

# The NDP's Emergency Plan to End School Violence

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Students and educators deserve a safe learning and working environment, but school violence in Ontario is at crisis levels:

- ▶ According to the Auditor General, reports of violent incidents in school boards are up 114% since 2017 – and this doesn't capture all incidents as not every incident is reported.
- ▶ 77% of ETFO members say that they have personally experienced or witnessed violence against an educator.
- ▶ 75% of OSSTF members say that incidents of violence have increased since they started working in the school system.

This violence is the result of an underfunded education system that is failing to provide the support our children need. After a cut of \$1,500 per student under the Ford government, students are now dealing with:

- ▶ **Larger class sizes**, with fewer educational assistants and other education workers
- ▶ **A lack of mental health supports** – 9 out of 10 schools do not have regularly scheduled access to a mental health professional
- ▶ **Cuts to special education programs** that means that safety plans and IEPs too often exist on paper only

An unsupported child is a frustrated child and our kids are not getting the help they need, despite the best efforts of the caring professionals who work hard every single day.

This situation is unacceptable. Kids can't learn in an unsafe environment, and we don't want to see violence normalized for our children. Teachers and education workers deserve a safe workplace. Our committed educators shouldn't have to experience physical and psychological injuries just for showing up for our kids every day.

**That's why we sat down with education workers, teachers, and principals to identify the solutions to this crisis.** We have listened to the people who are on the frontlines every day about what is needed to address the issue and prevent violence from happening in the first place, rather than responding after the fact. And we put together an Emergency Plan to End School Violence that was developed in partnership with workers. We are calling on the government to take the crisis seriously and implement this plan immediately.



# Our Emergency Plan to End School Violence

## Staffing and training:

1. Provide funding to hire additional qualified staff for our schools, including mental health professionals, qualified education assistants, child and youth workers, and other education workers.
2. Provide funding for comprehensive training for all workers and supervisors, including training on rights and responsibilities, managing difficult behaviours, conflict resolution, and de-escalation.

## Occupational Health and Safety regulations:

3. Create a sector-specific regulation for the education sector under the Occupational Health and Safety Act that takes into account the unique nature of the workplace.
4. Require that school board Workplace Violence Policies use a single, common definition of violence based on the Occupational Health and Safety Act that includes physical harm that does not require medical attention and psychological harm;
5. Change the OHS Act to require that multi-workplace Health and Safety Committees are established at the school board level, and site-specific committees are encouraged to discuss and address site-specific health and safety concerns;

6. In the sector specific regulations, require that school board Workplace Violence Prevention Plans and Programs must be developed in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee;

## Provincial Health and Safety Working Group:

7. Create a permanent, Provincial Health and Safety Working Group to review and adapt current government policies regarding workplace violence in the education sector;

## Reporting:

8. Create a single, province-wide online reporting system to ensure uniformity in reporting and allow for the collection of data to better understand school violence and guide policy responses
9. Require the Ministry of Labour to produce a report in a timely manner summarizing the data and findings of any compliance initiative or operation regarding workplace violence in the education sector.