

## ETFO holds advocacy day at Queen's Park to call for urgent action to address rising violence in schools

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TORONTO, ON – The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario is holding an advocacy day at Queen's Park on May 14 to call for urgent action to address increasing violence in schools. ETFO local presidents from across the province are bringing our concerns on this issue directly to members of provincial parliament (MPPs).

"Rather than moving inadequate funding from one envelope to another, the Ministry of Education must reverse its cuts to school board funding and address increasing violence in schools. The safety and well-being of students and educators are non-negotiable priorities," says ETFO President Karen Brown. "The government's lack of support for struggling students puts staff and students at unacceptable increased risk of harm."

ETFO local presidents will observe Question Period and meet with MPPs to demand meaningful changes, including:

- **Acknowledging the issue.** Violence in schools must be adequately tracked. Every incident of workplace violence is supposed to be reported, but educators are sometimes discouraged from doing so. School boards should share incident data with their joint health and safety committees and the provincial government should gather meaningful information to facilitate solutions.
- **Providing adequate funding that meets the diverse needs of students.** Violent behaviour from students is often the result of unmet needs. The government must increase funding for student supports and ensure funding is based on actual student needs.
- **Following and enforcing the law.** The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires school boards to take action to keep staff safe. When violence is dismissed in schools, the Ministry of Labour must act to enforce the law.

[ETFO's 2023 All-Member Violence Survey](#) revealed the impact of violence on physical safety and mental well-being caused by understaffing and the lack of sufficient resources for students. Adds Brown, "ETFO is committed to taking action with policymakers, legislators, and stakeholders to develop and implement concrete strategies to enhance school safety, prevent violence, and foster a nurturing environment conducive to learning and working."

[ETFO](#) represents approximately 83,000 members, including public elementary teachers, occasional teachers, designated early childhood educators, education support personnel, and professional support personnel. Visit [BuildingBetterSchools.ca](https://www.etfo.org/buildingbetter).

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**ETFO Media Relations:** Carla Pereira | 416-962-3836 ext. 2332 | [cpereira@etfo.org](mailto:cpereira@etfo.org)