

WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION WORKPLACE VIOLENCE SURVEY SUMMARY RESULTS

In an effort to understand the violence and mental health crises facing the District of Columbia Public Schools, the Washington Teachers' Union surveyed our membership between May 25 and June 24, 2023. Teachers and school staff in more than 100 schools completed the survey. The results provide insight into the type, frequency and impact of violence in schools, along with the effectiveness of DCPS procedures to prevent and respond to violent and disruptive behavior. Addressing the violence in schools and the mental health needs of students is crucial to ensuring that teachers can perform their jobs effectively and that students have the best possible environment to learn and thrive free from the disruptive impact of violence.

Frequency and Type of Violent Incidents

- **Frequency:** 42% of respondents said that workplace violence increased a lot in their schools within the past year. Another 23% said it increased a little.
- **Student-on-student violence:** Respondents said they experienced the following student-on-student violence within the previous year: assault (55%); physical threats (70%); slapping, punching, kicking (73%); and groping or inappropriate touch (46%).
- **Student-on-staff violence:** Respondents said they experienced the following student-on-staff violence within the previous year: assault (30.4%); physical threats (49%); slapping, punching, kicking (42.2%); and groping or inappropriate touch (13%).

Impact of Violent Behavior

- **Well-being:** Respondents said workplace violence impacted their mental well-being and work in the following ways: sadness/depression (49%); anxiety, fear or increased vigilance (74%); and physical injury (19%).
- **Professional practice:** Respondents said workplace violence impacted their work in the following ways: 29% took time off or reduced work, and 45% said they considered leaving the profession.

Effectiveness of DCPS Protocols and Supports for Students

- **Reporting violent incidents:** When asked whether their school has procedures in place to report workplace assaults, only 44% responded "yes." More than 2 in 5 (42%) said they were "unsure," and another 14% said "no."
- **Investigating violent incidents:** When asked whether their school has a procedure in place to investigate workplace assaults, only 37% responded "yes." More than half (51%) responded that they were "unsure," and another 12% responded "no."
- **Training:** When asked whether they agree that staff receive adequate training to address workplace assaults, 82% said they disagree (40%) or strong disagree (42%).
- **Student supports:** When asked whether they agree that there are enough counselors or social service support for students in their school, 71% said they disagree.