

news



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N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

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School violence on the rise according to Nova Scotia's teachers

(Halifax-Kjipuktuk, NS) Approximately 87 per cent of Nova Scotia teachers and educational specialists believe that school violence has increased since 2018, according to a recent NSTU membership survey. Similarly, 92 per cent of those surveyed say they've witnessed violence first hand at school, while 55 per cent say they've been the victim of a violent act or threat while at work. Of the teachers surveyed, less than 1 per cent (only 17 respondents), believe that violence levels in schools are on the decline.

A total of 2,534 NSTU members completed the online survey which was conducted between March 27th and April 13th, 2023.

“All too often I receive phone calls and emails from teachers who are upset and concerned about a violent event they witnessed or experienced at school,” says NSTU President Ryan Lutes. “Incidents between students are becoming more frequent, more severe and alarmingly more dangerous. Teachers and school staff members are often kicked, bit, hit, punched, threatened and verbally abused. Unfortunately, these incidents frequently go unaddressed or are characterized as just part of going to school. This is unacceptable.”

A recent CBC article reported that since 2018 police have responded to 424 incidents at Halifax area high schools resulting in 77 criminal charges. According to the Province, there were 13,776 incidents of physical violence in Nova Scotia's public school system during the 2021-2022 school year. These acts of violence are defined as: “Using force, gesturing, or inciting others to use force to injure a member of the school community.”

“Our schools are microcosms of our society and as society becomes more complex, so do our classrooms and schools. The NSTU will be sharing the information gathered through its teacher survey with the Province and is prepared to work with Government on identifying actions aimed at eliminating school-based violence and improving school safety,” says Lutes.

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