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

- 284 elementary principals
- 77 secondary principals
- 36 elem/sec principals
- 12 middle school principals
For principals, these issues led to draining situations at work OFTEN or ALWAYS:

- **>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
- 27.5% GENDER-BASED
- 19.5% AGE-BASED
- 8.2% ABILITY-BASED
- 7.6% RACE-BASED
- 6.3% SEXUAL ORIENTATION-BASED
- 4.9% RELIGION-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.

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

- Physical assault
- Cyber-bullying
- Lateral violence
- Harassment
- Gossip and slander
- Bullying
- Passive-aggressive behaviours
- Escalated conflicts and quarrels
- Other
- False accusation
- Threats of violence
- Isolation
- None

A fortunate 2% of respondents have never had to deal with these situations.
RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Ministry of Education</th>
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<tr>
<td>• continue to strengthen its relationship with WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Labour, and BC Federation of Labour (BCFED) Health &amp; 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</td>
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<th>For District School Boards</th>
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<td>• create or update a quick and handy list for principals on any available policies, procedures, and contact information they might need for easy reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>• organize campaigns and programs to encourage safe and respectful behaviours and cultures within schools and communities</td>
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<td>• build stronger working relationships with other public sector organizations to support employee wellness</td>
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<td>• expand and diversify its member support services and Early Intervention Program to direct more attention and resources to principals’ occupational health and safety</td>
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<td>• expand legal and policy consultation services to school leaders on safety issues with students, parents, and teachers</td>
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<td>• 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</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>• build a repertoire of healthy coping strategies that can promote physical, emotional, and psychological well-being—please see the Coping Strategies booklet</td>
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<td>• know your rights and the processes in place that support you when there are safety issues at work</td>
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For the full research report, visit:  

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