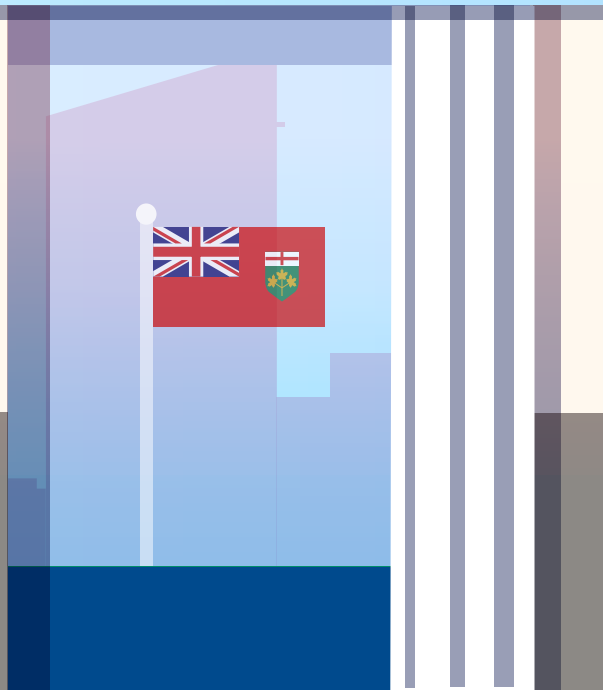
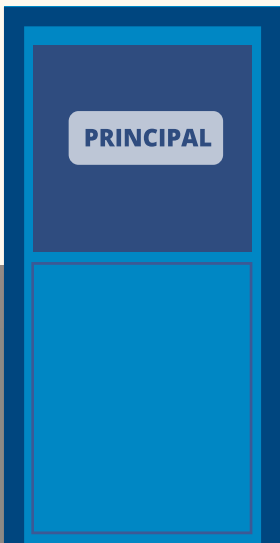


# Principals' Work and Well-Being in Ontario

Dr. Katina Pollock  
Dr. Fei Wang

## Booklet #3 Principals' Health and Safety



**PART OF A SERIES OF 4 BOOKLETS**

# Overview

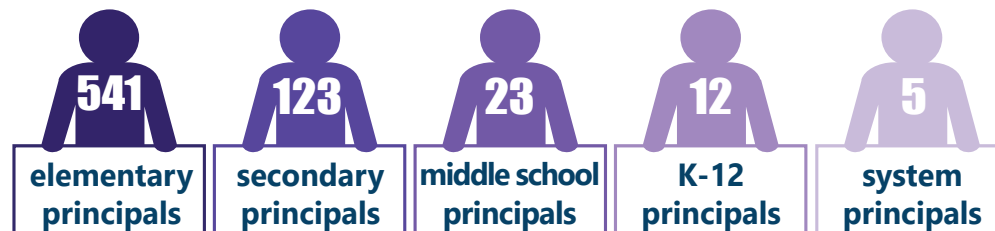
This booklet summarizes the findings of a research survey and explores principals' health and safety, including:

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

## The Respondents

**2419**  
invited

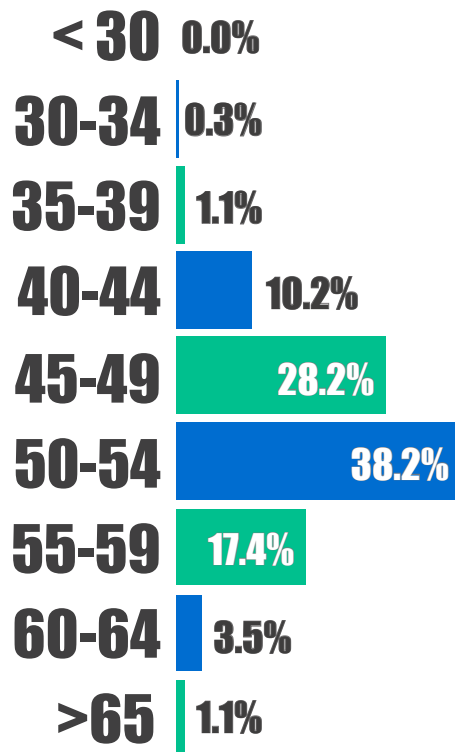
**35.6%**  
response rate



# Gender



# Age



# School Location

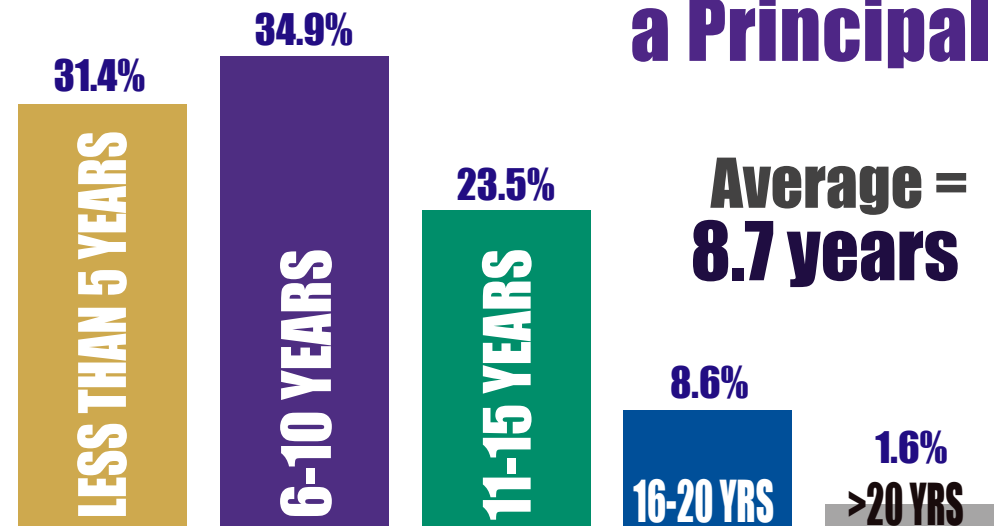


**33** school boards

# 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



**MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES  
AMONG STUDENTS**

**79.9%**



**LACK OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION  
SUPPORT/RESOURCES**

**74.0%**



**VOLUME OF  
DAILY EMAILS**

**72.4%**

### Lesser factors:

**>50%**

**Mental health issues among teachers  
Teacher resistance to change  
Student discipline (excluding bullying)**

**45-50%**

**Lack of recognition for principals throughout the system  
Dealing with concerns about teacher performance**

**40-45%**

**Union issues  
High levels of support needed by teachers  
Pressure from superintendent and school board**

# School Community Contributors to Draining Situations at Work

Lack of special education resources & services in the community **67.6%**

Mental health issues among parents/guardians **57.0%**

Meeting with parents/guardians **38.8%**

Parents/guardians not involved in their child(ren)'s education **36.6%**

Social issues in school community **34.3%**

Racial or ethnic tensions in school community **16.3%**

Lack of support from school's community **15.5%**

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.

**46.0%**  
NONE

**14.4%**  
AGE-BASED

**5.9%**  
SEXUAL  
ORIENTATION-  
BASED

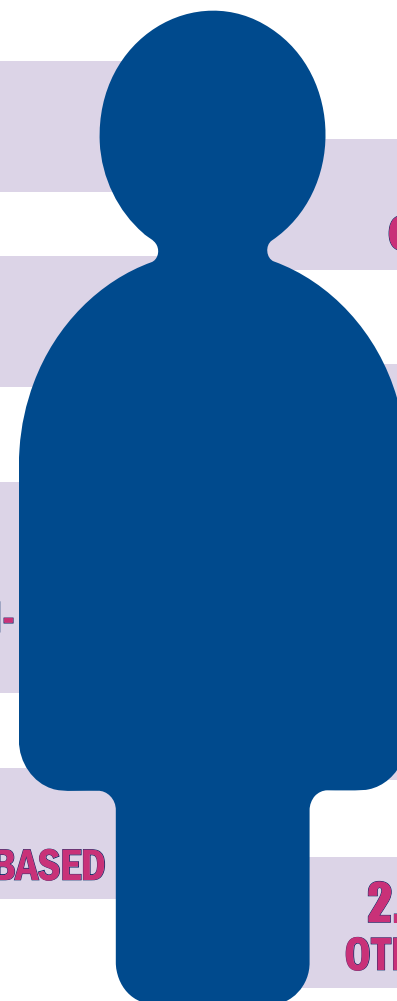
**4.3%**  
ABILITY-BASED

**27.0%**  
GENDER-BASED

**10.6%**  
RACE-BASED

**4.3%**  
RELIGION  
-BASED

**2.9%**  
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
70.7%	4.0%	64.5%	PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)/FAMILY MEMBER(S)
25.9%	57.8%	55.2%	STUDENT(S)
15.5%	35.6%	13.5%	NONE
29.2%	0.2%	12.0%	TEACHER(S)
22.2%	0.0%	7.9%	UNION REPRESENTATIVE(S)
14.2%	0.0%	4.4%	SUPERINTENDENT(S)
9.0%	0.0%	2.8%	OTHER SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER(S)
8.3%	0.0%	1.7%	EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT(S)
4.0%	1.0%	2.9%	OTHER
5.2%	0.0%	1.7%	TRUSTEE(S)
5.5%	0.0%	0.5%	OTHER PRINCIPAL(S)
4.4%	0.0%	1.6%	SUBSTITUTE TEACHER(S)/TTOC
4.4%	0.0%	1.5%	VICE-PRINCIPAL(S)
3.5%	0.0%	0.7%	FACILITY SERVICES

# Safety

After being harassed, physically assaulted, and/or threatened, principals will:

- Report to senior management/director/HR (67.7%)
- Talk with family members/friends (57.7%)
- Consult with other colleagues within the district school board (52.2%)
- Follow specific protocol (49.9%)
- Contact their professional association (36.6%)
- Report to the police (21.6%)
- Seek medical/health attention (16.3%)

Principals have experienced a variety of unsafe situations in their workplaces:



**13%**  
will do nothing

A fortunate 3% of respondents have never had to deal with these situations.

# Recommendations

## For Ministry of Education

- continue to strengthen its relationship with the Ministry of Labour to work together to implement the existing Healthy and Safe Ontario Workplaces Strategies as a part of the Ontario public education system

## For District School Boards

- build stronger working relationships with other public sector organizations such as the Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) to support employee wellness
- create or update a quick and handy list for principals on any available policies, procedures, and contact information they might need for easy reference

## For Professional Associations

- advocate for public school leaders' occupational health and safety at the provincial level
- expand and diversify its member support services and Early Intervention Program to direct more attention and resources to principals' occupational health and safety

## For Principals

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



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

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