



CANADIAN TEACHERS' FEDERATION

Attention News Editors:

Cyberbullying in schools: national poll shows Canadians' growing awareness

MONCTON, July 11 /CNW Telbec/ - Three-quarters of Canadians are aware of the term "cyberbullying", according to a national poll commissioned by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF).

"This heightened public awareness around cyberbullying strengthens our resolve to address this issue which we believe is becoming an increasingly serious problem in our schools and society," says CTF President Emily Noble.

The poll further shows that 34% of Canadians surveyed knew of students in their community who had been targeted by cyberbullying in the past year while one in five was aware of teachers who had been cyberbullied. The poll also shows that almost one in 10 knew someone close to them who had been cyberbullied.

"We want to reverse this growing trend, and support measures and education programs that promote proper cyberconduct," says Noble. "Cyberbullying and harassment on the Web doesn't just affect kids. Many teachers have been targeted by cyberbullying or harassment on the Internet. This is why more has to be done to educate youth and the wider community about this growing societal problem."

According to the CTF policy proposal, cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technologies to bully, embarrass, threaten or harass another. It also includes the use of these technologies to engage in conduct or behaviour that is derogatory, defamatory, degrading, illegal or abusive.

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Other key findings of the CTF poll:

- 9 in 10 Canadians believe that an effective measure to prevent cyberbullying by students is for parents to become more knowledgeable and more responsible in monitoring their child's activities with the Internet and electronic communication devices;
- 86% believe that an effective measure to prevent cyberbullying by students is to have teachers trained to respond to cyberbullying when it impacts them or their students;
- 96% believe that school boards should develop and enforce policies that hold their students accountable when they are identified as cyberbullies;
- About 7 in 10 Canadians think that school boards should hold students accountable when the cyberbullying originates outside the school, such as from the student's home.

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"When it comes to instilling proper cyberconduct and preventing cyberbullying in schools, we all have a role to play," explains CTF President Emily Noble. "In the past 12 months, the Canadian Teachers' Federation has taken a leadership role by rolling out an action plan, preparing policy and seizing every opportunity to educate the public, governments, media and education partners about the seriousness of cyberbullying.

"Tomorrow, we are holding a special session during our Annual General Meeting to discuss the issue of cyberbullying and to adopt a leading-edge

national policy on cyberconduct and cyberbullying," adds Noble. "The guiding principles of our National Policy are based on the premise that safe and caring schools that promote healthy workplaces for teachers and healthy learning environments for children and youth should be a national priority. Our policy speaks strongly to the need for education as a key element in addressing, preventing and protecting students and teachers from cyber-related harm. It also speaks to the roles and responsibilities of parents and guardians, schools, school boards and school districts, teachers, students, teacher organizations, ministries of education and government."

CTF will hold a special session on cyberbullying at 9 a.m., July 12, at the Delta Beauséjour in Moncton, N.B.

The National Issues in Education Poll, commissioned by CTF every two years, examines the public's views and opinions on public education in Canada. The poll was conducted online by Vector Research + Development Inc. from Feb. 27 to March 11, 2008, with 2,523 Canadians throughout the country.

CTF speaks for 220,000 teachers in Canada as their national voice on education and related social issues. CTF membership includes Member organizations in every province and territory in Canada as well as an Affiliate Member in Ontario. CTF (<http://www.ctf-fce.ca>) is also a member of the international body of teachers, Education International (<http://www.ei-ie.org>).

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(36)



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