asking for forgiveness rather than permission

**27.1%** I feel lonely because I have few close colleagues with whom to share my concerns

**10.6%** I live, work one day at a time and don't really think about the future

# Spiritual Well-Being

## Feelings of Overall Spiritual Well-Being at Work

3.8%  
very poor



6.1%  
poor



55.8%  
neutral



27.6%  
good



6.7%  
excellent



The extent to which the following spiritual and religious statements described principals and their work:

N/A-NEVER-RARELY    SOMEWHAT    OFTEN-ALWAYS

I often attend religious services to give me strength to deal with work-related issues

81.7%    7.5%    10.8%

Attending religious services provides me with a sense of direction and purpose at work

78.3%    9.2%    12.6%

My religious beliefs sustain me at work

70.2%    14.0%    15.8%

My spiritual practice grounds me at work

63.1%    16.4%    20.4%

I often resort to spiritual practice(s) to give me strength to deal with work-related issues

65.1%    16.0%    19.0%

My spiritual practice provides me with a sense of direction and purpose at work

61.1%    18.1%    20.8%

# Recommendations

## For Ministry of Education

- mandate Well-being Lead positions at the district school board level to support a comprehensive well-being program that includes principals and their schools
- expand the healthy schools initiatives to include the well-being of the school principals
- expand Ontario’s well-being Strategy for Education to include the well-being of the school principals

## For District School Boards

- consider creating Well-being and Safety Teams to provide support and resources for principals
- designate fund and apply for grants from other agencies to work in partnership with health organizations and researchers to support principals’ well-being

## For Professional Associations

- mobilize and align existing resources and programs from the districts, health and community organizations, and provincial and municipal governments to improve school system well-being
- explore the possibility of or expand the existing third party partnerships that focuses on wellness in public schools (e.g., STARLING Mind, IWBI, etc.)
- create well-being assessment tools to keep track of the health and well-being of their members to provide better support

## For Principals

- cultivate individualized strategies to promote health and wellness (e.g., a personalized system dealing with emails/paperwork)
- set aside time to engage physical activities, sports, hobbies, and other individualized well-being practices

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For the full research report, visit:  
<https://bit.ly/ONprincipals2020>

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