

Teachers say they are bullied by parents, students

BY CAROLINE GRECH
Staff Writer

They have sat back and taken it long enough.

But now, teachers are coming out swinging in a study that says they have become a target of bullying by parents and bosses. And they're not going to take it any more, they say.

Teachers, including those in York Region boards of education, are speaking out. Thirty per cent of Ontario teachers and education workers reported being bullied by a parent or guardian, a study commissioned by three Ontario teachers unions says.

The study found:

- Bullying from parents takes numerous forms, with female teachers reporting being bullied more often than their

male counterparts;

- Bullying by parents was more prevalent in elementary schools than high schools;

- Threats to report a teacher was the most common form of bullying, with more than 70 per cent of both high school and elementary teachers reporting this type of harassment.

Teachers also complained classes are sometimes disrupted by angry parents; they are often subjected to repeated intimidation, verbal abuse, threats of physical assault and malicious lies.

Twenty-four per cent of the province's teachers say they have been bullied by a boss and 15 per cent say they have been bullied by a colleague or co-worker, including being subjected to unfair criticism and excessive monitoring.

'We don't want to point any fingers, we want solutions.'

Donna Marie Kennedy
president,
Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

- Thirty-four per cent of teachers in the Greater Toronto Area have reported being bullied by students, the study found.

Reported incidents of teachers being bullied by students ranged from having their belongings vandalized, disrupting class, threatening physical assault, verbal abuse, racial or sexual slurs and repeated intimidation.

Bullying is defined as persistent or

repeated incidents of abuse, threats, insults or humiliation intended to hurt other individuals physically, emotionally, psychologically or socially.

More than 1,000 members of the three organizations were interviewed for the survey.

The survey was undertaken due to a number of complaints at union offices, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association president Donna Marie Kennedy said.

"We don't want to point any fingers, we want solutions," Ms Kennedy said.

Critics may say bullying is a harsh word for teachers' experiences, but Ms Kennedy said it needs to be taken seriously.

"Twenty years ago, people would have poooh-pooohed sexual harassment," Ms Kennedy said.

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Trade mission to China a success, MPP says

More was gained from Ontario's trade mission to China than just goodwill between two nations.

Tony Wong, a Hong Kong native and MPP for Markham, was on the mission.

He said this trip has generated positive feedback from Ontarians of Chinese descent.

Students wanting to study at the University of Waterloo can now earn degrees by studying both in Canada and in China at Nanjing University.

Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital has signed an agreement to jointly work on genomics research with Hong Kong University.

Toronto's University Health Network will work with the Shanghai Institute of Health Sciences to research new cancer drugs.

"These agreements are significant, but they represent just the start of what we can accomplish in China and Hong Kong," said Joe Cordiano, minister of Economic Development and Trade.

The 12-day trade mission finished up Tuesday.

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