Quebec Principal Barometer: English-Language School Principals' Work, Well-Being, and Workplace Safety

2026 Survey Report

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The Principal Barometer Canada

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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

Effective school leaders are key to a thriving education system. When they can do their job well, they create a productive and positive school climate and skillfully manage resources. This report summarizes the results for principals of English schools of Quebec who participated in the 2026 Canadian Principal Barometer survey. The Principal Barometer survey is a tool used to investigate the occupational health, working conditions, and well-being of school principals. The Quebec analytic sample included 125 respondents, all of whom were members of the Association of Administrators of the English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ). The survey was administered through a Western University Qualtrics link from February to early March 2026.

QC Participant Profile at a Glance

125 respondents	**65.3%** identified as women	**8.1 years** average experience	
49.2% were age 45-54	**60.7%** held a master's degree	**57.4%** elementary-only principals	**7.4%** reported a disability

Selected characteristics are shown here; full distributions are presented in later figures.

As shown in the Participant Profile above, respondents reported an average of 8.1 years of experience as principals. Most held a master's degree and identified as a woman. We also asked participants about their ethnoracial identity. The vast majority of participants identified as White. Unfortunately, the numbers for non-White principals were so low that reporting them would risk compromising anonymity.

Quebec principals in English-language public schools described their work as fast-paced, cognitively demanding, and emotionally intense. Despite these demands, the participating principals felt their work was meaningful and that they have high levels of commitment. Most felt their work was important and that their school meant a great deal to them. However, this high meaning coexisted with signs of strain. Principals reported high burnout and stress, sleep issues, and interrupted eating practices. Moreover, their self-rated health is worse than average Canadian workers (Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers [OHCOW], 2023). Occupational health and safety risks were substantial. During the previous 12 months, many participants reported threats of violence, actual physical violence, workplace quarrels or conflicts, and gossip and slander. Those reporting physical violence indicated that students were the most frequently identified source, whereas both students and parents/guardians were prominent sources of threats of violence. Equity-related findings require careful reporting because of sample size, but the descriptive results indicated 15.2% of respondents reported workplace discrimination in the previous 12 months.

Based on our findings, we recommend that:

- English school boards and AAESQ conduct workload reviews to examine workload intensity and work distribution;
- English school boards improve internal communication processes;
- English boards and the le ministère de l'Éducation (hereafter "Le Ministère") improve role clarity through coordination across the system;
- School board leaders (i.e., directors and commissioners) engage in explicit recognition and appreciation for work well done;
- Le Ministère, along with the English school boards, monitor mental health and engage in early intervention to prevent burnout;
- AAESQ support principals in improving their sleep and eating habits by enlisting experts to provide tailored resources and professional learning opportunities;
- Le Ministère, along with the English school boards, treat threats, violence, bullying, and conflict as occupational health and safety priorities;
- Le gouvernement du Québec expand the *Preventing and Managing Violence Against School Staff: Practical Support Guide* to include provisions for violence enacted against principals;
- Le gouvernement du Québec evaluate the *2023–2028 Anti-Bully and Anti-Violence in Schools Plan* at the midway point;
- Le Ministère work with the English school boards to continue to address equity, diversity, and inclusion issues; and
- Principals engage in boundary setting, and that English school boards support principals in boundary management.

Effective school leaders are key to a thriving education system. When they can do their job well, they create a productive and positive school climate and skillfully manage resources. In this report, we present the findings from the 2026 English Quebec School Principal Barometer survey. The Principal Barometer survey is a tool used to investigate the occupational health, working conditions, and well-being of school principals working in Canadian public education systems. In English-speaking Quebec, members of the Association of the Administrators of the English Schools of Quebec (AAESQ) completed the survey in February–March 2026. Because the dataset provided for this report is descriptive, the findings should be read as a provincial snapshot rather than as causal evidence.

Organization of Report

We begin by discussing our methodology and providing a demographic breakdown of participants. Then, we present our main findings, organized into the following themes: (a) workload, pace, and emotional demands; (b) job satisfaction, control, meaning, and professional commitment; (c) English school board communication, recognition, and support; (d) work–life integration, health, burnout, sleep, and eating practices; and (e) workplace safety, discrimination, and harassment. We discuss some of the overall implications of the findings before providing a set of recommendations for the nine English school boards, the Québec Ministère de l'Éducation, AAESQ, and principals.

Methodology & Participant Profile

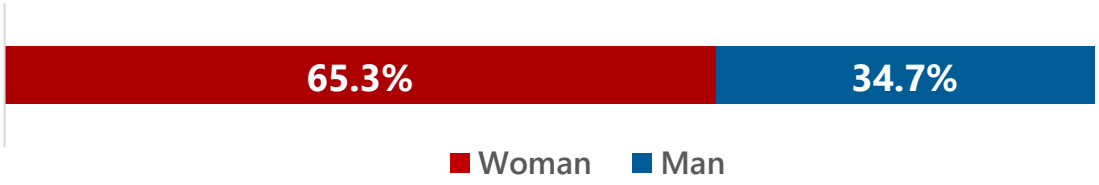
To accommodate principals' work patterns, we collected data through an online survey via Western University's Qualtrics program. An email invitation was sent to potential participants in February 2026 asking them to complete the multiple-choice survey. In addition to demographic questions, the survey contained questions from the following validated scales and screener:

- COPSOQ-III
- Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index
- Eating Habits Screener
- Bergen Burnout Inventory
- Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment

In English Quebec, 255 invitations were sent out. It took approximately 30 minutes for participants to complete the survey. Surveys that were less than 60% complete were removed, leaving 125 usable survey responses. Figures 1–6 present some demographic information about participants. Note that although the survey asked principals to indicate their ethnoracial identity, the numbers for non-White principals were so low that reporting them would risk compromising anonymity. In other words, most participants identified as White.

The 2026 survey provided participants with six options to indicate their gender (i.e., non-binary, man, woman, Two-Spirit, prefer not to answer, and other). As demonstrated in Figure 1, 65.3% of participants self-identified as women and just over 34.7% self-identified as men. No respondents selected non-binary, Two-Spirit, prefer not to answer, or other.

Figure 1. Participants' Gender



In terms of age, Figure 2 demonstrates that one half of the participants fell into the 45–54 age group (49.2%). One fifth indicated that they were between 55 and 59 (20.5%) and one sixth (16.4%) indicated that they were between 40 and 44 years old. There were smaller percentages of participants over the age of 60 (6.6% between the ages of 60 and 64, 2.5% over the age of 65) and under the age of 40 (4.1% between the ages of 35 and 39, and 0.8% between the ages of 30 and 34).

Figure 2. Participants' Age

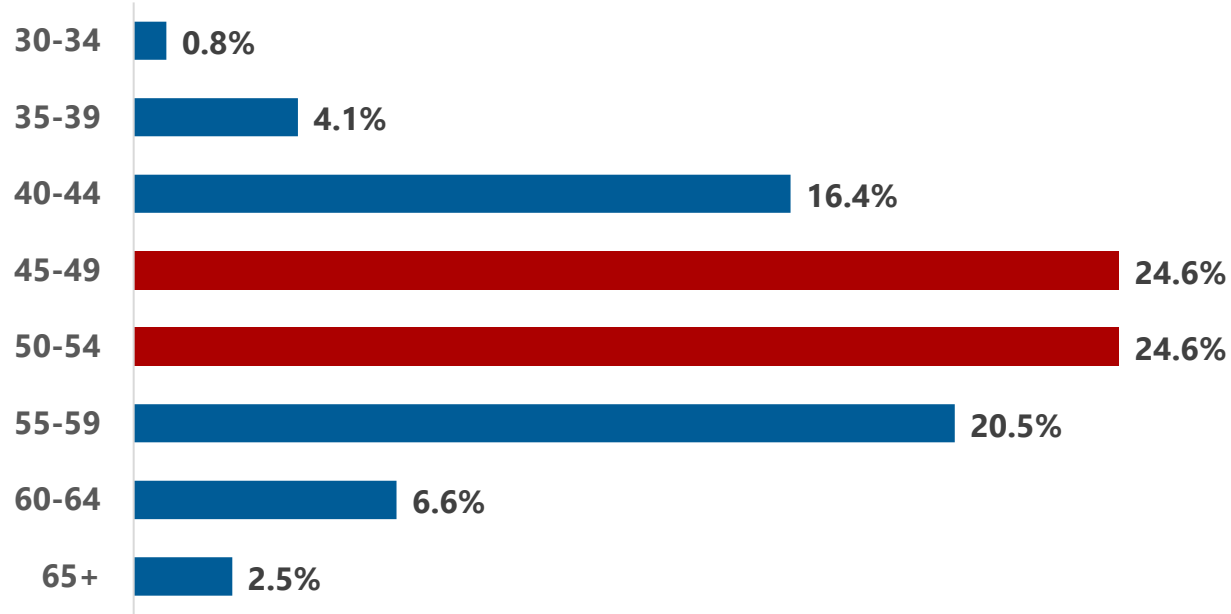


Figure 3 shows self-reported disability status. Of the participants, 7.4% indicated having a disability.

Figure 3. Self-Reported Disability Status of Participants

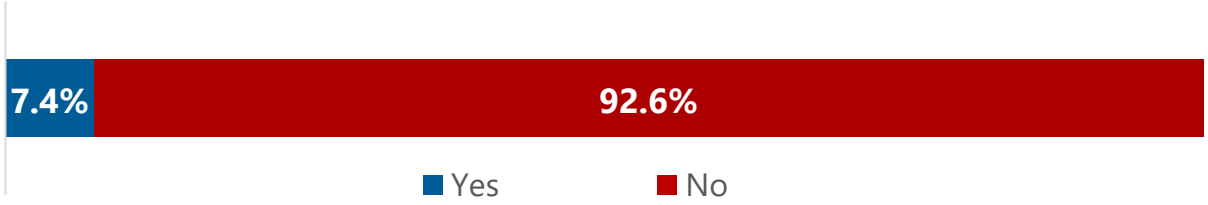


Figure 4 shows how many years of experience the participants had when they completed the survey. Two fifths of principals (41.2%) had less than 5 years in the role, 28.6% had 5–10 years in the role, 17.7% had 11–15 years in the role, 9.2% had 16–20 years in the role, and 3.4% had 20 years or more in the role.

Figure 4. Participants' Years of Experience

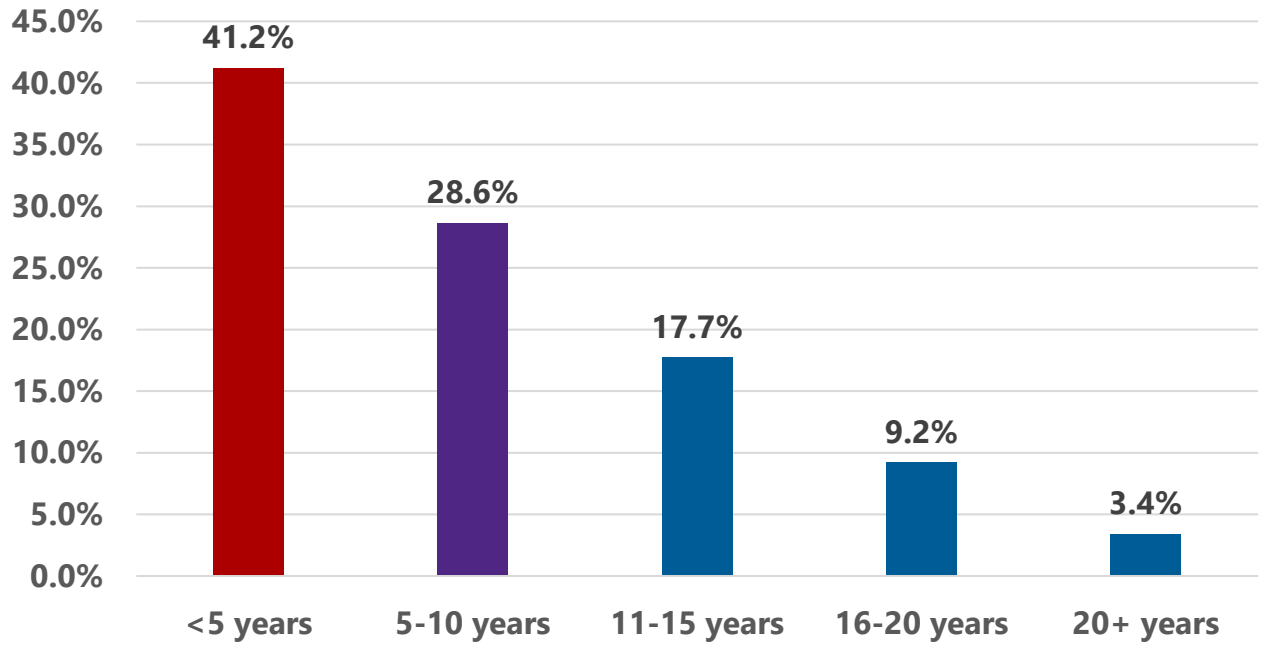
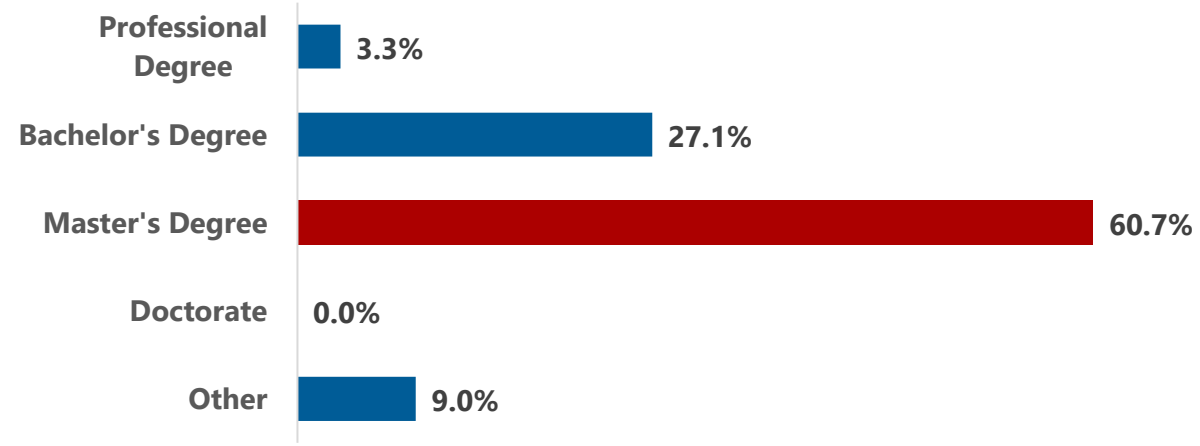


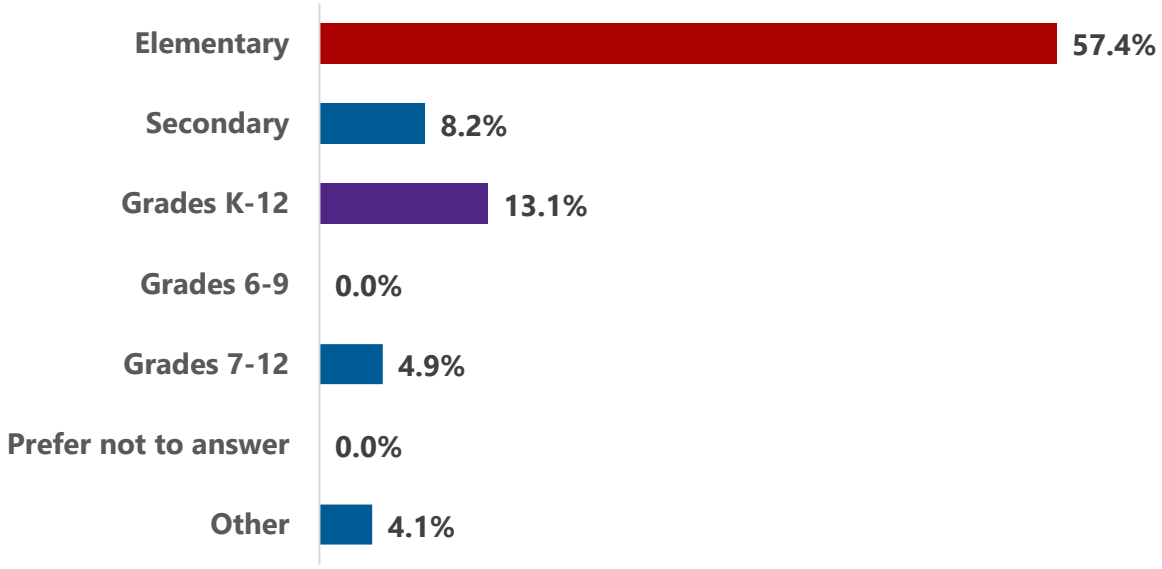
Figure 5 shows the highest level of education that participants had. Three fifths of participants (60.7%) had a master's degree as their highest level of education, and just over a quarter of participants (27.1%) had a bachelor's degree.

Figure 5. Participants' Highest Level of Education



According to the Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Quebec (2021), there are approximately 340 schools in the K–12 English public education system. As shown in Figure 6, more than half of the respondents (57.4%) worked in the elementary panel.

Figure 6. Participants' School Panel



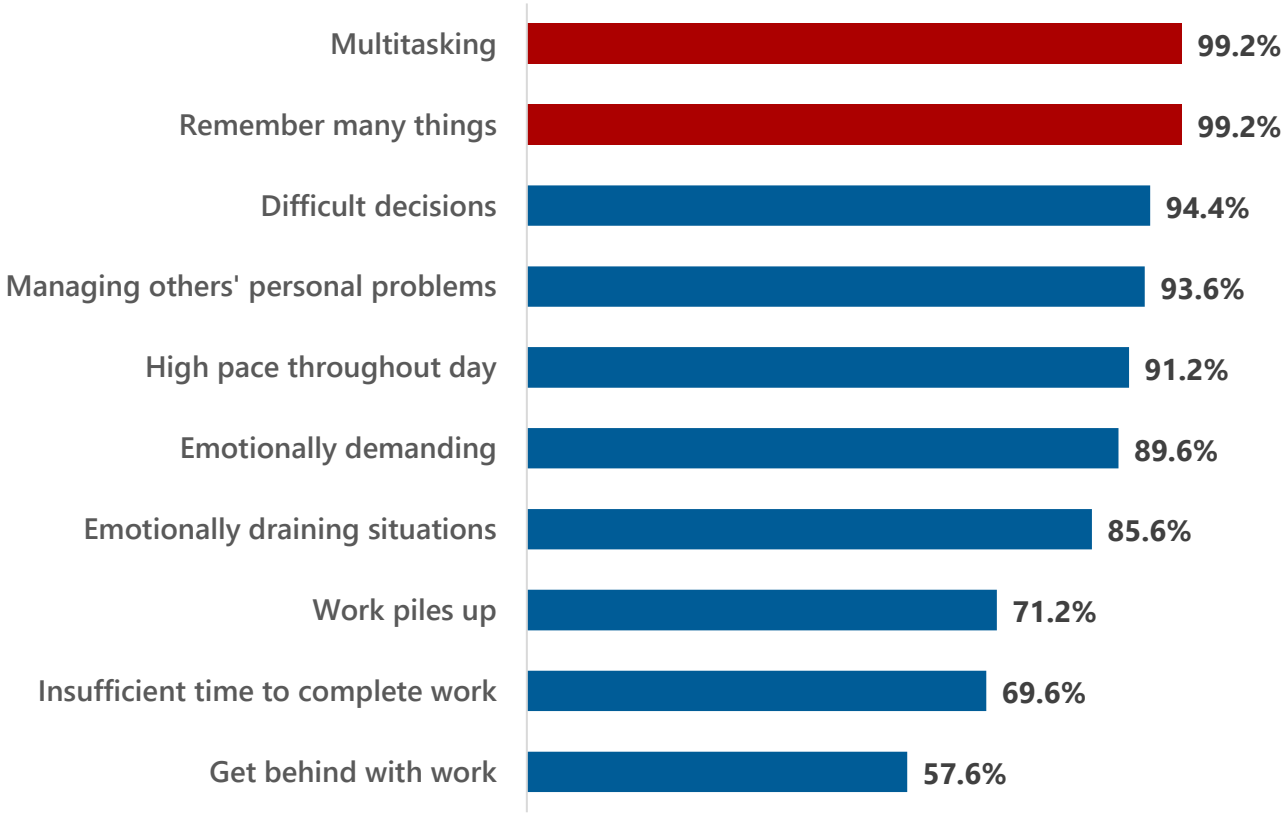
Findings

As mentioned in the introduction, we have organized the findings into the following themes: (a) workload, pace, and emotional demands; (b) job satisfaction, control, meaning, and professional commitment; (c) English school board communication, recognition, and support; (d) work–life integration, health, burnout, sleep, and eating practices; and (e) workplace safety, discrimination, and harassment.

Workload, Pace, and Emotional Demands

Participating principals of English Quebec Schools reported that their work is consistently high in pace, complexity, and emotional intensity. As shown in Figure 7, the highest pressure indicators were cognitive and relational: 99.2% *always* or *often* had to pay attention to many things simultaneously, 99.2% *always* or *often* had to remember many things, 94.4% *always* or *often* had to make difficult decisions, and 93.6% *always* or *often* had to relate to other people's personal problems. Emotional demands were nearly as prominent as time demands: 89.6% reported that their work was emotionally demanding *to a large* or *very large extent*, and 85.6% indicated that work *always* or *often* put them in emotionally draining situations.

Figure 7. Highest Workload and Emotional Demand Indicators



Note. Bars represent the percentage of principals reporting high levels of each work demand. For items measured using *always/often/sometimes/seldom/never*, the percentage combines responses of *always* and *often*. For items measured using *to a very large extent/to a large extent /somewhat/to a small extent/to a very small extent*, the percentage combines responses of *to a very large extent* and *to a large extent*. Higher percentages indicate that a greater proportion of principals experienced that demand at a high level.

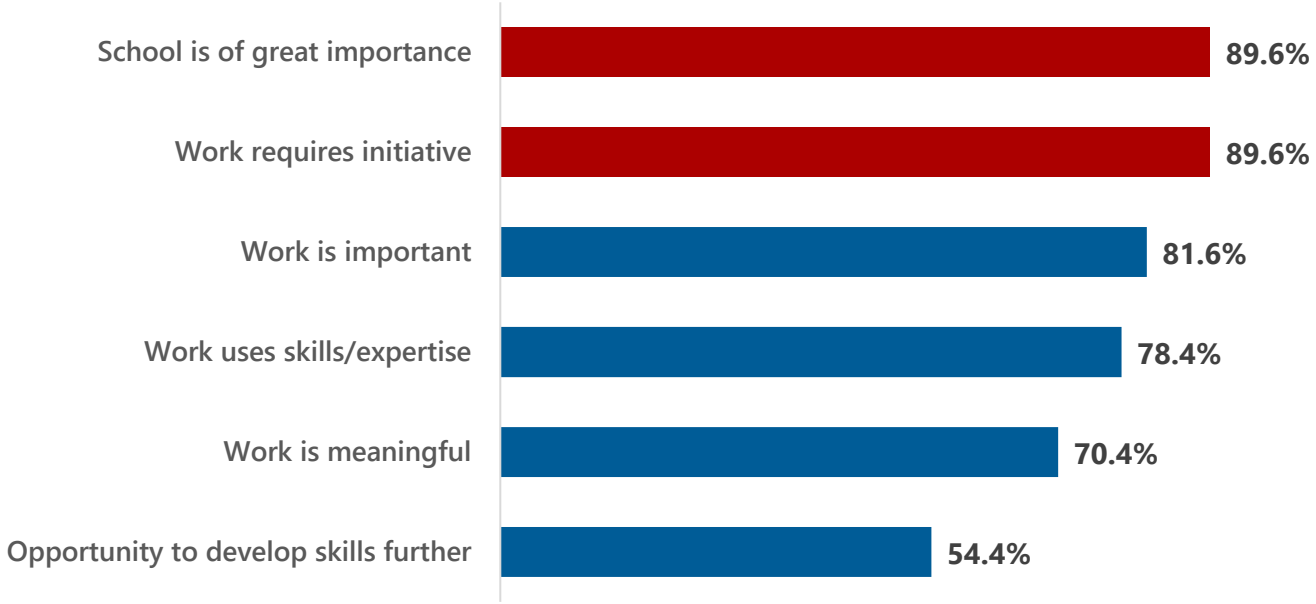
Many participating principals also reported having a backlog of unfinished work. More than two thirds reported that their workload *always* or *often* piled up (71.2%) and that they *always* or *often* did not have enough time to complete all work tasks (69.6%). A further 57.6% *always* or *often* got behind with work. Only 8.9% said they *always* or *often* had enough time for their work tasks. The 2026 Quebec English Principal Barometer results suggest that high pace, volume, and complexity are routine features of principals' workdays. Principals are not simply

working through a long task list: They are simultaneously managing urgent decisions, competing demands, personal problems of other people, and emotionally demanding situations. This combination is likely to make routine time-management strategies insufficient unless workload, staffing, and decision authority are addressed at the organizational level. Because of the nature of principals' work, it can be expected that they would experience some degree of these demands; however, it is the degree to which they are experiencing these demands that is alarming.

Job Satisfaction, Control, Meaning, and Professional Commitment

The relationship between job satisfaction and occupational stress is well documented for school principals (Fang et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2018). This is the case for principals working in English Quebec schools. The sample showed that 62.4% of the principals were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their job as a whole, 62.4% were *satisfied* with the way their abilities were used, and 63.2% were *satisfied* with physical working conditions. Principals reported a moderate level of influence over how they carry out their work. About 41.6% reported that they *always* or *often* have a large degree of influence over their work. Compared with average Canadian workers, Quebec principals in English schools reported somewhat greater influence at work, suggesting many principals felt they had control over how they performed their job (Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers [OHCOW], 2023).

Figure 8. What Keeps Principals Connected to the Work



Almost three quarters of participating principals (70.4%) reported that their work was meaningful *to a large* or *very large extent*, and more than three quarters (81.6%) felt that the work they do is important *to a large* or *very large extent*, and almost all (89.6%) principals indicated that their school was of great importance to them *to a large* or *very large extent*. Most also reported that the work allowed them to use their skills or expertise (78.4%) and required initiative (89.6%). However, 24.0% said they *always* or *often* considered looking for work elsewhere, suggesting that professional commitment does not eliminate risk of principals leaving their current leadership position.

89.6%

said their school was of great importance to them

24.0%

often or always considered looking for work elsewhere

High commitment coexists with retention risk.

English School Board Communication, Recognition, Leadership, and Support

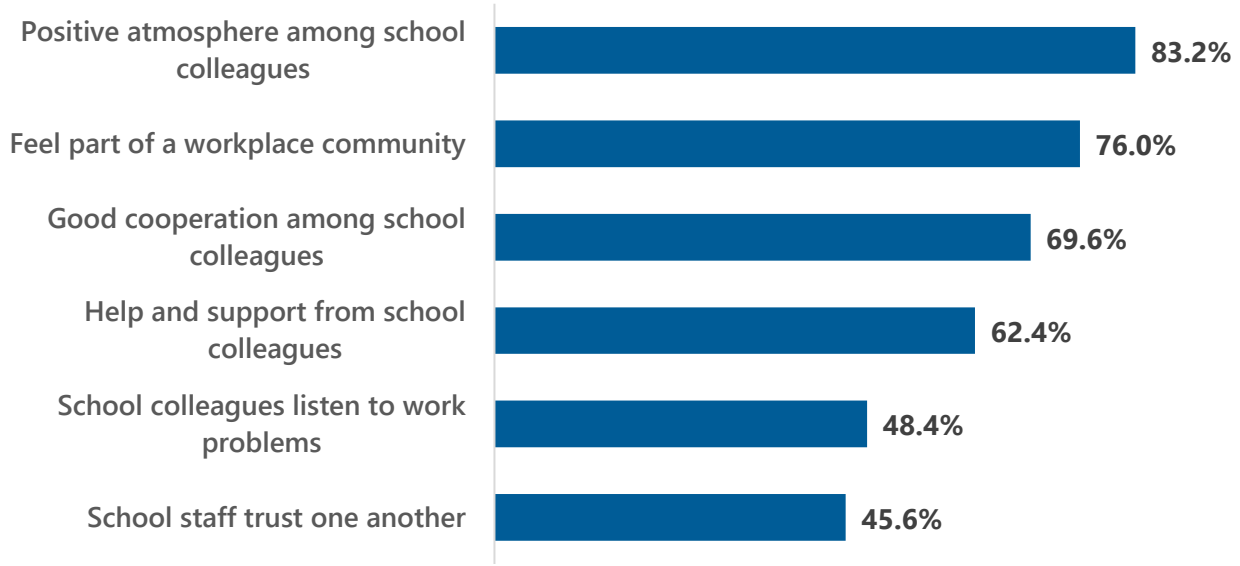
Participants indicated that there were issues with the communication they received from their English school boards. Only 22.4% felt that they were informed well in advance about important decisions, changes, or future plans *to a large* or *very large extent*. Only 27.2% reported receiving all the information needed to do their work well.

Principals feel strongly supported inside their schools, but less supported by the broader system.

Work recognition from the English school boards was also low. Only 34.4% felt their work was recognized and appreciated by the English school board *to a large* or *very large extent*, and only 23.2% felt principals were appreciated when they had done a good job. Less than one quarter (23.2%) said their suggestions were treated seriously by the school board. The data on director support was only slightly more promising: 48.0% reported that their directors were *often* or *always* willing to listen to work problems, while only 36.8% *often* or *always* received help and support from their directors when needed. The data around trust was more positive, with 63.7% feeling that the school board trusted principals to do their work well. The picture was also more positive within the schools where principals worked. Most respondents reported that they *always* or *often* have a good atmosphere between themselves and colleagues (83.2%), good cooperation among colleagues (69.6%), and feel part of a community at work (76.0%). Help and support from colleagues inside the school was also relatively high (62.4% indicated *always* or *often*).

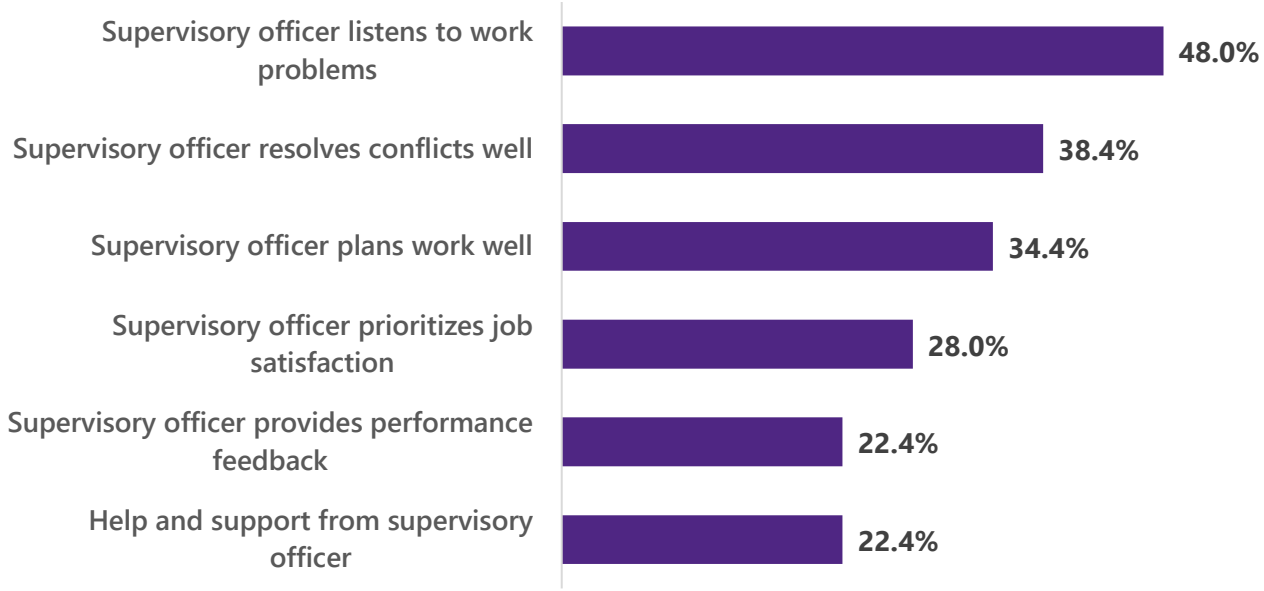
Although school-level supports appear strong, system-level communication, recognition, and voice appear less robust. This distinction matters because the school-level community may support principals, but it cannot resolve structural issues such as workload allocation, role clarity, or information flow from the English school boards.

Figure 9. Leadership, Communication, Recognition, and Support Within the School



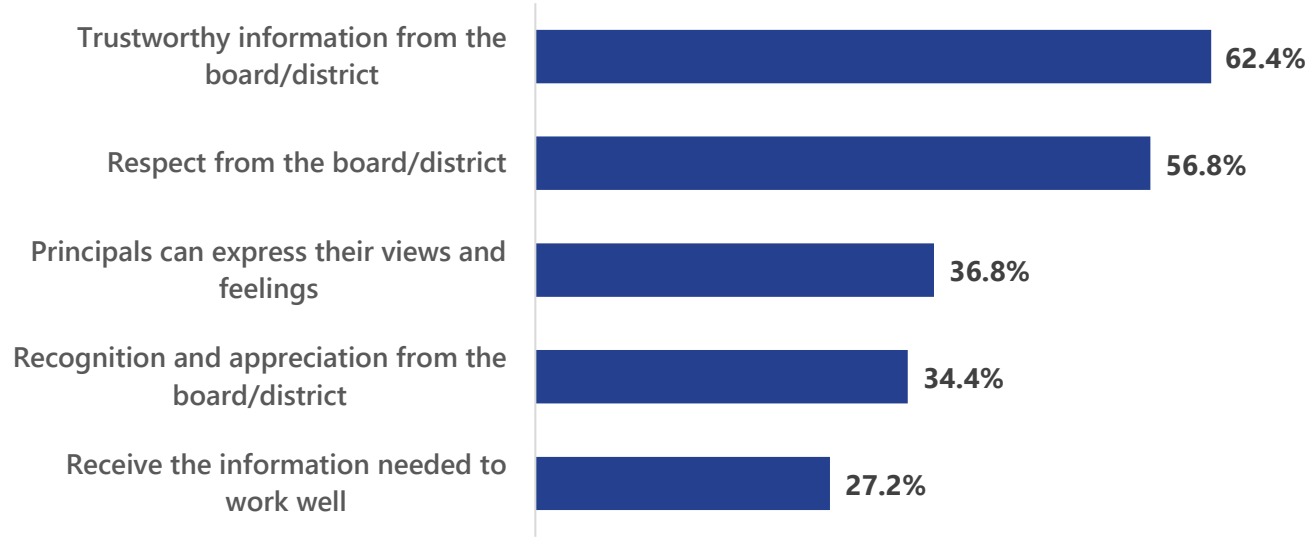
Note. Bars show the percentage of principals reporting a strong positive experience for each indicator. "High" responses combine *always* and *often* for frequency-based questions, or *to a very large extent* and *to a large extent* for extent-based questions. Longer bars indicate stronger support, leadership, communication, recognition, voice, or fairness. "School colleagues" refers to colleagues inside the respondent's school.

Figure 10. Leadership, Communication, Recognition, and Support at the Supervisory Officer Level



Note. Bars show the percentage of principals reporting a strong positive experience for each indicator. "High" responses combine *always* and *often* for frequency-based questions, or *to a very large extent* and *to a large extent* for extent-based questions. Longer bars indicate stronger support, leadership, communication, recognition, voice, or fairness. Supervisory officers are presented separately because they represent principals' direct formal leadership relationship rather than the school team or the board/district as a whole.

Figure 11. Leadership, Communication, Recognition, and Support at the School Board Level



Note. Bars show the percentage of principals reporting a strong positive experience for each indicator. "High" responses combine *always* and *often* for frequency-based questions, or *to a very large extent* and *to a large extent* for extent-based questions. Longer bars indicate stronger support, leadership, communication, recognition, voice, or fairness.

Work–Life Integration, Health, Burnout, Sleep and Eating Practices

The 2026 Quebec English Principal Barometer survey focused not only on principals' work but also on their wellness. As mentioned in the methodology section, we used several internationally validated scales to measure work–life integration, health, burnout, sleep, and eating practices.

59.2% work drains energy from private life

71.8% frequently tired

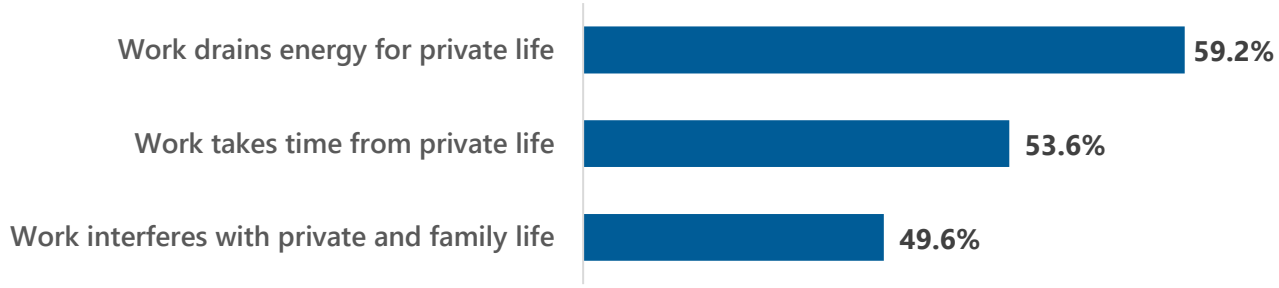
83.1% overwhelmed with work

6.1hrs average sleep

Work–Life Integration

In terms of work–life integration, work–life conflict was common: 59.2% of participants indicated that their work drained so much energy that it had a negative effect on their private life, 53.6% indicated that their work took so much time that it had a negative effect on their private life, and 49.6% indicated that work demands interfered with their private and family life.

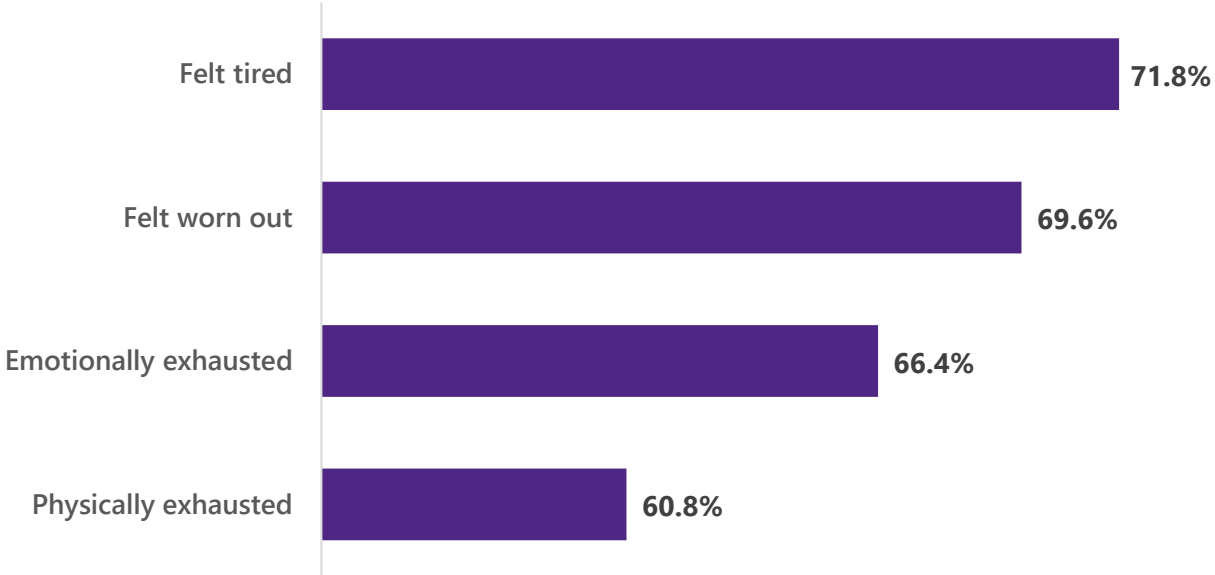
Figure 12. Work–Life Interference Among Participating Principals



Health

In Quebec, only 23.8% of the participating principals described their health as *excellent* or *very good*, while 37.7% described it as *fair* or *poor*. Overall, their average self-rated health fell between *fair* and *good*, compared with the Canadian workforce average, which fell between *good* and *very good* (Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers [OHCOW], 2023). Stress indicators showed that problems relaxing were common (58.5% *all the time* or *often*), and 56.0% felt tense *all the time* or *often*. Many also reported feeling tired (71.8% *all the time* or a *large part of the time*), emotionally exhausted (66.4% *all the time* or a *large part of the time*), worn out (69.6% *all the time* or a *large part of the time*), and physically exhausted (60.8% *all the time* or a *large part of the time*).

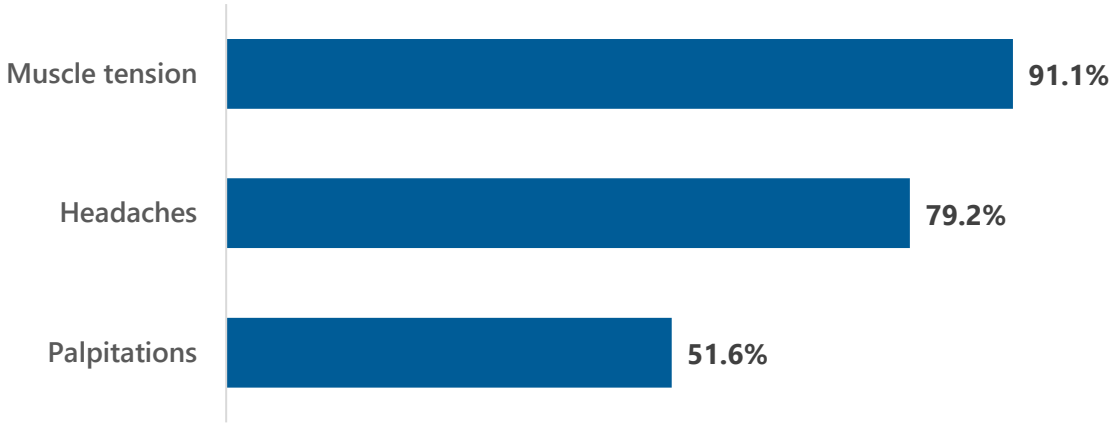
Figure 13. Exhaustion and Recovery Concerns among Participating Principals



38%
rated their health as fair or poor

In terms of physical health indicators, 79.2% of participants had a headache at least *part of the time*. Of these, 20.0% of participants had a headache *all the time* or *a large part of the time*. When asked if they have had palpitations only 48.4% said *not at all*; this means that 51.6% of principals experienced palpitations within the last year at least *a small part of the time*. More than a third (38.7%) had muscle tension *all the time* or *a large part of the time*, and 52.4% had muscle tension *part of the time* or *a small part of the time*. Only 8.9% reported having no muscle tension in the last year.

Figure 14. Physical Health Symptoms Among Participating Principals

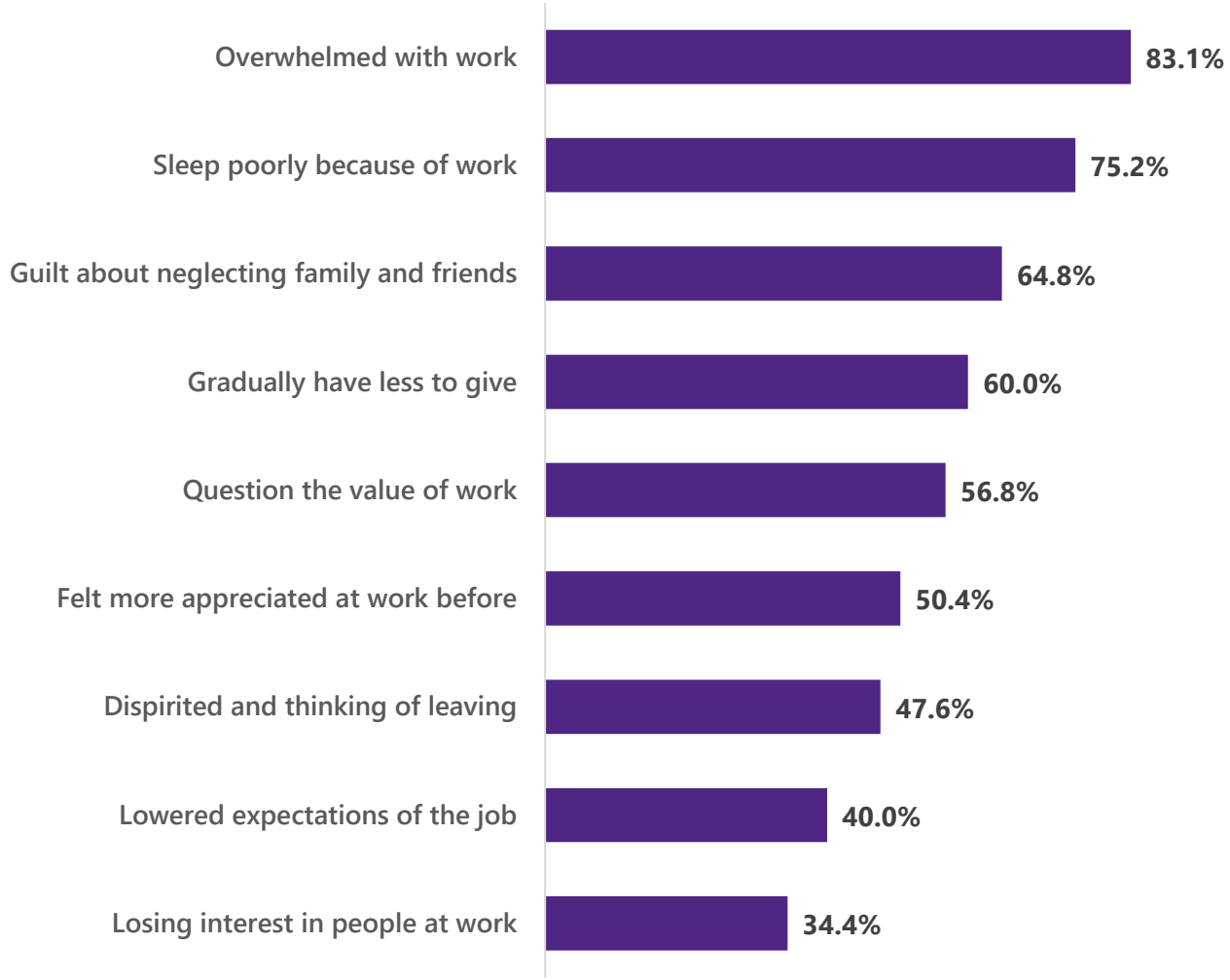


Note. Percentages combine all responses above *not at all*. For headaches, *at least some of the time* includes part of the time, a large part of the time, and all the time. For palpitations and muscle tension, percentages represent participants who did not select *not at all*.

Burnout

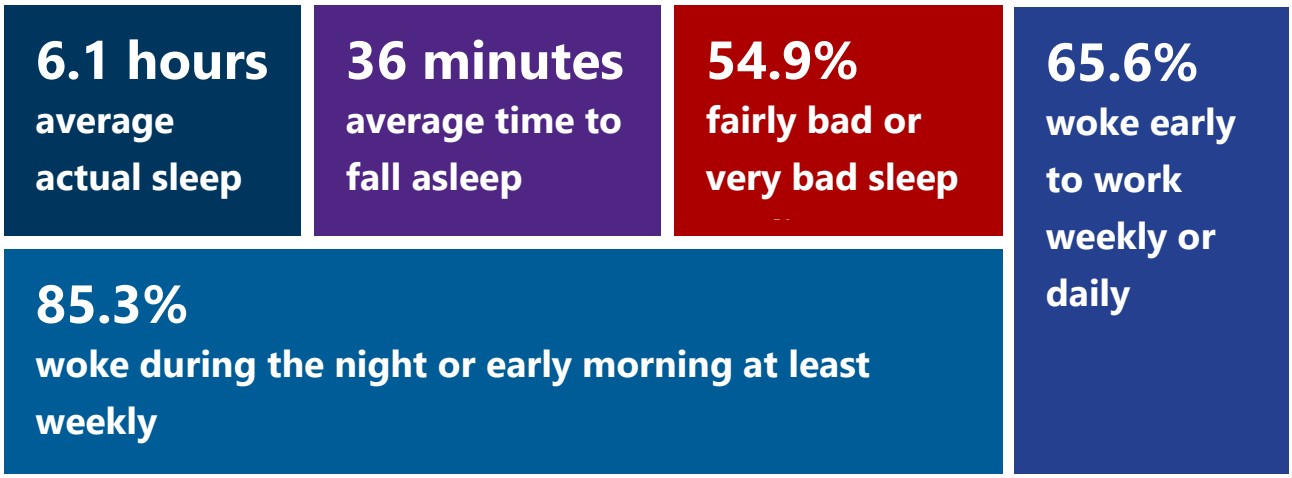
In terms of burnout, the Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI) is a mental health check-up tool that measures how severely a person is suffering from chronic work stress. The higher the rating, the higher the frequency of severity for burnout symptoms (Feldt et al., 2014). As shown in Figure 15, burnout indicators revealed that 83.1% at least *partly agreed* that they were overwhelmed with work, 75.2% at least *partly agreed* that they often slept poorly because of circumstances at work, and 60.0% at least *partly agreed* that they had gradually less to give to their work. In addition, 64.8% at least *partly agreed* that they feel constantly guilty because their work forced them to neglect close friends and family.

Figure 15. Burnout Concerns among Participating Principals



Sleep

In terms of sleep, the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) measures how well a person sleeps over a 1-month period. The sleep data suggest that some participating principals may be experiencing insufficient or disrupted sleep, which may limit opportunities for adequate rest and recovery. Respondents reported an average of 6.1 hours of actual sleep per night, taking an average of 36.4 minutes to fall asleep. More than half rated their sleep quality as *fairly bad* or *very bad* (54.9%). Waking during the night or early morning was especially common: 85.3% reported this *at least once or twice a week*, including 55.7% *three or more times a week*. Work also intruded directly into sleep routines: 65.6% had woken up early to get work done at least *occasionally* while 36.1% reported doing so weekly or daily; 61.2% had stayed up late because of work *at least occasionally* while 23.1% reported doing so *at least weekly*.



Note. Percentages in this section show the proportion of principals reporting a concern-level response for each indicator. For general health, this means *fair* or *poor health*. For exhaustion items, this means *all the time* or *a large part of the time*. For work–life interference, this means *to a very large extent* or *to a large extent*. For burnout items, percentages combine *partly agree*, *agree*, and *completely agree*. For sleep quality, percentages combine *fairly bad* and *very bad*. Work-related early waking and staying up late were classified as concerns when they occurred *weekly* or *daily*. Longer bars indicate that a greater percentage of principals reported the concern.

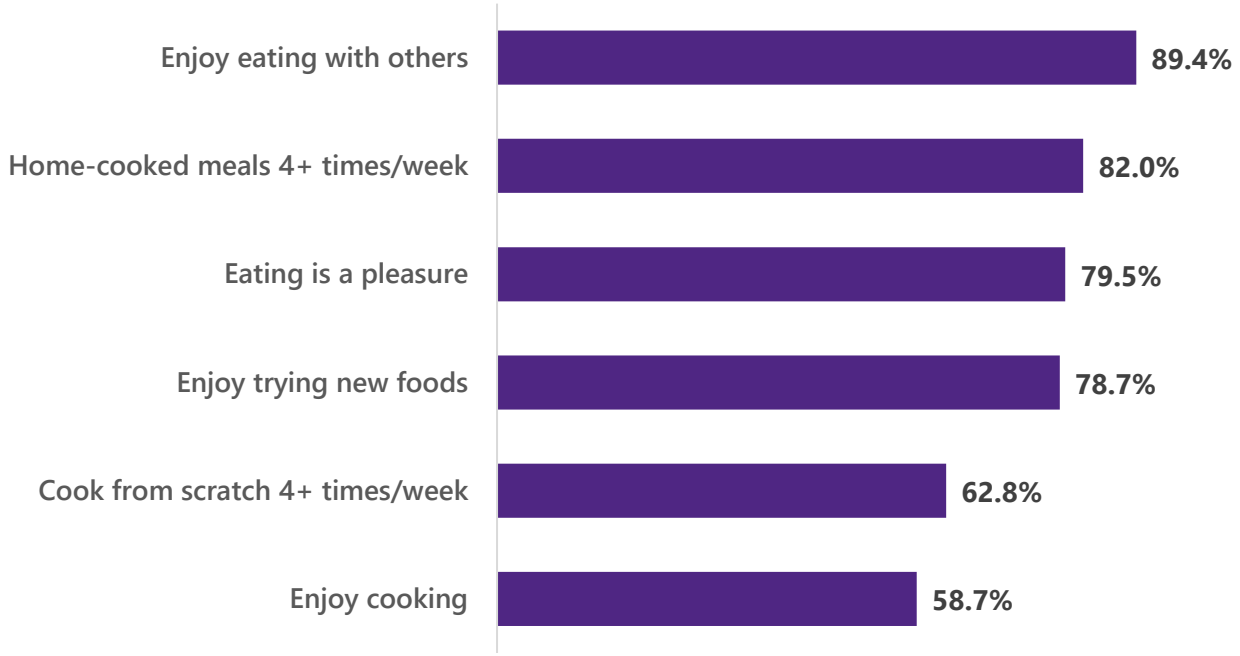
Eating Practices

The survey also asked participants about their eating practices. Most respondents reported limited time and attention for meals. As shown in Figure 16, 57.4% *never* or *rarely* took time to eat meals, 85.2% *never* or *rarely* ate slowly, and 80.3% *often* or *always* engaged in other activities while eating, such as working, driving, or using a phone or computer. Emotional eating was also reported, with 35.3% reporting that they *often* or *always* ate when feeling emotional even when not hungry. On the other hand, the results also suggest that many principals engage in some positive eating practices. 82.0% ate home-cooked meals from scratch four or more times per week, and 62.8% cooked from scratch four or more times per week. Most *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that eating was a pleasure (79.5%) and that they enjoyed trying new foods (78.7%), that they enjoyed cooking (58.7%), and that they enjoyed eating with others (89.4%).

Figure 16. Eating-Practice Concerns



Figure 17. Eating-Practice Values



Note. For meal time and attention items, concerns were defined as *never* or *rarely* taking time to eat or eating slowly, or *often* or *always* eating while doing other activities. For meal preparation and planning, concerns were defined as *never* or *rarely* eating home-cooked meals or cooking from scratch less than once per week. Longer bars indicate that a greater percentage of principals endorsed the practice or value.

The eating practices data provide additional information about principals' everyday habits. Limited mealtime and frequent multitasking while eating were common. Although principals appear to have positive food-related values and practices, the clearest area for support is reducing mealtime interruptions and distractions.

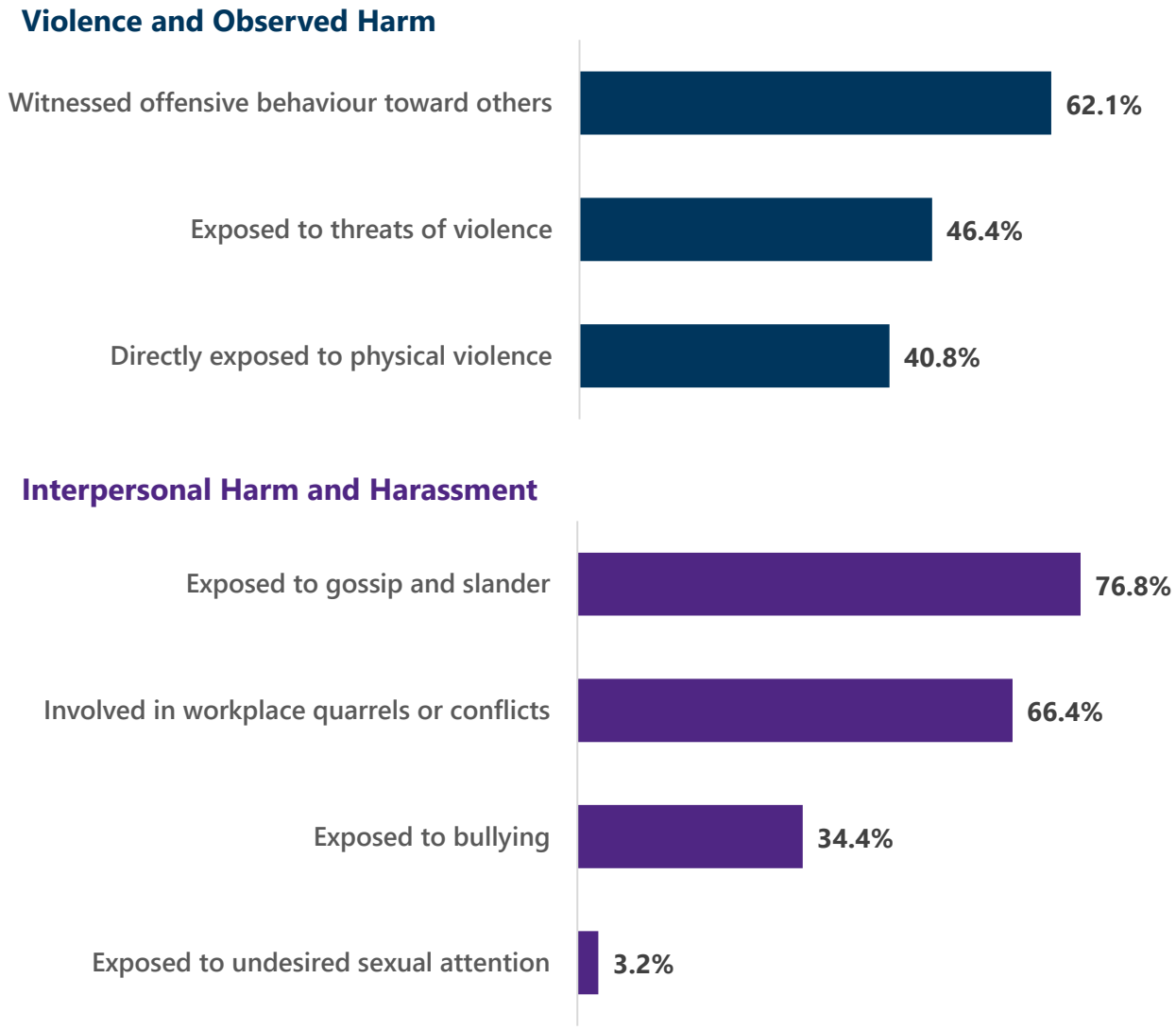
Principals generally value food and cooking, but work appears to interfere with how they actually eat during the day.

Workplace Safety, Discrimination, and Harassment

In 2022, Institut national de santé publique du Québec (the National Institute of the Public Health of Quebec) surveyed school staff in Quebec on mental health and psychosocial risks. They published their report, É*tude menée auprès du personnel scolaire du Québec sur l'état de santé mentale et l'exposition aux risques psychosociaux du travail / A Study Conducted Among Québec School Staff on Mental Health and Exposure to Psychosocial Risks at Work*, in 2025 (Pelletier et al., 2025). They found that one quarter of respondents indicated that they had experienced threats of violence and roughly a third indicated that they had experienced direct physical violence. Safety concerns were also a major finding in our results on principals in English Quebec schools (see Figure 18). The data suggest these principals are exposed to threats, direct violence, bullying, conflict, and relational harm while also carrying responsibility for school safety.

At least once during the previous 12 months, 66.4% reported involvement in workplace quarrels or conflicts, 46.4% reported threats of violence, 76.8% reported gossip and slander, 40.8% reported direct exposure to physical violence, and 34.4% reported bullying. Undesired sexual attention was less commonly reported (3.2%).

Figure 18. Workplace Violence, Harm, and Harassment in the Past 12 Months



Note. For violence, observed harm, interpersonal harm, and harassment indicators, percentages represent principals who reported experiencing the event at least once during the past 12 months; responses of *daily*, *weekly*, *monthly*, and *a few times* were combined. The "witnessed offensive behaviour" item includes observing undesired sexual attention, threats of violence, bullying, or discrimination directed toward someone else at the respondent's school. Longer bars indicate that a greater percentage of principals reported the experience. Indicators are not mutually exclusive, and a principal may be represented in more than one bar.

Sources of unsafe behaviour differed by behaviour type. Respondents who reported threats of violence most frequently identified students as the source of unsafe behaviour (51.1%), followed by parents/guardians (40.0%). Among those who reported direct physical violence, students were the dominant source (87.3%). Among those who indicated that they experienced bullying, parents/guardians were the most common source (41.2%). Gossip and slander were most often attributed to colleagues (43.1%) and parents/guardians (33.8%).

Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment

15%
reported workplace discrimination in the previous year

The survey also asked principals about workplace discrimination. In the "Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment" (COPSOQ) section of the survey, principals were not only asked how frequently they encountered different experiences at work, but also what they thought the main reason was for the experience. Of the principals that responded, 15.2% reported being exposed to discrimination at work during the previous year. Among those reporting discrimination, the most frequently selected sources were parents/guardians (29.3%), students (24.4%), and staff in school (17.1%). When asked if they felt they had to work twice as hard as others, 38.7% of participants reported feeling this way at least once or twice a year. When asked about the main reason for this, 17.4% said ancestry or race, 10.9% said gender, 4.4% said age, and 4.4% said weight.

When asked if they felt they had to work twice as hard

38.7%
experienced this at least once or twice a year

17.7%
experienced this at least weekly

Perceived reasons:

17.4% ancestry/race

10.9% gender

Note. Percentages for perceived reasons are based on respondents who answered the corresponding follow-up question. Selected reasons are shown.

When asked how frequently a coworker with less experience and fewer qualifications was promoted before them, one third (33.6%) indicated that this had happened between once a year and a few times a year. When asked the main reason for this, one third (33.3%) said ancestry or race, 25.9% said age, and 22.2% said gender.

When asked if less-experienced/less-qualified coworkers were promoted first

33.6%
Reported this between once and a few times per year

Perceived reasons:

33.3% ancestry/race
25.9% age
22.2% gender

Note. Percentages for perceived reasons are based on respondents who answered the corresponding follow-up question. Selected reasons are shown.

When asked how frequently they feel they are ignored or not taken seriously by their employer, 29.3% indicated that this happens to them between once and a few times per year. When asked why they thought this was so, 12.0% said ancestry or race, 12.0% indicated gender, and 28.0% indicated age.

When asked if they felt ignored or not taken seriously by employer

29.3%

Reported this between once and a few times per year

Perceived reasons:

28.0% age
12.0% ancestry/race
12.0% gender

Note. Percentages for perceived reasons are based on respondents who answered the corresponding follow-up question. Selected reasons are shown.

Overall Insights

High Demands + High Meaning
Strong professional commitment coexists with exhaustion, sleep disruption, and work–life interference.

Recovery is Compromised
Burnout, work–life conflict, sleep quality, and limited time for meals are recurring concerns.

Support is Uneven
School-level community is strong, while board-level communication, recognition, and voice have room for improvement.

Safety Needs System Attention
Threats, physical violence, bullying, conflict, and discrimination are substantial workplace concerns.

There are several overall insights to draw from the 2026 Quebec English Principal Barometer findings. First, the data indicate that, for the participating principals, high demands coexist with high levels of meaning: Although the principals in this study strongly endorsed the importance of their work, they also reported exhaustion, sleep disruption, and work–life interference. Second, English Quebec principals indicated that they are strongly supported at the school level, but do not feel they receive the same level of support from their school boards. Third, the data indicate that burnout, work–life conflict, impaired sleep quality, and limited time and opportunity to engage in healthy eating practices are major issues for the participating principals. Many

respondents are experiencing symptoms of burnout (including exhaustion and stress); they are also not sleeping well and reported limited time and attention for meals. Fourth, the participating principals are experiencing significant workplace safety issues. They reported exposure to threats of violence, direct physical violence, bullying, and gossip and slander. The findings also show that several principals felt they were experiencing discrimination at work based on their gender, their ancestry/race, and their age. Considered together, the 2026 Quebec English Principal Barometer survey findings suggest that principal well-being needs to be urgently addressed at every level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and insights above, we have formulated several recommendations for English school boards, the ministère de l'Éducation, le gouvernement du Québec, AAESQ, and principals.

01 / Conduct Workload Reviews to Examine Workload Intensity and Work Distribution

We encourage boards to work collaboratively with AAESQ to conduct workload reviews that will identify nonessential school administrative tasks and duplicative reporting to the boards. In terms of task distribution, we recommend that the Le ministère de l'Éducation allocate targeted funding for additional administrative office staff and other educational support staff such as educational assistants in areas that most affect daily pace and after-hours work, and that boards prioritize staffing these roles. We recommend that AAESQ engage in discussions with the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT-APEQ) so that improvements made for one workforce do not have a reciprocal negative influence on the other.

02 / Improve Communication Processes within Regions

The findings indicate that there is room for improvement in communication between boards and principals. We recommend that boards harness advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve the transparency of decision-making and ensure principals receive the information they need to effectively run their schools. We recommend that AAESQ engage in discussions with boards to identify more efficient and transparent communications systems.

03 / Improve Role Clarity

We recommend that the Le Ministère (a) clearly define school leadership responsibilities and (b) distribute leadership to avoid continually expanding principals' responsibilities (OECD, 2008).

04 / Engage in Explicit Recognition and Appreciation

Much of principals' work is often invisible, such as managing difficult situations, supporting staff, responding to crises, and maintaining school operations. We recommend that board leaders engage in explicit forms of recognition and appreciation for work done well.

05 / Monitor Mental Health and Engage in Early Intervention to Prevent Burnout

We recommend that boards work with experts in occupational health and well-being to establish processes for regularly monitoring principals' well-being and identifying early signs of burnout. We also recommend that AAESQ repeat core measures associated with the Principal Barometer such as burnout and work–life conflict over time to monitor whether interventions reduce workload pile-up, improve job control, reduce unsafe incidents, and improve sleep, health, and burnout indicators. These processes can provide timely, confidential support and early intervention before concerns become more severe.

06 / Support Principals in Improving Their Sleep and Eating Habits by Enlisting Experts to Provide Tailored Resources and Professional Learning Opportunities

Compromised sleep and nutrition can negatively affect principals' leadership practices by limiting their ability to meet the self-care needs that support optimal cognitive functioning (Ray et al., 2020). For this reason, it is recommended that AAESQ enlist sleep and eating experts to create professional learning opportunities that focus on healthy eating and sleeping habits.

07 / Treat Threats, Violence, Bullying, and Conflict as Occupational Health and Safety Priorities

The study findings point to a high prevalence of workplace harm among participating principals. We encourage the Le Ministère and English boards to collaboratively establish a coordinated, system-wide approach to preventing and responding to workplace threats, violence, bullying, and conflict. Drawing on established occupational health and safety approaches, including principles reflected in the federal Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations (SOR/2020-130), this approach can include regular assessment of workplace risks, clear and consistent reporting and response protocols, appropriate education and training, post-incident debriefing, practical coverage that allows principals to step away from their duties when needed, timely follow-up care and supports, and ongoing monitoring and review of incidents to identify patterns of risk and strengthen preventative action.

08 / Expand the *Preventing and Managing Violence Against School Staff: Practical Support Guide* to Include Provisions for Violence Enacted Against Principals

We recommend that le gouvernement du Québec expand the 2025 practical guide that it developed in collaboration with several partners, including AAESQ, to explicitly include support guides for school administration. Currently, school administrators are figured only as those responsible for supporting staff who have experienced violence, whereas our data shows that principals themselves also experience violence in English-language Quebec schools.

09 / Evaluate the 2023–2028 Anti-Bully and Anti-Violence in Schools Plan at the Midway Point

Because our findings indicate the violence principals are facing in Quebec's English school system predominantly comes from students, we recommend le gouvernement du Québec, along with the English school boards, teacher unions and AAESQ work collaboratively to evaluate the *2023–2028 Anti-Bullying and Anti-Violence in Schools Plan* at its mid-point of implementation to identify areas where student support could be strengthened.

10 / Continue to Address Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Issues

As mentioned earlier, we were unable to report on ethnoracial data without compromising anonymity; what we can say, however, is that the population who responded to the survey was overwhelmingly White. There is a large body of research showing that diversifying the principal workforce can support student success (e.g., Hannan et al., 2025; Ryan et al., 2009). We recommend that the Le Ministère work with English boards and AAESQ to create the conditions that will support a racially diverse principal workforce and ensure that non-White principals are not only hired but also supported and retained long term. Moreover, the 2026 Principal Barometer data also identified ancestry/race, gender, and age as perceived reasons for some experiences of unfair treatment. We recommend that both the Le Ministère and boards work with AAESQ to continue to address gender and age discrimination directly by conducting an equity audit and examining patterns of workforce data, such as hiring and promotion patterns and complaints.

11 / Set Boundaries

Without overemphasizing the need for principals to change their individual practices or approaching principals' work from a deficit perspective, we recommend that principals engage in boundary management where possible. Findings from this study suggest that principals' work can extend beyond the formal workday, with competing demands, ongoing communication, and unfinished work encroaching on time intended for rest and recovery. Boundary management (Shaked & Benoliel, 2020) may include establishing reasonable limits around after-hours communication, protecting periods of non-work recovery time, identifying when work can be deferred rather than completed immediately, and communicating expectations about availability. Importantly, principals' capacity to establish and maintain these boundaries is shaped by their working conditions. Boundary management should therefore be supported by board administrators' practices and expectations that make it possible for principals to disengage from work and recover during non-work hours.

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