This document was prepared by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation in consultation with the Work Group on Teaching Quality.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................................................................ 1

CTF NATIONAL TEACHER SURVEY – The Teacher Voice on Teaching and Learning............................................................... 3
 Overview .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 3
 Selected findings .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 4

VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM – Examples of Teacher Organization Research Initiatives......................................................... 15
 The teacher voice on…

  - Teacher retention / Beginning teachers .............................................................................................................................................................................................. 16
  - Workload / Workplace stress / Teacher well-being.............................................................................................................................................................................................. 21
  - Inclusion / Class composition .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 39
  - Assessment and evaluation .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 46
  - Curriculum evaluation.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 50
  - School financial support by teachers and communities.............................................................................................................................................................................................. 53
  - Poverty and schools.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 55
  - Teaching in Francophone minority settings .............................................................................................................................................................................................. 58
  - Aboriginal education.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 62
  - International cooperation.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 65
  - Professional learning.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 68
  - Technology in education .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 73
  - High quality public education.............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 78
  - Future of teaching and learning .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 80

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ........................................................................................................................................................................ 87

APPENDICES .............................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................. 89
Over the past year discussions of the CTF Work Group on Teaching Quality (WGTQ) have focused on a number of themes and issues related to the teaching profession. These include the need to:

- recognize that the vast majority of teachers find teaching to be a very satisfying profession, although not without its challenges.
- give voice to teachers’ values and beliefs about teaching and learning; articulate and promote teachers’ vision of public education; “affirm our profession”.
- promote teachers as public leaders in learning, both student learning and their own professional learning; affirm the collective knowledge of the teaching profession.
- shift the conversation to enduring student learning, particularly the conditions necessary for optimizing learning in an increasingly complex and diverse society; the teaching profession needs to affirm both its commitment and capacity to foster student learning; when it comes to learning, teachers know what works best for children and youth.
- emphasize that the quality of teachers/teaching is a major factor in the quality of student learning – in sum, good teaching matters.
- emphasize that public education works in Canada; while there is always room for improvement, we have an excellent education system (including educational equity outcomes); we can make a strong system even stronger, through the leadership of teachers.
- recognize that there are a number of forces serving to undermine public education, among them neoliberal accountability policies and the application to education of narrow economic motives and market ideologies; these forces are putting pressure on teachers and schools which can leave teachers feeling undervalued – one example is the growing U.S. trend of evaluating teachers on the basis of student test scores.

Out of these discussions the Work Group identified the need for a national research project that would give voice to teacher perspectives on teaching and learning in Canada's public schools. Great significance was put on the need for teacher organizations to ensure that the teacher voice is heard in visioning for the future of education, as it is the profession that should be positioned as an authoritative voice on teaching and learning. This belief is grounded in two assumptions:

1. Teachers are the classroom experts. They are public leaders in student learning. As such it is critically important that K-12 educational decisions be informed by their professional knowledge and expertise.
2. Increasingly, educational policy decisions are being informed by people with little or no background in public education, and without the input of teachers.

This national research project is being conducted by the CTF in collaboration with its Member organizations. The intent of the project is to expose the voice of teachers concerning their perspectives on teaching and learning in Canada's public schools, drawing on the substantial pool of experience, expertise and knowledge they possess.
As the only group authorized to speak nationally on behalf of the Canadian teaching profession, CTF will endeavour through this project to give expression to the collective views of teachers on K-12 education, with a view to informing and influencing education policy decisions to enhance the quality of our public schools for the future benefit of all Canadians.

CTF’s mission is apt here: *Conducting research. Expanding knowledge. Fostering understanding* – in order to strengthen the teaching profession, to ultimately benefit student learning and development.
Overview

In March / April 2011 CTF conducted an online teacher survey entitled The Teacher Voice on Teaching and Learning. [See the appendices for the survey instrument.] Teachers were surveyed on a wide range of issues including:

- What attracts teachers to the profession
- Why teachers remain in teaching
- Why beginning teachers leave the profession
- Public respect for the teaching profession
- The purpose of public education
- Major challenges facing public education over the next decade
- Teachers’ rapport with students
- The most rewarding aspects of teachers’ relationship with students
- Teachers’ level of satisfaction regarding their ability to meet children’s needs
- The impact that specific challenges faced by students have on their ability to succeed in school
- The impact of educational changes on teachers’ ability to help their students achieve to their potential
- The impact of educational changes on teachers’ ability to teach effectively
- Changes that teachers would make to the public education system to maximize students’ potential and improve their quality of education

Due to variations in the March break period across Canada, the survey was conducted in three stages. The survey was conducted from March 14-21 for NLTA, PEITF, AEFNB, NBTA, MTS, ATA, NWTTA and NTA; from March 21-28 for ETFO, AEFO and NSTU; and from March 28-April 4 for YTA.

The survey was successfully emailed to 4,368 educators from 12 participating CTF Member organizations. Responses were collected from 434 respondents, for an overall response rate of 9.9%. 391 respondents replied to the English survey, while 43 respondents replied to the French survey.

A sample of teacher responses is reported for the open-ended survey questions. The responses reflect a range of issues regarding teaching and learning in public schools and a diversity of viewpoints on those issues.
Selected findings

Selected survey findings are presented in this section [from the full report of the CTF National Teacher Survey on The Teacher Voice on Teaching and Learning].

The teacher voice on why teachers enter the profession

- 9 in 10 Canadian teachers indicated that the fact that they “Enjoy working with children” was a “very” important factor regarding their decision to become a teacher, ranking it the highest among 9 factors surveyed.
- Over 8 in 10 teachers also reported the following factors as “very” important: “Making a difference in children’s lives” (87%); “Helping develop and motivate children” (86%); and “Love of learning” (85%).

This is a sampling of teacher comments on why they decided to become a teacher:

- I believe the most important factor is to enjoy working with children and making a difference through recognizing the uniqueness of their needs and abilities.
- Le facteur le plus important pour moi était de pouvoir faire une différence dans la vie des enfants, de leur donner des outils pour avancer dans la vie (potential et motivation). J’aime apprendre et trouver des facons de faire apprendre, c’est ce que je fais de mieux.
- The desire, as a First Nations teacher, to be a role model for other First Nations children so they are inspired to become a teacher and lead a healthy lifestyle.
- I care deeply about who my children are and who they will become.
- Understanding that teaching can be a vehicle for social change and empowerment of marginalized groups. This was my personal, most significant factor for becoming an educator.

The teacher voice on why teachers remain in the profession

- 86% of Canadian teachers indicated that the fact that they “Enjoy working with children” was a “very” important factor regarding their decision to remain in teaching, ranking it the highest among 10 factors surveyed.
- Over 8 in 10 teachers also reported the following factors as “very” important: “Making a difference in children’s lives” (82%); “Enjoy teaching/job satisfaction” (81%); and “Being good at your job” (80%).
This is a sampling of teacher comments on why they remain in the profession:

- *Participating in the learning community that exists among teachers in terms of mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and celebrating the work that teachers do with colleagues (not necessarily from the same school). Developing relationships with others involved in education.*

- *Le facteur le plus important est d’aimer enseigner. Sans cela, on ne peut pas survivre devant les demandes bureaucratiques.*

- *The elements of professional autonomy and trust that are the ongoing factors as one continues in an educational career.*

---

**The teacher voice on why teachers leave the profession**

- 84% of Canadian teachers indicated “Heavy workload” as a “very” important factor influencing the decision of some beginning teachers to leave the profession, ranking it the highest among 12 factors surveyed.

- At least 8 in 10 respondents also consider “Work-related stress” (82%) and “High expectations/Increasing demands on teachers” (80%) to be “very” important factors.

- Virtually all respondents indicated that “Work-related stress”, “Heavy workload”, “High expectations/Increasing demands on teachers” and “Student behaviour and discipline issues” are important factors (“very” or somewhat”).

A sampling of teacher comments on why some beginning teachers leave the profession:

- *La charge de travail qui augmente sans cesse, les corrections avec les grilles de justification, les évaluations constantes font que le travail est moins motivant. On a l’impression de toujours évaluer et non d’enseigner. Faut bourrer les crânes au lieu de les former. C’est assez pour changer de carrière.*

- *I have noticed that the stress of trying to accommodate students’ individual needs is becoming increasingly more difficult. Very poor training is given to teachers to deal with this issue. The stress of not being able to meet the needs, or of having to make the requirements up, is very real.*

- *Many beginning teachers come to the profession burdened with debt from the pursuit of their education. They have huge loans to be paid off and the salary new teachers receive for the amount of work that they, as new teachers, must do is not comparable to what they can receive elsewhere for less work. Teachers are often very overqualified for their jobs.*

- *One other factor not listed is that of contract status. I am a beginning teacher myself in my second year, who doesn’t have a permanent contract and it makes for an extremely stressful end of the year, waiting to see if you have a job. Many beginning teachers deal with this issue on a yearly basis for many, many years and for many, it’s just not worth it.*

- *I believe the job expectations and workload are becoming unmanageable. As we become more efficient at recognizing student abilities and needs we require more support and training. The support and training cannot be a one day occurrence and then leave teachers on their own to provide specialized programming for students.*
The teacher voice on public respect for the teaching profession

- Almost two-thirds of teachers (64%) believe that public respect for the teaching profession has “decreased” over their career, while almost one-third (31%) said it “remained the same”, and only 5% said it has “increased”.

A sampling of teacher views on the status of public respect for the teaching profession:

- Teachers are no longer seen as the professional who has the knowledge needed to contribute to the decisions being made in education today. As a teacher having changes being pushed on the classroom teacher without input or choice is very difficult. Very frustrating as we are still expected to make everything work and when it doesn’t be able to account to parents the reason why.

- Il me semble que nous devons plus gagner la faveur des parents qu’avant. Les parents semblent maintenant des clients que nous devons satisfaire. Ils demandent plus, ils sont plus critiques, mais sans nécessairement nous fournir l’appui et la collaboration nécessaires au bon cheminement scolaire de leur enfant.

- Teachers are judged by the schools they work in. In the north, if one works in a challenging school, others look down as if the poor and disadvantaged students are a result of the teachers, rather than the teachers being courageous and continuously upgrading their special needs strategies and behaviour approaches to be of continued value.

- We are expected to maintain complete control and have constant state of engagement in our classrooms, but are given little authority or respect to fulfill this. Parents who never sit in the classroom, have no concept of the curriculum or the state of our education system, lobby principals and bully administration in getting their way with their children. Teachers’ expertise, experience and knowledge are irrelevant.

The teacher voice on satisfaction with their decision to become a teacher

- 8 in 10 teachers said they would make the same choice to become a teacher if they could go back in time.

The teacher voice on the purpose of public education

- Almost 9 in 10 teachers believe that some of the “very” important purposes of public education include “Preparing students to become responsible citizens” (88%), “Ensuring that students acquire the basic skills: reading, writing, mathematics” (87%) and “Preparing students to be life-long learners” (86%).

- Fewer than half of respondents (45%) believe that “Preparing students for the job market” and “Supporting the cultural development of students” are respectively “very” important, ranking the lowest among the 7 surveyed goals of public education. Nonetheless, when “somewhat” important responses are included, more than 9 in 10 respondents consider these two goals to be important.
• Over 9 in 10 respondents believe that all 7 surveyed goals are important (“very” or “somewhat”), ranging from all respondents with respect to “Promoting students’ personal development” to 91% of respondents regarding “Supporting the cultural development of students”.

The teacher voice on the greatest challenge facing public education

A sampling of teacher views on the greatest challenge facing public education over the next decade:

• Protecting public education from the right wing. Charter schools, merit pay, high stakes testing... You hear the rumblings from folks like the Frontier Centre for Public Policy for example. But just look to our neighbours in the south to see where we might go if we’re not careful. Having spoken to U.S. teachers at conferences I am glad to be north of the 49th.

• Accepter l'idée de consulter les enseignants avant d'apporter des nouvelles initiatives, avant de prendre des décisions qui auront un impact sur les élèves et leurs enseignants.

• Funding public education seems to always be an issue. Since technology will continue to grow in importance it will be a challenge to put enough money behind it. It will also be challenging to provide equality education in rural areas with declining enrollment.

• Managing diversity (of skills, of cultures, of language, of intelligences, etc.).

The teacher voice on concerns regarding their ability to accomplish specific responsibilities

• A majority of teachers report that, given the pressures they face, they are “very” concerned about “Ensuring that students achieve their potential” (60%), “Developing the capacity for critical thinking in students” (57%), and “Promoting good life habits among students” (50%).

• At least 7 in 10 respondents are concerned (“very” or “somewhat”) about accomplishing 9 of the 10 surveyed responsibilities, ranging from 89% of respondents regarding “Ensuring that students achieve to their potential” to 7 in 10 respondents with respect to “Preparing students for the job market”.

• “Preparing students for standardized provincial exams” ranked the lowest among the 10 responsibilities surveyed, with 55% of teachers indicating concern (“very” or “somewhat”), including 1 in 5 who said they were “very” concerned.

A sampling of teacher comments on concerns regarding their ability to accomplish specific responsibilities:

• Developing the capacity for critical thinking in students and preparing students to become responsible citizens.

• Développer la pensée critique des élèves.

• Standardized tests. There are so many students now, who are brilliant in so many areas, but constantly struggle with writing a standardized test, and are being given a label throughout their entire school life. Also, teachers
are so fixated on teaching to the tests, that they do not give students the information that they truly need and desire. I believe that these tests hinder student and teacher success a great deal more than they help.

- Behavioural issues, demands related to inclusion, lack of resources all impact on the learning environment and place restraints on teachers in working effectively with students.

The teacher voice on their rapport with students

- Two-thirds of teachers “strongly” agree with the statement, “My relationship with my students is fundamentally affective: I love teaching these young people”, the most agreed upon statement among the 8 surveyed.

- A majority of respondents also “strongly” agree with the statements, “I perceive myself as an individual who has an important impact on the future of my students” (64%) and “When I’m with my students, I feel that I have a fulfilling role” (59%).

- About half of the respondents (49%) disagree (“strongly” or “somewhat”) with the statement, “Maintaining order among my students demands too much energy/sometimes I feel overwhelmed”, including about one-third who “strongly” disagree.

- Over 1 in 5 teachers also disagree (“strongly” or “somewhat”) with the statements, “Motivating my students is easy” (28%), “Some students have problems that are so serious that I cannot help them” (22%), and “My students’ needs are so different from one another that I have a hard time meeting all their needs” (20%).

The teacher voice on satisfaction regarding their ability to meet children’s needs

- Among applicable respondents*, only a minority of teachers are “very” satisfied with their ability to meet the needs of minority students and students with special educational needs, ranging from 25% with respect to meeting “The needs of students with diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds” to 13% for meeting “The needs of students with behavioural issues”.

- A majority of applicable respondents* were satisfied (“very” or “somewhat”) with their ability to meet all 6 surveyed needs, ranging from 83% with respect to meeting “The needs of students with diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds” to 61% regarding meeting “The needs of students living in poverty”.

* Note: Based on data excluding Not Applicable (N/A) responses.
The teacher voice on the impact of challenges faced by students on their ability to succeed in school

• 7 in 10 Canadian teachers believe that “Student absenteeism” impacts “significantly” on students’ ability to succeed in school, the highest among the 17 challenges surveyed.

• 6 of the 17 surveyed challenges faced by students were believed by respondents to “impact significantly” on the ability of students to succeed in school.

• 3 in 10 teachers believe that “Racist or sexist conduct by students”, “Inadequate school facilities/building conditions”, and the “Presence of gangs in the school” “impact significantly”, ranking the lowest among the surveyed student challenges.

• A majority of teachers believe that all 17 surveyed student challenges impact (“significantly” or “somewhat”) on students’ ability to succeed in school, ranging from 97% of teachers with respect to “Student apathy” to half of respondents regarding “Presence of gangs in the school”.

A sampling of teacher comments on the most significant challenge influencing students’ ability to succeed in school:

• The most significant challenge is the incredibly difficult home life that so many children have to deal with when they leave school, and then have to try and “forget” about when they come back to school to try and learn and cope.

• I am seeing mental health issues more frequently impacting student performance.

• I am an advocate of inclusionary practises. Most teachers are, but do not feel equipped to deal with the developmental and other deficits/diagnosis that exist in classrooms being unfamiliar with the latest research and evidence based strategies and resources.

• Pour moi, le défi principal est la lutte que je dois mener contre les autres intérêts non scolaires des élèves, certains sont présents dans l’école comme les i-pod et les téléphones cellulaires. D’autres se situent à l’extérieur de la sphère d’influence de l’école : emploi, parties (avec alcool et drogues), jeux vidéo, MSN, Facebook, etc. L’école n’est plus la partie principale de la vie des élèves, c’est juste un aspect de leur vie, et qui n’est pas nécessairement le plus important.

The teacher voice on the most rewarding aspects of their relationship with students

A sampling of teacher views on the most rewarding aspects of their relationship with students:

• Helping them to develop the ability to self-assess and self-manage their behaviours and reactions so that they can get what they want out of life. They are in control of themselves and how they interpret and respond to various situations.

• La récompense suprême pour moi est quand les élèves manifestent un intérêt pour quelque chose qu’ils ne
connaissaient pas avant ou qu’ils connaissaient mal ou encore quand ils comprennent un aspect du monde, de leur vie, de la société, qui leur paraissait opaque ou incompréhensible.

• Il n’y a, pour moi, rien de plus beau que lorsqu’un-e élève comprend un peu mieux le monde dans lequel elle/ il vit, et pourra, plus tard, faire des choix éclairés selon sa conscience et non plus selon son ignorance.

• Ahhhh…. the joyful moments, the perfect project that students enjoyed and learned from. The magical «ah ha» moments. The classes where a true class team is created and the students work together. The students who are up against difficulties and still make it. Without relationship, quality learning does not take place…

• Working with children with learning disabilities, I get to see children make big strides in school.

The teacher voice on educational changes influencing their ability to help students achieve to their potential

Changes having a positive influence

• 88% of applicable respondents* reported a positive influence with respect to “New information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching”, followed by “New instructional approaches (curriculum)” (83%), “New approaches in learning assessment” (79%), and “Increased cultural or linguistic diversity” (64%).

• Over 1 in 4 applicable respondents* reported that “New information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching” (29%), “New instructional approaches (curriculum)” (25%), and “New approaches in learning assessment” had a “very” positive influence.

Changes having a negative influence

• 91% of applicable respondents* reported a negative influence with respect to “Reduction in human resources”, followed by “Socio-economic changes in the community” (74%), “Fluctuation of student population”(73%), “Use of provincial standardized tests” (62%), and “Inclusion of special needs students in all classrooms” (55%).

• A majority of applicable respondents* (55%) reported that “Reduction in human resources” has had a “very” negative influence on their ability to help their students achieve to their potential, followed by “Socio-economic changes in the community” (19%).

No influence at all

• Shares of applicable respondents* indicating that surveyed changes had “No impact at all” ranged from 18% with respect to “Fluctuation of student population” to 2% regarding “New information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching”.

* Note: Based on data excluding Not Applicable (N/A) responses.
A sampling of teacher comments on changes that have significantly influenced their students’ ability to achieve to their potential:

- Local assessments in addition to provincial assessments have overwhelmed teachers. Some external assessments are great but we have too many!!
- A breakfast/nutrition program has helped especially for students who sometimes bring no food to school.
- Integration in itself is not a negative, but integration without adequate support is.
- Opportunities for greater collaboration between teachers have been very positive.

The teacher voice on the impact of educational changes on teachers’ ability to teach effectively

- The majority of Canadian teachers agree with each of the 8 statements surveyed regarding the impact of educational changes on their ability to teach effectively.
- Virtually all applicable* teachers (97%) agree with the statement, “My workload has increased”, including about three-quarters of applicable* respondents who “strongly” agree.
- 87% of applicable* respondents agree (“strongly” or “somewhat”) with the statement, “I felt the need to take additional professional development”, however, 6 in 10 also agree with the statement, “I have had less time for professional development”.

A sampling of teacher comments on the impact of educational changes on their ability to teach effectively:

- Provincial mandates without proper supports, whether in funding or training, are the most significant problem in public schools.
- Increase in number of students, workload and paperwork.
- Ma charge de travail a augmenté.
- J’ai senti le poids de mon jugement professionnel diminuer, j’ai senti mon espace professionnel diminuer. A cause de la façon que le système scolaire (ministère de l’éducation, conseil scolaire, direction d’école) s’est mis à fonctionner, soit du haut vers le bas, sans consultation significative.
- Due to provincial achievement exams, there is a lot of pressure put on those grade specific teachers to prepare the students for the test.
- The whole issue of time is a question. Not only have I had less time for professional development, I have less time for everything. I am expected to do more in the same or less amount of time that I had before. Our curriculum has expanded, what we are expected to do has expanded but our day and our year have not expanded nor has our energy level. Something somewhere has to give and for many it is our newer teachers.

* Note: Based on data excluding Not Applicable (N/A) responses.
The teacher voice on changes they would make to the public education system to maximize students’ potential and improve their quality of education

This is a sampling of teacher comments on changes they would make to the public education system, on a broad range of issues, for the benefit of student learning:

**On class size / class composition**
- Caps on class sizes at all levels with restrictions on the number of students with individualized programming placed in the same class.
- Augmenter le nombre d’éducateurs/trices par classe et non par école.
- Smaller class sizes so as to increase the time that teachers can spend on one on one and small group instruction. This will allow for inclusive teaching practices and differentiated instruction to be better and more effectively managed within the classroom.

**On teacher autonomy / respect / professionalism**
- Faire confiance aux enseignants dans leur décisions et leur travail, en donnant ainsi une importance au métier d’enseignant.
- Increase teacher autonomy and control over worklife.
- Work to end the Blame the Teacher Game: We see students for five hours a day and they spend the rest of the day being influenced by many other things. It is not appropriate to blame teachers for poor nutrition, poor work ethic, poor behavior, poor attitudes or much else that their students might exhibit. What is society teaching them?
- Trust educators working as teams to know what quality education is…

**On professional development & learning**
- Increase PD around integrating technologies that students are exposed to daily into our classrooms.
- Ongoing in-house sustained professional development. Regularly scheduled PD times during the school day.
- Je voudrait voir plus de développement professionnel pour auxiliaires qui travaillent avec les élèves ayant des besoins spéciaux.
- More opportunities for professional development in areas of inclusive/special education.
- Provide PD for teachers that is not about increasing test scores.

**On supports / resources for teachers**
- Availability of mental health professionals who specialize in work with children and are attached to schools.
- I would like to have more support from the Ministry of Education in areas such as high-quality assessment materials, resources for inclusion of special needs students and support for ESL students.
- Assurer une période de préparation à tous les jours à tous les enseignants du primaire. Maintenir les ressources humaines (enseignantes de littératie, francisation, ressources) pour appuyer l’enseignante en salle de classe.
- Co-teaching is a wonderful teaching method, but very little resources and time can be given to it. We should find more opportunities for teachers to teach together in the same classroom.
On teacher workload

• Je diminuerais la quantité de rapports que les profs doivent rédiger au profit de plus de temps consacré à la préparation d’activités d’apprentissage, etc., pour les élèves.

• Increase resources – both human and other. We need more people if we are to respond as requested to differentiate teaching and learning, adapt curriculum, individualize lessons and testing. Without this we cannot possibly meet increased demands.

On technology in schools

• Better technology training for teachers.

• Increased technology (and infrastructure to support it) in all (even low income) schools. Also, time for teachers to develop the competency to use technological tools to their fullest potential.

• Integrate different technologies into an option stream... allow use in class as appropriate. Don’t rely on technology as the savior of education. Technology is a tool. The brains and hearts of students grow in the presence of teachers who form positive relationships with them on a human to human level.

On education funding

• Increase spending to support increased demands on classroom teachers to meet the increasingly wide range of abilities in classrooms.

On large-scale provincial testing

• Let teachers be accountable to each other and parents through the activities they do in the classrooms, not provincial exams!

• Je cesserai d’administrer les tests provinciaux à chaque année....ou au moins chez les petits de la 3e année. Si le gouvernement veut absolument continuer cette pratique, on pourrait le faire mais pas à la grande échelle et pas à chaque année.

• Abolish provincial standardized testing: create new and VARIED assessments that can tap in to every area of knowledge that a student possesses.

On curriculum-related issues

• Decrease the number of outcomes to be covered.

• Curriculum moins chargé.

• Ensure that students are engaged in tasks that promote critical thinking.

• Focus on multiple intelligences as a greater part of the curriculum.

• As per other countries, reduce the amount of curricular outcomes for each subject for each grade; allow for more focused teaching and more indepth exploration of the objectives.

• Increase the value of the arts in a student’s education. Skills in such classes will transfer to the other courses.

On classroom / learning resources

• More money for classroom supplies, consumables, resources, books, etc. so teachers do not have to spend money out of pocket.

On diversity

• Increased support for immigrant children and Aboriginal students.
• Teaching resources to accommodate student diversity.
• Respecter les écoles qui ont davantage une société immigrante dans laquelle les élèves ne parlent pas/peu la langue d'enseignement; réaliser que l’enseignement à ces élèves ne PEUT PAS être la même qu’aux écoles où les élèves parlent couramment la langue d’enseignement.
• More support for students learning English as a second language.

**On students with special needs / inclusion policies**

• Students with special needs would be identified earlier and would be given supports outside of the classroom to help them reach their full potential.
• Plus de ressources et de temps pour les élèves ayant des troubles d’apprentissages.
• More support and training for educating students with special needs. More resource/learning center time for students with special needs.
• Augmentation du personnel de ressource qualifié dans les écoles afin de subvenir au besoin des enfants présentant des difficultés quelconques.
• With the advent of inclusion, there needs to be more instructional support teachers in the classroom. Otherwise, the regular classroom teacher cannot meet the needs of all students.

**On parental support**

• Make sure that parents understand where their responsibilities lie with respect to their children and where professional judgement and training should take some precedence.
• Promouvoir auprès des parents que l’éducation a une grande importance dans la vie de leurs enfants.
• Need for parental support. Parents need to be held accountable too and they need to do their part in their child’s education.
• Place some of the accountability for the success of students back on the students and parents.

**On educational change**

• Communicate positive messages to the public and educate them as to the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in public education. ... Emphasize all the good which comes from a well supported and respected public education system. Work to dispel the idea that private schools are better at education. The public system must take in everyone and does a reasonable job of meeting most of the needs of most of the students. Private schools don't have to do this, they control who they teach. They are two entirely different entities with different goals.
• Recognize Canada and its educational system as the world educational leader it is – stop reacting to phenomena south of the border.
• There is a lifelong strategy developed to help children living in poverty. There is acknowledgement that poverty impacts learning and we have poor children living in our country.
• Alléger la tâche des enseignants en donnant le temps à ceux-ci de se familiariser avec les nouvelles approches et de s’approprier les nouvelles ressources avant de vivre de nouveau changements. Pour que ceci soit réalisable, il faudrait que les autorités étudient à fond la validité des changements qu’ils veulent apporter et qu’ils planifient les changements avant de les faire. Il faudrait prioriser et s’en tenir à un minimum essentiel.
• New provincial mandates should come with training provided for teachers BEFORE they are implemented and extra funding for resources should accompany new mandates.
Examples of Teacher Organization Research Initiatives

These are examples of teacher organization research and other initiatives that fit within the theme of the teacher voice on teaching and learning. This is not intended to be exhaustive but is rather a sampling of teacher organization research to illustrate the breadth and depth of the important work being done with and on behalf of Canadian teachers.

A brief summary of each initiative as well as highlights of findings and proposed recommendations generated from the findings are included (excerpted from the original report or other publication). Website links to sources are indicated where they exist.

This section showcases the teacher voice on a broad range of important education issues:

- Teacher retention / Beginning teachers
- Workload / Workplace stress / Teacher well-being
- Inclusion / Class composition
- Assessment and evaluation
- Curriculum evaluation
- School financial support by teachers and communities
- Poverty and schools
- Teaching in Francophone minority settings
- Aboriginal education
- International cooperation
- Professional learning
- Technology in education
- High quality public education
- Future of teaching and learning
The teacher voice on teacher retention / beginning teachers

*Why Teachers Leave: Results of an Ontario Survey 2006-08*

Teacher retention is always a topic of interest to both the profession itself and to governments. The costs of teacher turnover are more than monetary, of course, since continuity and teacher satisfaction are important factors not only with respect to instruction at a school, but also to the emotional climate that helps build student success. The topic of teacher retention became critical in Ontario during the years of teacher shortages in the province, precipitated by the opening of the “85 factor pension window” in 1998 prompting more than 10,000 retirements in a single year (see Table 1). Over the past several years, however, the employment market for teachers has moved from general teacher shortages affecting all regions of the province to a mixed market with some areas of oversupply and some areas of undersupply.

This study was designed to survey teachers who left their permanent positions in Ontario school boards in a “snapshot” period of two school years, whether for purposes of retirement or resignation, and to find out their reasons for leaving.

*Survey methodology*

With funding and support from the Ministry of Education, and cooperation from the Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE), the Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF) designed and administered a pilot survey for teachers who leave their school board and the profession. The pilot phase involved 14 school boards representative of all three publicly funded school systems. After the pilot phase was completed in January 2007, the project was expanded to all remaining district school boards and conseils scolaires for the remainder of the school year 2006-07, and repeated in the school year 2007-08.

Each teacher (excluding occasional teachers) who handed in a letter of resignation (including retirements) to a school board was provided with a sealed envelope. In it was a letter from OTF, explaining the purpose of the survey and providing a web address with a unique and confidential alphanumeric password to use to access the online survey. 10,000 such log-in identities were generated each year, and more than 7000 letters were mailed out to school boards for use in the 2006-07 year, with over 6000 sent out for 2007-08. The number of letters actually distributed to resigning teachers was not tracked in 2006-07, but was tracked by most boards in 2007-08. A sample of 18 Ontario school boards, chosen to represent 25% of the total number of boards, and roughly representative in terms of north/south, urban/rural, French/English, and public/catholic distribution, showed 1871 total resignations in 2007-08, of which 399 completed our survey, for a response rate of 21.3%.

The online survey was designed to be answered quickly; average time per respondent was less than 6 minutes. All correspondence, and the survey itself, were available in both official languages.

*Summary*

In Ontario, teachers tend to stay in teaching once they obtain a full time job. When comparing the more recent American literature on teacher attrition rates to our Ontario trends noted in Part A of this report, we therefore find that
• The overall annual rate of teachers leaving the profession (including retirees) in the U.S. is approximately 8 percent compared to an estimated rate based on OTPP data of approximately 5 percent in Ontario. The Ontario rate, unlike American trends, has generally declined in the past five years.

• In Ontario, almost 65 percent of “leavers” are retirees, compared to 30 percent in the U.S. This means that in the U.S. the higher attrition rate is not due to retirements, but to teachers leaving the profession.

• Over 20 percent of beginning teachers leave within 5 years in the U.S.¹ compared to approximately 10 percent in Ontario. The literature indicates that both numbers are considerably lower than attrition rates in the mid-1990’s. The Ontario rate has risen in the past few years as the employment market has moved from general teacher shortages affecting all regions of the province.

Of the 1860 resigning teachers who completed our survey over two school years, 63.8 percent retired, 18.5 percent moved to another board, and 17.6 percent left the profession but not the workforce. The most significant difference between 2007-08 and 2006-07 respondents is that fewer moved to another school board (a drop from 23% to 14% of respondents). “Movers” left primarily for personal reasons, and most went to a job in another publicly funded school board.

Overall, just over 10% resigned (either retiring ‘early’ or leaving the profession) due to dissatisfaction with their job. In general, then, Ontario teachers seem to be relatively satisfied.

The leading factors cited by dissatisfied leavers were:

1. workload issues such as excessive paperwork, increasing bureaucratic demands, long hours outside of school time needed for preparation, marking and reporting, and increasing stress;
2. issues with administration, including many who felt disrespected or not supported, or felt that administrators were not properly trained or held accountable themselves;
3. class sizes (although almost no written comments expanded on this topic; instead, many comments gave unsolicited details of dissatisfaction with specific board and ministry policies involving assessment, curriculum, and school organization);
4. issues with particular duties, especially dealing with IEP’s and the demands of special education and EQAO testing, or with certain job assignments/ timetables.

Other factors were not significant in influencing the teachers’ decision to leave, including salary and relations with colleagues or parents.

Source: Excerpts from, Why Teachers Leave: Results of an Ontario Survey 2006-08, by Rosemary Clark & Fab Antonelli, Ontario Teachers’ Federation, January 2009.
www.otffeo.on.ca/english/media_room/briefs/why_teachers_leave.pdf

¹ Recent data from the Education Law Center indicates that across the U.S. 46% of teachers leave before their fifth year.
Becoming a Teacher: The Transition Experiences of Beginning Teachers in Saskatchewan

This is a joint research project by the University of Saskatchewan (College of Education) and the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation.

This research project was initiated in the 2005-06 school year and focused on the identification and examination of key factors that affect Saskatchewan teachers’ early career paths by tracking beginning teachers through the critical three-year period following graduation from teacher education programs.

The project was designed to: (1) document employment patterns among beginning teachers; (2) describe new teachers’ expectations about their responsibilities and work experiences; (3) illustrate how beginning teachers develop a sense of belonging to the teaching profession; (4) examine new teachers’ opinions of their pre-service preparation; (5) describe the types of supports new teachers believe are needed; and (6) expand on the closely related theoretical frameworks of development stage/teaching career cycle theory and teacher induction analysis.

The project was carried out through a combination of survey research and case study interviews.

These were among the findings from a preliminary analysis of first year teachers’ experiences.

When asked to reflect on their first year teaching experience by looking at various factors, most survey respondents gave a high rating to “support from colleagues”, “challenges of teaching assignment”, and “stress level”.

When asked to rate supports or resources for their work as beginning teachers, the survey respondents indicated that “preparation time” and “support from family friends” were very important.

Case study participants provided considerably more detailed reflections about their transitions from student to professional status and employment as a beginning teacher. In addition, they were also asked about their workloads and work lives during their first year of teaching. Key themes or observations from these interviews include the following:

a) For the most part, the case study participants had relatively few difficulties in making the transition from student to employed teacher. Not surprisingly, most of these teachers thought their success in obtaining employment was due mainly to their networking within a school division or to their previous contacts with individuals who had influence on hiring decisions. Although a few had worked for awhile as substitute teachers, most were hired at about the same time that they had graduated. A caution to keep in mind, however, is that while case study participants seemed to find employment fairly easily, the survey data as well as results from other studies suggest that most graduates from teacher education programs face considerable problems, especially in the large urban centres. A much more typical scenario is that the transition to employment as a teacher involves a prolonged period of unsuccessful job searches, substitute teaching, and other forms of under-employment.

b) Orientation processes at the school level varied widely. Through their internship, volunteer work or other involvement at a particular school, some individuals were already very familiar with the teaching
staff, students and everyday routines or procedures. Other case study participants, however, were placed in a classroom very shortly – sometimes within hours – after being hired. They were expected to “hit the ground running” and had little or no time to prepare. Still other beginning teachers felt, with an exception or two, that orientation of new staff was a fairly structured process, more or less, and that teacher colleagues, including school-based administrators, had gone out of their way to offer assistance and help them adjust to the school’s norms.

c) Orientation at the community level also varied widely. Some case study participants who had moved to a new community for employment reasons thought they were very much welcomed. Others felt somewhat like outsiders but thought that with more time and perhaps more effort on their part to get more involved in community activities or groups, they would eventually become more comfortable with their new surroundings. At least one individual, however, experienced significant difficulties in adjusting to the community and seemed unsure about how to deal with this situation.

When referring to their new communities, several participants noted how, as the “new teacher in town”, they had quite a high degree of visibility that sometimes led to difficult moments. Of particular concern was the tendency on the part of some students or parents to call the teacher at home and at inappropriate times to discuss assignments, grades or other non-urgent matters. These teachers clearly felt this behaviour was unacceptable, but they were unsure about what if anything they could do to change the situation.

d) In general, support from division level administrators, school-based administrators, teacher colleagues and others at the school level was perceived very favourably by the case study participants. Some felt they would have benefitted from more frequent and/or specific guidance by the principal. A few individuals also experienced some difficulties in their relationships with colleagues, usually in connection with misunderstandings or disagreements about the allocation of student supervision and extra-curricular responsibilities.

e) Some of the case study teachers had a mentor, either assigned by an administrator or as the result of the beginning teacher seeking out a colleague to whom they could turn for advice and assistance. Each scenario had advantages and disadvantages. While having an assigned mentor may have been an efficient and appropriate administrative decision, it could make for an awkward relationship, especially if the mentor had little apparent interest in this role or not much more teaching experience than the beginning teacher. On the other hand, new teachers who sought out their own mentors found that process somewhat daunting and seemed to be concerned, perhaps with good reason, that the mentor might eventually resent the demands of this role. There were, however, some notable success stories in the interviews, all of which came from individuals who had a say in determining who their mentor would be. It should also be emphasized that teachers who had no mentor at all thought it would likely have been very helpful if they had had one.

f) The workload and work life demands in the first year of teaching presented special challenges for some of the case study teachers. Nearly all participants indicated that the workload was heavier than expected though still manageable, at least most days. Some full-time teachers, however, felt they were in survival mode and barely able to keep up with their instructional timelines for the week or month. Several participants also commented that the workload they had as interns was much less than what they experienced as beginning teachers. (Not surprisingly, however, individuals who had part-time status had a different perspective.) Teachers also noted in the interviews that workload varied during the school year with particularly heavy demands associated with reporting periods (this included parent-teacher meetings), major school activities (e.g., a concert) and extra-curricular tournaments or events.
When referring specifically to their teaching assignment workload, case study participants had widely divergent experiences and views. Some individuals taught more than one grade level and most were required to teach courses or subjects for which they had little if any pre-service preparation. While these circumstances alone involved significant workload implications, layered on top of it all for some teachers were a number of factors that could add hours to the work week. These factors varied from case to case, but included, for example, responding to students’ special needs or trying to cope with inadequate instructional resources or school supplies (requiring teachers to acquire their own materials).

When asked to comment on their student supervision and extra-curricular workload, most case study participants seemed to be reasonably satisfied. With a few exceptions, they also felt that fair processes were used in their schools to decide which staff would do which of these activities. A few individuals indicated, however, that the workload in some instances was not distributed evenly and that the rationale for some administrative or staffroom decisions might be questionable. As newcomers to the school, though, they wanted to avoid “rocking the boat” and therefore refrained from suggesting alternative approaches.

g) Perhaps a more critical issue than workload for some teachers was the quality of their work lives. Case study participants noted how difficult it was to maintain some semblance of a personal life, let alone balance their professional and personal lives. Teaching, as some beginning teachers came to realize, is an occupation that can be all-consuming, if one lets it. Work encroached significantly on their personal time, particularly at certain points in the school year. Even before completing their first year of teaching, some of these teachers had concluded that this was an unhealthy and likely unsustainable situation. They were already taking steps to ensure that they put the less urgent and less important aspects of their professional roles and responsibilities in perspective (“this task can wait until some other day”) and they were trying to set aside time and energy to carry out fulfilling personal lives.

h) Access to professional development opportunities seemed to be important to most of the case study participants. Several individuals made comments, for example, about how much they learned by attending the STF Beginning Teacher Conference in the fall. Others noted how they needed opportunities to observe experienced teachers and to meet with colleagues to share ideas about instruction. Although some of these teachers spoke very favourably about the encouragement and supports offered by their employers to take part in professional development, others seemed unclear about the procedures they should follow to access these learning opportunities.

Although they had not completed their first year of teaching when interviewed for this research project, the case study participants were generally satisfied with how they were doing in their work so far. Nearly all were confident that a teaching career was “a good fit” for them and that, assuming they would receive continuing (“permanent”) contracts, they planned to remain in teaching for the foreseeable future. In a sense, their reflections about their career choice and their first year teaching experience demonstrated that their professional identity had already undergone an important transformation – they were beginning to view themselves as bona fide teachers.

Source: Excerpts from, “Beginning Teachers in Saskatchewan: Transitions and Transformations” (Showcase 2008), by Gwen Dueck and Bruce Karlenzig, Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation, 2008.
The teacher voice on workload / workplace stress / teacher well-being

Stress and Strain in the Nova Scotia Teachers Union Membership

In December 2009 and January 2010 teachers and school administrators working in public schools across Nova Scotia were contacted by a research team from Saint Mary’s University working on behalf of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) and invited to complete a survey on workplace stress. The survey, which was conducted within eight school boards across Nova Scotia involving a total of 879 teachers, assessed:

- Work factors that lead to workplace stress for teachers (i.e., workplace stressors)
- Specific responsibilities and work tasks unique to the teaching profession that may contribute to stress
- Types of social support available to teachers to help mitigate the effects of workplace stress
- Various attitudes towards teaching, which can be influenced by the experiences of workplace stress
- Teachers’ health and well-being (e.g., experiences of psychological and physical strain)

The following is a summary of the results:

Work stressors and attributes

- Workload was the most frequently noted stressor (79.3%).
- Teachers reported working an average of 54 hours per week, with 13 of those hours being from outside of the regular school time, including their lunch breaks.
- There was a high reported incidence of incivility from school administrators, co-workers, students, and parents. The most common uncivil act was having their judgment questioned.
- Approximately 25% of respondents reported experiencing themselves at least one act of physical violence from students since the start of the school year.
- The number of curriculum outcomes that teachers are expected to cover, the number of new initiatives from the department of Education, the School Board, or school administrators, and the individual needs of students were noted by the majority of teachers as prevalent workplace stressors.
- Many teachers included comments about how stressful it was to deal with students’ behavioural problems.
- Only about half (52.9%) of working hours are spent on tasks directly related to teaching, half of the sample reported using their designated prep time on non-teaching relevant job activities (e.g., committee work), and half the sample also reported feeling that prep time was allocated unfairly.
- Only a quarter of the sample agreed that their school administrators were transformational leaders.
- Teachers reported good opportunities for skill use in their jobs and involvement in decision making.
- Teachers reported feeling secure in their jobs, but this finding may reflect the fact that the majority of respondents were full-time employees with permanent contracts.
Health & well-being

- Teachers reported high degrees of social support from co-workers and family/friends.
- The majority of respondents indicated that they sometimes come to work even when they are ill.
- Teachers self-reported moderate levels of strain; however, they inferred higher levels of strain among their coworkers.
- When looking at the relationships among experienced stressors and health factors, work family conflict, role conflict, and job insecurity were consistently associated with poorer health (psychological and physical health symptoms and lower affective well-being). Experiences of mistreatment, particularly incivility from parents, coworkers and administrators and acts of violence from students, were also associated with poorer health.

Job attitudes

- Teachers had largely positive job attitudes. Most reported being satisfied with their jobs overall as well as with their pay and benefits. Most reported low intentions to leave their jobs and approximately half of respondents reported high professional commitment.
- When looking at the relationships among experienced stressors and job attitudes, work-family conflict, role conflict, and lack of skill use were consistently associated with more negative job attitudes (lower professional commitment, lower job satisfaction, and higher intentions to leave the profession). Experiences of mistreatment, particularly incivility from administrators and acts of violence from students, were also associated with more negative job attitudes.

The report concludes that the results of the teacher survey suggest that, although teachers face some pressing stressors, particularly around workload, incivility and violence (from students), and high demands around curricula and new Board/DOE initiatives, they receive adequate social support from multiple sources, attempt to lead healthy lifestyles, and are largely avoiding the manifestation of psychological and physical strain responses that often result from long term stressor exposure. Similarly, even in the presence of stressors, the teachers hold largely positive job attitudes. That said, exposure to certain stressors, most notably work-family conflict and role conflict are consistently associated with negative job attitudes and poor health outcomes among the respondents. Similarly, experienced mistreatment from parents, administrators, and students are associated with negative job attitudes and poor health outcomes.

Source: Excerpts from, Stress and Strain in the Nova Scotia Teachers Union Membership: Teachers’ Report (Executive Summary). Prepared by Lori Francis, Natasha Scott, and E. Kevin Kelloway, CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, NS.
High School Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Working Environment in Newfoundland

In 2005, Dr. Lynda Younghusband (Memorial University) completed a study on teacher stress in Newfoundland called *High School Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Working Environment in Newfoundland: A Grounded Theory Study.*

The following are selected summary highlights from the study:

- During the past decade the major causes of teacher stress have been attributed to workload, poor school ethos, the inclusion of students with special needs without adequate supports and resources, and behavior problems in regular classrooms.
- Workplace stress not only impacts teachers’ health and well-being, but also the lives of their families and friends.
- After decades of research on teacher stress there is extensive information but little or no progress toward alleviating the problem. Teachers do not feel that they have an equal partnership in education; they feel overworked and unsupported. They report being excluded from the decision-making process and they want some autonomy. Teacher stress and resulting burnout is a serious problem that should be researched in a meaningful way if the quality and productivity of education is not to be weakened and if the health and well-being of teachers is to be taken seriously.
- Workload, class size, student behavior problems, inadequate administrative support, lack of professional training, lack of resources, teaching outside the area of specialization, time pressures, and evaluation apprehension have all been noted as issues of concern for teachers.
- Overloaded with paper work and facing increasingly larger classes, the problems inherent in inclusive classrooms, and the multiple role expectations, teachers expressed their concern not just for themselves but also for their students, who they felt experienced a loss when teachers felt less effective in the classroom and were physically and emotionally exhausted.
- Teachers expressed frustration about the rising demands and conflicting expectations not only from the Department of Education and board offices, but also from the public, who seem to expect them to manage all aspects of students’ upbringing. Of primary concern to the teachers in the present study were the profound social and emotional needs many students bring to school.
- Considering the barrage of educational policy changes and the increasing demands placed on teachers it is worrying that none of the previous responsibilities, such as supervision or extracurricular duties, have been reduced or eliminated.
- Personal time is becoming increasingly scarce outside of school for these teachers as they are faced with increasing demands to meet deadlines that cannot be accomplished within the scheduled instructional time.
- It is unfair to expect a teacher to teach technology courses with only half the computers in working condition and little technical assistance to repair broken equipment. It is not acceptable to expect teachers to purchase their own supplies or to expect students or teachers to study in classrooms designed for half the number of students. How inadequate resources can be justified by the Department of Education was difficult for teachers to understand and caused considerable frustration and anger. Failure to recognize the need for resources was perceived as a lack of respect for both teachers and students.
Overloaded and bombarded with massive changes and unrealistic time demands, these teachers were feeling overwhelmed, helpless and powerless, exhausted and disillusioned. There was never enough time in their work day to accomplish everything that was expected of them. Their personal lives were eroded by the increasing demands of their job, which impacted their well-being, forcing many of them to reconsider their desire to continue teaching.

Effective teachers constitute a valuable human resource, one that needs to be supported and treasured.


**Objective: Workplace Well-Being—Survey of AEFO Members**

In February 2006, the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO) asked a research team to conduct a survey on workplace well-being and dignity of its two groups of members: regular and supply teachers, and professional and support staff.

The stability of educational systems depends on hiring staff and being able to retain them, both physically (in numbers) and psychologically (in terms of commitment and interest). Essentially, everyone has a tangible bond (for example, a title, salary, collective agreement, job description) and a psychological bond (motivation, interest, excellence, commitment) with one’s organization. The key element in ensuring that the psychological bond is maintained is workplace well-being.

The research we conducted tried to determine how AEFO members relate to both their professional and personal lives, their level of satisfaction with different aspects of their job and their views on working climate, on ideological support and on various forms of harassment.

The three goals of this research were as follows:

1. paint a picture of the situation regarding workplace well-being and dignity
2. define training focus areas for AEFO members
3. identify advocacy objectives

The research team developed a preliminary questionnaire in March 2006. After consulting with other researchers in the field, it produced a second questionnaire in May 2006. This questionnaire was validated with a hundred or so regular and supply teachers.

The style was then reworked, and some questions were modified after a metrological analysis to determine their level of reliability.
At the end of January 2007, the questionnaire was sent to all AEFO members (regular and supply teachers, and professional and support staff) through union representatives in each workplace.

The union representatives returned the answer sheets in February and March 2007.

Among regular and supply teachers, 2,325 (33.8%) of the 6,869 AEFO members responded to the survey. Among professional and support staff, 82 (35.3%) of the 232 members responded to the survey.

**Conclusion**

**Needs and findings**

There are basic needs that must be met; otherwise, individuals begin to distance themselves or disengage from the organization and prepare their “exit” physically (changing jobs) or psychologically (absenteeism, neutrality, apathy). These needs include the following:

- the need for trust
- the need to have hope
- the need to feel a sense of worth
- the need to feel competent

The need for trust is defined by Branhan as follows: The organization honours its commitments, is open and honest in all its communications, invests in employees, treats employees fairly and makes sure they receive fair compensation.

**Research findings**

1. The climate of mutual trust is poor.
2. There is a feeling of unfair treatment in the sharing of responsibilities.
3. Compensation for both staff group members is not commensurate with their perception of their own value.
4. The “material” component (resources and technological support) is being neglected.

The need to have hope is defined as follows by Branhan: the belief that individuals are able to grow, to develop their skills through work and training, and to access career opportunities leading to higher pay.

**Research findings**

1. Continuing education is lacking.
2. Career opportunities are limited.
3. Only half of respondents from both groups believe they have decision-making autonomy and the freedom to take the initiative and exercise their creativity.
The need to feel a sense of worth is defined by Branhan as follows: Individuals feel that their investment (time, energy, effort) will be recognized and valued. They are confident that if they work hard, do their best, commit and make meaningful contributions, they will be recognized and rewarded. To feel important, individuals must feel that they are respected and considered an investment for the organization, rather than an expense.

**Research findings**

1. Levels of social appreciation and recognition are low.
2. Barely half of respondents from both groups feel valued by the school administration or their immediate supervisor.
3. Explicit recognition of skills by parents and guardians is less than 50%.

The need to feel competent is defined by Branhan as follows: Individuals expect a job that brings out their skills, that is challenging, and for which they receive adequate training, see results and receive feedback on their performance.

**Research findings**

1. Less than 60% of regular and supply teachers and less than 40% of professional and support staff feel that their skills are being used optimally.
2. About half of respondents from both groups feel that work is challenging and interesting.
3. Over two thirds of both staff group members feel that continuing education is inadequate.

Generally speaking, the level of well-being of both groups is rather low. There is dissatisfaction with the working climate. Trust, team spirit and adherence to the school mission are poor. Some inappropriate behaviours, such as public criticism, and particularly undue pressures, affect a person’s dignity. These behaviours are exhibited by colleagues, school administrators, supervisors, parents, guardians, students, children and clients alike.

Based on this research, we can say that the needs of half the members of both groups are not being met. Given their education and labour demands, a number of professional and support staff members could easily decide to leave the education system. As the situation for regular and supply teachers is different, there is a greater risk that members of this group will become withdrawn, apathetic or disengaged.

**Courses of action**

A comparison of the results with peer and research team norms (see Appendix B) highlights difficulties relating to the workplace, to the poor climate of mutual trust, to teamwork, to the deteriorating job atmosphere and to unclear and inconsistent job demands. We recommend that particular attention be paid to these areas.

After reading respondents’ comments and analyzing the data, we noted that the school administration has a leading role to play in creating a proper job atmosphere and in team building, since elements such as fair task sharing, listening and eliminating negative comments are largely its responsibility.
What is most telling is that regular and supply teachers are more concerned with work-life balance than working conditions, while professional and support staff have less concerns relating to work-life balance.

The challenges of work, the scope of responsibilities, the effective use of skills, the quality of continuing education and a sense of self-worth are all related to quality of worklife and professional recognition.

To improve the situation, the following three elements should first be considered:

1. clarifying and valuing the challenges of work in education
2. paying attention to workplace well-being
3. restoring a sense that one’s work is important


MTS Task Force on Teacher Workload

The Manitoba Teachers’ Society Task Force on Teacher Workload was created in June of 2008 to study the issue of teacher workload across Manitoba. Teachers have reported that:

• they have been asked to do more and more at school,
• there is an increase in the number of students taught,
• their allotted preparation time is inadequate, and
• they are burning out.

In order to obtain as clear a picture as possible of workload issues, the Task Force consulted with a broad range of the 14,000 members that make up The Manitoba Teachers’ Society. This was done through MTS Focus groups (2008), the provincial MTS Workload Survey 2008–2009, and Member Polling (2009). The MTS Task Force traveled across the province during 2008 and 2009 making presentations to and speaking with over 600 members, gathering their information and stories. Members were also invited to respond to topical workload articles which were printed in the Manitoba Teacher.

Within the final report, the Task Force examines international and national research on teacher workload, looks at Manitoba’s appropriate educational programming legislation (Bill 13) and its effect on Manitoba teachers, discusses teachers’ top five workload issues and makes recommendations for addressing workload issues for teachers in this province.
Workload findings

According to the MTS Workload Survey, 52 percent of Manitoba’s teachers reported an increase in workload (2008-2009) over the previous year. Seventy percent of respondents said that the teaching job has negatively impacted their health and 73 percent stated that on the job stress has negatively impacted their work performance. The hours worked per week (50 hours or more) demonstrate the increased workload and the accompanying stress of trying to keep up.

Most of the MTS Focus Group participants indicated that they feel they do not have control over their workload and that there is a lot of pressure on them to do more co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Data gathered corroborate the top concerns of Manitoba teachers.

1. class size and composition
2. preparation time
3. technology
4. provincial / divisional demands
5. extra-curricular activities

Class size and composition

Class size and composition wears a different face across the province. In some locations it could be too many students in one grade level without an appropriate heterogeneous blend. In others, it could be a split classroom (two grades) or a multi-grade classroom (3 grades plus) where the teacher is required to teach the curricula of all grades. In a high school or a middle years setting, it could be the total number of students taught across all the classes assigned to a specific teacher.

As the 2001 provincial Commission on Class Size and Composition recognized, smaller class sizes benefit both teachers and students. Manitoba is largely without legislation and collective agreement clauses to deal with class size and composition.

In Manitoba, a small class size, combined with an appropriate compositional load, would reduce teacher workload. It would enable students to reach their potential. Smaller classes would also facilitate a decrease in some of the behavioural issues. Some students who have educational assistants may not need them.

Preparation time

Due to their intensified workload, increasing class sizes, diversity of students within the classroom and the expectation to engage in extra-curricular activities, teachers work long hours in an attempt to provide an appropriate education to all of their students. Across Manitoba, 50 percent of full-time classroom teachers receive less than 200 minutes of preparation time per week and two percent indicate that they received no prep time at all.
Technology

Teachers perceived a rapid implementation of the Literacy with ICTs curriculum without having had the appropriate curriculum or technology training, or having the appropriate technology available within the school.

Teachers are often required to maintain a website in order to report class activities and assigned homework to parents; answer their e-mail from the division, school administration and parents during prep time; use a divisionally-based computerized system for the preparation of report cards which may or may not be available from home; and expected to troubleshoot problems with equipment due to the lack of technical support provided by the school division.

Provincial / divisional demands

Within any given year, there are new initiatives that are introduced and/or implemented by the Department of Education or school divisions. Program implementation is not co-ordinated between school divisions and the Department, so many initiatives can and do overlap. As with technology, teachers report frustration and being overwhelmed with the rate of introduction of too many initiatives by the province and school division. A teacher stated that they feel “Pulled in too many directions, for example, division-led initiatives and provincial initiatives: literacy in reading and numeracy, green schools, nutrition, Differentiated Instruction, Literacy with ICT, etc. The list is endless and I can’t focus or do well in any one area because there are too many!”

This sentiment is frequently expressed by teachers who perceive that there is a continuous change to programming. Teachers feel that the implementation of new programs is often done: 1) without adequate research as to program effectiveness (just another band wagon), 2) without the proper training of teachers, 3) without enough time allowed for teachers to become proficient, and 4) without resources being made available to ensure that the program runs well.

In order to cope with the increased rate of implementation, teachers report spending many extra hours preparing for new courses and that additional preparation spills over into their personal time. When overloaded they feel that they are not as thorough, plan less diverse activities and their lessons are less enjoyable. They also report having to choose where they are going to expend their energy, or whether or not they will implement the new program.

Principal report similar frustrations with the additional provincial and divisional demands. They report that the number of tasks assigned to principals keeps growing in an attempt to increase accountability of others to the Department of Education. They also report that they have to continuously advocate for staff and students in order to keep education a priority, rather than succumb to the managerial and political agenda.

Extra-curricular activities

The role of a teacher often extends beyond academics, encompassing the many extra-curricular activities that a school offers. Teachers feel there is a lack of personal control over these activities as these activities normally occur outside of normal working hours and bump up against family and personal commitments. They also report feeling pressured by colleagues and administration to “do their fair share”.

The Teacher Voice: Inspiring Students, Awakening Potential | 29
Recommendations

The ability to provide an appropriate education to every student is complicated. Teachers are pressured by class size and composition concerns, inadequate preparation time, the implementation of too many initiatives/programs by the Department of Education, technological challenges and pressure to participate in extra-curricular activities. In light of these concerns, the MTS Task Force recommends the following:

1. Appropriate Educational Programming Regulations
   The issue of compliance with these regulations has raised many concerns in terms of the burgeoning workload of members.

   MTS will need to:
   • Educate all members in regards to their rights and responsibilities under these regulations.
   • Educate all members as to the appropriate role of an educational assistant.
   • Educate all members about WSH legislation (harassment, violence in the workplace, etc.).
   • Educate all members about the resources available to support the learning of students with special needs.

   MTS must also lobby the government to:
   • Ensure that appropriate funding and resources are in place to support students with special needs.
   • Ensure that an educational assistant’s role within the classroom remains one of an assistant and not a teacher.
   • Provide adequate funding for teachers’ professional development in the area of special needs.
   • Ensure that the departmental dispute resolution mechanism has within it a provision which provides representation by The Manitoba Teachers’ Society for members involved in a dispute.

2. Class size and composition
   • Develop a formula for an appropriate class size taking into account student composition.
   • Develop an appropriate caseload limit for clinicians.
   • Ensure that a clause regarding class size and composition is bargained into each collective agreement.
   • Lobby the government to ensure that teachers are hired to support Level 2 students.
   • Free up resource teachers and clinicians to work with students.

3. Negotiate into all collective agreements a clause that guarantees a minimum of 300 minutes of preparation time per week per teacher.

4. Lobby the government and school divisions to reduce the rate at which new initiatives/curriculum are put in place, and when new programs are implemented ensure that adequate, ongoing professional development is made available.

5. Negotiate into all collective agreements a clause that stipulates that all extra-curricular activity is voluntary.

6. Continue expanding the image of public school teachers with the population.
7. Ensure that there is an equitable access to professional development opportunities across the province.
8. Lobby for adequate time within the school day to prepare report cards.


The Workload and Worklife of Prince Edward Island Teachers

In the fall of 2009, the PEITF commissioned researchers from the UPEI Centre for Education Research (CER) to conduct a study describing and exploring issues of workload and worklife experienced amongst their membership. The study included the following components:

- a survey of 655 of the 1579 teachers who are members of the PEITF
- a sample teachers’ group completed daily work logs totaling 57 working days
- 59 teachers participated in focus group discussions across the Island
- six teachers volunteered to provide detailed narratives of their experiences spanning a 30-day period

Some key findings of the study include:

- Teachers were found to work about 48 hours each week during the paid academic year, which is similar to a 2002 PEI teacher workload study.
- Teachers today are spending less time (2.3 hours less) on instruction of their students than in 2002.
- Teachers are spending more time than in the past on activities that support teaching and learning (i.e., modifying curriculum, preparing for instruction, and administrative tasks).
- Teachers are seeing the importance of quality instructional time being diminished by the competition for students’ time to be involved in social or family activity.
- Teachers are concerned about the perceptions the public and some school officials have regarding teachers’ professional dedication to the mission of educating PEI’s children.
- Teachers are stressed by the constant call for innovation and change.

The study found that teaching has indeed shifted to include new demands on the way time is distributed throughout teachers’ professional days, forcing new ways of working in schools and increasing stress on their worklife. For example, it was discovered that teaching today involves a complex set of ever-changing tasks, which seem to be reducing the amount of time dedicated to instruction. Attending to administrative tasks, responding to rapid technological changes, and addressing the needs of a growingly diverse population of learners all add to the myriad of tasks teachers need to manage and which teachers report are adding to a stressful workplace. The study recommends that through continued and increased collaborative efforts by
government, school boards, teachers, and parents, the ever-changing and complex role of teachers will be less stressful resulting in a more productive learning environment for children.

Teachers reported serious concern regarding the support they receive from various educational stakeholders as they pursue the important mission of educating PEI’s children. Societal changes in family structures and priorities, combined with seemingly uncoordinated agendas of school officials, has produced a sense of diminished support and confusion of roles for teachers. Teachers also expressed reduced opportunities to collaborate with colleagues and to work in a coordinated fashion with school officials focused on essential innovations to enhance student learning.

Arising from the findings, the report makes 11 recommendations for the stakeholders of children’s education.

Recommendations

1. School boards/districts, and principals, need to identify the number and kind of administrative tasks that are required of teachers to determine the effectiveness, redundancy, and priority of such tasks, as well as those which are most essential to the enhancement of student learning.

2. Teachers and school district officials need to engage in a process to determine which administrative tasks are essential and then develop a practice of prioritizing these tasks.

3. All stakeholders need to recognize that some administrative tasks are seen to be too time-consuming and that some tasks, such as the use of the SAS system [Students Achieve Software – for teachers to track attendance, marks and other information that parents can monitor online], could be seen as a valuable source of communication and assessment, and not simply an extra “administrative task”.

4. Further examination is needed to consider how the reduction in teaching time is affecting student learning. Have we lost sight of the primary role of the teacher and sliced it into so many disparate roles that any cohesive impact by teachers is being diminished?

5. In the changing nature of what it means to be a teacher, there is an accompanying change in what it means to be an administrative assistant. The good work of administrative assistants is not the same work that was done in 2002. Teachers and administrators must come to an understanding of how and who administrative assistants are to assist. A redefinition of the role, or at least an explicit acknowledgment of the role, is needed.

6. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), school districts, and the PEITF need to communicate to parents, sports agencies, and other youth-oriented services that instructional time is sacred time, and events such as tournaments, festivals, and competitions need to be scheduled outside of school time and that students have a responsibility to complete assignments.

7. At all levels of the education system, the parent/teacher relationship needs to be valued and nourished. Open lines of constructive communication need to be built, which holds the education of children with the utmost importance. Collaboratively, school districts, school administrators, school councils, Home and School Federation groups, and family literacy groups must work to make explicit their common goals. To facilitate this collaboration, these groups need to develop local effective systems of communication between teachers and parents to support and enhance parental involvement, student learning, and teacher efficacy.

8. Public relations work needs to continue to be done by all levels and organizations within the education system to demonstrate and celebrate the good work that is done by teachers, administrators, and support staff for children.
9. Teachers need to work collaboratively with their school administrators and central office personnel to align resources and supports to the mission of teaching and learning.

10. Working from the shared value of enhancing student learning through enhanced teacher practices, the DEECD, school districts, and the PEITF should collectively examine the instructional day, week, and year so as to embed professional collaborative time for teachers.

11. The DEECD, school districts and the PEITF should work collaboratively to move from a practice of adopting programs that are intended to provide “fixes”, to adopting long-term processes that promise to enhance the capacities of teachers to meet the challenges of teaching and learning in this decade.

Researchers anticipate the study will encourage discussion among the key educational stakeholders about the role and work of the teachers particularly in light of the province’s interest in adopting the “21st Century Skills” philosophy presented at last spring’s Summit on Education.

www.upei.ca/cer/files/cer/PEITF%20Report_0.pdf
www.upei.ca/cer/files/cer/ExecutiveSummary_0.pdf

Relationships Among Teacher Workload, Performance, and Well-being

Research has shown that teacher workload is intensifying and teachers are increasingly leaving the profession prior to having taught for 35 years. The purpose of this mixed method, sequential, phenomenological study was to determine (a) how workload intensification impacts teacher performance and well-being, (b) whether or not workload intensification was a primary factor in teachers’ choosing to leave the profession early, and (c) a formula for maximizing teacher performance and well-being.

Quantitative data obtained via a survey (n = 484), together with qualitative data collected via four focus group sessions and individual interviews with 15 teachers who had left the profession early, were utilized to determine if there is a problem with workload intensification in this east coast Canadian province [New Brunswick]. Quantitative data were analyzed using the chi-square test to determine the relationship between the independent variable (workload intensification) and each of the two dependent variables (performance and well-being). Qualitative data were analyzed to determine emergent themes with respect to workload intensification. Findings from this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between the independent variable and each of the two dependent variables. Qualitative data substantiated the quantitative findings that indicated there is a problem with workload intensification in that it is a primary factor in teachers’ choosing to leave the profession early. Recommendations include having administrators address identified current teacher workload issues. Utilization of the derived formula for maximizing teacher performance and well-being may effect social change by balancing teachers’ workload and thereby encouraging qualified teachers to remain in the profession.

Bullying in the Workplace. A Survey of Ontario’s Elementary and Secondary School Teachers and Education Workers

Three Ontario education worker unions – the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF), the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA) – retained James Matsui Research to conduct a survey to obtain information concerning the bullying of their members. Bullying is defined as persistent or repeated incidents of abuse, threats, insults or humiliation that are intended to hurt other individuals physically, emotionally, psychologically or socially.

The two specific objectives of the research are to:

- establish the incidence of bullying of the members of the three sponsoring organizations; and,
- describe bullying incidents from the perspective of their instigation, the nature of the bullying, the reporting of the bullying incidents, actions taken to halt bullying and the outcomes of these actions.

In total, 1,217 members of the three organizations were contacted by telephone and interviewed in March 2005. Each organization contributed equally to the overall sample which subsequently was weighted at the analysis stage. For the representative sample of 1,217 education workers in Ontario, the margin of error is ±2.8 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. The subsamples from the individual sponsoring organizations have a margin of error of ±4.9 percent.

Phase 1 of the Bullying in the Workplace study documents the incidence of bullying of Ontario teachers and education workers by students so that we can better understand the nature of bullying, how it starts and evolves and what can be done to prevent it. The survey was also conducted to prove that failure to address the needs of students who bully represents a huge cost to society.

Among the findings from Phase 1:

- Teachers and education workers (respondents) defined bullying as threats of physical assault, verbal abuse, racial and sexual slurs, repeated intimidation, disrespectful behavior, vandalism of personal belongings and persistent class disruption.
- Thirty-eight percent of respondents have been bullied by a student.
- Almost 48 percent of respondents have witnessed violent incidents in schools involving injuries, property damage or weapons.
- Based on the most serious accounts of bullying by a student, 82 percent of respondents were bullied by a male student and 10 percent by a female student.
- Bullying can occur at any point during a teacher’s or education worker’s career.
- The personal consequences of bullying include absence from work, and emotional and stress-related symptoms including increased fear, loss of sleep, loss of self-confidence, anxiety, appetite loss and depression. More than 20 percent of respondents bullied by students have sought professional help to overcome the consequences of bullying.

Phase 2 of the Bullying in the Workplace study documents the incidence of bullying of Ontario teachers and education workers by parents or guardians, school administrators and their own colleagues in order to...
understand the nature of bullying, including personal consequences, labour costs, and its prevention.

Among the findings from Phase 2:

- Bullying by parents or guardians is the second most prevalent form of bullying, after bullying by students, with 36 percent of teachers and education workers working in elementary schools and 22 percent in secondary schools reporting having been bullied. Thirty percent of respondents who have been bullied by parents have been the subject of repeated attempts at intimidation, 20 percent have encountered persistent verbal abuse, 11 percent have been threatened physically or assaulted on more than one occasion and 11 percent have been the subject of repeated malicious lies.

- Bullying by a superior or someone in a position of authority affects approximately one in four respondents. Specific forms of bullying include repeated unfair criticism (54 percent), pressure to change schools (46 percent), repeated attempts at intimidation (35 percent) and other behaviours such as deliberately withholding information (32 percent), attempts at isolation (26 percent) or removal of responsibilities without justification (18 percent).

- Of the four ways by which respondents could be bullied, bullying by a colleague had the lowest rate of incidence. Fewer than one in seven across Ontario reported being bullied by a co-worker.

- For those who formally or informally reported a bullying incident to another person, 62 percent of those bullied by parents, 52 percent by school administrators and 39 percent by colleagues reported that subsequent action was taken.

- The personal consequences of bullying include absences from work, increased fear, loss of sleep, loss of self-confidence, anxiety, appetite loss and depression. Severe panic attacks, and loss of appetite, self-confidence and concentration are most prevalent reactions when bullied by an administrator. The victims of this type of bullying are also more likely to seek professional help than when bullied by a parent, colleague or student.

**Recommendations from the study**

**Phase 1**

Parents, teachers and other education professionals need to help children learn alternatives to aggression to help prevent them from becoming violent adults.

Along with this help, however, school boards, parent and community groups and the government need to work with teachers and education workers to:

- Provide more school-based professional group and individual services for students.
- Develop resources for parents to recognize, address and prevent bullying behaviour.
- Offer pre-service and in-service training for administrators.
- Offer pre-service and in-service training for teachers.
- Offer in-service training for support staff.
- Develop Ontario schools as “Bully-free environments”.

**VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM**
Phase 2

School boards and the government need to work with teachers and education workers to:

- Amend the Ontario’s Employment Standards Act to mirror the innovative sections 81.18 to 81.20 of Quebec’s Labour Standards Act to protect employees from workplace psychological harassment. The Quebec legislation defines psychological harassment as “any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures that affect an employee’s dignity or psychological or physical integrity and that results in a harmful work environment for the employee.”

- Include protection from workplace psychological harassment and violence in the Occupational Health and Safety Act for all sectors.

- Develop and publicize school board policies that address and prevent bullying.

- Offer pre-service and in-service training for administrators.

- Offer pre-service and in-service training for teachers.

- Offer in-service training for support staff.

- Develop Ontario schools as “Bully-free environments.”

**Sources:** Excerpts from, Bullying in the Workplace. A Survey of Ontario’s Elementary and Secondary School Teachers and Education Workers, by James Matsui and Lang Research (Executive Summary), 2005.

www.oecta.on.ca/wps/wcm/connect/9eb417804e326110b00fb40ed7cd0271/bullying_execsum.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID=9eb417804e326110b00fb40ed7cd0271

Bullying in the Workplace – Fast Facts (Phase 1 & Phase 2).

www.oecta.on.ca/wps/wcm/connect/88f421804e326113b013b40ed7cd0271/osstf_oecta_bullying_card.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHENID=88f421804e326113b013b40ed7cd0271

www.oecta.on.ca/wps/wcm/connect/7123aa004ee2498892dcf40134de00e/bullying_card2.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CACHEID =7123aa004ee2498892dcf40134de00e

**Cyberbullying**

The 2010 CTF National Issues in Education public opinion poll includes teachers’ views on cyberbullying.

These are among the findings:

- 48% of teachers surveyed in 2010 were aware of some elementary-secondary school students in their community who were cyberbullied over the last year, down from two-thirds of teachers surveyed in 2008.

- 1 in 5 teachers surveyed in 2010 said they had knowledge of some elementary-secondary school teachers in their community being victims of cyberbullying over the last year, down from 29% in 2008.

- 12% of teachers surveyed in 2010 said they knew a close friend who was victimized by cyberbullying over the last year, matching the national average.
8% of teachers surveyed in 2010 said they knew a family member who was a victim of cyberbullying over the last year, virtually unchanged from 2008 (9%).

8% of teachers surveyed in 2010 said they knew a co-worker who was victimized by cyberbullying over the last year, down from 20% in 2008.

7% of teachers surveyed in 2010 said they were victims of cyberbullying over the past year, up from 3% in 2008.

On the issue of whether parents should become more knowledgeable and responsible in monitoring their child’s activities with the Internet and electronic communication devices, virtually all teachers surveyed in 2010 (98%) believe this measure would be effective, including about three-quarters of all teachers (74%) who indicated it would be “very effective”.

On the issue of whether teachers should be trained to respond to cyberbullying when it impacts them or their students, 88% of teachers believe this measure would be effective, including 52% of all teachers surveyed who indicated it would be “very effective”.

On the issue of whether legislation should be developed that better protects students and teachers from becoming the victim of a cyberbully, 68% of teachers surveyed in 2010 believe this measure would be effective, including 31% who feel it would be “very effective”, down from respective shares of 81% and 36% in 2008.

All teachers surveyed in 2010 believe that school boards should develop and enforce policies that hold cyberbullying students accountable, virtually unchanged from 2008 (98%).

On the issue of whether school boards should hold students accountable when the cyberbullying originates outside the school, such as from the student’s home, 61% of teachers surveyed in 2010 support this approach, virtually unchanged from 2008 (62%).


2005 CTF National Teachers’ Poll

The purpose of a national teachers’ poll conducted in May 2005 on behalf of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation by Vector Research + Development was to study the views of Canadian educators on a range of issues related to their workplace, including teachers dealing with abusive parents and school safety.

The survey results are based on telephone interviews with 1,103 full-time and part-time public elementary and secondary educators across Canada who are CTF members.

While a significant number of teachers reported witnessing at least one incident that they would classify as physical assault or verbal abuse, there is an overwhelming view that our schools are safe places. There is, however, a strong message from the results that programs designed to reduce bullying and foster cooperation and good dispute resolution skills, must continue to be supported.
Highlights

- 82% of Canadian educators surveyed in 2005 reported that they do not fear for their physical safety when they are on school property.
- 1/3 of educators surveyed reported an increase in the number of incidents with angry or abusive parents compared to four years ago.
- The percentage of Canadian educators surveyed in 2005 who reported witnessing at least one incident of various forms of assault or abuse over the past year was as follows:
  - a student physically assaulting or intimidating another student (78%)
  - a student verbally abusing another student, more than just an angry exchange (75%)
  - a student physically assaulting or intimidating a teacher (35%)
  - a student verbally abusing a teacher, more than just an angry exchange (60%)
  - a parent physically assaulting or intimidating a teacher (23%)
  - a parent verbally abusing a teacher, more than just an angry exchange (46%)

The teacher voice on inclusion / class composition

A View From the Front Line: A Report of the NBTA Ad Hoc Committee on Inclusionary Practices

Classroom composition issues are unquestionably having a negative impact on teaching and learning conditions in New Brunswick. The New Brunswick Teachers’ Association struck an ad hoc committee to study the issue through the lens of inclusionary practices in August 2004. This committee gathered data using focus groups of teachers from across the province to study the depth of the issues, in combination with an on-line survey of members to provide information on the breadth of concerns. The NBTA Board of Directors accepted the results and recommendations in October 2005. The Committee also presented preliminary findings and recommendations to Professor Wayne MacKay, who had been contracted by the Department of Education to conduct a review of inclusion in New Brunswick.

Class composition

Even the briefest analysis of the data collected led the Committee to conclude the education system in Anglophone New Brunswick has reached a breaking point. Our schools are in crisis.

In the minds of many, classroom composition issues arise from the placement of exceptional learners within “regular” classrooms. While the education of a very high needs child may form a stress point in a classroom, such a situation does not usually form the core of classroom composition concerns. Classrooms reach a state of crisis when many high needs students are placed therein (whether the needs are behavioural, physical, or cognitive); and the resources required to meet those needs are not provided.

Data provided by classroom teachers is disheartening. Analysis of results reported from the on-line survey revealed that 29% of the student population in elementary core (non-immersion) classes was comprised of students on Special Education Plans (SEPs). In middle school core classrooms that population jumped to 38%. The streaming of Anglophone education into immersion and core classes has created untenable environments in many core classrooms.

Lack of resources

Teachers report that we have children in our schools who have unique, exceptional, educational and behavioural needs, yet are being placed in environments in which these needs cannot possibly be met. The frustration and despair being felt is apparent. The combination of the high concentration of needs in some classes, and the lack of support is overwhelming teachers.

Students who have extreme behavioural needs, which may or may not coincide with educational exceptionalities, are destroying the learning environments for their peers. Administrators report spending nearly one third of their time dealing with behavioural issues. Participants report that students who have exceptional educational requirements (including gifted students) are not being well served because teachers cannot meet their needs without significant supports, while those students who fall within the “normal” range are not being well served because teachers must spend so much time with those students who fall outside the range.

Despite reporting severely compromised learning environments, teachers firmly believe in the concept of inclusion of children with educational exceptionalities.
However, they make it clear the inclusion model currently used, in which inclusion often simply means placement within a regular classroom, does not work. In order for children with exceptionalities to be included, they must be integrated into the social life of the school, and be provided with appropriate educational programming.

Teachers posit that if those children with extremely disruptive behaviours were provided with alternate settings, and if the human and material resources were in place, inclusion could work. In fact, they argue passionately the lack of resources is central to the failure of the current model.

**Workload**

The third thematic concern recounted by teachers was one of workload. Teachers are troubled by both the quantity and quality of their workload. In terms of quantity, they describe spending long hours trying to create appropriate materials for their students. With regard to quality, the issue is one of paperwork.

The amount of time being spent on Department of Education paperwork is denying our children learning opportunities, and leading to acute frustration levels.

**Recommendations**

In order to address the three thematic areas of concern – class composition, lack of resources, and workload – the Committee offers three broad recommendations for government action. In addition, there are twenty supporting recommendations that are outlined on pages 22 to 25 in the report “A View From the Front Line”.

A. Government must recognize the system is in crisis and address classroom composition issues immediately.

B. Government must provide adequate resources to meet the needs of the children of New Brunswick.

C. Government must immediately redefine its expectations of the level of service that can be provided to our children by teachers currently within the education system, given the existing class compositions and resources.

**Summary**

In our multi-cultural, knowledge-based society it is imperative that all citizens are able to access information, and subsequently to evaluate and use the information. It is also imperative that we accept diversity. Teachers model and encourage acceptance of all individuals within an inclusive school, and attempt to provide appropriate educational programming to all children regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or educational exceptionality. Teachers in New Brunswick believe in inclusion; that each child needs to be provided with an educational program that will ensure life-long learning to the best of the child’s ability. Sadly, teachers report that such educational programming is not always provided. Despite teachers’ best efforts, many children are not being afforded the education they deserve. The high concentration of needs within some classrooms, in combination with a lack of resources to address those needs, has led to the creation of classroom environments that cannot possibly foster learning. These conditions, in combination with unreasonable expectations of what can be supplied by a single classroom teacher, have led some teachers to the brink of despair.
The view from the front line is discouraging, even alarming. Teachers have done all they can as professionals to provide positive learning environments and educational opportunities for the children in their care, yet they know it is not enough. Teachers must be provided with reinforcements in the form of material and human resources in order to address the needs of their students.

The New Brunswick Anglophone education system is in crisis. The government of New Brunswick must refocus our education system. Our education system must have one mission only – to focus on meeting the educational needs of all of our children. Nothing can be more important to the future of New Brunswick than ensuring that every child is provided with an opportunity to be successful.

www.nbta.ca/profession/ad_hoc_committee/
www.nbta.ca/profession/ad_hoc_committee/executive_summary.pdf
www.nbta.ca/profession/ad_hoc_committee/front_line_report.pdf
www.nbta.ca/profession/ad_hoc_committee/message.html

Success for All: The Teaching Profession’s Views on the Future of Special Education in Alberta

In 2007, the Alberta Teachers’ Association surveyed teachers attending the fall conferences of the Special Education and the Gifted and Talented Education councils to gather information about their experiences in providing instruction to students with special needs. The survey focused in particular on their work related to developing and implementing individualized program plans (IPPs). To augment the survey results, the Association organized, throughout the province, a series of focus groups in March and April 2008. This report analyzes the data garnered from the survey and focus groups, looks at some of the larger philosophical questions associated with the delivery of educational services to exceptional learners and suggests how those services might be improved in the future.

Over the years, educators in the field of special education have struggled with two fundamental questions. The answers to these questions determine many related policy and funding decisions.

The first fundamental question

The first question is whether children deemed to have learning disabilities should be segregated and taught in special classes or whether they should be integrated into regular classrooms and educated with their peers. During the first half of the 20th century, the dominant approach was to segregate students with special needs, a practice that resulted in the evolution of a specialized educational approach known as special education. Beginning in the 1960s, however, the pendulum began to swing in the opposite direction, and today most students with special needs are integrated into the regular classroom, a practice that has come to be called inclusive education. Although teachers overwhelmingly support the right of students with learning disabilities to be educated with their nondisabled peers, they nevertheless experience ongoing frustrations with the way that inclusive education has been implemented in the province of Alberta. Many of these frustrations appear
to be rooted in the fact that the province is caught between two paradigms: the traditional special education approach and the more recent inclusive classroom approach.

One major concern is that the province has not developed a systematic action plan to support regular classroom teachers in carrying out such aspects of inclusive practice as assessing students, developing IPPs, designing appropriate instructional strategies for students with diverse learning needs and supervising the work of paraprofessionals. A second concern is that many school jurisdictions have implemented inclusive education without fully dismantling the programs and services typical of traditional special education. As a result, the two systems end up competing for scarce resources. A third concern is that the inclusive classroom approach is incompatible with the province’s standards-based approach to accountability whereby student progress is assessed according to predetermined levels of academic performance as measured by provincial achievement tests. Requiring students with special needs to write such tests merely confirms the obvious: namely, that they achieve at levels below those of other students. Fourth, some students, when included in the regular classroom, jeopardize the learning, safety and emotional wellness of their classmates. Yet the province has not developed any clear criteria for weighing the advantages of including a particular student against the disadvantages that might accrue to the group as a whole.

**Recommendations**

1. That Alberta Education develop guidelines and criteria to assist school jurisdictions in determining whether, in the case of an identified student, a regular classroom setting is in the best interests of the identified student and other students in the classroom. Such a determination should always be made in light of the fundamental principle that every student has an equal right to an educational program and that the first placement option should generally be an inclusive setting.

2. That Alberta Education align its funding framework to permit jurisdictions to provide a full spectrum of programs and services from inclusive to segregated so that one option does not have to be pursued at the expense of the other.

3. That Alberta Education, in consultation with teachers and parents, develop an evaluation framework for students with special needs that takes into account realistic standards for student outcomes. Such an evaluation framework should consider formally recognizing program completion in the case of students who are enrolled in ungraded programs and who are unable to meet the outcomes of the program of studies.

**The second fundamental question**

The second question that shapes the delivery of services to students with special needs is whether or not to code students according to their exceptionalities. Those who support coding argue that it helps ensure not only that educators have a common understanding of learning needs but also that students gain access to additional services and supports. Those who oppose this approach contend that coding is harmful (leading to stigmatization and low self-esteem), extremely difficult to carry out (children do not fit neatly into prescribed categories) and somewhat arbitrary (many students who have difficulty learning and require extra assistance do not qualify for a special needs designation according to coding criteria). Given these concerns, many teachers believe that the province should either expand the coding system to more accurately reflect the diversity of students in today’s classrooms or abandon the coding approach altogether in favour of an
approach that identifies the level of support that each student requires. Whichever approach the government chooses, teachers believe that earlier identification and intervention can greatly improve the outlook for children with learning difficulties.

**Recommendations**

4. That Alberta Education revise the system of determining eligibility for special educational services so that, rather than coding a student, it identifies the level of support that a student requires.

5. Should Alberta Education choose to maintain the current system of categorizing students, that it expand the categories to include learners who function slightly below the average range of intelligence and, as a result, require more time to learn than their classmates.

6. That Alberta Education, when determining a student’s eligibility for a special education designation, give equal weight both to the teacher’s observations and assessments and to other professional assessments and judgments.

7. That Alberta Education fund early literacy and numeracy programs for students identified as being at risk.

**Learning conditions**

For learning to occur effectively in highly diverse classrooms, the following conditions must be in place:

1. class sizes should be small and inversely related to the number of students with special needs,

2. teachers and students must have uninterrupted time for instruction and

3. school boards should have the latitude to exclude from regular classes students who are highly disruptive and/or who pose a physical risk to other students.

Study participants also agreed that teachers working in inclusive classrooms need

1. adequate time to prepare and to collaborate with other teachers;

2. access to professional development, workshops and courses to help them acquire the knowledge and skills to work with students with disabilities;

3. access to site-based special education/resource teachers;

4. access to the services of well-trained education/teaching assistants;

5. access to material resources that would help them to tailor their instructional strategies to the needs of their students;

6. access to assistive technology to help students learn more quickly;

7. access to an electronic template to help them prepare IPPs; and

8. coordinated support from principals, school board personnel, Alberta Education and other agencies that provide services to students.
Recommendations

8. That Alberta Education provide sufficient funding to enable jurisdictions to reduce class sizes, thereby creating conditions that research has shown are more conducive to effective teaching and learning.

9. That Alberta Education modify its funding formula and framework to take into account the composition and complexity of the class.

10. That jurisdictions grant every teacher adequate time during the school day to prepare to teach in inclusive and diverse classrooms. The importance of such preparation time cannot be overstated.

11. That Alberta Education fund professional development programs to help teachers acquire the knowledge and skills they require to work in inclusive and highly diverse classrooms.

12. That jurisdictions, through the leadership of principals, ensure that teachers have access to professional development opportunities related to inclusive practice.

13. That Alberta Education, in collaboration with the Alberta Teachers’ Association and the College of Alberta School Superintendents, develop a provincial professional development action plan targeted at supporting teachers to meet the challenges posed by changing classroom demographics.

14. That jurisdictions provide teachers with the opportunity, during the school day, to meet with colleagues to discuss instructional and assessment strategies for students who are experiencing learning challenges. Such meetings, which could be incorporated into existing professional learning community agendas, would facilitate a whole-school approach to meeting the needs of all students.

15. That Alberta Education provide jurisdictions with new targeted funding for the purpose of hiring special education teachers/resource teachers/learning support teachers and assigning them to schools in proportion to the number of students enrolled and the severity of their needs.

16. That Alberta Education establish criteria governing the knowledge, skills and experiences that teaching/educational assistants must possess in order to work with students having special needs.

17. That the Government of Alberta take measures to reduce the time that schools must wait to (a) access the assessment services provided by speech-language therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and other specialists and (b) receive reports once such assessments have been made.

18. That Alberta Education increase the number of copies of special education resources that it provides to schools.

19. That Alberta Education, in consultation with the Alberta Teachers’ Association and the College of Alberta School Superintendents, develop new materials related to such aspects of inclusive practice as (a) modifying the curricula to meet the needs of students who learn at different rates and (b) developing nonstandard ways of assessing students with special needs.

20. That Alberta Education, in consultation with classroom teachers, revise the requirements for individual program plans so as to make them less time-consuming and more practical for teachers to write.
Student-centred accountability

One other theme that clearly emerged in the study is the incompatibility between the province’s avowed support for inclusive education, on the one hand, and its dogged pursuit of a standards-based approach to accountability, on the other. Expecting students who have learning difficulties and/or who have not been exposed to the curricula to write provincial achievement tests is unhelpful. Much more productive would be to adopt an accountability mechanism that is student-centred, includes teachers’ own assessments and provides teachers with feedback that helps them to improve their practice.

Recommendations

21. That Alberta Education, in consultation with teachers, redesign the accountability policies and practices related to students with special needs.

22. That Alberta Education and school jurisdictions reduce the administrative paperwork required of teachers working with students with special needs.

23. That Alberta Education establish accountability policies and practices that honour the complexities of teaching and that support student learning.

Source: Excerpts from, Success for All: The Teaching Profession’s Views on the Future of Special Education in Alberta, ATA Research Update. Alberta Teachers’ Association, Feb. 2009. [Executive Summary]
www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Research-Updates/PD-86-13%20Success%20for%20All%202009%202002.pdf
The teacher voice on assessment and evaluation

Teachers’ Views of Standardized Testing and EQAO

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) standardized testing has been in place in Ontario since 1996; all students in Grades 3 and 6 are tested. Elementary teachers have a strong interest in this public policy area. ETFO commissioned Environics Research Group to survey Ontario elementary teachers’ opinions of EQAO testing in November 2009.

Among the results of the telephone survey:

• The majority of respondents – 94% – said they spend considerable time preparing students for the EQAO test.
• 77% said the range of topics taught has narrowed because of the testing program.
• 88% said that EQAO testing has increased teachers’ workload.
• 67% did not believe EQAO testing was useful in assessing the quality of the education system.
• 61% did not believe EQAO testing was useful in informing parents of a student’s progress in school.
• 56% said EQAO testing has made no difference in the quality of education in Ontario; 19% felt it has improved while 18% said the quality of education is worse as a result of EQAO testing.

In June 2010 Environics conducted focus groups with ETFO members across the province to gather further qualitative information in order to understand teachers’ views in more detail.

These are selected findings from this research (from Environics Research Group presentation):

• Teachers think that the public and parents place a high importance on EQAO scores as an indicator of a good school – although teachers do not.
• A division of opinion exists as to whether there are any benefits from EQAO testing.
• Top-of-mind benefits mentioned by teachers include:
  • large amount of data that is collected has potential use in a number of areas
  • EQAO has made teaching more intentional
  • EQAO emphasis on particular skills has forced certain changes in the way subjects are taught
  • has created opportunities for professional development
  • has fostered more collaboration among teachers
• Many feel these benefits could have been achieved through other means (like the new curriculum) or at lower cost.
• EQAO is seen as of limited use or of no use for:
  • Assessing the quality of the education system as a whole
  • Informing parents about their child’s progress in school
• EQAO is seen by some as useful for:
  • Helping schools in their plans to improve school achievement
  • Helping teachers to plan their lessons and curriculum
• There are many more downsides of EQAO testing in the opinion of teachers.
  • A divergence exists between Ministry of Education goals and EQAO tests – the goal that learning should be geared toward the child’s needs vs. the goal of making all children capable of performing to a specific level in EQAO.
  • EQAO creates a system which is less “rich” and more narrowly focused – it is a shift in orientation from an “education” agenda to a “test score agenda”.
  • EQAO means less attention and teaching of non-test subjects such as music, arts, drama, even the sciences, to focus on the subject areas of the tests.
  • EQAO leads to “assessment driving more assessment”.
• Pressures on students are too intense, particularly on Grade 3 students.
• EQAO has huge drawbacks related to children with special circumstances or needs – special education students, ESL students, students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students from different cultural backgrounds (inner city, rural, ethnic), students with behavioural issues or learning disabilities, highly gifted children.
  • The idea that 75% of students can achieve a level 3 or 4 is problematic.
• EQAO tests are not uniformly administered, putting the test results, comparability and tracking over time in question:
  • schools administer the tests differently
  • standards of marking have changed over the years
  • difficulty of the tests has changed over the years
• Disruptions to class routines and program planning to accommodate testing and to accommodate reviews of test scores are harmful to students and teachers.
• The costs of EQAO may lead to less spending in other areas where needs are great.
• Teachers use a wide range of resources and strategies in their professional life for assessing students, reporting to parents, preparing lessons, and working with colleagues – EQAO testing is rarely mentioned among these tools, resources and strategies.
• On the future of EQAO testing, most teachers think EQAO testing should be eliminated.
• When asked what changes should be made if EQAO were to remain, teachers had many suggestions/comments:
  • Reduce the scale and importance of EQAO tests to reduce the pressure on children and teachers
  • Change the structure of the testing process
  • Consider random sampling
  • Reduce the importance of EQAO tests in the eyes of the public as the best or only way of evaluating a school
• Take into account the needs of children in special circumstances
• Administer the tests uniformly to make it a true level playing field
• When asked what message they would like to tell the Ontario public about education, the main theme is that teachers care about the children they teach and that teachers want students to have the best possible education.
• Other themes include:
  • parents and communities need to be involved
  • schools have changed since many members of the public were students, and they must continue to change to meet the needs of students
• Some teachers offered messages about EQAO:
  “We want what’s best for the kids and that’s why we discourage or don’t think standardized testing is good, not because we’re trying to save our jobs or because we’re afraid, but because we really want what’s best for these kids and we don’t believe these tests are really serving them well in the long run, they’re not really helping.”


Teacher Voice on Assessment (TVA) Project

The Teacher Voice on Assessment (TVA) study was initiated by the Ontario Teachers’ Federation with funding from the Ministry of Education to explore classroom assessment, evaluation and grading practices in Ontario secondary schools. Nearly 6,000 high school teachers (members of AEFO, OECTA and OSSTF) were surveyed online in 2010 on the topic of classroom assessment. Teacher interviews were also conducted across the province.

The data from the surveys and interviews are being analyzed in relation to questions and concepts such as the following:
• What is the context for teachers’ decisions about classroom assessment in Ontario secondary schools?
• What are teachers’ beliefs about learning and assessment?
• What are the demographics of the respondents?
• What is the respondent’s experience of professional learning in relation to assessment?
• What resources have teachers used, found useful?
• What are teachers’ practices in relation to assessment purposes?
• What do teachers do in relation to strategies, creating assessments, reference points, feedback, marking, grading, recordkeeping and reporting?
• What are the issues that teachers are experiencing in relation to assessment, marking and grading?

In addition to producing a report, the survey results will be used to create an assessment, evaluation and reporting resource for teachers.

The teacher voice on curriculum evaluation

The English Language Arts Program at the Secondary Level. QPAT Evaluation and Recommendations

Introduction

The Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT), on behalf of the teachers it represents in the English sector, has examined the Secondary English Language Arts (ELA) program as well as the recent supporting documentation prepared by the ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS). This document is the report of QPAT’s evaluation of the program that has been progressively implemented since 2005-2006 and contains QPAT’s recommendations to correct certain elements of the program.

At the time of writing, the secondary ELA program is in its second year of implementation across all five years of high school. In conjunction with the new documents tabled by MELS in the late summer and fall of 2010 (i.e. Progression of Learning and Frameworks for the Evaluation of Learning), it is an opportune moment to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the program and its evaluation of students.

A working group of teachers was established to conduct the review. The committee represents a broad cross-section of the teachers in our schools at both the cycle I and cycle II levels. The teachers come from schools on the island of Montreal, from the surrounding suburbs and from outside the Montreal area. Their schools range in size from 400 to over 1700 students and they have taught anywhere from 8 to 34 years.

In broad terms, the committee examined a range of questions concerning the program:

• Does the program reflect the content, learning and outcomes that are appropriate for ELA students?
• Do the new documents help clarify the program and help teachers?
• Does the evaluation of students fit with the program and does it also reflect the learning the students should have?

In other words, the committee members brought their varied experiences to bear on an examination of the program to determine whether it meets the needs of our students and leads them to an appropriate level of learning over the course of their secondary schooling.

The program

The program is comprised of four competencies at cycle I and three competencies at cycle II. The competency in media that is separate in cycle I is integrated into the remaining competencies in cycle II. This integration will happen in fact, if not in theory, for the 2011-2012 school year in cycle I given the method by which marks will be reported as of then. Consequently, the analysis and discussion was held from the perspective of there being three competencies across both cycles with an examination of the place and content for each.

In general terms, the competencies of the program reflect different elements that are appropriate to a mother tongue program. Any language is learned by the development of a variety of interconnected skills. The ability to speak for the purpose of effective interaction (Talk to Learn), to read for meaning (Reading of Literary and Media Texts) and to produce and communicate ideas effectively (Production of Literary and Media Texts) are broad areas of language development that interact with one another in an organic way. As such, each of these
elements has a place in the program and in evaluation. There are, however, specific issues with each of these competencies that need to be addressed. These issues arise out of the fact that the program is very broad and all-encompassing, which has led to a highly variable understanding of what the program is and its application. The analysis and recommendations in this report are intended to highlight the areas of difficulty and find ways to provide a common understanding of the program in the interest of ensuring that students learn what is appropriate and necessary.

Conclusion

QPAT has carefully examined the various elements of the secondary ELA program and its evaluation. It is clear that the program attempts to incorporate learning that was deemed essential by the program developers for students in the 21st century. It is important, however, that these skills not supplant traditional skills that remain essential to students. A certain rebalancing needs to take place to ensure that students are best served by the program.

It is in this spirit that QPAT makes the following recommendations:

Talk to Learn (Talk)

1. The weighting of the Talk competency must be reduced to 20% of the grade, with the Reading and Production competencies to be weighted at 40% each.

Reading of Literary and Media Texts (Reading)

2. The Reading competency must emphasize traditional forms of text, while retaining a Media component.
3. Media texts that are produced, promoted or distributed by MELS must clearly be connected to language arts.

Production of Written and Media Texts Production

4. The Production competency must emphasize traditional forms of writing, while retaining a Media component.
5. The program content regarding media production must be streamlined to allow teachers the flexibility needed to focus on media production that is realistic to their situation.

The Progression of Learning

6. The progression of learning document must be revised
   • to reflect a clear progression of skills, particularly in writing, for each grade level;
   • to present connected concepts more logically;
   • to provide exemplars that match the criteria of the program.
**Evaluation**

7. MELS examinations in ELA must
   - reflect the program;
   - eliminate evaluation of Talk;
   - eliminate evaluation of Media Production;
   - provide a choice of genres for written production;
   - take less time to administer and evaluate.

8. MELS must review and simplify the rubrics for ELA to make them understandable to students and emphasize outcomes more and process less.

9. MELS must provide information about the exams at the beginning of the school year so that it can be used for effective planning.

There is one final action that MELS must undertake in a systematic manner: QPAT must be included at the development phase of any new program or evaluation elements, or any other significant document or policy orientation regarding ELA. It is the program that distinguishes the English sector from the French sector, and QPAT, on behalf of the teachers it represents, has a vested interest in providing timely input to MELS.

**Source:** Excerpts from, *The English Language Arts Program at the Secondary Level. QPAT Evaluation and Recommendations.* Position Paper Developed by the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers for Presentation to the ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, May 2011.

www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca/
The teacher voice on school financial support by teachers and communities

**CTF Teacher Survey on School Financial Support by Teachers and Communities**

In February 2010 CTF conducted an online teacher survey on the topic of school financial support by teachers and communities. The survey examined three areas: out-of-pocket expenditures of educators on classroom materials or class-related activities; school breakfast and lunch programs; and school fundraising activities. The survey was emailed to 1,746 educators from eight participating CTF Member organizations (NLTA, NSTU, AEFNB, NBTA, AEFO, ETFO, MTS, NTA). Responses were collected from 328 respondents, for an overall response rate of 19%. 298 respondents replied to the English survey, while 30 respondents responded to the French survey.

Highlights of findings:

**Out-of-pocket expenditures**

- Total out of pocket expenditures by educators in the previous completed school year, that will not be reimbursed, on classroom materials or class-related activities, averaged $453 per educator.
- Full-time teachers responding to the 2005 CTF National Teachers’ Poll telephone survey reported an average expenditure of $344 in 2004-05, with respect to contributions made with their own money on classroom materials and class-related activities, that will not be reimbursed, for students at their school in that school year.

**School breakfast and lunch programs**

- Almost 6 in 10 educators surveyed (57%) indicated that their school has a free breakfast or lunch program for students.
- 7 in 10 educators at the secondary level reported that their school had such programs compared to about half of those in elementary schools.
- Among educators surveyed who reported that their school has a free school breakfast or lunch program, a majority (54%) reported that fewer than 30% of students take advantage of such programs, while 31% indicated that at least half of the students in their school take advantage of these programs.

**School fundraising activities**

- Virtually all educators surveyed (95%) reported that fundraising activities took place at their school over the last school year.

The top 5 fundraising activities at school during the last school year:

- Three-quarters of educators surveyed (76%) reported the sale of products for fundraising at their school during the last school year.
- 58% of respondents reported having a bake sale at the school, followed by miscellaneous donations from the community (55%); contests (53%); and fees for admission to school-related sports and cultural activities (45%).
- 8 of the 10 types of fundraising activities surveyed were more prevalent in secondary schools than in elementary schools.
• Among respondents reporting fundraising activities, the prevalence of the following types of fundraising activities were reported much more frequently in secondary schools than in elementary schools:
  • bake sale at the school (73% vs. 48%)
  • miscellaneous donations from the community (66% vs. 47%)
  • fees for admission to school related sports and cultural activities (65% vs. 32%)
  • sports-related sponsoring (49% vs. 17%)
  • bottle drives (29% vs. 15%)

• The 5 items most frequently reported as being supported by fundraising activities at school include arts and cultural programs (59%); transportation (55%); athletic programs (54%); clubs and extracurricular activities (54%); and special events (47%).

Educators in elementary schools were more likely than those in secondary schools to report that the following items were supported by school fundraising activities:
  • library and library resources (54% vs. 33%)
  • classroom resources (51% vs. 33%)
  • playground equipment (49% vs. 15%)
  • electronic technology and materials (39% vs. 23%)

Educators in secondary schools were more likely than those in elementary schools to report that the following items were supported by school fundraising activities:
  • athletic programs (76% vs. 41%)
  • clubs and extracurricular activities (75% vs. 41%)
  • arts and cultural programs (66% vs. 54%)
  • breakfast/lunch programs (34% vs. 22%)

Source: Analysis of CTF Teacher Survey on School Financial Support by Teachers and Communities, Canadian Teachers’ Federation, March 2010.
The teacher voice on poverty and schools

The ETFO Poverty Project

In 2006, the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) was approached by the Ministry of Education through its Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, to lead a project supporting teachers working with children living in poverty. You may wonder why a teachers’ union would consider taking on such an initiative. One of the organizational priorities of ETFO is to promote social justice in the area of anti-poverty; indeed, this was one of ETFO’s founding principles. This project also gave ETFO a unique opportunity to build partnerships with a variety of education groups and individuals including school board and school administrators, teachers, university faculty researchers, community organizations and activists, and the Ministry of Education. It was a groundbreaking opportunity to deepen and strengthen partnerships between ETFO and the Ministry of Education.

We knew from the outset that our poverty and education project was a large task that would require a multi-faceted approach. We also knew that we could not “fix” poverty. Instead, our goal was to support teachers as they work to support students who come from poverty. Both of these understandings were important in developing our approach to this project.

The scope of the project was developed based on a literature review that was commissioned to help us understand the complexities of the issues and the intricacies of the impact of poverty on education. One of the recurring themes in the literature was the importance of addressing the biases that educators can bring to their work with students living in poverty. All of the components of ETFO’s project included a focus on the issue of stereotypes that educators hold.

The key components of the project were:

- A partnership was formed with Rosneath Theatre to bring the play, Danny, King of the Basement, to a number of schools across Ontario. The play toured the province for two years.
- Financial support was provided for a sample of schools to go deeper into the issues raised by the play, to develop a year-long project. This support also included time for teachers to be released from their teaching duties to work on their projects.
- Financial support was provided to another sample of schools to allow them to address identified professional and educational needs related to poverty in their school.
- Community resource information was identified for a number of major centres in every district school board and communicated through a poster displayed in schools.
- After-school workshops were presented for teachers to help them identify issues of poverty within their schools and communities.
- A DVD entitled “One in Six” captured the voices of individuals who represent some of the groups affected by poverty. It was used as a tool to generate discussion and awareness of poverty in Ontario.
- A four-part workshop series was facilitated for teams of teachers and school administrators from several district school boards to further probe issues of poverty as it affects their specific context and to develop school-based actions.
• A province-wide symposium was convened to help consolidate some of the research and projects from the various aspects of this project.

• And research was conducted at various stages of all of this work.

ETFO is dedicated to providing a high quality education for all students. That includes working to ensure that children living in poverty are afforded the opportunity to learn and be successful. We know poverty has an impact on student learning. And we know it is our responsibility to work to alleviate that impact within our realm of influence. Schools can and do make a difference.

With the publication of Poverty and Schools in Ontario: How Seven Elementary Schools Are Working to Improve Education, we add teachers’ voices to the growing conversation about elementary schools serving students living in poverty. The result of collaboration between two universities and the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, involving seven different school boards and participants from 11 schools, this book explores success stories from a diverse set of Ontario elementary schools. Through school visits, extensive interviews, and document analysis, case studies were developed to describe the ways that adults in the sample schools think about and shape their work with students and communities affected by poverty.

The case studies describe schools where teacher inquiry into the problems of practice led to efforts to build community within the school and to make connections between home and schools. We learned about schools that systematically approached improving school culture and climate as a way to shape a positive context for teaching and learning. We heard from teachers that their own attitudes about the interaction between poverty and schooling were changing. They were moving from what they called simple answers to more complex ones, and away from deficit-based assumptions about students’ capacity to learn or families’ interests in their children’s success. We heard from schools that progress was an ongoing collective effort and that setbacks were inevitable but surmountable. We also learned about gaps in policy. For example, we heard enthusiastic teachers worry about burnout, overextension, or distraction from classroom teaching. They recognized the need to place boundaries around their extra hours of effort on poverty initiatives. We also saw repeated instances of the schools least able to raise additional funds having to embrace fundraising to support co-curricular activities like field trips.

This research sheds much-needed light on the ways that urban, suburban, and rural schools in Ontario have sought to address and better serve students and communities affected by poverty. The successes presented through several cases in this book allow for the small stories that teachers, parents and families, principals, and community members share. These stories become critical and useful counterpoint discussions to the meganarratives, or reforms that are described and emphasized by test scores and other provincial standards. All the cases reveal issues that are relevant in Ontario education today including: teaching excellence and leadership; high quality collaboration in schools; principal leadership; parent engagement; community partnerships; and school climate.

We also draw attention in this book to site-based teacher inquiry that focused on context specific issues of poverty and schooling. The cases in this book present how teachers, families, community members, and school administrators worked together to share their practices, and how they worked in professional learning and knowledge communities that detailed curriculum innovations relevant to their school. Collective responsibility, mentoring, and coaching were combined with community partnerships to better understand
the realities of poverty, to help build community relationships, and to ensure the success of students’ learning through a nurturing culture of care and collaboration amongst all.

Other issues are explored that have been long standing tension points for schools across Ontario:

- How do teachers grapple with the dilemmas associated with acknowledging students' significant non-academic needs in school while meeting their academic needs?
- In what ways are schools approaching student discipline?
- What are some of the more and less successful approaches to involving and engaging parents?
- What practices seem to sustain teachers’ sense of efficacy and morale?
- How do teachers resist deficit-based conceptualizations of students and their families, given the prevalence of derogatory stereotypes about communities affected by poverty?
- How can programs and initiatives that seem successful be sustained in the face of changing resources?
- Given the unsustainability of “hero teacher” approaches to reform, what combination of school district and provincial policies will institutionalize the positive practices that we witnessed?

These issues merit scrutiny in schools and among those responsible for improving educational opportunities in Ontario schools.

The teacher voice on teaching in Francophone minority settings

The Challenges of Teaching in Francophone Minority Settings: Teachers Share Their Perspective

There is a growing consensus around a critically important matter in education: French-language schools in Canada’s minority settings have a unique mission. They are expected to be tools for identity-building for young Francophones, for the reproduction of social models and, in fact, for the very survival of Francophone minority communities. This mission is extensively documented. “The objectives of French-language education go beyond those usually assigned to education in a majority setting,” says the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The distinction boils down to this: “The first objective of any school system is to provide the basic educational experiences necessary to ensure the social, emotional and intellectual development of the student. Minority-language schools have an additional objective: the maintenance and in some cases the development of French-language skills as well as the heritage and culture of this community.”

How does this responsibility play itself out in the daily life of teachers, the front-line players in this dual mission? Who exactly are these teachers? What prompts them to teach in French-language schools? What are their main challenges? How does their setting shape their experience? At the turn of the century, little or no research had been conducted into these questions.

In light of this finding, CTF then decided to take a closer more detailed look at the complex challenge of teaching in minority settings. To that end, and thanks to financial support from Canadian Heritage, CTF was able to call on the highly regarded expertise of the University of Ottawa's Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Citizenship and Minorities and of the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities.

The publication in 2004 of a survey report on Francophone education in minority settings marked the beginning of research on this issue. Some 670 Francophone teachers who responded to this comprehensive pan-Canadian survey, the first of its kind, gave us their perspective. Following is an outline of the survey findings.

Who is teaching our young Francophones?

That women account for three-quarters of the survey participants and that a significant percentage of the respondents (51.9% in Western and Northern Canada, 38.7% in Ontario, and 35.1% in Atlantic Canada) have fewer than ten years of teaching experience will leave few people surprised. The overwhelming majority of the respondents were born in Canada; of these, 25.7% hail from the province of Quebec and therefore have no direct experience of minority realities. Overall, 96.8% have indicated French as their mother tongue and 92.8% come from households where both parents are Francophones, and this is reflected in the strong sense of Francophone identity expressed in every region.

The language background of teachers differs from that of most of their students who, nowadays, come more often from exogamous households (one Francophone and one Anglophone parent). However, in about 20% of the households, one of the spouses is an Anglophone, while in roughly 5%, one of the spouses speaks another language. This trend is stronger in Ontario (22.6%) than in Atlantic Canada (11.8%), and stronger still in Western Canada (34.5%).
When it comes to teachers’ French-language experience during both childhood and adulthood, there is a stark difference between Western and Northern Canada on the one hand, and Ontario and the Atlantic provinces on the other where actually “living” in French is easier to do. The same applies to the language of schooling: respondents from Western and Northern Canada completed only slightly more than half of their studies in French. However, respondents from all regions say they did have contact with people and organizations dedicated to promoting and defending the French language and culture. This may compensate for disparities on other fronts and thus holds tremendous significance given that teachers must awaken their students both to the realities of their minority status and to their language rights.

**Why teach in a French-language school?**

Given the French-language school’s special mission in otherwise English-dominant settings, one would suspect that a sense of personal commitment would lie behind the career choice of these teachers, and the survey confirmed this. Whatever the region, respondents harbour a firm commitment to helping students to not only develop their French-language skills, but also to feel more closely connected to their French identity. And what proves the most gratifying in all of this? A number of things, in fact: the chance to see students progress and succeed, to build relationships with both students and colleagues, to teach in French and to nurture among students a true sense of belonging to their Francophone community.

**Does teaching in a French-language school hold special challenges?**

Yes, according to more than 93% of the respondents. Among the 64 challenges noted, those related to living in French in an otherwise English-dominant setting top the list, followed by those linked to the lack of resources at all levels (material, pedagogical, financial, human and technological). Together, these two sets of challenges account for 92% of the comments gathered in the West and North, 87% of comments in Ontario, and 82% in Atlantic Canada. Next, in decreasing order of importance, come students’ motivation and academic success, professional relations and working conditions, and equity between Francophones and Anglophones.

Teachers were asked to comment on the difficulties they face and, in the process, evaluated a total of 31 elements. They are grouped into the following seven categories listed in order of importance:

1. Teaching load too heavy and diversified
2. Lack of educational resources
3. English-dominant setting
4. Lack of qualified staff
5. Lack of physical facilities
6. Lack of access to training
7. Negative image of school

The weight and diversity of workload combine to produce not only the greatest obstacle to teaching in minority settings (and to the same degree in each region), but they are also a major stumbling block in the achievement of the French-language school’s mission. In fact, the list of problems and obstacles drawn from the responses to the two questions on this topic converge and the lack of educational resources and the English-dominant setting appear second and third on both lists.
The means to suit the needs

At a consultation forum coinciding with the launch of the report in Ottawa, invited educational stakeholders used the wealth of data drawn from the survey to discuss possible courses of action. Some of the solutions focused directly on the teachers themselves, while others were geared to the students and their communities.

Forum participants put forward a multi-faceted action plan, including these measures:

- Ensure that teacher-education programs provide compulsory courses on the pedagogy of teaching in minority settings; include this aspect in professional development programs;
- Increase the number of in-service training opportunities through collaborative channels that allow school boards to pool their resources;
- Build teacher-interaction networks locally, regionally, provincially and nationally; look into creating a Canadian educational resources portal, organized by subject and grade;
- Produce more minority-specific educational materials, and ensure broader distribution of these materials;
- Take into account the various effects of the “French factor” (huge differences in French-language skills among students, lack of French-language educational resources, teachers’ special role as catalysts for conveying French language and culture) in the management of teaching loads and assignments;
- Improve the employment status of teachers and introduce an incentive program that heightens the drawing power of French-language schools as opposed to that of majority-status English schools;
- Intensify recruitment efforts across university campuses;
- Facilitate access for both specialists and high-quality supply teachers;
- Provide better access to proper facilities;
- Promote French-language early childhood initiatives that both encourage the use of French at home and ease children’s integration into French-language schools;
- Build more school-community partnerships that make the best possible use of resources at both levels;
- Design and implement a media relations strategy that highlights the strengths of French-language schools and the added value of a French-language education.

In all cases, the need for urgent action is acutely felt, and the issue of adequate funding permeates virtually every discussion because of the key objective: to overcome unfavourable cultural and linguistic conditions and give students in French-language schools the same educational opportunities and chances of succeeding as those afforded to Anglophone students.
Teacher input at a landmark event

The survey shows that teachers have both the will and the sense of belonging needed to make their schools true centres for the development of Canada’s Francophone communities. It is clear that accomplishing the schools’ special mission comes with an array of very special challenges, and the future of Francophone communities depends on that mission being fulfilled. It is equally clear that all partners in education must join forces to create learning conditions that are truly suited to the mission of Francophone schools in minority settings.

That was the purpose of the National French-language Summit that brought together all key players in Ottawa from June 2 to 4, 2005. This landmark event came some ten years after the establishment nationwide of French-language school boards. CTF was represented by staff and the members of its Advisory Committee on French as a First Language, who ensured that the teacher voice was heard in the development of a common action plan aimed at “completing” the French-language education system. CTF research on the supply and demand of teachers, the challenges of teaching in Francophone minority settings and the impact of early childhood services as the gateway to French-language schools, among other topics, were central to the discussions. Hence, collaboration is the watchword in implementing the action plan that resulted from this summit and whose impact is still being assessed.

www.ctf-fce.ca/publications/pd_newsletter/PD2005_Volume5-2English_Article5.pdf


Le point de vue des enseignantes et des enseignants sur les défis de l’enseignement en milieu minoritaire francophone. Rapport d’enquête. [technical survey report – French only]
www.ctf-fce.ca/documents/Priorities/FR/francophone/francaise/Rapportdelenqu%C3%A9eRodrigueLandryversionfinale-pdf.pdf
The teacher voice on Aboriginal education

A Study of Aboriginal Teachers’ Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools

Rationale for the study

This qualitative study, initiated by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation and its Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education, explores the professional knowledge and experiences of Aboriginal (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) teachers. The rationale for the study was to address the urgent need to improve and promote Aboriginal education in public schools. This study asks the question: what can we learn from the professional knowledge and experiences of Aboriginal teachers who teach in public schools about how to better promote and support the success of Aboriginal students? The continuing goal of this study is to promote ongoing dialogue and learning about Aboriginal education within teachers’ organizations and the broader educational community.

Methodology

Employing a focused and critical ethnographic methodology, the study interviewed 59 Aboriginal teachers (49 female and 10 male) teaching in public schools across Canada. Participants were recruited through a process of “community nomination” (Ladson-Billings, 1994) involving the networks of the Advisory Committee on Aboriginal Education, and the provincial and territorial teachers’ organizations; participation was always voluntary. More than one-third of the participants had twenty and more years of teaching experience, and half were graduates of Aboriginal programs, including Aboriginal teacher education programs. Overwhelmingly, the Aboriginal teachers who participated in this study valued the opportunity to be heard, to hear each other and to be part of an effort that hopes to promote change.

Nine different groups of Aboriginal teachers, each from different regions or provinces, were assembled in central locations across Canada where they participated in a full day of data collection. Data was collected through two methods: open-ended questionnaires that teachers responded to in writing, and focus group interviews that were audiotaped. Data collection focused on four areas of Aboriginal teachers’ professional knowledge and experience: philosophy of teaching; integrating Aboriginal content and perspectives into the curriculum; racism in education; and allies of Aboriginal education. Data analysis was performed using the “grounded theory method” (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Charmaz, 2006).

Findings

Philosophy of teaching

In this study, the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching that motivated Aboriginal teachers to become teachers and to remain in the teaching profession were examined. These Aboriginal teachers became teachers because they were committed to and valued education. They believed that good teaching involves loving and caring for their students, communicating with the whole child, helping to find their students’ gifts, developing pride and self-worth in their students, and creating a safe learning environment. They emphasized the importance of all teachers working to establish respectful, positive and encouraging relationships with their students.
The Aboriginal teachers in this study remained in the profession because they valued the opportunity to teach Aboriginal culture and history, to foster responsible citizens, to challenge negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people, to serve as role models, and because they believed they could have a positive impact on children. Acknowledging the challenging circumstances that could surround their Aboriginal students and their families and communities, these teachers nonetheless felt that there should be no “disposable” kids, and that they could not give up on their students. By positively acknowledging the lives of Aboriginal people, culture and history, the Aboriginal teachers in this study enabled Aboriginal students to become “bodies that matter” (Butler, 1993).

**Integrating Aboriginal content and perspectives into the curriculum**

Eager and willing to teach Aboriginal content and perspectives, Aboriginal teachers in this study wanted to share what they knew and sought each other out to learn more. They described their culturally grounded teaching practices and how these practices positively influenced both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students. Many described how they began their teaching of Aboriginal content and perspectives by talking about their own lives and identities as Aboriginal persons. The Aboriginal teachers in this study emphasized that the integration of Aboriginal content and perspectives into public education must happen every day, for all students, in all subject areas. They sought to make that integration meaningful, in part by teaching about the everyday experiences and local life of Aboriginal people. Teachers reported that teaching about Aboriginal culture and history gave them and their Aboriginal students back their lives.

But Aboriginal teachers in this study suggested that there is still a lot more that can be done to insure that Aboriginal content and perspectives are being taught in a meaningful way to all students. The often implicit hierarchy of school knowledge and subjects within a school system typically places a low valuation on Aboriginal subject matter, and this had negative implications on how others received both the Aboriginal teachers and the Aboriginal content and perspectives they taught in schools. Many Aboriginal teachers in the study still encountered attitudes and behaviours that suggested that they do not belong in the profession, such as a questioning of their teacher education, qualifications or capabilities. This questioning occurred even as these teachers performed a number of services, such as developing Aboriginal curriculum and supporting their colleagues to teach Aboriginal content and perspectives; services which they often did willingly, and usually without compensation.

The participants in the study identified ways to support the integration of Aboriginal curriculum: meet the ongoing need for schools to acquire Aboriginal curriculum and materials; adequately support Aboriginal teachers and non-Aboriginal teachers to teach Aboriginal content and perspectives; find supportive and understanding administrators and develop policies that come from the top down; accept Aboriginal teachers as fellow professionals; and hire more Aboriginal teachers and professionals.

**Racism in education**

Feeling that racism in education was typically denied, ignored and trivialized, Aboriginal teachers in this study described various ways in which they experienced racism. They reported on some occasions a disregard for their qualifications and capabilities, and for Aboriginal content and perspectives; a lowering of expectations of Aboriginal students; and a discounting of the effects of colonization and oppression on Aboriginal people. Institutional responses to racism were often seen as inadequate, leaving the burden for addressing racism on Aboriginal teachers.
Allies in education

Aboriginal teachers in the present study interpreted the idea of who is an ally of Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal education broadly, including themselves, their families and communities, in addition to non-Aboriginal colleagues, as potential allies. They identified non-Aboriginal colleagues who were allies as being genuine, honest and trustworthy; good listeners; and persons who remained positive and open minded despite facing many challenges in education. Those non-Aboriginal colleagues who were allies also were said to show respect and support for Aboriginal people by learning to use community resources. Aboriginal teachers in the study stressed that allies seek to be a part of the local Aboriginal community without taking over; that allies avoid becoming experts about or saviours of Aboriginal people and culture. The research participants highly valued those non-Aboriginal colleagues who accepted them as equal, helping them to succeed and offering validation for the work and perspectives they as Aboriginal teachers brought to the profession.

But though allies existed, among colleagues as well as parents and community members, Aboriginal teachers in the study described the many instances where either support was absent or they experienced active resistance. Participants acknowledged there could be a lack of support — and sometimes even hostility — from Aboriginal families and community members towards the school and teachers, which contributed to sabotaging the efforts both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal teachers were making. Instances where there was a lack of support from the Aboriginal community were felt as particularly difficult for the Aboriginal teachers.

Nonetheless, the Aboriginal teachers in this study continued to believe in the importance of being an ally – having to be an ally to become an ally – and working to support Aboriginal students and families to recover from a history of colonization. Although these Aboriginal teachers encountered a variety of adverse circumstances, such as a lack of Aboriginal curriculum materials or misunderstandings of Aboriginal education by their colleagues, or challenging social and political conditions in the schools and in the communities, or the effects of poverty on students, they remained committed to making a difference in education. They were resilient, and used that resiliency to help maintain that commitment while continuing to learn to be better teachers. In the end, these Aboriginal teachers sought to continue their own education and self-improvement, whether it was learning more about anti-racist education, or the most effective ways to be an ally, or how best to support the development of a positive identity in their students.

Sources: Excerpts from, “A Study of Aboriginal Teachers’ Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools”, by Dr. Verna St. Denis, CTF Perspectives, August 2010. www.ctf-fce.ca/Documents/publications/e-publication/perspectives/PERSPECTIVES_1_08-2010.pdf

The teacher voice on international cooperation

In 2011 the Canadian Teachers’ Federation marks the beginning of 50 years of international development work by Canadian teachers. Over this time, approximately 2,000 Canadian teachers have shared their skills and expertise with over 100,000 teachers in developing countries. They have worked alongside local co-tutors within teacher organization professional development programs in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. Most active teachers in marginalized areas have had inadequate formal training and no pedagogical upgrading.

Teacher leaders in partner countries have spoken about how such experiences have helped their teachers find and transform their own teacher voices and improve their capacity to deliver quality education.

Comments from Canadian teachers on their experiences speak not only to the successes of the programs themselves, but to how their experiences have impacted on their own reality in Canadian classrooms, instilling in them new understandings and purpose. Some Canadian teachers speak of how their experiences have resulted in an amplification of their own voice upon returning to their classrooms, inspired by the dedication and effort of those teachers with whom they now share a co-learning experience.

CTF has received numerous letters and testimonials in support of its International Programs from teachers and their organizations in Canada and around the world. This is a sampling of what teachers have to say about the importance of international cooperation – teachers supporting their overseas colleagues – through the vehicle of CTF’s International Programs including Project Overseas:

*I have been blessed to have been involved with Project Overseas for 5 years as a volunteer Canadian teacher and I can assure you that Project Overseas increases the quality of education delivery in classrooms, assists “Education for All” targets and positively impacts the lives of the children, teachers and the community. … I am proud to be a part of an organization that is recognized around the world and at home as making a positive difference in the world.*

*Personally and professionally, the experience for me was both incredibly rewarding and life changing. Since returning from Ghana I have made numerous presentations to other educators and to my school and School Board. I have integrated Social Justice and the Development for Sustainability into my teaching. My school has been partnered up with a Ghanaian village through the Nkabom Project, run through CTF and the Ghana National Association of Teachers and we are in the process of providing funding to build a 2-block school in the Ghanaian village of Bokorvikofe.*

*Dans mon séjour en Guinée en 2007, j’ai donné de la formation aux enseignantes et enseignants qui allaient enseigner dans des Centres de formation professionnelle post-primaire. Ces centres sont un moyen de «raccrocher» les jeunes qui ont quitté l’école avant de terminer le primaire. Grâce à ces centres, les jeunes peuvent continuer leur éducation tout en apprenant un métier …. En 2008, je suis retourné en Guinée pour donner de la formation aux enseignantes et enseignants du système d’éducation publique. Cette formation se faisait en collaboration avec des partenaires de la Guinée. J’ai beaucoup apprécié travailler en équipe avec nos partenaires guinéens. Ces enseignantes et enseignants qui travaillent dans des conditions très difficiles ont eux aussi à cœur la réussite de leurs élèves. Tous les participants étaient très réceptifs au contenu de la formation que nous donnions sur l’évaluation des apprentissages. Il faut dire que sans l’intervention de la FCE, ces enseignantes et enseignants n’ont pas tellement d’autres occasions de formation.*
In both Jordan and Malawi, the very fact that I am a female math teacher was an empowering idea, one which expanded their concepts of what women were capable of achieving. Every day I taught more women who joined my class, eager to experience the novel idea of a successful female in a male-dominated subject.

This is a sustainable intervention that extends well beyond the time that Canadian teachers are there...it goes into the classroom and lifts people up, gives them the opportunity to acquire literacy and math skills to take them into a future where—even now the gap between rich and poor widens.

Le Projet outre-mer constitue souvent la seule source de perfectionnement professionnel dont bénéficient les enseignantes et enseignants en exercice dans les pays en développement et fait partie intégrante du travail international de la FCE. L'appui sous forme de perfectionnement professionnel que reçoivent nos partenaires non seulement rehausse la qualité de l'éducation en classe, mais également les aide à accroître le rayonnement d'une éducation de qualité dans le cadre des cibles nationales de « L'éducation pour tous et toutes » (EPT) dans leurs pays respectifs. L'impact est extraordinaire.

Having collaborated with Ugandan teachers during my work with Project Overseas, I was enlightened by the influence of this program. I also learned first-hand of the necessity for other partnership programs such as the Teachers Action for Girls while visiting Ugandan schools where girls were visibly being celebrated and guided as a result of the TAG initiatives. Not only were the Project Overseas teacher participants extremely grateful for the opportunity to develop themselves, they were inspired by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation’s efforts to assist them in mobilizing themselves as a collective group with a supporting union. This partnership ensures that teachers have a voice and that efforts to feed, protect, and educate thousands of children become a priority.

Project Overseas is a grassroots effort that represents the very best kind of international aid: hands-on assistance and training that leads those being served to develop independence and self-sufficiency. Project Overseas contributes directly to the furthering of Millennium Development Goals and has earned great respect throughout the world.

My own work in development in Africa spans 45 years. I know of no other program in which a large-scale human resources component is both at a high professional level and almost totally voluntary. Nor do I know of any other program in Canada in which the multiplier effect on development education in Canada (of teachers, of students and of the general public) has been so highly sustained and ongoing.

This past summer, I travelled to Liberia as part of the first PO project (in that country) in 10 years. A tentative peace has been restored to Liberia and the government is working in a respectful, supportive relationship with the National Teachers’ Association to rebuild schools, train teachers, and provide children and young adults with the opportunity to get an education and rebuild their lives after a tragic 14 year civil war. We 4 Canadians were paired with 4 excellent Liberia teachers to deliver pedagogy, and subject content to 85 untrained teachers who could not afford the time or the fees to attend a regular teachers’ training program.

Depuis plus de 50 ans, grâce aux programmes de la FCE, des milliers d’enseignantes et d’enseignants canadiens, agissent comme ambassadeurs du Canada à l’étranger. Je suis moi-même une de ces personnes qui a travaillé dans des pays en développement dans le cadre des programmes de la FCE. J’ai eu le privilège en effet de participer aux programmes de la FCE à maintes reprises entre 1974 et 2010 et cela, à titre de bénévole. Les programmes internationaux de la FCE ont des retombées importantes pour le Canada. En particulier, ces programmes contribuent à l’accroissement de son influence sur la scène mondiale. On sait combien le Canada a été bafoué dernièrement dans sa réputation. Pourtant, comme tous les autres participants et participantes aux programmes internationaux de la FCE, je suis très conscient que le travail que j’effectue en offrant de la formation à des collègues dans les pays en développement en est un de promotion de mon pays et des valeurs qu’il représente, comme la démocratie, l’égalité et la paix.
Canadian and overseas teachers continue to work together through CTF international programs, to bring teacher voices and experiences into education policy, planning, access and delivery across Canada and around the world.

The barriers to inclusive quality education are similar on the surface and there are advances in education facilities in many areas. However the challenges often run deep in marginalized areas at home and abroad. While the dedication to student learning is high, teacher capacity and motivation are often eroded due to the following factors:

- Lack of government resources or political will to support public education;
- The need for teachers to have second jobs to supplement meagre pay and periods with no pay for months on end;
- Few benefits such as pension, maternity leave, etc.;
- Class sizes often over 50 students, and even exceeding 100 students;
- Culture of rote learning and no training to implement child-centred approaches;
- Lack of resources which often means no textbooks or teaching resources;
- Poor facilities which can run from cracked blackboards to destroyed walls;
- Lack of electricity and safe water is often a problem;
- Poor “girl-friendly” school environment, from lack of latrines to abuse and safety issues;
- Hunger, poverty, isolation, despair and high drop-out rates;
- Students, particularly girls, needed at home to care for young siblings or aging grandparents, due to the impact of HIV/AIDS;
- Assessment and testing neglect local contexts and the needs of all children and youth in these environments as elsewhere.

CTF International Programs increase the capacity of teacher organizations to engage members in actions to diminish the barriers to delivering quality education. CTF supports programs and projects that include gender awareness, professional in-service, creative local resources, community engagement, school needs, HIV/AIDS awareness, school health clubs, non-sexist pedagogy, special education and differentiated teaching practices, culturally relevant curricula including supplementary readers written by local teachers, and regional networking to share “best practices”. Through CTF, Canadian teachers continue to value teacher voices, validate efforts in difficult conditions and promote professionalism among their counterpart colleagues.

Teacher voices are amplified through such programs, and are brought to the national level to make sure that “Education for All” means full access to inclusive, quality education and that Millennium Development Goal activities work to eradicate poverty, tackle social issues and promote global networking for development.

As one Project Overseas alumnus put it:

*When you educate a child, you give that child a future. When you educate a teacher, you give hundreds of children a future. That is what Project Overseas has been doing for teachers and students in developing countries around the world for the past 50 years.*
The teacher voice on professional learning

*Professional Learning for Informed Transformation: 2010 Professional Development Survey*

The Alberta Teachers’ Association administered the professional development survey to the PD committee chairs of its 54 local associations. Given that 89% of locals responded, the survey constitutes a reliable representation of teachers’ perspectives on professional development activities across the province. The survey consisted of an online form that invited participants to respond to various numerical and descriptive scales and to add comments. Respondents were also asked to fill out a chart detailing how their local and jurisdiction allocate professional development resources.

Major findings to emerge from the study:

1. Funding and access for most forms of professional development have declined. However teachers noted an increase in their ability to participate in professional learning communities.

2. Respondents indicated that stakeholders have been generally successful in implementing professional development planning practices. According to respondents, the principle of effective professional development that is most evident is that professional development “contributes to collaborative learning cultures.”

3. Respondents indicated that the various conditions considered essential for effective professional development are generally apparent in their areas but that considerable room for improvement still exists. Respondents were asked to rate each condition on a four-point scale in which 1 indicated “not evident” and 4 indicated “consistently evident.” Here are the results:
   - Professional development is supported by employers: 3.28
   - Professional development supports school improvement goals: 3.3
   - Professional development promotes collaboration at the school level: 2.64
   - Professional development is embedded in the workday: 2.72
   - Professional development is offered at a variety of times: 2.7
   - 17.0% of respondents reported that professional development was consistently embedded in the workday.
   - 12.8% of respondents reported that it was consistently evident that professional development is chosen by the teacher.
   - 31.9% of respondents indicated that it was only sometimes evident that professional development opportunities supported teacher growth plans.
   - 89.3% of respondents indicated that it was often evident or consistently evident that professional development supported school improvement goals.

4. Respondents report that teachers are most interested in professional development opportunities that have a collaborative element, such as seminars, joint unit or lesson planning, curriculum development and interschool visits.
5. Teachers believe that the professional autonomy and choice they have when developing and pursuing their individual professional growth goals has declined.

6. Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) projects continue to shape professional development opportunities for teachers. Teachers do not appear to have as much influence, especially at the jurisdictional level, in setting AISI priorities as had been expected. Indeed nearly half of the respondents (46.7%) reported that teachers have only a limited influence in determining project priorities at the jurisdictional level.

7. Most ATA locals and jurisdictions in the province offer programs to support beginning and early-career teachers. In many cases, locals and jurisdictions share the cost of these programs; in other cases, either the local or the jurisdiction bears the full cost. In some cases, locals and jurisdictions share the cost of sending teachers to an ATA Beginning Teachers’ Conference.

8. Respondents reported that although part-time teachers enjoyed the same access to professional development as full-time teachers, professional development opportunities for substitute teachers were quite limited.

9. Professional development programs for new and veteran administrators and for teachers aspiring to administrative positions were broad and varied.

10. Very few respondents indicated that their area offered professional development programs tailored to the needs of teachers new to Canada or to Alberta.

In a preface to the study, ATA Executive Secretary Gordon Thomas states that,

Education stakeholders in Alberta are becoming increasingly aware that if the province’s K-12 education system is to remain one of the finest in the world, it will need to change fundamentally in the very near future. Such changes will require tremendous resilience on the part of teachers. For that reason, an indepth examination of teachers’ professional development opportunities is timely. If teachers are to lead the informed transformation of Alberta’s education system so that it meets the changing needs of students and society, they must identify and nurture those conditions of practice upon which professional learning depends.

This publication reports the results of a study that the Association undertook in 2010 to identify the professional development structures and resources that are currently in place in Alberta to assist teachers in transforming their practice to meet the demands of students and the larger educational community. The resulting data reinforce much of what the literature tells us: namely, that teachers’ learning needs should be addressed through job-embedded and practice-based learning experiences that take into account teachers’ individual needs and the stage at which they are in their careers. To ensure that teachers receive the professional development that they need, some new approaches will clearly be required. Furthermore, schools will need to set aside time during the day for teachers to learn about, discuss, reflect upon and implement new teaching strategies.

This study clearly suggests that professional development opportunities should be planned cooperatively and implemented at a pace that allows teachers to learn at the depth required to transform their practice. The study also suggests that professional development resources need to
be available to all teachers, regardless of their area of specialization, geographic location or career stage. The comments of respondents, including professional development chairs from across Alberta, reveal that Alberta’s teachers and professional development leaders are deeply committed to lifelong learning and the enhancement of their professional skills.

Conclusions and future directions regarding professional development and Alberta teachers are situated in the context of designing for the complexity and diversity of teaching and learning, enhancing and sustaining the professional culture of learning, and coordinating coherent professional development.


**Beyond PD Days: Teachers’ Work and Learning in Canada**

“PD That Works” is the theme of a resource from the *Teaching Matters* professional development project of the Ontario Teachers’ Federation.

Launched in August 2007, OTF in collaboration with the Teacher Learning and Work Group (a Canadian research consortium) have produced a book – entitled *Beyond PD Days: Teachers’ Work and Learning in Canada* – and an accompanying video – *No Two Alike: PD That Works*. These resources can be used as training tools for teacher leaders in school boards and teachers’ organizations involved in planning professional learning opportunities for teachers.

The research showcased in the book reveals teachers’ own views about their professional learning. The basic premise of this research and the accompanying resources is that effective student learning is highly dependent on effective teacher learning.

As stated in the preface, the purpose of the book is twofold: to showcase the results of a decade of federally-funded (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) research into workload issues and learning habits of Canadian teachers; and to extract key points from that research for use by policy makers and planners of programs for teachers’ ongoing learning. It is very much an exercise in translating research into practice and policy.

Some of the research findings as they apply to experienced teachers and beginning teachers are summarized here (excerpted from *Beyond PD Days: Teachers’ Work and Learning in Canada*, pp. 132-133).

- Among the major Canadian professional groups, teachers have the most ability to plan their own daily work, and are second only to nurses in experience with almost half of teachers having been employed in the profession for over 16 years; despite this comparatively high experience and control over their daily jobs, teachers express concern over loss of autonomy in their workplaces.
• An increasing workload averaging approximately 50 hours per week, almost half of which is outside of timetabled teaching hours, has led to significant increases in stress; this must be taken into account when planning and scheduling professional learning opportunities.

• On top of their workload, teachers make time for professional learning – work-related formal learning activities take up on average over 6 hours per week, while work-related informal learning occupies more than 4 hours per week.

• Those provinces (Ontario and Nova Scotia) where governments legally mandated teacher PD in terms of requirements for documented courses or hours have abandoned these programs as they proved to be unpopular and unnecessary; the main impact of such mandatory PD was to increase workloads, not learning.

• Teachers embrace ongoing learning and the overwhelming majority actively engage in it.

• Professional learning includes both formal learning (courses, conferences and workshops) and informal learning from colleagues or personal exploration.

• Teachers want support, flexibility of learning offerings, and the ability to direct their own learning.

• Time pressure is most often articulated by teachers as the major barrier to learning.

• Experts increasingly recognize that job-embedded learning is critical to ensure change in teacher practice.

For new teachers, mentors and mentoring relationships were identified as an important support in their first few years of teaching, as were opportunities for online sharing and targeted workshops in areas such as classroom management and student assessment techniques.

Another important finding from the research on experienced teachers is the recognition that classroom teacher leadership should be recognized and fostered. Such teachers often serve as both formal and informal mentors, and can greatly assist in encouraging colleagues to improve professional practice and student learning.

The publication includes implications for policy reform based on the research findings.

Teachers and Summer Professional Development

In June 2010 CTF conducted an online teacher survey on the topic of teachers and summer professional development. The survey was emailed to over 2,900 educators from 10 participating CTF Member organizations (NLTA, PEITF, NSTU, AEFNB, NBTA, AEFO, ETFO, MTS, NWTTA, NTA). Responses were collected from 414 respondents, for an overall response rate of 14%. 375 respondents replied to the English survey, while 39 respondents replied to the French survey.

Among the findings:

- Almost 4 in 10 Canadian teachers surveyed (39%) reported that they planned on attending formal professional development sessions in summer 2010.
- Among teachers who plan on attending formal professional development sessions in summer 2010:
  - The average number of sessions planned is 1.2 for the summer of 2010, given that some teachers expect to attend several sessions.
  - 27% said the formal professional development sessions will be offered by their provincial/territorial Member organization, followed closely by a Faculty of Education (25%), their local school board/division (23%), their provincial/territorial Ministry/Department of Education (20%), or some other provider (24%).
  - About 7 in 10 teachers surveyed (69%) indicated that they have professional reading planned for the summer.

Source: Analysis of CTF Teacher Survey – Teachers and Summer Professional Development, Canadian Teachers’ Federation, June 2010.
The teacher voice on technology in education

A Study of Teachers’ Workload in Distributed Learning Environments: Flexibility, Accessibility and Permeable Boundaries

Authorized by the 2007 Annual Representative Assembly of the Alberta Teachers’ Association, this study focused on determining what constitutes an acceptable workload for Alberta teachers in a distributed learning environment in order to ensure an optimal teaching and learning environment. The ever-changing technologies used by distributed learning teachers make their teaching environment quite different from that of conventional classroom teachers. A major conclusion of the study is that, in reality, there is no such entity as a “distributed learning teacher.” Instead, there are teachers who work with students in a variety of distributed learning environments. This finding is consistent with the Association’s long-standing policy that all its members are “teachers first.”

The researchers involved in this study, Dr Philip McRae and Dr Stanley Varnhagen, have produced their final report entitled A Study of Alberta Teachers’ Working Conditions in Distributed Learning Environments: Flexibility, Accessibility & Permeable Boundaries.

Introduction

This study examined the experience of Alberta teachers in a distributed (or distance) learning environment with respect to such matters as workload, amount of technical and administrative support, opportunities for professional development and collegial support. For the purposes of this study, teaching in a distributed learning environment was defined as providing instruction that relies primarily on such indirect modes of teacher-student interaction as correspondence, online learning, blended learning, teleconferencing and videoconferencing – in short, on approaches designed to render the learning experience more flexible in terms of time and place than traditional classroom instruction. However, the focus group activities demonstrated that the term “distributed learning” is ambiguous. People who work primarily with print-based resources, for example, may use the term differently than those who work in an online context and use digital resources.

Methodology

Initial data for the study came from an anonymous online survey that the researchers developed with input from the working group and advice from Helene Fournier, project director for Alberta Education’s Distributed Learning Strategy. The study was made available online from February 1 to March 27, 2008. In addition to linking to the study from its website, the Association drew members’ attention to the study by announcing it in the ATA News, mentioning it at teachers’ conventions, promoting it on listservs and networking with the Educational Technology Council. A total of 232 people responded to the survey.

Additional data came from four focus groups that the researchers organized in the spring of 2008, after the online survey was taken down. These focus groups, two of which took place in Calgary and two in Edmonton, consisted of respondents to the online survey who had expressed an interest in discussing their teaching and learning conditions in more depth. A total of 40 people participated in these four groups. In addition to filling out a written questionnaire, focus group participants took part in small- and large-group discussions. The following four questions asked in the questionnaire were also the focus of the discussion groups:

1. How can distributed learning in Alberta be improved to enhance your working conditions?
VOICES FROM THE CLASSROOM

2. In regard to distributed learning and your working conditions, what specifically should the ATA be advocating for on your behalf?

3. How should technology be used to support distributed learning?

4. What advice would you share with educators who are about to teach in a distributed learning environment for the first time?

Findings

Distributed learning is not an adequate term to describe the uniqueness of the work we do. . . . Many people are [still] trying to work and plan in a “boundary” familiar [educational] setting and our work is “boundless” by nature.

— Focus group participant

Because the total number of teachers involved in distributed learning in Alberta is unknown, the researchers were unable to calculate the response rate to the survey. As a result, any conclusions drawn from the study, while valid for the study participants, cannot be applied with certainty to the population of distributed learning teachers as a whole. Nevertheless, the number of responses received (232) was significant enough that the experiences reported by the participants with respect to their work environment likely bear at least some similarity to those of other distributed learning teachers in the province.

A number of key findings, themes and issues resonated across the survey and focus group conversations. These findings were identified through an analysis of the survey results and further elaborated upon via four provincial focus group conversations. When crosstabs (the examination of two variables together) were performed, only results that were both statistically (p<.05) and practically significant have been reported.

The researchers drew the following conclusions about the working conditions of teachers in the sample population. The key findings that follow are not ranked in any particular order.

Teaching in a distributed learning environment is a positive experience

A majority of respondents find the experience of working in a distributed learning environment to be a positive one, especially in terms of such factors as their level of responsibility in the school, their professional autonomy, their job security and the amount of clerical support that they receive. Rural instructors are more likely than their urban counterparts to view teaching in a distributed learning environment positively.

Degrees of satisfaction with workplace

Most respondents reported that, in general, their workplace supports student learning. Respondents were most satisfied with the professional autonomy that they experience in a distributed learning environment and least satisfied with the number of students that they are expected to teach and with the concomitant workload.

Professional identity and misperceptions

People not involved in the distributed learning process – including other teachers and administrators, and students – tend to regard distributed learning as “second-class” and/or lacking the rigor of regular classroom instruction.
Establishing professional boundaries

Many respondents reported that establishing boundaries between their professional and their personal lives is more difficult for them than for traditional classroom teachers. The absence of set hours and a specific structure sets up the expectation that distributed learning teachers will teach more students, develop their own course content and keep their courses up to date.

Levels of support

Respondents were generally more satisfied with the support they receive for tasks directly related to student learning (such as instructing and interacting with and evaluating students) than with the support they receive for such non-instructional activities as designing course materials, obtaining relevant professional development, and making decisions about firewalls and filters.

Problematic funding approaches

Alberta Education’s approach to student funding is largely based on a traditional classroom model and, for that reason, seldom takes into account such unique factors as the mobility of distributed learning students (many of whom split their time between conventional schooling and distributed learning), the fact that such students may register any time during the year, the low completion rate of these students, and the fairly high number of home-schooled students and students with special needs.

Teacher education programs

Even though teaching by means of distributed learning differs significantly from classroom-based methods, it was perceived that undergraduate teacher education programs (including the field experiences component) currently offer only limited preparation for teachers interested in this method of delivery.

Professional learning opportunities

Teachers already teaching in a distributed learning environment have relatively few formal opportunities for professional development related to distributed learning technologies.

Resources, curriculum and course development

When the curriculum is revised, the development of related course materials in a format that supports distributed learning lags significantly behind the development of resources for use in a traditional classroom setting.

Diversity in the distributed learning student population

Students who enrol in distributed learning are becoming increasingly diverse in terms of their requisite digital literacy, linguistic abilities (e.g., English as a second language students), and unique academic, social, medical and emotional needs.

Staffing issues

Because teaching in a distributed learning environment involves unique skills, finding substitute teachers who can easily pick up when the regular teacher is away is extremely difficult.
Access to technologies

Access to the technology required to support distributed learning varies widely throughout the province and, even in urban areas, is not optimal. The fact that an instructor has access to the latest technologies is no guarantee that his or her students will have the same access either from their home or school.

Web 2.0 technologies

New interactive technologies (sometimes called Web 2.0 technologies) such as wikis, blogging and podcasting, although ideally suited to distributed learning contexts, are not widely used. Factors that impede the adoption of these technologies are the lack of professional development concerning their use (recognizing the relatively new nature of these technologies), the lack of infrastructure and the associated hardware and software costs.

Videoconferencing technologies

Although the infrastructure to support videoconferencing is available, a majority of respondents (more than 75%) noted that videoconferencing is still not widely used in distributed learning environments. Possible reasons for the low usage are (1) a lack of efficacy on the part of some students to learn in this context, (2) timetable conflicts among schools in a district, (3) the perception that videoconferencing is an initiative driven by factors outside of the local school jurisdiction (e.g., government) rather than the jurisdiction, and (4) the need for students to leave home and travel to the videoconferencing location (i.e., videoconference suite).

As the voice of the teaching profession in Alberta, the Association looks forward to the ongoing dialogue related to the future of distributed learning in the province. This report will be a key element in facilitating these discussions.


Cell Phones in the Classroom

In October 2010 CTF conducted an online survey of teachers on the topic of cell phone use in the classroom. The survey was emailed to 3,969 educators from 11 participating CTF Member organizations (NLTA, PEITF, NSTU, AEFNB, NBTA, AEFO, ETFO, MTS, ATA, NWTFA, NTA). Responses were collected from 610 respondents, for an overall response rate of 15%. 579 respondents replied to the English survey, while 31 respondents replied to the French survey.

Among the findings:

• About 8 in 10 Canadian teachers surveyed (79%) reported that their school does not allow students to bring cell phones into the classroom.
• The majority of teachers surveyed (58%) do not believe that students could potentially use cell phones in the classroom for educational purposes.

• Among the 42% of teachers who believe that cell phones could potentially have an educational purpose in the classroom, these are sample comments from respondents:

  [Cell phones provide] unrestricted internet access when laptops and internet are limited in our classrooms. They can find answers in seconds that would take much longer to find in our outdated classroom resources.

  Avoir accès à Internet en tout temps étant donné que les ordinateurs ne sont pas toujours disponibles.

• Among the problems or challenges cited by respondents as a result of allowing students to use cell phones in the classroom were the following:

  Comment savoir si l’utilisation est reliée à la matière enseignée? Comment savoir s’il ne s’agit pas de messages textes envoyés à un autre élève pendant une évaluation sommative?

  Unauthorized recording of classroom activities would infringe on privacy of students and teachers. Publication on the internet of unauthorized recordings could have terrible consequences.

The teacher voice on high quality public education

Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching

The mission of the Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching, an independent charitable organization established by the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation in 1991, is to empower teachers and influence public education through teacher-led action research.

The Foundation funds research into teaching and learning in publicly funded elementary and secondary schools. It supports a wide range of activities aimed at the improvement of education:

- research projects
- publication of research results
- conferences and workshops on research
- awards for educational research
- networking and mentoring opportunities for teachers and researchers

Each project sponsored by the McDowell Foundation results in a final report, manual, handbook or other product that shares the findings with other educators and researchers. Among the diverse topic areas: arts education, English as a second language, inclusive schools and classrooms, instructional strategies, kindergarten, mathematics, school organization and philosophy, technology in education, Aboriginal education.

Source: www.mcdowellfoundation.ca/main_mcdowell/index.htm

Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI)

Established in 1999, the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement is a program designed to improve student learning and performance by fostering initiatives that reflect the unique needs and circumstances of individual school authorities. From the onset, AISI has been a collaborative effort involving the following education partners:

- Alberta Home and School Councils’ Association (AHSCA)
- Alberta Education
- Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
- Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA)
- Alberta Teachers’ Association (ATA)
- College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS)
- University Faculties of Education (University of Alberta, University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, Campus Saint-Jean)
To date, there have been four cycles of AISI funding. More than $500 million has been invested in this initiative to continuously improve student learning in Alberta. After three successful three-year cycles of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (2000-2009), AISI is now in its fourth cycle, 2009-2012. The work of school improvement focuses on improving student learning through fostering enhanced strategies at the school, district, and government levels. Essential elements to promote school improvement include leadership, instructional practice, school climate, assessment and accountability, building capacity through professional development, student and parent engagement, and the integration of effective practices.

Each cycle of AISI funding has resulted in a wide range of projects designed to improve student learning. The summaries and reports of over a decade of site-based research projects are on the AISI website at the AISI Clearing House: http://education.alberta.ca/admin/aisi.aspx

Source:  www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Resources/Pages/AISI%20Clearing%20House.aspx
The teacher voice on the future of teaching and learning

The Future of Teaching in Alberta

This is an Alberta Teachers’ Association research project, conducted in collaboration with the University of Calgary and Calgary Public Teachers Local No 38, intended to advance the Alberta teaching profession’s view on the future of teaching and learning in the province.

The Future of Teaching in Alberta attempts to analyze the forces and influences that will shape the future of teachers’ work in Alberta over the next 20 years. Authorized by the 2009 Annual Representative Assembly, this study is especially timely given the release in 2010 of Alberta Education’s Inspiring Education: A Dialogue with Albertans, which calls for the “informed transformation” of Alberta’s education sector.

Because of its global scope and long-term perspective, this study will also serve to advance the profession’s views on a host of factors affecting the future of teaching, including the emergence of new technologies and the intensification of teachers’ work. A major portion of the study is devoted to analyzing the neoliberal agenda that is at the root of many of the developments that have affected education in Alberta and around the world during the last 20 years: the attempt to turn learning into a commodity by providing learners with “choices,” the marketing of “technology-solutions” by corporations and the implementation of bureaucratic compliance policies such as those advanced by Michael Barber, the architect of “deliverology.”

The study explores the following question: What are the key forces affecting teaching as a profession in Alberta, and how will these forces shape the identity of teachers during the next 20 years?

For the last several years, the Alberta Teachers’ Association has attempted to engage Albertans in a dialogue about the societal changes that are affecting the province’s public education system. A focal point for these discussions has been Changing Landscapes, a document that the Association revises annually to capture the various emerging trends that affect education in Alberta. The most recent version, Changing Landscapes for Learning Our Way to the Next Alberta, is available on the website www.learningourway.ca.

To complement this series of public dialogues, the Association embarked in 2009 on a study intended to identify the various external trends and forces that are changing the nature of teachers’ work and to suggest how these forces might change the knowledge, skills and attributes that teachers will need in the future. To undertake this study, the Association assembled a research team composed of representatives from the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary, Calgary Public Teachers Local No 38 and the provincial Association.

Scott (2005, 116) has pointed out that studies attempting to predict the future impact of current trends always run the risk of “closing down the opening to unknown futures” by imposing a narrow set of assumptions on whatever topic is being investigated. To ensure that the study looked at the factors driving education change from as many perspectives as possible, the research team decided on a four-phase approach:

Phase 1—Mitigating Between Possible and Probable Futures: In May and June of 2010, teachers and administrators in Calgary Public Teachers Local No. 38 were invited to a series of dinner focus groups in which they were asked to consider six questions about their experiences as beginning teachers and about how they believe education has changed. Participants were also provided with an environmental scan that included trends identified in Changing Landscapes for Learning Our Way to the Next Alberta.
Phase 2—Trends and Drivers Affecting Public Education: This phase, completed in June 2010, consisted of a review of the literature on the future of teaching. The views of leading future scanners and social philosophers were taken into account.

Phase 3—Casting Our Futures: Drawing upon Galtung’s (1982) conceptual model for configuring the future, the researchers, in Phase 3, synthesized and reconciled the ideas generated by the focus groups participants.

Phase 4—Writing the Final Report: In Phase 4, the research team produced a draft report and submitted it to various stakeholders, including Calgary Public Teachers Local, for comment and feedback.

In Phase 1 focus group participants (teachers and principals) were asked to respond to six questions. A summary of their responses to each question follows.

1. Thinking back to when you were a beginning teacher, were you prepared for what you faced in the classroom? Why or why not?

   For years, researchers and practising teachers have observed that university preparation always seems to be out of step with what is required in practice. However, the responses of the participants suggest that the situation is actually more complex than just a gap between theory and practice. Although most of the participants, for example, admitted that they had not been adequately prepared, their admission had less to do with condemning the quality of their teacher preparation program than simply acknowledging that the life of the classroom and school was more complex than they had anticipated. Academic study, while important, did not give them a foretaste of what teaching would actually be like. As one participant put it, “I don’t think I was as prepared as I thought I was going to be.”

   A major theme to emerge from the focus groups was that teaching is a complex task. Among the factors cited as contributing to that complexity were these:

   • Students come from a diversity of cultural, socioeconomic, domestic and linguistic backgrounds and vary considerably in their ability to learn.
   • Teaching involves many tasks, which need to be prioritized. Time management is essential.
   • Teachers are sometimes given assignments outside their area of specialization.
   • Managing a classroom and dealing with behavioural problems can be difficult.
   • Dynamic, inquiry-based learning, to be effective, requires a great deal of preparation.
   • Teachers are too often required to be social workers, a task for which they are not prepared.
   • Teaching involves being prepared as a person, an attribute that is acquired more through experience than training. As one participant put it, “despite my feeling prepared for my beginning years, I didn’t feel much satisfaction at the type of work that was going on in my classroom (by the students and by me). However, I could not articulate this emptiness at the time, except to say that it was unfulfilling.”

   In short, even though respondents reported that the actual experience of teaching was much more complex than they had anticipated, they did not believe that many of the skills and attributes required could have been fully developed in advance of practice.
2. **What did you find most difficult in those early years?**

In general, the difficulties that participants cited fell into three broad categories. The first were the challenges associated with maintaining a balance between work and life and developing a sense of personal identity, agency and purpose as a teacher.

Here’s how one teacher summed up the issue of work-life balance:

> Most difficult: the simple things I guess—balancing home/school, not being married to the job, not taking work home, deciding when to shut off the teacher, so to speak. Prioritize my many roles: paperwork, phone calls, IPP, communication with parent/guardian. Juggling expectations of self, peers, administration, parents, community.

This struggle concerning time and workload is a common lament in the literature about the experience of teaching. What is interesting, however, is the way in which participants linked their concerns about time to their sense of self-efficacy and identity as a teacher. What participants reported, in other words, is that the complex demands of teaching—whether mastering the course content, receiving “new teaching assignments every year” or “dealing with students who had bigger issues than [a teacher] can deal with”—made them feel less creative than they had hoped and gave them a sense that they weren’t growing professionally.

The second category of difficulties had to do with addressing the diversity of students’ needs. As in the case of work-life balance, the challenges that participants faced with respect to meeting the diverse needs of students caused them to question their self-identities and the adequacy of their preparation. Although preservice programs appear to give beginning teachers some sense of having mastered the curriculum, they are not, according to participants, of much practical value in helping teachers address the diverse needs of students. Several respondents, for example, commented that their preparation program had not helped them to find “a balance between curriculum and understanding students.”

The third category of difficulties had to do with fostering meaningful relationships with colleagues, students and parents. Several respondents observed that, when they began teaching, they “did not have anyone to discuss things with and they felt isolated.” Several participants mentioned that the structure of the school community can itself be an impediment to relationships. High schools, for example, can be highly departmentalized, and administrators may have little direct contact with classroom teachers. Other participants noted that teachers often lack access to, and time for, professional development activities that might help them establish relationships with other teachers. Participants also discussed the challenges associated with communicating with students and parents.

3. **Have things changed in the classroom or school since you began teaching? Are different qualities required of you now than when you began teaching?**

Participants identified four major areas of change. The first major change was a much greater emphasis on computers and technology. Virtually all participants noted that technology, if properly implemented, can be an asset to student learning. However, many of them expressed concern about the inadequacy of the support they received for implementing technology. Many participants noted, for example, that they did not understand how to integrate technology into an already overcrowded curriculum in a way that
resulted in meaningful learning outcomes.

Here’s how some of the participants explained the problem:

- We seem concerned with limiting rather than leveraging technology.
- A change in the dominant language and adapting to the latest trend is increasingly difficult.
- A focus on literacy and fundamental skills has been replaced with a focus on ICT or inquiry or 21st century skills (we see brilliance where there is only hyperactivity).
- Learning for teachers needs to have specific applications in order to build on the foundations—kids are learning in the moment so I need to teach in the moment.

A second major change was a significant increase in the cultural diversity of the student population. As one participant remarked, “kids are coming in from all parts of the world.” A third change that participants identified was a greater emphasis on certain kinds of accountability, especially standardized tests. Finally, participants mentioned a shift toward a more managerial style of administration. As one participant remarked, “administrators have become managers and are less connected to practice.” Others noted how such initiatives as AISI [Alberta Initiative for School Improvement], intended to encourage participation, are sometimes implemented in a top-down fashion.

What is encouraging is the way in which participants appear to view these changes less as impediments than as opportunities to develop new capabilities. Some participants, for example, mentioned that change had challenged them to develop a deeper understanding of complex learning approaches. Others noted that they had been motivated to improve their organizational abilities and their capacity to work collaboratively.

In the words of participants, today’s teachers, in contrast to teachers of an earlier generation, need to

- be more conscious of the teaching process, more knowledgeable about the teaching [and learning] process and less template driven;
- have greater flexibility with respect to being a teacher and to understanding kids in more complex ways; and
- be reflective and able to consider the myriad pedagogical choices available to maximize student engagement/interaction with the content and to deal with inclusion issues.

4. What aspects of good teaching have endured over time?

The preponderance of responses to this question centred on caring for children and ensuring that they are engaged in meaningful learning. Underlying all the comments was one central theme: “A good teacher believes that education makes a difference.”

Following is a sampling of responses to Question 4:

- Caring for students and doing the best to help them achieve their potential and having to deal with the demands of the system.
• The need for students to be part of a group (community), need for recognition, need for strong foundations in communication and literacy.
• Building relationships, lifelong learning, passionate about working with kids.
• Still not just a job. Teachers care and want their students to do their best, but the culture is getting bigger and more complex.
• Good teaching practices, relationship with kids, excitement in the classroom, room for creativity and incentive, value of collaboration, school gives structure to students’ lives, sense of community as children need to feel that someone cares and that they are safe.

5. **What do you think will be required of teachers and principals 20 years from now?**

In general, the attributes that participants believe will be required of teachers in the future relate to the difficulties that they mentioned with respect to their own experiences as beginning teachers and to the changes that they believe have occurred since they began teaching.

Here are some of the attributes that participants believe teachers will need in the future:

• An increased awareness of what students bring to the classroom (and not just technology)
• An understanding of the relationship between kids, knowledge and learning
• The interpersonal skills required to connect with students, parents and the community
• An understanding of cultural diversity
• A knowledge of life skills
• An ability to adapt and be flexible
• The ability to diagnose student differences and learning challenges
• An ability to deal with students from different family structures and different economic classes

Given the new challenges, participants believe that both teachers and administrators will need to change their practices. As one participant observed, “principals will need to be more empathetic, less top-down and more collaborative. They will need to connect with teachers, believe in them and be more effective in the classroom. Teachers will need to be lifelong learners and adapt to new ways of teaching.”

Participants also noted that teachers in the future will need to possess not only pedagogical skills and a knowledge of the subject matter but also a constellation of qualities that some experts refer to as capabilities. (It is, of course, important to remember that school reform is not just about improving the effectiveness of teachers but also about addressing such other systemic factors as the chronic underfunding of education and the failure of society to ensure that students are ready to learn when they get to school.)

6. **What kinds of learning experiences do you think will best prepare beginning teachers?**

The nature of teacher preparation is a subject of considerable debate among teacher education institutions, teacher associations, school boards and teachers themselves. Focus group participants
suggested that teacher preparation should place more emphasis on relationships and on inquiry-based learning. Participants also pointed out that teaching as a practice requires the development of good judgment, the ability to adapt to change and a willingness to continue learning.

Here is a sample of the qualities that participants believe beginning teachers will require in the future:

- The ability to lead more and deliver less by placing greater weight on the child’s verbal articulation of his or her understanding
- Learning to sustain relationships over time
- Not abandoning the children
- More life experiences in the community and the world
- Learning to ask for help
- The ability to separate practice from the person and a willingness to change practices or strategies if the current ones appear unsuccessful
- The ability to collaborate with other team members openly and honestly
- Understanding the importance of knowing the individual student when deciding on pedagogical approaches
- A willingness to accept that a teacher cannot know everything and that each year of practice leads to the development of new skills that can be applied to aid students in learning and understanding

In short, participants appear to believe that teacher preparation should focus on the development of enduring capabilities and what some philosophers call practical judgement.

**Possible, probable and preferred trends in teaching**

The possible future of teaching can be gleaned from participants’ comments about working with children and the curriculum and about coming to terms with such issues as accountability, diversity and technology. The probable future is hinted at in participants’ comments about the enduring qualities of being a teacher. In constructing a preferred future, perhaps we should focus not on changing teachers but on changing the conditions that make teaching possible.

Philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1991, 323) suggests that the interplay between ideology (a given with which we must cope) and utopia (a consideration of desirable ends and outcomes) opens up space to consider the possible:

This interplay of ideology and utopia appears as the interplay of the two fundamental directions of the social imagination. The first tends towards integration, repetition, and a mirroring of the given order. The second tends to disintegration because it is eccentric. But the one cannot work without the other.

Imagining a preferred future involves considering both what exists and what is possible. Constructing a preferred future for teacher preparation, therefore, involves taking a historical perspective and asking what we are preparing teachers to do. If we are always educating for “a world out of joint,” then simply preparing for the world “as it is” would be to abdicate our responsibility for changing that world. Teachers should not
be prepared merely to adapt to new technological demands. Setting the world “right anew,” as Arendt (1969) says, involves creating opportunities for teachers and learners that transcend existing structures and forms of practice and that take into account both what is needed and what is possible.

Although schools may not always be the way that we would like them to be, they are places where teachers and children dwell together, suffer together and—despite all odds—learn together. We are often in a hurry to introduce new methods and programs and to undertake more research. But we should, as Badiou (2008) reminds us, also be focusing on “the conditions of existence rather than just improving its methods” (p 20). Badiou’s counsel is utopian because it asks us to think about what it means to live in a way that is ethically and socially responsible. But utopian thinking also needs to take into account practice and to build our capacity for deeper understanding. Creating a preferred future involves imagining “a future goodness that transcends our current ability to understand what it is” (Lear 2006, 103).

Our preferred future, then, should not only address the joys and possibilities of creating knowledge but also articulate our understanding of what it means to live well together in the world. Glimmerings of these aspirations can be heard in the voices of the focus group participants.

As this report demonstrates, there is a great deal of research being conducted by teacher organizations that captures classroom teachers’ views on a range of K-12 education issues. Teachers are saying similar things in different parts of the country. For example while most teachers find teaching to be a satisfying profession and generally have confidence in their capabilities to address diverse student needs, given the increasing complexity of teaching they express a growing need for support on a number of fronts: inclusion, workload and work-related stress, class size, access to professional development, inadequate resources, rapidly changing technology, and accountability and other external pressures.

Another important commonality is that teachers’ values and beliefs about teaching and learning speak to a strong desire to place the best interests of children at the heart of public education.

Why is inclusion of the teacher voice so important when it comes to meaningful change in education?

Education International’s background paper for the first International Summit on the Teaching Profession, held in New York City in March 2011, in a discussion about the importance of engaging teachers in reform, notes that “Successful education reform cannot be achieved without the involvement and consent of teachers, education workers and their school communities …. Reforms must factor in the engagement and capacity of the teaching profession.”

The OECD’s background report for the Summit, Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from Around the World, also stresses the importance of meaningful teacher engagement in the development and implementation of educational reform – “school reform will not work unless it is supported from the bottom up.” The report goes on to say that “open and ongoing systematic dialogue and consultation are fundamental to the process. Such dialogue should recognize that teachers are experts in teaching and learning and thus can make an essential contribution to the design of reforms.”

In her post-Summit message, CTF President Mary-Lou Donnelly observed that Summit participants voiced a shared interest in elevating the professional status of teachers, partnering with teachers in education reform to produce successful outcomes, and building collaboration between teacher unions and education leaders to ensure overall progress. A common thread running through the Summit was the need to increase teacher participation in decision-making as a vital component of educational reform, as well as the importance of education ministries and teacher organizations working together to improve education.

Throughout the Summit, Canada emerged as having one of the most successful education systems in the world, being referenced several times by many of the participants. Comments from the Canadian delegation spoke to our highly educated teaching force, the importance of professional development, ongoing relations between ministries/departments of education and education stakeholders, and the importance of public education in building Canadian society.

Increasingly, other countries are looking to Canada in terms of how we treat and support teachers. Dennis Van Roekel, President of the National Education Association, remarks that

PISA’s top-performing countries show us that the way forward is by elevating the teaching profession. Among the hallmarks of high-performers such as Canada and Finland are strong teachers unions and evaluation systems that identify, support and advance effective teaching …. The work of teachers should be assessed, but there is no simple, easy way to evaluate a profession that combines many
different tasks, from explaining content to inspiring students to maintaining order in class. The lesson from PISA is clear: Respect teachers and treat them like professionals. The U.S. should focus on what leading countries are doing and learn from their example.

One of the most important ways we can respect teachers and treat them like professionals is by listening to what they have to say about their area of expertise: teaching and learning.

We call on policymakers at all levels to listen to what these voices are telling us.
Appendix 1

CTF Work Group on Teaching Quality
Ron Brunton, NSTU
J-C Couture, ATA
Bobbi Ethier, MTS
Marcel Larocque, AEFNB
Susan Perry, OECTA

CTF Staff
Dr. Calvin Fraser
Myles Ellis
Bernie Froese-Germain
Appendix 2

Questionnaire – Teacher Voice on Teaching and Learning Survey

Thank you for choosing to participate in the following survey. Your input will be part of a national research effort focusing on the teacher voice on teaching and learning. It is intended that these results will be used to inform policy decisions on public education.

1. Regarding your decision to become a teacher, what level of importance do you attribute to the following factors? Would that be very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?
   - Enjoy working with children
   - Helping develop and motivate children
   - Making a difference in children’s lives
   - View teaching as a noble profession
   - Love of learning
   - Good career opportunity/job security
   - Good salary and benefits
   - Schedule/holidays
   - Teachers were role models I admired

2. Are there any other significant factors that influenced your decision to become a teacher not listed in the previous question? If so, briefly summarize them below. In addition, please identify what you consider to be the most significant factor. Otherwise, skip to the next question.

3. Regarding your decision to remain in teaching, what level of importance do you attribute to the following factors? Would that be very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?
   - Enjoy working with children
   - Enjoy teaching/job satisfaction
   - Making a difference in children’s lives
   - Salary and benefits
   - Job security
   - Enjoy the opportunity to be creative/finding new ways to support student learning
   - Being good at your job
   - Close to retirement
   - Positive feedback from students/parents
   - Co-workers/work environment
4. Are there any other significant factors that influenced your decision to remain in teaching not listed in the previous question? If so, briefly list those factors below. In addition, please identify what you consider to be the most significant factor. Otherwise, skip to the next question.

5. How important do you believe the following factors may have been in terms of influencing the decision of some beginning teachers to leave the profession? Would that be very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?
   • Work-related stress
   • Heavy workload
   • Student behaviour and discipline issues
   • Better salary in another profession
   • High expectations/Increasing demands on teachers
   • Lack of support and training
   • Impact of government policy/educational change affecting teachers’ worklife (i.e. curriculum changes, assessment practices)
   • Large class sizes
   • Increasing lack of respect for the profession
   • Inadequate support for teachers regarding special needs children
   • Lack of resources for students and teachers
   • Low morale due to negative feedback from parents and students

6. Are there any other significant factors that you believe influence the decision of some teachers to leave the profession early which were not listed in the previous question? If so, briefly list those factors below. In addition, please identify what you consider to be the most significant factor. Otherwise, skip to the next question.

7. Over your career, do you believe public respect for the teaching profession has:
   • Increased
   • Decreased
   • Remained the same

8. If you indicated in the previous question that the level of public respect for the teaching profession has changed, please provide details.

9. If you could go back in time, would you make the same choice and still become a teacher?
   • Yes
   • No

10. Please explain your response.

11. Regarding the purpose of public education, how important do you believe each of the following is with
respects to your teaching? Would that be very important, somewhat important, not too important or not important at all?

- Teaching students society’s norms and values
- Preparing students to become responsible citizens
- Promoting students’ personal development
- Preparing students for the job market
- Ensuring that students acquire the basic skills: reading, writing, mathematics
- Supporting the cultural development of students
- Preparing students to be life-long learners

12. Over the next decade, what do you believe will be the greatest challenge facing public education?

13. Given the pressures you face as a teacher, how concerned are you with your ability to accomplish the following? Would that be very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not concerned at all?

- Covering the essential elements of the curriculum
- Developing both general and subject specific competencies in students
- Preparing students to become responsible citizens
- Supporting students from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds
- Developing the capacity for critical thinking in students
- Addressing discipline problems among students
- Preparing students for standardized provincial exams
- Ensuring that students achieve to their potential
- Promoting good life habits among students
- Preparing students for the job market

14. Which of the previous objectives are you most concerned about not being able to accomplish? Please provide an explanation.

15. With respect to your rapport with students, indicate the degree to which you are in agreement with the following statements. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree?

- Motivating my students is easy.
- Maintaining order among my students demands too much energy/sometimes I feel overwhelmed.
- When I’m with my students, I feel that I have a fulfilling role.
- Some students have problems that are so serious that I cannot help them.
- My students respect my authority.
- My students’ needs are so different from one another that I have a hard time meeting all their needs.
- My relationship with my students is fundamentally affective: I love teaching these young people.
- I perceive myself as an individual who has an important impact on the future of my students.
16. Over this past year, how satisfied have you been with your ability to meet the following student needs? Would that be very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not satisfied at all? If you do not deal with such students, please answer N/A (not applicable).
   • The needs of students with learning and other disabilities
   • The needs of students with behavioural issues
   • The needs of students with diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds
   • The needs of students with diverse linguistic backgrounds
   • The needs of Aboriginal students
   • The needs of students living in poverty

17. To what extent do you believe the following challenges faced by students impact on their ability to succeed in school? Do they impact significantly, impact somewhat, have little impact or no impact at all?
   • Student apathy
   • Disruption of classes by other students
   • Certain students’ weak command of the language of instruction
   • Student intimidation or bullying of students/teachers
   • Presence of gangs in the school
   • Racist or sexist conduct by students
   • Large class sizes
   • Integration of children with special needs
   • Student absenteeism
   • Student disrespect of teachers
   • Students’ use of alcohol or drugs (on school grounds or in the school building)
   • Lack of resources
   • Inadequate school facilities/building conditions
   • Lack of leadership by school administrators towards students
   • Deterioration of socio-economic situation of students’ families
   • Lack of parental support for students
   • Lack of parental support for teachers

18. Are there are any other challenges that you believe significantly influence students’ ability to succeed in school which were not previously listed? If so, briefly list those challenges below. In addition, please identify what you consider to be the most significant challenge. Otherwise, skip to the next question.

19. What do you believe are the most rewarding aspects of your relationship with students?
20. How do you believe the following changes have influenced your ability to help your students achieve to their potential? Would that be very positively, somewhat positively, somewhat negatively, very negatively or no impact at all? If in your personal experience a given change has not in fact taken place, please answer N/A (not applicable).

- New instructional approaches (curriculum)
- Increased cultural or linguistic diversity
- Use of provincial standardized tests
- Reduction in human resources
- Fluctuation of student population
- Socio-economic changes in the community
- New information and communication technologies (ICT) in teaching
- New approaches in learning assessment
- Inclusion of special needs students in all classrooms

21. Are there any other changes that you believe have significantly influenced your students’ ability to succeed in school which were not listed in the previous question? If so, briefly list those factors below, and identify whether you consider them to be positive or negative. Otherwise, skip to the next question.

22. Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements pertaining to the impact of educational changes on your ability to teach effectively. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree? If in your experience a given change has not in fact taken place, please answer N/A (not applicable).

- I have felt my professional autonomy decrease.
- I have focused my teaching on the core aspects of the program, at the expense of other aspects.
- I felt the need to take additional professional development.
- I have become more involved in the school’s decision-making process.
- I have more interaction with my colleagues.
- I have had less time for professional development.
- I have adapted the way I teach because of the provincial/territorial exams.
- My workload has increased.

23. Are there any other aspects of educational change that you believe have significantly influenced your ability to teach effectively which were not listed in the previous question? If so, briefly list them below. In addition, please identify what you consider to be the most significant aspect. Otherwise, skip to the next question.

24. As a teaching professional, briefly describe three changes you would make to the public education system to maximize your students’ potential and enable you to improve their quality of education.
Background Demographic Information

Please indicate your gender:
- Male
- Female

Please indicate the teacher organization of which you are a member:
- NLTA
- PEITF
- NSTU
- AEFNB
- NBTA
- AEFO
- ETFO
- MTS
- ATA
- YTA
- NWTTA
- NTA

In which age category do you belong?
- Under 30
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+

Do you teach mainly in ...?
- Elementary schools
- Secondary schools
- Not applicable

Is your primary workplace ...?
- A French as a first language school
- An English school (including immersion)
- A French-language board/district office
- An English-language board/district office
- Other
Is your current employment status ...?
- Full-time
- Part-time
- Occasional, casual or supply teacher
- Currently on leave

Which of the following best describes your current position?
- Classroom teacher
- Special education teacher
- Administrator
- Librarian
- Consultant/Coordinator
- Guidance Counsellor
- Other

Do the students that attend the school where you teach reside in...?
- Mainly urban areas
- Mainly rural areas
- A relatively even mix of urban and rural areas
- Not applicable

Please indicate the size of the student population in the school where you primarily teach:
- Less than 250 students
- 250 to 499 students
- 500 to 749 students
- 750 to 999 students
- 1,000 students or more
- Not applicable

How long have you been working in the public education system?
- Less than 5 years
- 5 to 14 years
- 15 to 24 years
- 25 years or more