



DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AD HOC COMMITTEE PUBLIC SESSION

Chair: Deb Oldfield

Vice Chair: Shailene Panylo

DATE: Monday, June 2, 2025

TIME: 8:00 p.m. (or following adjournment of Standing Committee meeting)

LOCATION: Hybrid

ATTACHMENTS: Agenda

Copies to:

All Trustees and Student Trustees
Director of Education
All Superintendents

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, June 2, 2025
8:00 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 November 20, 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 - 15
7. <u>Adjournment</u>	Verbal



DRAFT Minutes – Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2024, 6:00 p.m., Hybrid

1. Call to Order

Deb Oldfield, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Members Present: Trustees Michelle Arseneault (virtual), Tracy Brown, Mark Jacula, Stephen Linton (virtual), Kelly Miller, Carolyn Morton, Shailene Panylo

Regrets: Trustees Emma Cunningham, Donna Edwards, Christine Thatcher, Student Trustees Kayla Hoare, Nitishan Poopalasundaram, Shampavi Vijayakumar

Staff Present: Superintendent Heather Mundy, Senior Manager Lisa Coppins

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 Carolyn Morton

THAT THE AGENDA BE APPROVED.

CARRIED

5. Approval of Minutes

MOVED by Shailene Panylo

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THAT THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE APRIL 2, 2024 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 summarized the activities of the Violence in Schools Working Group since May 1, 2024, including the collection of anecdotal information received from different employee groups within the Durham District School Board: elementary principals, Inclusive Student Services, CUPE Educational Assistants, ETFO teachers and Designated Early Childhood Educators and OSSTF teachers and Professional Support Services Personnel. The report also outlined next steps for the Working Group, including an extension of its mandate through to 2025.

Discussion took place and trustee questions were answered. Committee Chair Deb Oldfield noted that as the Working Group will continue its mandate into 2025, the Ad Hoc Committee is not yet in a position to deliver its final report and should therefore recommend that its mandate be extended.

MOVED by Trustee Deb Oldfield
SECONDED by Trustee Shailene Panylo

THAT THE VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AD HOC COMMITTEE DELIVER AN INTERIM REPORT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DECEMBER 2, 2024 CONFIRMING THAT THE WORK REMAINS ONGOING AND THAT THE MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE IS BEING EXTENDED THROUGH TO DECEMBER 31, 2025.

CARRIED

7. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

8. Adjournment

MOVED by Trustee Deb Oldfield

THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED.

The meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee **DATE:** June 2, 2024

SUBJECT: Violence in Schools Working Group Report **PAGE:** 1 of 3

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 agreed to prepare a report on Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools for the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee. The report will include a Research Review, DDSB – What we Heard, and Recommendations. This report outlines the process that the working group will engage in towards development of the final report as well as the anticipated timeline.

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 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 for 2024- 2025 school year 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. Shane Stagg, OSSTF Representative

The working group has engaged in activities to provide information to support the purposes of the Ad Hoc Violence in Schools Committee.

The purpose of the Violence in School Ad Hoc Committee is:

- To secure an understanding of the issue of violence in schools across the District.
- To secure an understanding of structures in place to address these issues.
- To secure an understanding of practices and undertakings to mitigate violence in schools and the impact that these practices are having in schools.

4.0 **Analysis**

The working group has met twice since the Violence in School Ad Hoc Committee meeting on November 20, 2024: Friday, February 28 and Monday, May 12, 2025.

Through discussion, the working group has agreed to create a report titled: Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools to provide to the Ad Hoc Committee at a future date. The report will include:

- Research Review
- DDSB – What We Heard
- Recommendations

Working group members have been asked to share any relevant research materials to support the research review.

The working group then looked to gather additional information through a survey (Appendix A), which was sent to the working group members, trustees, student trustees, federation and unions, and Family of Schools superintendents to share with appropriate staff.

Though we had a very limited response (9), the working group reviewed the information and identified that the themes align with previous conversations and presentations. The survey comments provided in Appendix B have been shared as received and are therefore unfiltered.

The working group will complete the following next steps to support the development of the report: Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools, which will be provided to the Ad Hoc Violence in Schools Committee.

1. Review analysis of Climate Survey following 2025 administration.
2. Complete research review.
3. Attend Parent Involvement Committee, Special Education Advisory Committee and Student Senate meeting to gather information on next steps.

4. Reconvene as a working group in September to review all information gathered.
5. Finalize the report.

The working group aims to provide the report to the Ad Hoc Violence in Schools Committee in November 2025.

5.0 Financial Implications

N/A

6.0 Strategic Links

The working group continues to gather information to support safe and inclusive school environments, building connected communities and staff, and promote student well-being.

7.0 Communication/Implementation Plan

The working group will report back to the Violence in Schools Ad Hoc Committee with the report: Creating Safe and Inclusive Schools. The report will include a Review of Research, DDSB – What We Have Heard, and Recommendations.

8.0 Conclusion/Recommended Action

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

9.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Violence in Schools Community Feedback Survey

Appendix B: Violence in Schools Community Feedback Survey Responses

Report reviewed and submitted by:



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



Heather Mundy, Superintendent of People and Culture



Violence - Community Feedback

The Violence in Schools Working Group is conducting this survey to better understand the main themes you have heard from students, families, staff and community members in relation to violence in schools, with the goal of improving safety, well-being and the overall learning environment for students and staff. Your feedback is crucial in identifying the most pressing issues and potential solutions. The information you provide will be kept confidential and will help guide the next steps of the working group. Please complete the survey by March 31, 2025.

Thank You
Heather Mundy
Superintendent of Education, People and Culture

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

What have you heard?

Please share the main themes that you have heard and whether that was expressed by students, families, staff or community members. You have the opportunity to provide up to six themes.

Theme 1 - please provide a brief outline or description.

Theme 2 - please provide a brief outline or description.

Theme 3 - please provide a brief outline or description.

Are there any additional themes/concerns you have heard?

- ☐ Yes, I have more themes to share.
- ☐ No, not at this time.

Section

Theme 4 - please provide a brief outline or description.

Theme 5 - please provide a brief outline or description.

Theme 6 - please provide a brief outline or description.

Potential Solution(s)

Please provide any thoughts you have on potential solutions to reduce violence in schools and improve safety, well-being and the learning environment for students and staff.

Thank you, your responses have been submitted to the DDSB

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Microsoft Forms



Violence – Community Feedback

March 2025

The Violence in Schools Working Group conducted a survey to better understand the main themes communicated from students, families, staff, and community members in relation to violence in schools, with the goal of improving safety, well-being and the overall learning environment for staff and students.

The survey ran from March 4th to April 1st, 2025, and received 9 responses.

Key Themes

Lack of support and resources:

Not or not enough supports in kindergarten classroom for students who need/or would benefit from supports - families (who are also community members)/staff.

As the system decreases (or does not provide) supports for students who need them; we are now seeing other students beginning to exhibit behaviours they would not have exhibited before.

Students who would benefit from supports are also exhibiting behaviours as there are not enough bodies in the room to support their daily needs without ignoring or neglecting the other students in their care to support specific students.

Lack of support/resources to staff in supporting students with complex and high needs. Staff only assigned to high safety risk students with no preventative supports.

Use of exclusionary practices when supports are not available (parents)

Risk of injurious behaviour in ISS classrooms is the greatest concern. Members describe that violence is erupting without observable antecedents. The shortage of EAs is creating unsafe conditions and despite every effort to provide suitable programming, violence continues to happen.

Parents and staff feeling that the needs of special education students not being met is the cause of the issue (i.e. not enough support, no EAs)

Staff looking to potential work refusals as a means to get additional supports in a class.

Staff are suffering and experiencing abuse whether physical or verbal and are also starting to normalize these behaviours and they do not get support and are questioned by the Board when they take days off that they need because of what is going on in the classroom.

Lack of Bullying Prevention and Intervention:

Bullying where the victim continues to be unsafe in the school environment for months if not indefinitely.

Staff don't appear to take bullying seriously. Families miss zero tolerance policies.

Bullying and the perceived lack response...

Staff do not address what parent sees as bullying until issue becomes more traumatic to the victim.

in school bullying, (told to me by both parents and students,) group fights, several kids ganging up on one or more students.

students talking with their friends about having access to weapon ie guns. a student told me about another student who was bragging about having access to guns.

Lack of support for students with history of violent behaviours

I am noticing a steep increase in violence amongst female students. Often it is involving groups physically assaulting individuals.

Learning Environment: overcrowding, disruptive, unsafe, etc.:

Identified students causing "harm" or disrupting the learning environment for others. Staff and parents saying they can't teach, or their child can't learn because teachers are too busy dealing with behaviours.

Students afraid to go to school because of behaviours of other students.

Families/Staff looking to "push students out" that may be neurodivergent (i.e.. "that student better not be in my child's class, my neurotypical child has rights too").

Staff looking to potential work refusals as a means to get additional supports in a class or to have a student removed from their class.

Too many students in kindergarten classrooms - families (who are also community members), staff.

Students will also express that there is not enough "personal" space "they are in my bubble" etc.

The increasing class sizes and needs are a huge cause for concern as students are not getting the best beginning to the education system and some littles are caused unnecessary trauma due to what is going on in the classrooms.

Kindergarten students should not have to support and make their educators feel better because of what they have seen, and educators should not have to provide an explanation to littles of the behaviours they are witnessing. We have more and more students not wanting to come to school and are unable to explain to their families why.

Progressive Discipline: lack of follow-up, communication, etc.:

Lack of follow through with Progressive Discipline from administrators.

Lack of communication around Progressive Discipline from administrators to staff

Violent students are not learning from consequences, we are seeing many repeat offences.

Communication/Supports for victims/witnesses:

Follow up after violent incident is minimal for students who witness a violent incident in a classroom.

Bullying and the perceived lack response and supports for the victim (parents). Also lack of communication on how a situation is being handled.

Electronic bullying/harassment:

online bullying, (told to me by both by students and parents)- kids taking disagreements to social media to defame, embarrassment and pose threatening images.

Bullying on social media not addressed.

Expressing through behaviour:

From staff - supporting students who are expressing themselves through violent behaviours (hitting, kicking, biting) so that they are not hurting themselves or others and staff put themselves in potential risk of injury when supporting.

From parents - students in classrooms who randomly hit other students on an on-going basis - usually in the primary grades

Lack of respect/consideration (Code of Conduct):

Too noisy, why are students screaming/yelling, why does..... throw things "it hurts" - students, families, staff.

Student code of conduct is a concern with a sense that there is a failure to put reasonable boundaries around student behaviour or to enforce clear expectations. Examples include disrespectful conduct, class attendance, cell phones and vaping.

Religious/Racial conflict and discrimination:

In Oshawa schools, there has been a trend towards violence between racial groups. This has been an ongoing conversation I have been having with administrators.

Religious discrimination, particularly Judaism and Islamophobia

Potential Solutions

Support/Resources:

We need more supports/resources for students to access who struggle to self regulate. We need non-teaching professionals such as child and youth workers, psychologists etc. to work with students on issues that are beyond the requirements of a classroom educator.

The employer has a paramount responsibility to protect member safety. Adequate staffing and resources must be provided to prevent injurious behaviour, or the Board must acknowledge

that it is unable to provide programming to the affected students. Adequate staffing and resources would include EAs, PSSPs, and rooms equipped to support programming.

Job embedded support - that are in the classroom (ie Short term emergency response teams that can work alongside classroom staff to implement supports quickly - different from START as they don't stay for 6 week blocks and can be mobilized in a day or so rather than a lengthy application process)

Students who have exceptionalities/complexities need to have the supports they require to be successful and so that the other students and educators in the room can also be successful.

We need ISS to be supportive and not say "there are 2 of you in the room". This statement is demeaning and not reflective of everything educators do to give their kindergarten students the best start in their education. STAFF NEED TO BE RESPECTED, LISTENED TO, SUPPORTED AND PROVIDED WHAT THEY NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL

Community Outreach/Communication:

Greater access to community supports to remove barriers.

Greater communication to the broader community of the requirements to support all students in the learning environment and what we do as a system to mitigate potential concerns.

Respect for staff and students:

We need more focus on victims. Less "safety plans" and more moving the bullies away. Victims should not be banned from areas of the yard or have to switch classes to escape - bullies should be the ones facing consequences.

Not always saying "every student deserves and education". Yes, this is true, but needs to reflect ALL students NOT just students with exceptionalities/complexities.

STAFF NEED TO BE RESPECTED, LISTENED TO

STUDENTS NEED TO BE RESPECTED AND PROVIDED WHAT THEY NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

NO MORE WORDS. WE NEED TO SEE ACTION AND SUPPORTS FROM OUR EMPLOYER, TRUSTEES, ADMINISTRATION, SOs etc.

Smaller class size:

We need to have smaller class sizes in kindergarten.

Smaller class sizes.

Training:

Additional training for staff to meet the needs of increasingly complex learners.

Specialized training and programming in primary, intermediate and senior grades.

Security:

We need to have working cameras in schools, mainly high schools. We need some type of security guards on the premises, who is able to deal with these violent incidents. teachers are cared and not equip to handle these situations. Also to be the eyes and ears for the principals. be security for students who may feel the are in danger.
