



# 2024 K-12 Workplace Wellbeing Survey

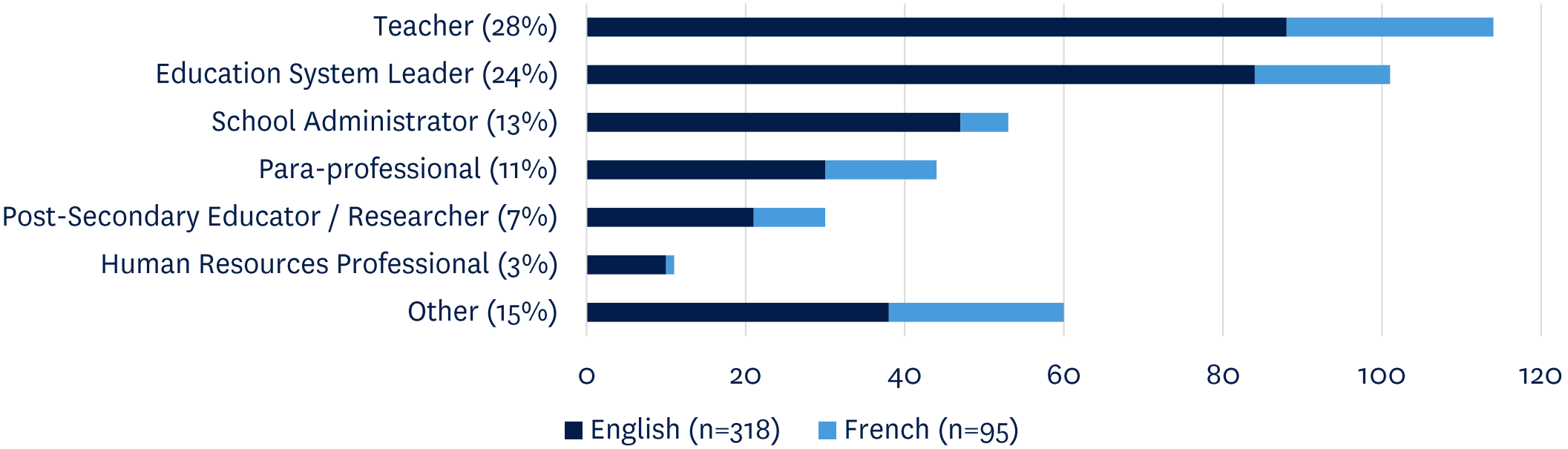
April 2024

# Introduction

The EdCan Network's strategic focus for 2023-2025 is to **foster healthier workplace environments that allow better outcomes for everyone in K-12 education**. With the launch of our new strategic plan, we conducted extensive pan-Canadian consultation consisting of [interviews in fall 2023](#) and the deployment of the 2024 K-12 workplace wellbeing survey in winter 2024.

Of the 413 individuals who responded (318 in English, 95 in French) to the survey, 164 individuals only responded to the first two questions. 249 individuals completed the survey (225 in English, 24 in French) between January 18 and March 8, 2024.

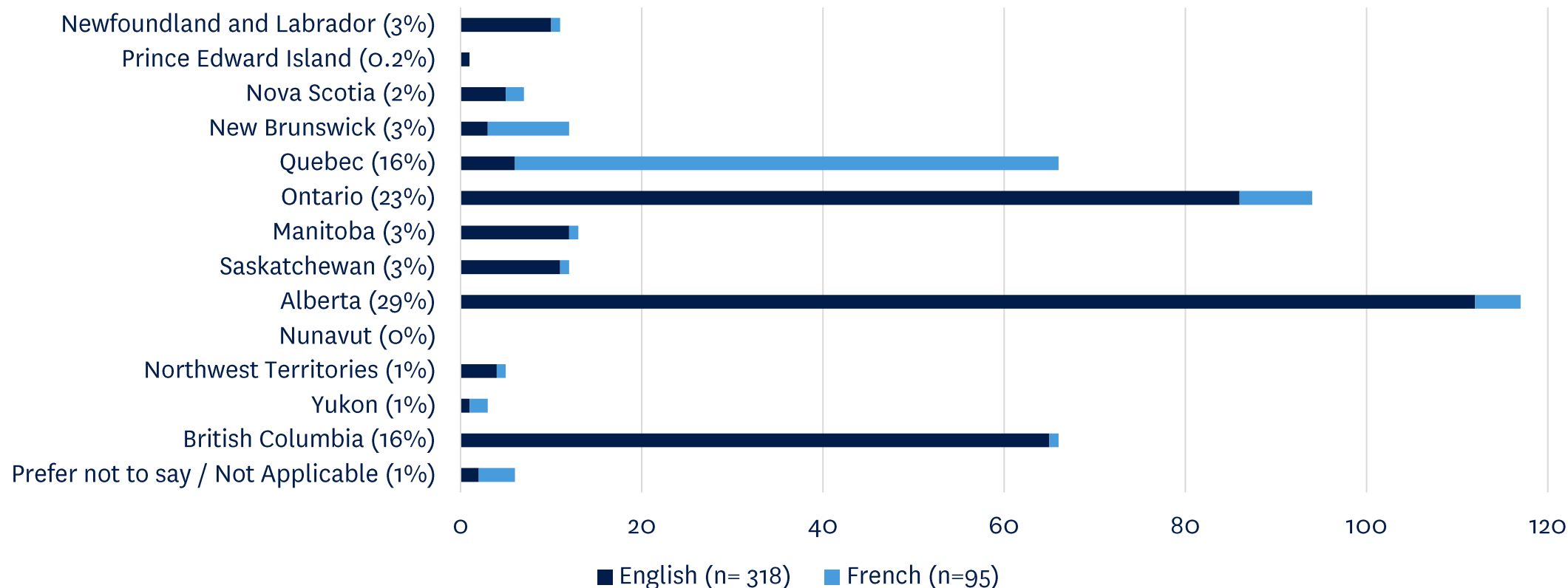
# What is Your role?



413 individuals responded to the question **What is Your Role?** Teachers formed the largest group, with 28% of the total, followed by education system leaders (e.g. Superintendent, Director of Education, Director General). Para-professionals included teaching assistants and support staff. Other respondents included executive assistants, psychologists, social workers, pedagogical consultants, trustees, and others from the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

Of the 249 **completed** surveys, 31% were completed by education system leaders, 26% by teachers, 15% by school administrators, 6% by post-secondary educators / researchers, 6% by para-professionals, 3% by human resources professionals, and 15% by other.

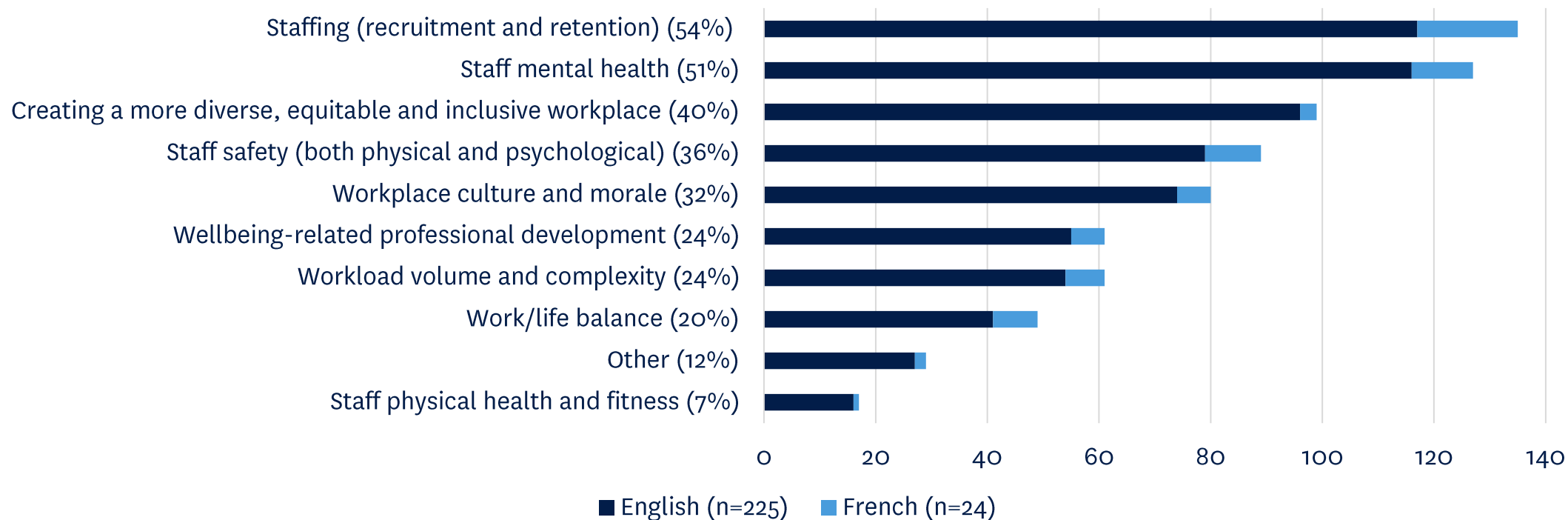
## What Province / territory do you work in?



413 individuals responded to the question **What province / territory do you work in?** The majority of English responses came from Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia, while the majority of French responses came from Quebec. Responses were received from all provinces / territories with the sole exception on Nunavut.

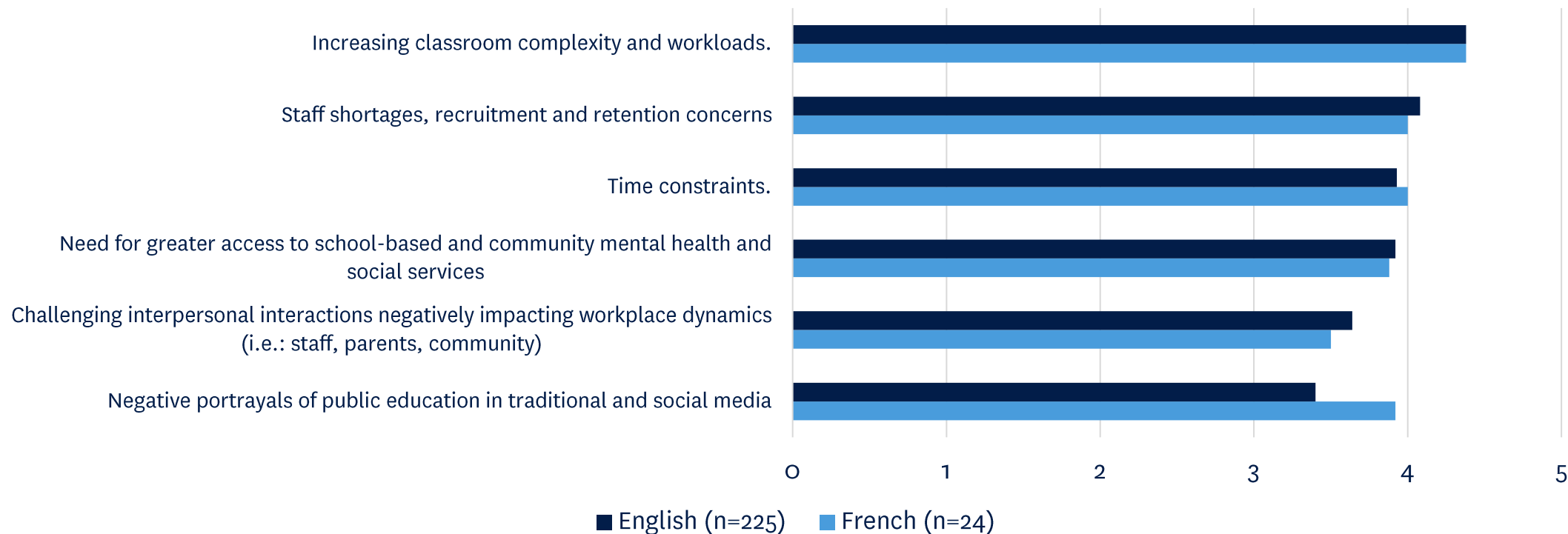
Of the 249 **completed** surveys, 33% were from Alberta, 26% from Ontario, 17% from British Columbia and 7% from Quebec.

## Please select the top three (3) workplace wellbeing priorities that your school district/organization is currently focusing on:



52% of English respondents and 75% of French respondents identified **staff recruitment and retention as a top priority**. Among English respondents, **staff mental health** (52%) is a close second, followed by: creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace (43%), staff safety (both physical and psychological) (35%), and workplace culture and morale (33%). Priorities were slightly different among French respondents: Staff mental health (46%), staff safety (both physical and psychological) (42%), and work/life balance (33%). Only 13% of French respondents included creating a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace as a top priority.

## Please rate the importance of the following workplace wellbeing-related challenges (1 = least important and 5 = most important):



The EdCan Network's 2023 stakeholder consultations identified several common trends impacting workplace wellbeing. To better understand the relative importance of the statements, survey respondents were asked to rate each on a scale of 1 to 5. French and English respondents held similar views, with **increasing classroom complexity and workloads** emerging as a clear priority in both languages. Negative portrayals of public education in traditional and social media held greater importance for French respondents.

# Promising practices to enhance workplace wellbeing

Survey respondents were asked to share promising practices that their school district/organization has implemented to enhance workplace wellbeing. Similar responses were grouped into themes.

**Leadership commitment and prioritization of staff wellbeing.** Survey respondents identified numerous ways that wellbeing was prioritized at their school district, such as:

- including staff wellbeing in the district strategic plan,
- collecting employee wellbeing data,
- implementing a staff wellness committee,
- allocating budget towards workplace wellbeing, and
- having one or more employees dedicated to workplace wellbeing.

Within this theme, survey respondents shared how surveys, focus groups, and committee structures were being used to **engage the employee voice** and involve employees in decision making.

# Promising practices to enhance workplace wellbeing

Survey respondents identified ways in which **wellbeing was becoming embedded in their district cultures**. *One respondent described how “the topic of wellness [was] becoming a universal topic through the division. All locations, all employees.”* Other examples shared include wellness days and wellness challenges, increased collaboration and socialization among staff, and opportunities to participate in wellness-related professional development.

Staffing shortages contribute to employee stress and workload. Several survey respondents shared that **actions to address staffing shortages** enhanced workplace wellbeing.

Survey respondents cited **enhanced employee benefit programs**, access to on-site counselling, early-intervention protocols, and access to sick leave as positively benefiting their wellbeing. Flexible work options, where appropriate, and the **right to disconnect** from email communication outside of work hours are also seen as having a positive impact.



# Additional Comments

Several survey respondents indicated that workplace wellbeing was not a priority in their school district. Many comments expressed frustration around the current state of education.

Several comments emphasized the importance of systemic action. One respondent suggested that putting *“the onus of responsibility on the worker and not on the larger system that has created the conditions that threaten employee wellbeing. ... **Improvements to wellbeing require structural changes.**”*

Systemic actions require support at all levels of the system including district leadership, provincial governments, unions, and the broader community. One respondent noted that *“what we can do at a school and division is limited, **we need community buy-in**”*

## Additional Comments

Qualitative responses underscore that addressing staffing shortages and workload issues are critical for supporting wellbeing. ***“If the staffing crisis is not resolved, any wellbeing initiatives will not have successful impact.”*** Staffing shortages and ***“24/7 burnout”*** are affecting teachers, education assistants, custodians, and leadership at all levels.

Ensuring that staff are trained and equipped to meet the psychological and other demands of their job can improve wellbeing: *“I believe that building wellbeing skills while still not feeling equipped to the actual job will be short lived and/or frustrating.”*

Given how strongly student and staff wellbeing are interconnected, ensuring that students have the necessary supports can improve staff wellbeing. One respondent noted that ***“supporting students with challenging behaviour would directly benefit wellbeing”***