

Trending Canadian K-12 Workplace Wellbeing Challenges

A summary of the EdCan Network's 2023 stakeholder consultations

The EdCan Network extends gratitude to the sampling of school district and professional association leaders who identified these trending staff/workplace wellbeing challenges:

1. The Following Social and Societal Conditions are Increasing Staff Anxiety and Negatively Impacting K-12 Workplace Dynamics

- An escalation in challenging interpersonal interactions among staff, parents, and the school community.
- The need for trauma-informed practices to support the ever-increasing classroom complexity and workloads.
- Growing requests from staff and students for shrinking mental health supports inside and outside of schools.

2. Concerning Trends Negatively Impacting Staff Retention and Recruitment:

- Low-energy/low-morale workplace cultures are contributing to a collective sense of burden.
- Increased rates of staff absenteeism, burnout and extended disability leaves.
- Worsening staff shortages leading to increased pressure on remaining staff.
- Decreased interest among potential school leadership candidates reluctant to heighten stress loads.
- Significant turnover of senior school district leaders due to retirements, necessitating increased demands for support from newer systems leaders.
- Negative traditional and social media portrayals of public education is reducing the appeal of teaching as a career choice.
- The emergence of expedited teacher training programs to address staff shortages may result in new teachers ill-prepared for complex classroom scenarios and exacerbating early career leaving rates.

3. Challenges Limiting the Potential Effectiveness of Workplace Wellbeing Strategies

Competing priorities, time constraints, frequent staff turnover and a lack of resources to increase the number of workplace wellbeing staff leadership positions are impeding efforts to:

- Utilize data more effectively to measure staff wellbeing levels, identify ongoing challenges, and craft coordinated systemic strategies for improvement (especially in smaller rural/remote school districts).
- Shift from a reliance on individual wellbeing support mechanisms (such as employee benefits, mentorship and staff recognition programs) towards developing customized districtwide solutions to build staff capacity to embed systemwide workplace wellbeing for the long-term.

Next Steps

From January 18 to February 14, EdCan is mobilizing a 3-minute ***Pan-Canadian K-12 Workplace Wellbeing Survey***. Survey data and insights will be shared in a forthcoming ***2024 Pan-Canadian K-12 Workplace Wellbeing Trends Report*** and will inform the ongoing development of EdCan's [Well at Work](#) programs and services designed to meet the emerging wellbeing needs of education professionals across Canada.

For more information about Well at Work programs and services, please visit: www.k12wellatwork.ca