

February 2024 Environmental Scan

A dark green, solid-colored shape that starts from the bottom left corner and extends diagonally upwards towards the right, filling the bottom half of the page. It acts as a design element separating the title from the main content area.

The crusade against workplace violence goes global

Ever gotten into a fight at work? Not just an argument, but a physical altercation?

Hopefully for most of us, the answer is negative. But for some, that is sadly not the case. There have been many cases of employees being fired for physical violence or uttering threats against co-workers and employers getting punished by courts and other decision-makers for allowing violence to happen in their workplaces. All Canadian jurisdictions have anti-violence provisions in their occupational health and safety legislation to combat this menace to the workplace, and now things are going global.

Last year, the federal government ratified International Labour Organization Convention 190 (C190), the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 – an international document that requires the governments of countries that sign on to implement laws, policies, and collective bargaining agreements that completely ban violence and harassment at work, including measures to prevent it before it happens.

Now, C190 has officially come into effect. All Canadian jurisdictions are involved, as the federal government worked with the provincial and territorial governments on Canada's commitment to the treaty. While Canadian employers have had an obligation to protect their employees from workplace violence for a while, now there's an international element to it.

Cyprus president makes government ministers sign a pledge not to tolerate sexual harassment

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — Cyprus' president on Friday required all government ministers to sign a “zero tolerance” declaration on sexist behavior and sexual harassment among employees and anyone visiting a government office.

Cyprus already has stringent laws against sexual harassment and sexism in the workplace, but it's the first time that ministers had to sign such a declaration in what Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides called an “institutional commitment” to eliminating such behavior in government.

Cyprus ranks a lowly 22nd of 27 countries in the European Union in terms of gender equality, scoring 57.3 out of 100, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality.

All ministers, deputy ministers and commissioners signed the declaration during a ceremony at the presidential palace. Christodoulides said that he expected all his subordinates to implement the declaration. “Through our behavior, our stance and approach, it is us who must first and foremost stand as an example,” Christodoulides said.

Lizzo's Sexual Harassment Lawsuit Moves Forward After Request to Dismiss Is Denied

Three of the Grammy winner's former background dancers have accused the singer of misconduct

Lizzo's attempt to have a sexual harassment lawsuit against her dismissed has been denied.

On Friday, a Los Angeles County Superior Court judge ruled that the case filed by several of the Grammy winner's former background dancers alleging sexual harassment in the workplace will go forward, PEOPLE can confirm.

The ruling was in response to an Aug. 1, 2023 lawsuit in which Arianna Davis, Crystal Williams and Noelle Rodriguez alleged they were abused, harassed, discriminated against and faced numerous workplace violations while working for the musician, 35, (real name Melissa Jefferson) and her Big Grrrl Big Touring Inc.

Los Angeles attorney Ron Zambrano is representing the three women.

"We're very pleased with the judge's ruling, and we absolutely consider it a victory on balance," Zambrano said in a statement to PEOPLE.

Worker appeals psychological injury case allegedly caused by workplace

A worker recently filed an appeal before the Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation, arguing that her employer caused her psychological injury due to the workplace's stressful environment.

In 2020, the worker submitted a claim for a psychological injury to the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), attributing it to interpersonal conflicts at her workplace, alleging harassment and bullying from her co-workers.

The claim's date of the incident was determined to be June 3, 2019.

Claim's initial dismissal

On January 14, 2021, a WCB adjudicator dismissed the worker's claim for a psychological injury, a decision upheld on August 13, 2021.

A separate claim was filed by the worker for a workplace incident on October 26, 2020, which was accepted for an adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood resulting from a traumatic work event.

Survey reveals alarming rates of harassment and bullying in Canadian maritime sector

The Seafarers' International Union of Canada (SIU) has released a report shedding light on the issue of workplace harassment and bullying within the Canadian marine sector.

The report reveals that 46% of seafarers have encountered harassment or bullying during their careers at sea. Particularly concerning is the finding that 69% of female seafarers and 9% of all seafarers have experienced instances of sexual harassment.

Highlighting the urgency of the issue, Michael Given, president of SIU Canada, stated, "Harassment in the workplace is not something we take lightly... the workplace needs to be a safe and healthy environment for everyone on board if we want to address issues of recruitment and retention within the industry."

The survey offers a critical overview of the challenges faced by maritime workers amid difficulty in finding workers to fill available positions. It was conducted by the union during the summer of 2023 among members, who represent the majority of unlicensed seafarers across Canada, in hopes to prompt discussions on issues of harassment at sea to make seafaring a more sought-after career.

Don't be caught without a plan: Violence policy & prevention soon required for SK employers

This requirement was first introduced under The Saskatchewan Employment (Part III) Amendment Act, 2022 (the “Amendment Act, 2022”) which came into force on May 17, 2023. The Amendment Act, 2022 provided that employers would have one year to develop a written policy statement and prevention plan (i.e. May 17, 2024).

Prior to the amendments, violence policies and prevention plans were only required by prescribed places of employment where violent situations have occurred or were likely to occur. The expansion of this requirement to all employers is consistent with other amendments that address violence in the workplace. These other amendments emphasize violence prevention duties for employers, supervisors and workers.

Employers are also now required to provide workplace violence training to employees and to investigate all incidents of violence.

As the Amendment Act, 2022 expanded the definition of “worker” to include volunteers, contractors and those enrolled in secondary or post-secondary education, these individuals will also be subject to the policy and plan.

Nearly half of women in Canada report workplace harassment: StatCan

Nearly half of women and three in 10 men in Canada have reported experiencing some form of harassment or sexual assault in the workplace, according to new data from Statistics Canada.

The figures are 47 per cent of women and 31 per cent of men, according to the survey conducted in 2020, an increase from a 2018 report by the agency on harassment in Canadian workplaces. At that time, 19 per cent of women and 13 per cent of men said they had been harassed at work.

The data for the 2020 report came from the Gender Results Framework, a tool first introduced by the federal government to track the progress of gender equality in Canada, and surveyed Canadians in 2020, with 12,138 people having responded. The survey included people 15 years of age and older in the workforce who live in Canada's 10 provinces.

Among those surveyed, inappropriate sexualized behaviour in the workplace was the most prominent type of harassment experienced with 44 per cent of women and 29 per cent of men reporting such incidents. Another 20 per cent of women and nine per cent of men described discriminatory behaviours, with 13 per cent of women and three per cent of men reporting sexual assaults.

One-in-two women report experiencing harassment, sexual assault at work

Nearly one-in-two women have reported experiencing harassment or sexual assault in the workplace during their career, according to a new report from Statistics Canada.

The agency also reported Monday that about three-in-10 men have made similar reports.

Among employed people, those aged 25-34 had the highest rate of incidence report. About 60 per cent of female workers and 39 per cent of their male coworkers said they had endured those sorts of inappropriate behaviour. StatCan described workplace harassment as “objectionable or unwelcome conduct,” including discrimination, as well as “inappropriate sexual behaviour.”

Sexual assault includes unwanted touching and sexual activity “to which the victim was unable to consent because they were manipulated, coerced, intoxicated or forced in another non-physical way.”

About 44 per cent of women reported experiencing inappropriate sexualized behaviours, about 20 per cent said they had experience discrimination, and 13 per cent reported sexual assault. As for male workers, three in 10 reported inappropriate sexual behaviours, nine per cent reported discrimination, and three per cent said they were sexually assaulted.

Gender Results Framework: A new data table on workplace harassment

Nearly 1 in 2 women and roughly 3 in 10 men report ever experiencing harassment or sexual assault in the workplace

In Canada, 31% of men and 47% of women reported ever experiencing some form of harassment or sexual assault in the workplace.

The largest proportion of women reported ever experiencing inappropriate sexualized behaviours in a workplace setting (44%), followed by discriminatory behaviours (20%) and sexual assault (13%). A considerable proportion of men also reported ever experiencing inappropriate sexualized behaviours (29%), as well as discriminatory behaviours (9%) and sexual assault (3%) in the workplace.

Among employed people, those aged 25 to 34 years report the highest rate of ever experiencing harassment or sexual assault in the workplace

Among employed people, 60% of women and 39% of men aged 25 to 34 years reported ever experiencing harassment or sexual assault in the workplace. This was primarily driven by the rates of inappropriate sexualized behaviours reported by women (57%) and men (37%) aged 25 to 34.

Saskatchewan above national average in workplace harassment: Statistics Canada

It's not a place where we want Saskatchewan to be a leader, but the province is above the national average when it comes to workplace harassment.

According to Statistics Canada, 50 per cent of women in Saskatchewan have experienced harassment or sexual assault in the workplace. Data also shows that nearly 40 per cent of men in the province have also experienced harassment or sexual assault at work.

Those numbers reflect issues such as inappropriate sexualized behaviours, gender-based discrimination and discrimination based on sexual orientation. "We understand that everyone can be impacted by harassment in the workplace, but we also understand the role of intersectionality," said Nicole White, the project lead for Enough Already, a coalition that is determined to address and prevent workplace sexual harassment in Saskatchewan.

While the government recently expanded health and safety policies, experts say more can still be done.

"The number one thing that a Saskatchewan employer could do is create a space of proactive prevention," White said.

Toronto cop facing charges for allegedly watching porn while on duty, slapping an officer's behind

A Toronto police officer is facing disciplinary action after he allegedly watched pornography with a colleague while on duty, chased and slapped a female colleague's behind and made "sexually charged" comments toward another officer, disciplinary tribunal documents show.

According to documents, Const. James Bragg is facing a total of five charges including four counts of discreditable conduct and one of insubordination. Bragg, who is currently suspended with pay, appeared before the tribunal Tuesday and is scheduled to appear before the tribunal again on March 26.

In incidents dating back to 2022-2023, Bragg allegedly committed misconduct both on and off duty. That winter, Bragg was a senior on duty with another officer when he allegedly watched pornography on his personal cell phone while in the passenger seat of a "scout" car.

"PC Y was able to clearly see the image of a female having intercourse in the reflection on the passenger side window," documents said. "This conduct made PC Y feel uncomfortable because of the conduct itself, and because you were the senior officer."

Sask. among worst provinces for workplace harassment in recent StatsCan study

A recent Statistics Canada workforce study found that nearly one in every two women and more than a third of men who responded in Saskatchewan had reported being harassed or sexually assaulted in their workplace.

Statistics Canada has done similar surveys on a five-year cycle, looking at working people 15 years and older. The latest release is a snapshot of the 2020 workforce.

Overall, 43.8 per cent of Saskatchewan workers in the study said they had experienced harassment at their workplace at some point, according to the data released Tuesday. That put Saskatchewan third worst in the country, behind only Alberta and British Columbia.

Meanwhile, 30.9 per cent of Saskatchewan respondents said they had been harassed at work in the 12 months before the survey. That was the worst among all provinces.

Chantelle Priel, a social worker who is the public education and outreach co-ordinator with the Regina Sexual Assault Centre, said her organization has been looking at similar numbers for a long time.

Nearly 1 in 2 women have experienced workplace sexual harassment: StatsCan

Overall, 52% of Canadian-born women have ever been victims of this, with 31% having experienced it in the past months. In comparison, 34% of the immigrant population have fallen victim to workplace sexual harassment, with 19% experiencing it in the past year.

Among men, those who are Canadian born are also more likely to have this experience ever (36%) or in the past year (22%), compared with immigrants (20% and 10%, respectively).

Non-racialized women (52% ever, 30% in the past 12 months) and men (35% ever, 21% in the past 12 months) are also more likely than racialized counterparts (women: 35% ever, 23% in the past 12 months; men: 20% ever, 12% in the past 12 months) to have fallen victim to workplace sexual harassment.

Nearly half (48%) of non-Indigenous women have had this kind of experience ever, and 28% in the past year while the numbers for Indigenous women are lower (43% and 27%, respectively). Meanwhile, among non-Indigenous men, 35% have been victims of workplace sexual harassment ever and 18% in the past year. The comparative numbers for Indigenous men are 30% and 21%, respectively).

Over 350 people contact law firm reviewing FDIC workplace culture – FDIC

More than 350 people have contacted an outside law firm reviewing workplace culture at the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in the wake of media reporting last year on allegations of persistent sexual harassment, top agency officials said on Thursday.

The agency in November announced the review after The Wall Street Journal cited interviews with more than 20 women who had quit, alleging the FDIC had failed to address a sexualized boys club atmosphere, widespread harassment and misogynist behavior among staff.

The reporting prompted outrage on Capitol Hill, including calls for the resignation of FDIC Chair Martin Gruenberg, and has spurred two other announced probes by Republican lawmakers and the FDIC Office of Inspector General (OIG).

Gruenberg has expressed dismay and said addressing the problem is a top priority.

"More than 350 people have contacted Cleary Gottlieb," the two-person "special committee" of the FDIC board tasked with overseeing the review said in Thursday's statement, referring to the law firm chosen to conduct the review.

Why the normal rules don't apply when dealing with a sexual harassment complaint

As workplace sexual harassment and assault cases continue to make headlines across the country, it's a good time to offer a refresher on how employers should handle such incidents, if they arise.

Put simply: sexual complaints are not regular incidents of misconduct, which require a standard investigation. Standard protocols around workplace investigations may offer little help when dealing with victims of serious abuse.

In some cases, the sexual improprieties toward employees come from the upper ranks of the company, and awareness of the incidents trickle down. In other words: everyone knows and no one says anything for fear of being fired or ostracized, including potential victims. In other cases, the knowledge of the abuse is not widespread and employers can insulate themselves from liability and negative internal PR if they handle the allegations with caution.

Dealing with complaints on harassment or physical violence in the workplace is a sensitive process that can be taxing on all involved. When the harassment or abuse is of a sexualized nature, the stakes are higher and the exposure to liability for employers on its mishandling could be worse.

Ford government says law to punish local politicians who harass staff coming soon

The Ford government says new legislation that could see local politicians thrown out of office for workplace harassment should be introduced before the summer.

Speaking to reporters at Queen's Park on Wednesday, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Paul Calandra called it "a very important piece of legislation. It has to be constitutional, but has to actually achieve the results that I think that everybody's asking for. So absolutely, we are going to bring something forward and continue to work" with municipalities.

Asked if the bill could come before the legislature rises in June, Calandra said: "I don't see why not."

The Ford government previously voted down a private member's bill from Liberal MPP Stephen Blais (Orléans), saying it would leave voters to decide who to remove from office at election time.

But with more than 200 municipalities supporting the idea and the non-partisan advocacy group The Women of Ontario Say No keeping the issue in the spotlight, last month Calandra changed course, promising the government would create "airtight" legislation.

Region of Waterloo cites 'harassment' and 'governance concerns' as it pauses Arts Fund

The activities of the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund have been paused effective immediately with the region saying the move was necessary due to "incidents of harassment of regional staff and governance concerns related to the fund's administration."

The region issued a press release Wednesday night about the arts fund but it did not provide details on what exactly was meant by "harassment" and "governance concerns."

Coun. Michael Harris, chair of the region's finance committee, told CBC News the region has an obligation to provide a safe and harassment-free workplace, but could not provide specifics because he said it's a human resources matter.

On the governance concerns, Harris said the region was made aware of decisions being made outside the board's policies and procedures.

"These, of course, will be reviewed as part of the third party review," he said.

STF calls school violence a symptom of underfunded education system

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation is shining a spotlight on in-class violence as its contract negotiations with the province remain at a standstill.

One teacher, Shelby, said she was attacked by a Grade 7 student who Shelby said was in an “escalated state” while she was on her way outside to supervise recess.

“I was repeatedly hit and kicked in the upper body and the head by the student, and I was told it took several staff members to get the student off of me and be able to restrain them,” Shelby told reporters at a virtual media conference held by the union on Wednesday.

Shelby – whose last name the union would not share, citing privacy concerns – said she was treated in hospital for a broken nose and severe concussion as a result of the attack.

The injuries Shelby suffered when she was attacked by a student.

“I stayed in a state of shock for about a month. I wasn’t really able to process what had happened or how severe it was,” she said.

B.C. nurse banned five years after sex assault convictions

A Port Alberni nurse has been banned from practising for five years after being convicted of sexual assault charges.

On Feb. 20, a B.C. College of Nurses and Midwives inquiry panel approved an agreement between the college and licensed practical nurse Colin R. Hall to address conduct issues underlying the sexual offences, and for engaging in workplace harassment of colleagues.

“The inquiry committee found that the most severe outcome was necessary to ensure that public safety was not compromised and to maintain confidence in the regulator's mandate of protecting the public,” the panel’s public notice said.

The college said Hall voluntarily agreed to terms equivalent to a limit and/or condition on their practice, including the cancellation of their registration and a prohibition on reapplying for five years.

“In the event that the registrant reapplies for practicing registration in the future, the registrant will be required to satisfy the registration committee that they meet the requirements of fitness, competence, and good character,” the panel said.

Home Depot broke labor law by firing an employee with ‘BLM’ on apron, NLRB rules

The National Labor Relations Board on Wednesday ruled that Home Depot violated the law by firing an employee after he refused to remove “BLM” (which stand for “Black Lives Matter”) messaging from his work apron.

In late spring and summer of 2020, the United States was engulfed in Black Lives Matter protests in the wake of George Floyd’s murder. In a Home Depot store in New Brighton, Minnesota – a suburb of Minneapolis, where police killed Floyd – several workers hand-wrote “BLM” on the company’s distinctive orange aprons. The store fired at least one employee, Antonio Morales, over the matter.

The NLRB ruled that Morales’ refusal to remove the messaging was a “protected concerted activity” to protest the racial injustice that took place at the store from August 2020 to February 2021. For example, the decision said that a flooring department employee told Morales to monitor a Black customer because “people of Somali descent were more inclined than others to steal.” Workers also complained of “racially discriminatory conduct” internally.

Workplace Harassment Lives Here

A recent Statistics Canada workforce study has found that nearly one in every two women and more than a third of men 15 years and older, who responded to the survey in Saskatchewan, had reported being harassed or sexually assaulted in their workplace. This survey from 2020, like some others completed by Statistics Canada, follows a five-year cycle and is therefore a snapshot of information rather than a linear gathering of information.

According to data released prior to Valentine's Day, the study found that 43.8 percent of Saskatchewan workers reported to have experienced workplace harassment at some point. Only Alberta and British Columbia were found to have worse records than Saskatchewan when it came to lifetime workplace harassment experiences. Unfortunately, Saskatchewan claimed first place when the time frame was narrowed. In the 12 months preceding the survey, 30.9 percent of Saskatchewan respondents reported having been harassed at work. The study's findings that people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and women were consistently overrepresented among people who experience harassment, discrimination, and violence should not come as any surprise.

"Saskatchewan's high rate of violence cannot be tolerated," Don Morgan, then Justice Minister and Attorney General, said via a press release dated October 22, 2018. "Government, organizations, communities, and all Saskatchewan residents need to work together to stop violence and abuse in our communities." Yet Saskatchewan maintains its status as an abusive and potentially violent place for women and others to live and work.

Province, teachers' union butt heads over classroom violence

As the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) continues to plead its case to get classroom complexity and composition language baked into its next contract, the province says it's ready and waiting to bargain.

"The government has moved on a number of items the STF asked for, including workplace safety which is one of many areas the GTBC (government-trustee bargaining committee) is prepared to discuss at the table as part of its renewed mandate," said a statement from the Ministry of Education on Thursday.

On Wednesday, the STF held a virtual news conference where teachers shared their experience with classroom violence and argued the system in place to address violent incidents is failing them. The union has been clear it will only return to negotiations if the GTBC comes back with a new mandate that includes the ability to address classroom complexity and composition, which includes violence, at the bargaining table.

While the ministry says multiple invitations to get back to the table have been extended, including one Wednesday morning, but have not been responded to by the union, STF president Samantha Becotte has doubts about whether anything has really changed.

Anti-Bullying Week: Outlook anti-bullying bylaw helps town set example

The Town of Outlook has had an anti-bullying and anti-harassment bylaw for two years now, and it's something that has helped the riverside community set an example for other communities around the province.

Created in 2022, Bylaw No. 02(2022), officially titled, 'A Bylaw of the Town of Outlook to Control Harassment and Bullying of Persons in the Town of Outlook, Known As the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Bylaw' has been a document that has not only helped the local RCMP in mediating matters related to the concerning patterns associated with bullying, but it's helped those in the community who may have felt like they didn't have anywhere to turn or anyone to confide in when they've had a troubling experience.

The town's chief administrative officer, Kevin Trew spoke with this reporter about the creation of the bylaw, and he was quick to give credit to Outlook RCMP officer Jesse Kimball in helping to lead the charge in what would become the town's official anti-bullying document.

"It was actually a request from the RCMP," explained Kevin. "Cst. Kimball had first contacted us and told us that she had some experience with this while being an RCMP officer in another detachment."

Human Rights Tribunal awards highest damages ever for workplace sexual harassment

A January 18, 2024 B.C. Human Rights Tribunal (HRT) decision has raised the bar on awards to claimants who have suffered injury to dignity, feelings and self respect, with an award of \$100,000 being the second highest ever such award in B.C.

As one employment lawyer explained to HRD, the amounts HRT adjudicators award to aggrieved employees will likely continue to increase. It's a further reason employers need to be extra cognizant of the conditions of a termination, as well as treating all discrimination or harassment claims very seriously.

“In terms of Human Rights Tribunal cases that involve sexual harassment or sexual assault, this was definitely the highest award for injury to dignity that we've ever seen,” said Chris Drinovz of KSW Lawyers in Surrey, B.C.

“It's part of a general trend that we've seen with human rights cases, both in British Columbia and in Ontario, of increasing damages awards for injury to dignity, whether it's sexual assault or really any type of discrimination.

Workplace Harassment Lives Here

A recent Statistics Canada workforce study has found that nearly one in every two women and more than a third of men 15 years and older, who responded to the survey in Saskatchewan, had reported being harassed or sexually assaulted in their workplace. This survey from 2020, like some others completed by Statistics Canada, follows a five-year cycle and is therefore a snapshot of information rather than a linear gathering of information.

According to data released prior to Valentine's Day, the study found that 43.8 percent of Saskatchewan workers reported to have experienced workplace harassment at some point. Only Alberta and British Columbia were found to have worse records than Saskatchewan when it came to lifetime workplace harassment experiences. Unfortunately, Saskatchewan claimed first place when the time frame was narrowed. In the 12 months preceding the survey, 30.9 percent of Saskatchewan respondents reported having been harassed at work. The study's findings that people with disabilities, Indigenous people, and women were consistently overrepresented among people who experience harassment, discrimination, and violence should not come as any surprise.

“Saskatchewan's high rate of violence cannot be tolerated,” Don Morgan, then Justice Minister and Attorney General, said via a press release dated October 22, 2018. “Government, organizations, communities, and all Saskatchewan residents need to work together to stop violence and abuse in our communities.”

Strategies for a healthy workplace environment: Proactive measures against bullying

Building an environment that cultivates productivity and uplifts employee morale is attributed to promoting a workplace that prioritizes health and well-being. Employers have the responsibility of ensuring the safety and well-being of staff, which includes taking proactive steps to address bullying and harassment.

As Pink Shirt Day (Wed. Feb. 28) approaches, an annual event against bullying, there's no better time to address this critical issue head-on and promote a culture of respect and inclusivity in the workplace. A recent study suggests that nearly two-thirds of respondents (65 per cent) reported encountering harassment or violence in the workplace within the last two years. Even more concerning, a staggering 71.4 per cent of respondents experienced some form of harassment, violence or sexual harassment and violence in the same period. These statistics highlight the need for employers to take proactive measures in preventing workplace bullying.

In paving the way for a safer and more inclusive workplace, providing training sessions for both employees and management to recognize and prevent bullying is an important first step. Managers, in particular, should receive training on how to effectively respond and address complaints.

Office return mandates: Do employers really want staff back that often?

Mandatory office-return policies are starting to take a hold of workplaces across the world, but a new report suggests that employers are only inflating on-site days amid low compliance expectations.

The report from Fortune said that organisations aren't expecting staff to meet their mandated target days on-site, which is why they're blowing up the number of in-office days.

"So, when we see a company say four days a week back in the office, usually they're expecting around three, so that means they're now going to be planning their portfolio, their footprint, and the type of space they need around that three day a week model," Sue Aspey Price, EMEA CEO for real estate services group Jones Lang LaSalle, told Fortune.

According to the executive, this is because employers "just know" about human behaviours and patterns, as well as travel, sick days, and holidays.

A report from recently Perceptyx revealed that employers are no longer pushing existing staff to return to the office as hard as they did initially, as the on-site pressure is transferred to new hires.

SD67 celebrating annual day of bullying awareness

Todd Manuel is the superintendent for Okanagan Skaha School District 67 which operates schools in Penticton, Summerland, Kaleden, Naramata and Westbench. He spoke this week with LJI reporter Dan Walton on bullying and how the school system is addressing this complex issue.

Q: What is the most common form of bullying students face in 2024?

MANUEL: In SD67 our administrators, teachers and school staff work hard to build safe and caring school communities. This includes teaching and modelling positive social skills, and supporting social emotional learning initiatives to help students understand and care about themselves and others. Additionally, our school communities work to create conditions that empower students to report concerns and help them to work positively through challenges when they arise.

Today, social media continues to create some of the most significant and common challenges around on-line communication and bullying. The proliferation of social media apps and communication tools that allow for anonymity and that can also be quickly amplified and spread to others can increase the impact of bullying, and they continue to be a significant challenge for our educators to navigate and respond to. Often, youth will make comments or engage in behaviours online that they wouldn't otherwise do if they were interacting face to face, which is an additional challenge of social media.ents and students throughout the school year.

'Startling numbers': Workplace violence on the rise at local public schools

The number of reported workplace violence incidents is up within Algoma District School Board classrooms.

Numbers in a report provided to the ADSB for its regular monthly meeting Tuesday showed there were a total of 1,271 reported incidents of workplace violence in the 2022-2023 school year. That's up from over 900 reported incidents in 2018-2019.

The incidents involve actions by students toward elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers and their support staff. A group of approximately 40 unionized educational assistants, teachers' aides, noon-hour aides, occasional teachers, custodians and parents attended Tuesday's meeting. Some told reporters afterwards that they have been punched, bitten or kicked by students, many in primary grades.

"The definition of workplace violence is a broad definition. It could be comments. It could be kicks. It could be other acts. It's determined by the individual and it's encouraged to report. They have the right under Bill 168 to be able to report that and we encourage it," said Joe Santa Maria, ADSB associate director of corporate services and operations, in an interview with reporters after Tuesday's meeting.

Manitoba Teachers' Society troubled by 'toxic work environment,' external investigation and staff on leave

The Manitoba Teachers' Society is being dogged by allegations of a "toxic work environment" that's led to an independent investigation and a number of employees taking a leave from the workplace.

Teamsters Local Union 979, which represents 70 support and administrative workers at MTS, is taking specific grievances involving some members to arbitration, "which include allegations related to violations of our collective agreement and a toxic work environment," the union wrote in an email to CBC News.

The turmoil reported at MTS has resulted in some employees taking medical leave from their work, others being burned out and schoolteachers — who pay dues to MTS — not getting adequate service because of insufficient staffing levels, according to a number of people with knowledge of the situation who spoke to CBC News on the condition they not be named, as they feared repercussion.

They say some senior leaders at the union would confront staff who raised complaints, making them feel intimidated, according to various people who weren't authorized to speak publicly.

With antisemitism on the rise, employers can't 'bury their heads in the sand'

In early February, 14 Jewish members of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) filed human rights complaints against their union, claiming it has been “advancing an anti-Israel agenda and causing a culture of discrimination and harassment against Jewish PSAC members.”