Survey on Incivility in Schools and Centres held in January 2025

Results from QPAT Members

Overview

Reminder of survey objectives

- To obtain a snapshot of teachers' opinions on the impact of handling recurrent situations of incivility in schools and centres, and

- To identify possible solutions.

Definition of incivility

Incivility can be defined as a failure to observe the basic rules of society (respect, cooperation, politeness and good manners). These gestures may be made consciously or unconsciously, and some may be expressly forbidden in the school's code of conduct, school regulations, classroom rules, or may simply be a matter of common sense.

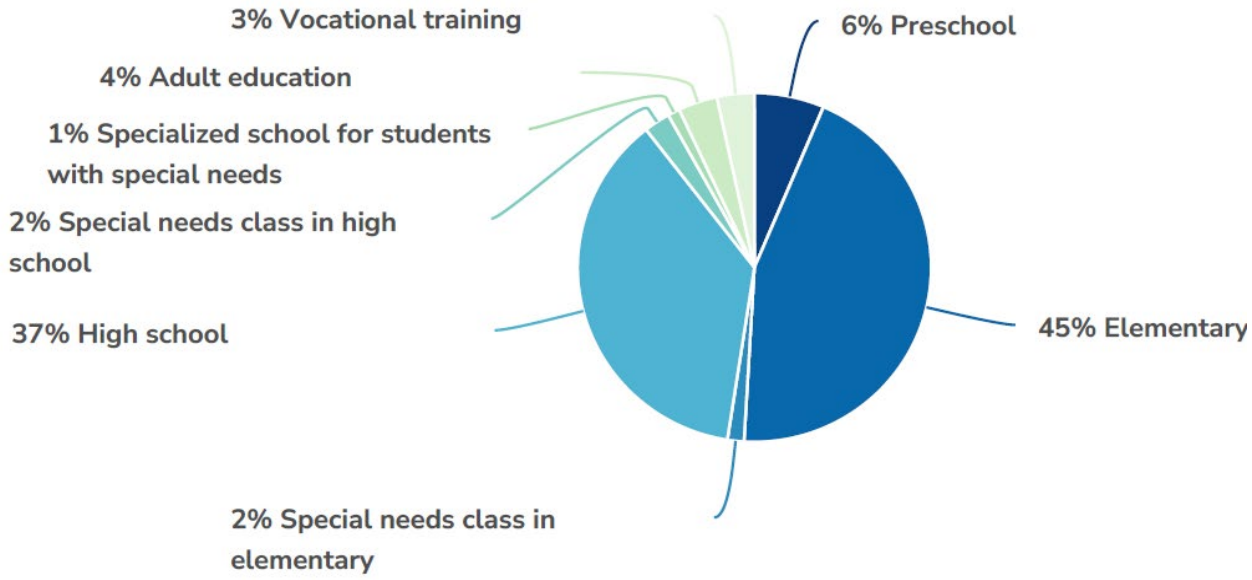
Survey results

- **1572** QPAT members **(20%)** answered the survey during the period January 15 to January 31, 2025.

- **Level of participation per union**

Value	Percent	Responses
Appalachian Teachers' Association (ATA)	7.6%	120
Montreal Teachers' Association (MTA)	20.0%	315
Pearson Teachers' Union (PTU)	22.1%	348
Riverside Teachers' Union (RTU)	10.9%	172
Chateauguay Valley Teachers' Association (CVTA)	6.8%	107
Eastern Shores Teachers' Association (ESTA)	3.4%	53
Lower North Shore English Teachers' Association (LNSETA)	0.2%	3
Central Quebec Teachers' Association (CQTA)	6.5%	102
Western Quebec Teachers' Association (WQTA)	7.6%	119
Laurier Teachers' Union (LTU)	14.8%	233
		Totals: 1,572

- **51% (802)** are preschool and elementary school teachers and **37% (583)** are high school teachers.



- **Close to 80%** mentioned seeing an i**ncrease** in incivilities in their establishment during the last two years and that the incivilities were considered **very or somewhat significant**.

- **63.5%** indicated that they have experienced incivility **from students** at least twice a day; more specifically **39% respondents** in elementary and **33%** in high school mentioned that incivility from students occurs 5 times a day or more.

- **41%** of preschool and elementary teachers said that they have experienced incivility **from parents** every month and, in few cases, every week; **30%** of high school teachers indicated the same thing.

- Verbal incivilities (inappropriate language, rudeness, aggressive tone, etc.) and disturbances (talking or laughing during explanations, making noise, eating in class, etc.) are the **most frequent** types of incivilities (**57% and 51%** respectively)**,** while lack of consideration (interrupting, improperly occupying common space, borrowing items without asking and pushing in front of others) as well as non-verbal language (intentional ignoring, inappropriate attitude, etc.) are in **third (46%)** and **fourth positions (43%)**.

- Teachers mentioned that incivilities negatively impact the work climate **(90%),** interfere with teaching duties **(84%)**, reduce motivation at work **(82%)** and cause overload at work **(75%)**.

- The incivilities impair concentration **(95%),** negatively impact the learning environment **and** reduce the time devoted to learning for students **(93%)**.

- The four most popular options selected by teachers to make a positive difference (to reduce incivility) were:

  1) To apply sanctions to students who show repeated/significant incivility: **62%**
  2) To enforce the current school's code of conduct in a consistent manner: **48%**
  3) To teach expected behaviour and raise awareness about the importance of acting with civility: **45%**
  4) To propose restorative measures or community service for students who show repeated/significant incivility: **40%**

  The less popular options were: to plan a civility week, to address adults using Ms. and Mr., and to have a dress code.

Summary of the main comments

- Incivility is a broader cultural/societal problem that teachers cannot fix on their own (society of entitlement); some parents have given up.
- Incivility is more and more prevalent among parents.
- Incivility, both among staff members and by the administration towards staff members are also of concern.
- There are no longer any serious/clear/real/strict consequences, nor accountability or consistency; measures are in place but are often purposely ignored; consequences for repeat offenders should be put in place.
- There must be robust support from the administration for teachers when dealing with both students and parents (to become less fearful of entitled parents); parents need to be held accountable for their children's behaviour.
- Roles and responsibilities should be clearer, and expectations discussed on an annual basis between administration, parents and teachers.
- School staff should be shown respect rather than having the blame placed on them, which begins by being supported by the school board and the administration rather than siding with children and parents; the special needs label excusing students' behaviour does not help.

- Excessive disruptive and violent behaviour leads to burnout and teachers leaving the profession.

Extracts from comments

> "*This is the make-or-break issue of our time and if nothing changes, the system will fall apart!"*
>
> *"Incivility is the hugest problem in schools today and it starts at the top."*
>
> *"Pool all teachers. Do inclusive models work? NO."*
>
> *"Problème souvent banalisé par la direction d'établissement."*
>
> *"Mettre en place un système facile à utiliser pour identifier les problématiques et les adresser."*
>
> *"The problem with behaviour at the primary school level is quite frankly out of control."*

Conclusion

Incivility is a key element that adversely affects the daily life of teachers and students. It is not a trivial matter, nor should it continue to be treated as such, and it is not inherent to the teaching profession.

By listening to teachers, developing a shared understanding of the problem and the impact it has on our educational system, along with the collective commitment to implement relevant and effective solutions involving teachers and staff members, could lead to important positive changes in our schools and centres.

Where do we go from here?

QPAT will present the results of the survey to the QESBA/CPNCA; in addition, we will continue to collaborate with the FSE and CSQ on some specific tools and continue our interventions with the MEQ.

We encourage each local union to present the results to their SB through the appropriate committee, and to pursue the QPAT anti-violence campaign to help sensitize members to the importance of reporting incidents so that action can be taken at various levels.