



DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

**VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AD HOC COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SESSION**

Chair: Deb Oldfield
Vice Chair: Shailene Panylo

DATE: Wednesday, November 20, 2024
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
LOCATION: Hybrid
ATTACHMENTS: Agenda

Copies to:
All Trustees and Student Trustees
Director of Education
All Superintendents

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, November 20, 2024
6:00 p.m.

	PAGE
1. <u>Call to Order</u>	Verbal
2. <u>Land Acknowledgement</u>	Verbal
<p>The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.</p>	
3. <u>Declarations of Interest</u>	Verbal
4. <u>Adoption of Agenda</u>	Verbal
5. <u>Minutes</u>	
(a) Draft Minutes of the April 2, 2024 Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee Meeting	1 - 2
6. <u>Information Items</u>	
(a) Report from the Violence in Schools Working Group (Superintendent Heather Mundy)	3 - 9
7. <u>Other Business</u>	Verbal
8. <u>Adjournment</u>	Verbal



DRAFT Minutes – Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Tuesday, April 2, 2024, 7:45 p.m., Hybrid

1. Call to Order

Deb Oldfield, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Michelle Arseneault, Tracy Brown, Emma Cunningham, Donna Edwards, Stephen Linton (virtual), Kelly Miller, Carolyn Morton, Deb Oldfield, Shailene Panylo, Christine Thatcher, Student Trustees Ben Cameron, Kayla Hoare, Neha Kasoju

Regrets: Trustee Jill Thompson

Staff Present: Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor, Associate Directors Jim Markovski and David Wright, General Counsel Patrick Cotter, Executive Lead Robert Cerjanec, Superintendents Heather Mundy, Andrea McAuley, Michael Bowman

Recording Secretary: Gillian Venning

2. Land Acknowledgment

Committee Chair Deb Oldfield gave the Land Acknowledgement: The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island (North America). We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Trustee Christine Thatcher

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Trustee Carolyn Morton

THAT THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 6, 2023 MEETING OF THE VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AD HOC COMMITTEE BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

6. Information Items

(a) Report from the Violence in Schools Working Group

Superintendent Heather Mundy introduced Senior Manager Lisa Coppins. Together, they provided trustees with an overview of the report, which included an update from the Violence in Schools Working Group that has met four times since being established in fall 2023. The Working Group has determined its purpose and engaged in discussion around the issues of violence, contexts and potential areas for action, leading to the emergence of five focus areas as noted in the report, along with information that is known and available, and information that still needs to be gathered in order to be responsive in providing recommendations around the five focus areas. It was noted that the Working Group will report back to the Ad Hoc Committee at a future date.

There were no trustee questions.

7. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee **DATE:** November 20, 2024

SUBJECT: Report from the Violence in Schools Working Group **PAGE:** 1 of 7

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Heather Mundy, Superintendent of People and Culture

The Durham District School Board recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The Durham District School Board is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination, oppression, harassment and harm.

1.0 **Abstract**

The Violence in Schools Working Group has engaged in gathering anecdotal information from different employee groups: Elementary Principals, Inclusive Student Services staff, Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Educational Assistants, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) Teachers and Designated Early Childhood Educators and Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation (OSSTF) Teachers and Professional Support Services Personnel. A summary of the anecdotal information shared from the presentations and reflections from the working group are provided. The report also recommends next steps for the Working Group.

2.0 **Purpose**

This report provides the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee with an update from the Violence in Schools Working Group.

3.0 **Background**

As per the Terms of Reference for the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee, a Violence in Schools Working Group was established by the Director of Education. The Working Group is composed of four trustees, four management staff and one representative from each of CUPE, ETFO and OSSTF. The membership consists of:

1. Donna Edwards, Trustee
2. Stephen Linton, Trustee
3. Deb Oldfield, Trustee
4. Christine Thatcher, Trustee
5. Heather Mundy, Superintendent of People and Culture
6. Lisa Coppins, Senior Manager of People and Culture
7. Michael Menheere, System Lead of Positive School Climates

8. Kerri Stewart, Manager of Health and Safety
9. Stephanie Dezsi, CUPE Representative
10. Pam Downward, ETFO Representative
11. Stephanie Pritchard, OSSTF Representative

The Working Group is committed to understanding the experience in school related to violence with the goal of creating positive school experiences for all students, families and staff.

In its [report](#) to the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee on April 2, 2024, the following next steps were recommended by the Working Group:

1. *Suggestion to the Director that options might be considered to gather information as noted in the chart under the “What do we need more information on?” and “What is missing?”*
2. *Note on the timing of the release of the Equitable Framework for Progressive Discipline (June 2020) and suggested to the Director that a communication plan might be developed to share this valuable resource.*
3. *Note that the Ministry of Education has announced a review of the Provincial Code of Conduct and information will be provided to the working group as available.*

4.0 **Analysis**

The Working Group has met four times since the Violence in School Ad Hoc Committee last met on April 2, 2024:

- Wednesday, May 1, 2024
- Tuesday, May 21, 2024
- Wednesday, June 5, 2024
- Friday, October 25, 2024

The revised [DDSB Code of Conduct](#) was communicated to all parents/guardians and all staff members on September 3, 2024. The DDSB Code of Conduct can be found on the DDSB website’s main page, as well as all school websites. A significant feature of the DDSB Code of Conduct is the detailed explanation of the DDSB’s Bias-Aware Progressive Discipline approach, which outlines how we respond to breaches of the DDSB Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct will be reviewed through staff meetings to support implementation.

The DDSB Code of Conduct supports the DDSB’s commitments to create a positive school climate for each school community.

School leaders work with teachers and other school staff to create and sustain an inclusive, welcoming and positive learning environment, and by holding everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. Students are to be treated with respect and dignity in return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour.

During the May 1, 2024, meeting, the Working Group discussed the upcoming school climate survey for 2024-2025 and looks forward to an opportunity to review the data from that survey. The Working Group also discussed the importance of communication with students, staff and families and understanding what was learned through the communication audit.

The Working Group decided that to further the understanding of violence in schools, inviting presentations from specific staff groups would be a good starting point. The following groups were invited to future meetings: school administrators, special education resources teachers (SERTs), professional student services personnel (PSSP), and federation/union representatives. The focus for the presentations was around knowledge and implementation of the Bias Aware Framework for Progressive Discipline as well as a process to address an incident. Presenters were asked to share what works well and what has been challenging.

The Working Group heard from various staff groups during the May 21 and June 5 meetings. The presentations were conversational in nature and provided anecdotal information that is summarized below.

Staff Group	Presentation Notes
Elementary Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experienced principal - Shared how they communicate information about the Bias Aware Framework for Progressive Discipline - Shared how they analyze data from school climate survey and school incidents - Share their response when risk of injury and the importance of communication and review of the student safety plan
Inclusive Student Services Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informed group that Mitigating Risk of Injury Procedure is being revised with more resources - Professional learning for administrators has started on this revised procedure - Shared information about the Short-Term Assistance Response Team (START) that provides an additional EA to support observation, data collection, and provides analysis of student communication, behaviours and needs to support programming - Learned about the Grove school classes which are funded through the Ministry of Health. These classes are staffed by a combination of DDSB teachers and

	agency staff providing a comprehensive range of educational and therapeutic support.
Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation - OSSTF District 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OSSTF represents teachers as well as professional student services staff (PSSP) including interpreters and intervenors - School experience and perception of support from administrators varies across the District - If incidents are not addressed, it can lead to further escalation (student fights)
Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation - OSSTF District 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feel there is limited access to PSSP - Strategies that are provided are not always attempted and implemented consistently - Communication between administrators and staff is critical and there is not a consistent practice - When there is lack of familiarity with student safety plans, it affects classroom management and student behaviour - When administrators respond and act quickly, it builds confidence for staff - Access to specialized spaces for gross motor activities is beneficial for many students - Transition planning is critical for student and staff success
CUPE 218 – Educational Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share that educational assistants (EAs) can feel blamed when being questioned about a risk of injury incident - When EAs receive and are involved in follow up strategies and plans, they see reduced incidents - Clear communication on next steps is important - When there is a high volume of incidents, it is difficult to have meaningful debriefs and plan next steps - CUPE stressed importance of EA support and maintaining smaller class sizes
Durham Elementary Teachers Federation (ETFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ETFO represents elementary teachers and designated early childhood educators - ETFO shared statistics from their provincial survey (https://www.etfo.ca/news-publications/publications/etfo-violence-survey-results) - The provincial survey results indicated a rise in violence since COVID 19; availability of support staff is intermittent when there is an incident; follow up after an incident is minimal; issue of underreporting

Durham Elementary Teachers Federation (ETFO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Durham ETFO members (Designated Early Childhood Educators, Occasional and Permanent Teachers) returned over 100 postcards through their in-school steward sharing their concerns - Common concerns expressed through the anecdotal responses included: verbal and physical violence between students and staff; little to no consequences for students; significant mental health impact for students and staff; frequency of violent incident in the early elementary years; safety for staff and students
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Following each presentation, the Working Group engaged in discussions and provided reflections individually and as a group. Reflections from the included:

- Importance of relationships
- Communication is key
- Visibility of school leaders and staff in the school and yard reduces incidents
- Additional resources are needed to support the complexity of student needs
- Collaboration of integrated team (including school staff) is necessary to support complex student needs (schedules, Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Transition plans and Student Support Plans)
- Designated multi-modal rooms for students presenting with risk of injury behaviour are important
- Knowledge and implementation of Student Safety Plan is critical
- Behaviour Management Systems training is necessary with focus on de-escalation strategies
- Important to share practices from schools that have proven successful
- Appreciation for the additional resources in the revised Mitigating Risk of Injury Behaviours Procedure and the training for school administrators
- When IEPs, Student Safety Plans and programming strategies are followed, we see a reduction of risk of injury behaviour
- Communication and professional learning on Bias Aware Framework for Progressive Discipline is needed
- Communication of Student Safety Plans and Transitions plan is necessary
- Professional learning on implementation of programming and strategies for all staff working with student(s) needs to be ongoing

4.1 What we have learned

1. The term “violence in schools” has many different understandings based on perspective, role and experience.
2. All parties care about the student experience and the importance of creating positive school climates for students, staff and families.
3. It takes all individuals working together in a school to create and sustain a positive school climate.
4. There are system structures to mitigate and address incidents.

4.2 What we will do next

1. Request that the Director of Education continue the Working Group until June 30, 2025.
2. Request that the Director of Education refine and narrow the mandate of the Working Group.
3. Request that the Director of Education review the composition of the Working Group for consideration related to refined mandate and absent voices.

Based on continuation and revised mandate for the Working Group, the next steps are:

4. Review research.
5. Create a process to gather information related to Violence in Schools from students (e.g., Student Senate), staff and school community.
6. Review analysis of Climate Survey 2025.
7. Identify and gather information regarding promising practices across the system and throughout our learning and working environments.
8. Understand the professional learning/structures needed to support student engagement and success at school.

5.0 Financial Implications

N/A

6.0 Evident of Impact

The Working Group has gathered information from different employee groups to understand the current situation in schools. This information can support future discussions and additional information gathering in terms of understanding strategies and plans that are making a difference.

7.0 Strategic Links

The Working Group has engaged in open discussions valuing the voice of all members which aligns with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan priority to Ignite Connection. The Working Group is committed to supporting meaningful learning and promoting well-being through the creation of positive school climates for all students and staff.

8.0 Communication/Implementation Plan

The working group will report back to the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee.

9.0 Conclusion

This report is provided to the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee for information.

Report reviewed and submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CW Taylor".

Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Mundy".

Heather Mundy, Superintendent of People and Culture