

# Realizing Safer Schools for Students and Teachers

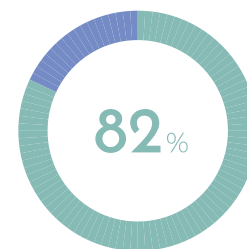
For years, Catholic Teachers have been working to draw attention to the growing issue of violence in schools across the province. This is a crisis, and it needs to be treated as such. The Toronto Elementary Catholic Teachers (TECT) recently partnered with Pollara Strategic Insights, one of the country's leading polling firms, to carry out a comprehensive survey of Toronto elementary Catholic teachers on violence in schools.

Toronto elementary Catholic teachers are experiencing verbal harassment and threats, physical assault, incidents involving weapons, and other violence in schools each and every day. This violence negatively impacts both teachers and the students in their care. Toronto elementary Catholic teachers have been reporting these issues with increasing frequency and severity, and we need policymakers and school administrators to take this crisis seriously.

The data collected confirms what we have been hearing from Catholic teachers in Toronto, and from teachers across the province, from all boards: violence is an *everyday occurrence*. The Ford Conservative government and school boards across the province must make addressing violence in schools a top priority.

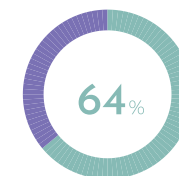
What follows are highlights of the data collected from Toronto elementary Catholic teachers.

## WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING The Reality



Report that there had been at least one threatened, attempted, or actual incident of violence against a teacher(s), either experienced or observed, in their school this school year.

Personally experienced a threatened, attempted, or actual physical assault.



## The Reality (cont.)



Of teachers within their first five years of teaching report experiencing physical assault at least once a week.

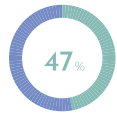
» **23 per cent** report weekly threats of physical assault.

» **22 per cent** report weekly incidents of attempted assault.

This is nearly double the rate of other teachers.



Report that violent incidents increased in the previous school year.



Report that the severity of incidents increased in the previous school year.



Of those who experienced violence said the incident(s) were perpetrated by a student(s).

» Only **11 per cent** of TECT members feel that their school board recognizes that student violence is a problem.

## The Impact



Almost every teacher shared that violence in their school made classroom management more difficult.



Report that student violence reduces the time they can dedicate to teaching and helping students.



Of teachers who were physically assaulted reported experiencing physical harm.

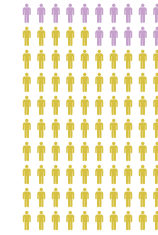
» **62 per cent** report having objects thrown at them (including desks and chairs).

» **58 per cent** report being punched.

» **54 per cent** report being kicked.



## The Cause



**85 per cent** of teachers felt that the main factor behind the rise in violence was the lack of teachers and education workers to support the growing number of students and their diverse learning needs.

## The Solution

The teachers surveyed report that the following solutions would make the biggest positive impact:

- » Lower class sizes, by reducing the number of students in each class (91 per cent).
- » Increase the number of teachers and education workers (90 per cent).
- » Ensure sufficient discipline/consequences for students committing violence in school/workplace (65 per cent).
- » Provide more information and training to teachers (81 per cent).

