THE EXPERIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE ON RURAL ALBERTA TEACHERS

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Dedication

To the best teacher I know, my dad.

To my mom, who with such grace showed me that it is possible to both work and be an incredible mother; she is the one I try every day to live up to.

To my brothers and all the rest of my extended family, dear friends, colleagues, and mentors: your love, support, and encouragement have helped carry me through this journey so far.

To my best friend and husband with whom everything seems possible, there are not enough words of thanks to express my deepest love and gratitude for all that you have done for me and our family.

To my precious Braxyn, you show me every day what matters most in life—love, joy, laughter, and play. I hope you always know how loved you are, and that you are capable of anything. Remember as you make your way through life that success is:

> To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection
> of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of
> false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a
> little better place than we found it, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a
> redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because
> you have lived. This is to have succeeded. (Ralph Waldo Emerson, as cited in
> GoodReads, 2012, para. 1)

Abstract

Research is unclear as to whether the level of violence in schools is increasing or decreasing. Regardless, it is higher than anyone would prefer. Therefore, it is essential that information on the nature and effects of violence in our schools, as well as methods for coping with and preventing such violence be gathered. It is also essential that the impact on different populations be explored. This study presents quantitative and qualitative research on the experience and psychological impact of school violence on rural Alberta teachers specifically. Sixty-eight teachers from a rural Alberta school division were surveyed to determine what forms of school violence they had experienced, the impact it has had on them, and their suggestions for preventing and coping with school violence in the future. Data collected determined that the rates of school violence against teachers remain high. The most commonly experienced form of school violence was verbal insults, with the prevalence of all incidents decreasing as the severity increased. Students and parents were the most likely perpetrators of school violence against teachers. Data gathered revealed significant emotional, physical, and career impact symptoms as a result of school violence. Survey participants strongly endorsed numerous techniques for coping with and preventing school violence, the most common being polices for dealing with school violence. Violence against teachers within rural Alberta schools was determined to be a serious social and psychological issue that cannot be overlooked.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Schools have traditionally been considered safe havens for students and

employees; however, continuing incidents of school violence have threatened the sense of

security usually found in these environments (Kondrasuk, Greene, Waggoner, Edwards,

& Nayak-Rhodes, 2005). Society hoped that the devastating act of school violence that

occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, in 1999 (Stancato, 2003) was

going to be a rare tragedy. Unfortunately, horrifying acts of school violence like this

have continued to happen all over North America and the rest of the world in recent

years. In particular and hitting close to home, another school shooting occurred at W. R.

Myers High School in Taber, Alberta, just eight days following the Columbine tragedy in

1999 ("10 Years After Taber," 2009). Recent additional incidents of shocking school

violence include: the Dawson College shooting in Montreal, Québec, in September 2006

("Two Shooting Spree Victims," 2006); the SuccessTech Academy shooting in

Cleveland, Ohio, in October 2007, in which two students and two teachers were shot

before the gunman turned the weapon on himself (Maag & Urbina, 2007); and numerous

other recent incidents of school violence such as those that have occurred in Tennessee,

California, Alabama, Florida, and Winnenden, a small German town.

These tragedies and other less publicized incidents of school violence have led to

increased fear throughout society regarding the safety of our schools. Some researchers

have suggested that the incidence of violence in schools has increased (Carter & Stewin,

1999), while others propose that it has decreased, or at the very least remained stable

(Brener, Simon, Krug, & Lowry, 1999). Regardless, it cannot be denied that the level of

school violence is higher than anyone would prefer. It is essential that those who manage

the education system are informed as to the nature and effects of the violence occurring in our schools, and that they are able to identify useful methods for dealing with the outcomes of such incidents.

Background

When referring to the concept of school violence the majority of the population imagines the highly publicized and traumatic instances of violence, such as the Columbine and Taber shootings ("10 Years After Taber," 2009; Stancato, 2003). Although school violence does include such severe incidents, the term actually refers to acts of violence that cover a much larger spectrum of severity. School violence refers to all of the violence and crime that takes place within a school setting. In other words, school violence is "any threatened, attempted, or actual harm to a person or persons" (Lyon & Douglas, 1999, p. 5) within a school setting. School violence includes such acts as: insults and name calling, rude gestures, bullying, cyberbullying, physical violence or the threat of violence, destruction of property, hazing and initiation, sexual harassment and assault, homicide, and suicide.

Researchers and clinicians have shown a great deal of concern for the impact of school violence on students (Borg, 1999; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Guerra, 2003). This research is of critical importance, as there is no question that students are largely affected by incidents of school violence. However, even with our awareness of the serious impact of school violence on those who experience it, very few studies have examined the types of school violence teachers are subjected to, and the psychological impact it has on them (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007). There also exists little information identifying what can be done to help teachers prevent and cope with

incidents of school violence. The research that does exist on teachers and school violence focuses on their usefulness in identifying at-risk students (Robinson & Clay, 2005), their perceptions of school violence towards students (Astor, Meyer, & Behre, 1999), and their job satisfaction, stress, and burnout in relation to their occupational environment (Schonfeld, 2001).

Understanding teachers' experiences of violence and the psychological impact of such occurrences is critical to the efficient running of our schools. Beyond job dissatisfaction and professional turnover, teachers' reactions to school violence can have additional ramifications on the education system, affecting the quality of students' education in the way teachers teach, in teacher attendance rates, and in the relationships teachers are able to form with their students (Ting, Sanders, & Smith, 2002). Students deserve the highest quality of education possible, and teachers dealing with the ongoing or residual elements of school violence cannot be expected to have the capacity to provide the level of instruction that they would have the ability to in a safe and healthy occupational environment.

To safely and effectively run the education system, a clear understanding of what types of violence are most prevalent in schools today and how these forms of violence psychologically impact those who deal with the ramifications on a daily basis, our teachers, must be developed. It is also important that once the impact of school violence on teachers is understood, teachers' help is enlisted to devise strategies to prevent and cope with such incidents of school violence. This study attempts to shed some light on solutions, gaining the insight of teachers in one rural Alberta school district.

The great majority of research on school violence has focused on urban school settings, where school violence is thought to be of greatest concern. However, rural areas that were previously thought to be safe have also been rocked by school violence (Ting et al., 2002), such as was seen in rural Taber, Alberta. Addressing the impact of school violence in rural schools is important because the effects of school violence and methods for handling such incidents are going to vary significantly from urban settings. This is due in part to the lack of anonymity in smaller communities and also the lack of availability of some important resources such as security and space (Seaton, 2007). More research needs to be undertaken on examining the impact of school violence in rural settings. This study addresses what school violence looks like in rural settings, the impact that such violence has on the teachers who work within these settings, and how teachers feel they, in a rural environment, might best cope with and prevent such incidents.

Kondrasuk et al. (2005) conducted a study in the United States that attempted to address the impact of school violence on teachers. Kondrasuk et al.'s study contributed to the conceptualization of this research project. These researchers examined how violence in schools in one metropolitan area (Portland, Oregon) affected the employees who worked there. Results indicated that the majority of employees felt safe in their school environment (Kondrasuk et al., 2005). However, there was a very low response rate (only 17%), and the majority of those who did respond were school administrators (Kondrasuk et al., 2005). Kondrasuk et al. suggested that administrators' perceptions of school violence were likely extremely different than the perceptions that they would have collected had more frontline employees, such as teachers, responded to their request for

participation. Kondrasuk et al. suggested that further research was required to better understand the violence experienced by school employees, and it would be particularly useful to specifically study teachers. These authors also recommended that varied geographical locations be chosen to sample the impact on different populations (Kondrasuk et al., 2005). Therefore, research on teachers in rural school environments would satisfy these suggestions, which this study accomplishes.

Research Questions

While research on the impact of school violence is increasing, there is still limited information on how it impacts teachers, specifically, rural teachers. The purpose of this study is to address this gap in the literature. The overarching goal of this study is to gain insight into the experiences and impact of school violence on rural teachers by sampling a rural Alberta school district's teachers and by exploring their perceptions of what can be done to improve their circumstances. The development of the research method for this study was driven by the following research questions: What types of school violence are rural Alberta teachers facing? What psychological impact does school violence have on teachers in rural Alberta? What can be done to help rural Alberta teachers to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Historical Evidence of School Violence

School violence is a historical phenomenon. As long as there have been schools, violence has been occurring within them, and as a result of them. While existing data on school violence indicate that violence did increase through much of the 1900s, research data regarding violence in schools are limited prior to the middle of the 20th century (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Therefore, the early history of school violence is known largely through archival records and anecdotes (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Reviewing the history of school violence is important because it provides information on how this problem has developed and changed over the course of time in response to varying social conditions. This history also provides some level of understanding of the impact it has had on those involved. In addition, being acquainted with the history of school violence offers insight into what has been successful as opposed to what has been unsuccessful in managing and coping with such events in the past. Historically, students and teachers have been both the perpetrators and victims of school violence (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005).

Early evidence of student violence. Student initiated school violence can be categorized into four different types: acts of rebellion, acts of anger, acts of protest, and random acts of violence (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Student violence in all four categories has been documented throughout history. Midlarsky and Klain (2005) indicated that bringing weapons to school is not a new phenomenon. European students from the 17th century were usually armed; they dueled with pistols, fought one another, beat their teachers, and rioted in the streets (Midlarksy & Klain, 2005). It should not be

surprising that it was difficult to find teachers to staff the schools during this time period.

Violence in the schools continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. During the

Industrial Revolution, students in universities engaged in violent protests that included

riots and picket lines, standing up against perceived injustices in the current educational

system (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Following the prosperity of the 1920s, the Great

Depression saw a decrease in levels of school violence, likely due to the fact that many

children were forced to leave school and work (Newman & Newman, 1980).

It was in the 1960s that the term "school violence" (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005,

p. 44) was coined as a result of the growing problem of violence in schools in the United

States. Midlarsky and Klain indicated that during this time assaults on teachers

increased, there were more weapon offenses occurring, and a significant number of

student deaths were reported. Racism and civil rights clashes caused further frustration,

reaching climax with public demonstrations and riots (Newman & Newman, 1980).

Newman and Newman (1980) noted that violent gangs present in American schools

during the 1970s were also responsible for some of the crime and deviant behaviour that

occurred in the schools. Canadian literature on school violence during this time is sparse.

Violence continued through the 1980s and 1990s. During this period, one of the

most infamous cases of school violence in the United States was the Littleton, Colorado,

massacre of 1999 (Stancato, 2003). In Canada, Albertans were then stunned when only 8

days following the Columbine incident, a similar school violence tragedy rocked Taber, a

small southern Alberta community ("10 Years After Taber," 2009). Jason Lang (17 years

old), son of reverend Dale Lang and his wife Diane, was killed in this violent episode,

and another student, Shane Christmas (17 years old), was seriously injured ("10 Years

After Taber," 2009). Aside from the more publicized incidents of school violence, Canadian research statistics from the 1990s highlighted the fact that there was mounting concern among teachers over the increase in verbal and physical assaults in schools and the increase numbers of abusive students (MacDougall, 1993). Such incidents and concerns did not stop at the end of the 20th century. School violence on all levels of severity continued in Canada and the United States into the 21st century (Maag & Urbina, 2007; "Two Shooting Spree Victims," 2006).

It is important to reiterate at this point that school violence has throughout the years occurred across both Canada and the United States, although typically what has happened in the United States has been far more publicized. Very few North American locations, if any, could declare that they are not at risk for such incidents, particularly in recent times. However, school violence is a phenomenon that reflects the social, political, economic, and cultural situation of each individual area at a specific period in time and, therefore, it is important to view Canada's struggle independently from other countries such as the United States, who deal with different mitigating factors. Unfortunately, research data on the history of Canadian school violence is more limited than American statistics.

Early evidence of teacher violence. It should also be noted that teachers have long exhibited violent behaviour. This is addressed because today's teachers may experience incidents of school violence perpetrated by other teachers as well as by students, parents, and other sources. Punishment continues to be debated as a strategy for dealing with and preventing school violence (Breulin, 2006; Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Corporal punishment, the inflicting of pain as penalty for an offense, has long been seen

as a way to create better people (Hyman & Perone, as cited in Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). In the ancient world, it was not unusual for teachers to whip children when they demonstrated laziness or were caught daydreaming (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). According to Midlarsky and Klain (2005), in Pre-Columbian America, the Inacs beat students who disobeyed, even though only the wealthiest class attended school. In the colonial period, teachers spent the majority of their time maintaining order, as opposed to imparting knowledge (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Religion and obedience were emphasized over and above academics. Teachers were hired based on their flawless character, rather than on their level of education or interest in teaching.

During the Industrial Revolution, children were beginning to be treated differently, and the value of a more intelligent society was being noted (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). States began to make education mandatory, and teachers were being trained in education and classroom management (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). During this time corporal punishment was still accepted; however, it was seen as a last resort. Although the majority of modern institutions no longer support the use of corporal punishment, in some areas of the world it is still considered an acceptable means of punishment for disobedient acts in the classroom (Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Many argue that corporal punishment should be completely abolished, as it is unnecessary and even gratuitous, fuelling further violence in the school environment (Crews & Counts, as cited in Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). With or without corporal punishment, violence in schools has been occurring for centuries, and both students and teachers have at times been the perpetrators and the victims.

Violence in schools is not a new phenomenon, it has occurred on some level throughout the history of education. Brener et al. (1999) indicated that the number of violent acts in schools decreased or at the very least remained stable during the last decade of the 20th century, while other research suggests that violent acts have increased (Carter & Stewin, 1999; MacDougall, 1993); regardless, acts of violence that continue to occur are becoming increasingly dangerous and severe (Williams & Corvo, 2005), highlighting the importance of this topic. While in the 1940s teachers reported noise, littering, and gum chewing as the most important school problems in the United States (Denmark, Krauss, Wesner, Midlarsky, & Gielen, 2005), today's teachers are facing far more serious issues. School violence is composed of a large array of aggressive and dangerous behaviours and, therefore, there is little agreement on what defines school violence. For the purpose of this research, school violence has been defined using the definition from the report on *Violence Against British Columbia Teachers* (Lyon & Douglas, 1999) as, "Any threatened, attempted, or actual harm to a person or persons" (p. 5) within a school setting.

Typology of School Violence

Today, when most people hear the term school violence what immediately comes to mind are images of the numerous mass murders that have occurred in schools across North America in recent years. However, the phrase school violence is used to describe a large range of behaviours. These behaviours include: verbal insults, name calling, and rude gestures (Lyon & Douglas, 1999), bullying (Fekkes et al., 2005), property damage (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994), physical fighting (Carter & Stewin, 1999), physical assault (Astor et al., 1999), gang and racial violence (Joong & Ridler, 2005),

hazing and initiation (Hoover & Pollard, 2000), sexual assault and abuse (Carter & Stewin, 1999), stabbings (Astor et al., 1999), suicide and homicide (Schonfeld, 2006), as well as the recent trend, cyberbullying (Keith & Martin, 2005).

School violence impacts everyone involved in the school setting including: administrators, teachers, support staff (such as counsellors, school bus drivers, and custodians), students, and parents to different degrees. In this section the different types of school violence that occur and who are impacted by these types of violence are outlined. The types of violence teachers are most likely to face are also highlighted. It is important to discuss the many different forms of violence occurring in schools because one of the purposes of this study is to clearly identify and understand the specific types of school violence that rural Alberta teachers are currently facing.

School violence, for the sake of this discussion, will be roughly classified into the three different subtypes that were used in data collection. The three subtypes are: physical violence, nonphysical violence, and sexual violence (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994). These three categories were developed for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's (1994) report entitled *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers.*

Physical violence. The first category of school violence that is examined is physical violence. Physical violence includes contact, either harmful or with the intention to harm, against another person or against the other person's family, as well as willful damage to the person's property (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994). In analyzing the numerous Canadian surveys on violence in schools that were conducted in the early 1990s, MacDougall (1993) identified a number of common themes. One such theme was that teachers reported that they were the targets of verbal violence more

frequently than physical violence; however, an additional commonality in these surveys was a mounting concern amongst teachers over the increase in physical assaults in schools. The following forms of school violence would be considered physical violence: physical assault and physical fighting, bullying, gang and racial violence, hazing and initiation, stabbings and shootings, suicide, and personal property damage.

Physical assault and physical fighting. Physical assault can be broken down into two categories: assault causing physical injury and assault with serious physical injury. Assault with physical injury is defined by the New York Safe Schools Against Violence in Education (SAVE) Act (as cited in Hevesi, 2005) as "intentionally or recklessly causing physical injury with or without a weapon" (p. 38), where "physical injury means impairment of physical condition or pain" (p. 38), such as a scrape, cut, or bruise that does not involve risk of death or disability. Assault with serious physical injury, on the other hand, involves intentionally or recklessly causing serious physical harm or injury to another person with or without a weapon, where serious injury indicates a physical injury with the possible result of death, disfigurement, or impairment (Hevesi, 2005).

Statistics on assaults and fighting in schools may well be underestimated as these acts of violence are often dealt with internally and never reach the criminal justice system. McConnell and McKeen (as cited in Carter & Stewin, 1999) reported that crime statistics for the Province of Alberta revealed that between 1986–1987 and 1992–1993 youth crimes had risen rapidly, assaults with weapons rose 144% to 491, and minor assaults rose 120% to 1240. Astor et al. (1999) provided accounts of incidents of physical fights and assaults that their research participants had witnessed. Such statements included: "Some girls rode up in a car and jumped out and had like these little

sticks or bats or whatever you call them . . . and they jumped these two girls" (p. 17), and "a boy from our school tried to run over a person from another school" (p. 17).

As the accounts above describe, frequently, incidents of assaults and physical fighting are student on student; however, this is not always the case. Evidence indicates that individuals employed in the education field are relatively vulnerable to assault (Schonfeld, 2006). Schonfeld (2006) pointed out that studies of workers' compensation claims and employer injury reports indicated that employees in the field of education are assaulted at higher rates than members of most other occupational groups. In the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's (1994) survey on the abuse of teachers, the following illustration of physical violence against a teacher was provided:

> I've been sworn at and slapped and kicked and hit and degraded. . . . I was beaten up once pretty good with the board off of a fence, by the brother of one of my students, for not including her in a class car wash. (p. 8)

A second teacher described her experience with physical violence, "During my second year at this school, I was hit by a student and had my life and house threatened by her and another student" (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's, 1994, p. 8).

Moreover, the very high rate of assaults on school bus drivers is also concerning, as the majority of the drivers' assailants attend school and, therefore, put other students and staff at risk. An extreme case of violence on a bus driver occurred in Cumberland City, Tennessee, in March of 2005. A school bus driver was shot and killed while driving a school bus carrying 24 students. The driver had reported the 14-year-old male student who committed the crime to administrators for chewing tobacco on the bus ("Boy, 14, charged," 2005).

Bullying of students. Bullying is discussed here, in the physical violence section, because bullying often includes physical violence in addition to nonphysical forms of violence. Given that bullying has been named one of the most common and dangerous forms of school violence, there is a need to understand it, and to be able to define what behaviours it consists of (Elinoff, Chafouleas, & Sassu, 2004). Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour, and can be described as a situation in which an individual is repeatedly exposed to negative actions on the part of one or more individuals (Elinoff et al., 2004). An additional criterion is an imbalance of power; the individual who is exposed to the bullying has difficulty defending him or herself.

There are four common forms of bullying, the first being verbal bullying. Verbal bullying includes: name calling, teasing, rumour spreading, threats, and referring to ones culture, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation inappropriately (Government of Alberta, Education, 2011). The second type of bullying is social bullying, which involves: mobs, scapegoating, exclusion from groups, humiliation, or public displays used to put other individuals down (Government of Alberta, Education, 2011). The third form of bullying is physical bullying, which fits into the assault or physical fighting category, in which an individual is hit, poked, pinched, pushed, kicked, chased, shoved, or coerced (Fekkes et al., 2005). Finally, the last type of bullying is cyberbullying (using technology to bully). Cyberbullying is a recent trend in Canada; it has evolved over the last few years due to increasing access to the Internet (Gibson, 2010). Cyberbullying is discussed later on in this chapter.

Joong and Ridler (2005) examined Canadian students' and teachers' perceptions of school violence and concluded that the primary cause of school violence from the

perspective of both was bullying. Both males and females are involved in bullying; however, the bullying tactics that they employ differ. Boys are more likely than girls to suffer from direct types of bullying (i.e., being beaten up, threatened, and stolen from), while girls were slightly more likely to face indirect forms, such as being lied about or excluded from a group (Baldry & Farrington, 1999). Female bullies tend to engage in more subtle, covert, and manipulative behaviour and, therefore, tend to escape the attention of school personnel (Borg, 1999). This type of bullying is very dangerous and harmful and should not be overlooked.

Both boys and girls tend to be bullied by children who are in the same class as them (Baldry & Farrington, 1999) or who are in higher grades (Borg, 1999), with the most common places for bullying to occur being: the classroom, hallways, bathrooms, or school playground (Baldry & Farrington, 1999; Borg, 1999). It is surprising that two of the most common places for bullying, the classroom and the playground, are two places in which children are supposed to be under supervision (Borg, 1999). The majority of bullies (53%) victimize on their own, while a close second (40%) bully with the help of a group, and lastly (33%) bully with a single friend (Borg, 1999). Today, bullying is especially pertinent, as more and more young people are committing suicide and citing bullying as the main reason.

Bullying of teachers. Bullying is also a concern for teachers, although academic literature on the subject is scarce. In a review of a number of education databases, very few academic articles were found on the subject of teachers being bullied. Articles that related bullying and teachers discussed two things, teachers bullying students (Chapell et al., 2004) and the role of the teacher in understanding, identifying, and preventing

bullying between students (Mishna, Scarello, Pepler, & Wiener, 2005; Stockdale, Hangaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002). However, when you perform a search on the Internet, it is easy to locate a dozen news stories and articles on the horrific consequences of bullying behaviour towards teachers. Teachers are taking sick leave, seeking counselling for stress, and even resigning as a result of bullying behaviour (Hartjes, 2007; Smol, 2008).

Teachers face the harmful effects of bullying from a number of different sources: students, students' parents or guardians, coworkers, and superiors. The most prevalent form of bullying against teachers is carried out by students. The *Bullying in the Workplace* (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005) survey, conducted using the input of three of Ontario's teachers' unions, identified that 4 out of every 10 teachers reported having been bullied by their students. Of the teachers who had been bullied by students, 82% had been subjected to repeated class disruptions or disrespectful behaviour; 41% had their personal belongings or property vandalized; 27% had been threatened or physically assaulted on more than one occasion; 16% were persistently verbally abused; 11% were subjected to repeated racial, sexual, and religious slurs; and 10% experienced repeated attempts at intimidation (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005). Teachers who worked in rural communities were more likely to be bullied by students than teachers working in large communities (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005). This finding is important, as there is a misconception that school violence does not occur as frequently in rural areas as it does in urban educational settings. According to the survey, bullying by students was more likely to affect those who teach intermediate grades (Grades 7 through 9).

Unfortunately, it is not just students who are bullying teachers, parents are also participating in this destructive behaviour. Statistics from the *Bullying in the Workplace Survey* (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005) identified that 30% of teachers had been bullied by a parent or guardian, and of those teachers who had been bullied, 77% were threatened that they would be reported to a school administrator or to the local school board. Slightly less than one half of teachers surveyed indicated that parents had resorted to the tactic of repeatedly disrupting classes or showing disrespectful behaviour towards them. Of the teachers who had been bullied by parents or guardians 30% indicated that they were subjected to repeated attempts at intimidation, while 20% encountered persistent verbal abuse, 11% had been threatened physically or assaulted on more than one occasion, another 11% had been subject to repeated malicious lies spread about them, 2% had personal property vandalized, and 1% had been threatened by email or over the Internet (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005). A testimonial from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) described one teacher's experience of bullying by a parent:

> One parent made my life miserable and spread malicious gossip. . . . Another
> parent has been dissatisfied with all of us because of [his child's performance]
> and has harassed all of us at one time or another on the telephone, at interviews,
> on the street. He has maligned us to other staff members, support staff, board
> members, administrators, etc. (p. 10)

Bullying by a colleague is the least frequent of the four ways in which teachers are bullied. In the *Bullying in the Workplace* (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005) survey, less than one in seven teachers reported being bullied by a

colleague. This type of bullying is not dependent on the grade being taught or the gender of the teacher. Finally, bullying by a superior is the last form of bullying a teacher may encounter. Bullying by a superior is reported by approximately one in four teachers (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005). This form of bullying is most likely to occur outside urban schools, with the most common tactic being repeated intimidation and pressure by the administration for the teacher to change schools.

Gang and racial violence. In Joong and Ridler's (2005) study on perceptions of school violence, the researchers identified that one of the top causes of school violence from the student's perspective was racial conflict. Students and teachers also identified the existence of gangs in schools as a concern. A gang is defined as a group of individuals consorting together to engage in unlawful behaviours (Clements & Sova, 2000). According to Clements and Sova (2000) there has been increasing gang violence in western Canada in recent years, with activity being led by such gangs as the Indian Posse, Deuce, and the Manitoba Warriors.

Students as young as 8 years of age are being recruited into gangs; schools should not be denying that this type of violence exists. Clements and Sova (2000) provided an excellent example of how gang violence becomes school violence by describing an incident that happened to one of the authors growing up in Winnipeg in the early 1970s. "Suddenly, a dozen gang members surrounded me; I was punched in the jaw and my canvas bag of books was ripped off my shoulder" (Clements & Sova, 2000, p. 130). In this situation, three teachers intervened, and the situation was deescalated; however, this type of action puts those who intervene at risk for violence as well. Teachers are typically the ones that are expected to intervene, therefore, are also at risk.

Hazing and initiation. According to Hoover and Pollard (2000), all individuals who are part of a group are at risk for hazing and initiation. Hoover and Pollard found that among American high school students surveyed, 48% of those who belonged to a group reported being subjected to hazing activities, 43% reported being subjected to humiliating activities, and 30% reported performing potentially illegal acts as part of their initiation. What is concerning about these activities is that a large number of those surveyed stated that they would not report this activity because they did not feel that adults would deal with it well, or because they did not see the activity as a problem, but rather as fun and exciting (Hoover & Pollard, 2000). According to Hoover and Pollard, this type of activity is also concerning because it begins at a young age and usually carries on throughout one's life. These types of violent, humiliating, and dangerous experiences can cause serious physical and emotional harm to those affected.

In August 2009, an incident of hazing and initiation occurred in Sedgewick, a small rural community in central Alberta. Seventeen high school students were issued one month expulsions after they admitted to duck taping and striking approximately 30 Grade 10 students with makeshift paddles at a bush party (Loyie, 2009). The students were informed that they would be permitted to return to school in October if they met certain conditions of reinstatement (Loyie, 2009). One of these conditions was the understanding that any form of intimidation would not be tolerated, which Loyie (2009) indicated included threats made verbally or technologically through texting or the use of such sites as Facebook (2011) or Twitter (2011).

Although hazing and initiation are probably somewhat less common for teachers then for students, a teacher who is new to a school may experience these types of

behaviours at the hands of other staff members, administrators, or more likely students.

A teacher who is new to a school may end up teaching the worst subjects, with the

hardest students, and in the most difficult environments, often with little support or

acceptance. In addition, students often enjoy testing a new teacher's limits through

misbehaviour and pranks. This could be especially troubling for new teachers if they are

not properly prepared to manage and cope with these testing behaviours.

Stabbing and shootings. Stabbings and shootings are related to many other

domains of school violence, such as assaults and fighting, as well as racial and gang

violence. Stabbings and shootings, both of which have been highly publicized, are a risk

for anyone that attends or works in a school setting. Astor et al. (1999) provided an

account of school violence that involved a stabbing incident, "We had a terrible fight last

year, it was after a basketball game, a couple of people got stabbed . . . it was bad"

(p. 17). A teacher in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey provided an

account of gun violence: "I've had a .22 pointed at me in the school yard" (p. 8).

Suicide. Although the rates of suicidal deaths at school or those due to school

violence are unacceptable, Schonfeld (2006) suggested that youth are still safer in school

than out of school. Suicide in youth has recently been linked to persistent bullying, in

addition to cases of homicidal or suicidal behaviour, during which an individual or

number of individuals murder others before taking their own life. A few cases of such

incidents were previously mentioned. One particularly well known case is that of the

Columbine tragedy (Stancato, 2003). The nature of suicide suggests the serious

implications for all those exposed to such a tragedy. Teachers and other school

employees are also effected by suicide in their own personal lives, their need to be aware

of students who are at risk, and their ability to deal with such circumstances should they occur in their school (Wastell & Shaw, 1999). This can have a significant impact on one's mental health and ability to function effectively in one's work environment.

Personal property damage. Damage to personal property is a relatively common but often overlooked form of physical school violence. Many fail to recognize that damaging personal property is violence, and that it can have a considerable impact on an individual's mental health and environmental satisfaction. In the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey, damage to property in the last year was reported by 12% of teachers surveyed. The following is an account of one of the teachers surveyed:

> I had someone pour a litre of paint on my white car [it caused] $800 damage, (no one found out about it [but I] suspect a student from school). I have personally experienced abuse against my property almost every Halloween for 25 years. This always has a considerable effect on my morale (especially since some parents seem to support such behaviour). A number of incidents of vehicles driving on my lawn have happened at other times. It is very discouraging to find that the RCMP seemed to regard this as harmless pranks in most cases. (p. 9)

Another teacher from the survey also described experiencing property damage: "My vehicle has taken repeated punishment from students, my home has taken repeated punishment from students. Insurance doesn't cover the damage. I pay" (p. 9)! One last teacher's account was as follows: "Every night the place I live in has been under attack from certain kids who throw eggs. My car also comes under attack" (p. 9).

Table 1

Verbal Abuse Reported by Teachers who Responded to the Saskatchewan Teachers'

Federation Survey

Teachers' Comments
"I had a yelling parent several times, one time a pencil was thrown at me. One or two days ago, a parent screamed at another teacher in the hallway, continued threats in the office disrupted school" (p. 10). "One problem that a number of teachers at our school have is parents phoning them at home with calls that are very seldom necessary and are often verbally abusive or angry in tone. It seems that the parents feel the need to ventilate their anger immediately. This causes the teacher to feel constantly on guard even at home. I feel that my privacy has been invaded" (p. 10). "I was verbally attacked and slandered all over town by a member of the school board who called me several very nasty names "little bitch, slut. . ." etc. Because of her son's performance in failing my class" (p. 10).

Note. Participant comments from *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers* (p. 10), by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994, Saskatoon, Canada: Author. Copyright 1994 by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

Nonphysical violence. Nonphysical violence is the second category of school violence addressed in this section. Nonphysical school violence includes such acts as: personal insults or name calling (either spoken in person, on the telephone, through

letters, or on the Internet); remarks about someone meant to harm the person's

reputations or relationship; rude or obscene gestures; stalking behaviour; and threats of

physical violence or other harm to the person or the person's family (Saskatchewan

Teachers' Federation, 1994). Bullying, which has already been discussed, is one of the

most common types of nonphysical school violence. Additional forms of nonphysical

school violence are now discussed.

Personal insults and name calling. In the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

(1994) survey, the most common type of abuse was verbal, including personal insults or

name calling, either in person or through telephone calls, letter, or notes. A total of 25%

of the teachers who responded to the survey reported this type of abuse. Several of these

accounts are presented in Table 1. Sometimes verbal abuse can be of the chronic type.

Although the nature of each act is not in itself serious, the chronic pattern of acts is what

makes the behaviour abusive.

Cyberbullying of students. There are a number of forms of school violence that

have increased significantly over the last 10 years. One of these trends involves society's

increasing reliance on technology, and that is the occurrence of cyberbullying (Gibson,

2010). Cyberbullying involves using technology to support deliberate, repeated, and

hostile behaviours by an individual or group with the intention to harm others (Belsey, as

cited in Bullying.org Canada Inc., n.d.). Such behaviours may include: text messaging,

paging, e-mailing, and the use of websites, on-line voting booths, and blogs, as well as

the ability to send pictures and even live videos of unsuspecting individuals in the school

locker room (Government of Alberta, Education, 2011). Cyberbullying is unique in that

today's youth are always connected to the Internet and other forms of technology in ways

that are often unknown by adults and are, therefore, unsupervised (Keith & Martin, 2005). Keith and Martin (2005) suggested that this can make it hard for parents and school administration to both understand the nature of the problem and to then combat it.

Traditionally an individual's home was a place where he or she could escape bullying. However, with advances in technology the home is no longer safe from such violence. Today's bullies use technology to make the lives of their victims miserable 24 hours a day. Online screen names and email addresses can hide an individual's true identity and make it much more difficult to identify bullies in cyberspace (Keith & Martin, 2005). It is far easier to bully someone who you do not have to face. Keith and Martin (2005) suggested that without boundaries or consequences children are using technology to vent in ways that can become extremely dangerous and destructive.

Cyberbullying of teachers. In the United Kingdom, the problem of teachers being bullied by mobile phone, email, or over the Internet is becoming a serious problem (Pytel, 2007). It is not just students who are engaging in this type of behaviour but fellow teachers resort to this form of harassment as well. In a Catholic Toronto High School 19 students were suspended for making sexually explicit comments about their principal on an Internet site (Pytel, 2007). A number of additional teachers from the same school were ranked in a less than good light on RateMyTeachers.com (Pytel, 2007).

Stalking behaviour. Stalking behaviour could be described as the repeated and persistent unwanted communication between two people in which one of the individuals intends to inflict fear or harm upon the other. Stalking is often a component of bullying or cyberbullying and is at times associated with personal insults and name calling. Students have been known to become the victims of stalking behaviour perpetrated by

students and other teachers. However, teachers are also highly likely to become victims as well. Professional victims (such as health care providers, lawyers, and teachers) who are often in contact with lonely, unhealthy, and angry people are particularly vulnerable (Mullen & Pathý, 2001). According to Cadena (2007), the stalking of a teacher by a parent is quite common. While most stalking occurs via the phone or Internet, some teachers are verbally or physically stalked in person-to-person contact (Cadena, 2007). Teachers have even reported that students and parents have followed them home and threatened their family and property (Cadena, 2007). This could be a bigger problem in rural communities where teachers and their families are easier to locate.

Sexual violence. The final category of school violence is sexual violence. Sexual violence includes sexual assault and sexual harassment. Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature imposed on another individual (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994). Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance, request for sexual favours, or other contact of a sexual nature. Sexual violence in the schools is discussed in the following sections.

Sexual assault and harassment. Dating violence, rape, and issues of sexual harassment in schools have been appearing more often in literature on school violence (Astor et al., 1999). Astor et al. (1999) provided an example of a student's account of such an incident: "I seen plenty of guys down there calling females from the end of the hallway . . . calling females, like come here you know. They won't rape you, but they'll harass you to have sex with them" (p. 17). Another female recounts a personal experience, "I've told plenty of times of guys messing with me and you know they say, 'I'll talk to him.' I mean talking ain't going to do nothing cause they gonna keep doing it"

(Astor et al., 1999, p. 17). The majority of sexual abuse and assaults in school settings

are student–student interactions, but this is not always the case. Additional, types of

sexual behaviours occur in school environments, including: student–teacher interactions

in which the student acts out against the teacher or, oppositely, teacher–student

interactions in which the sexual act is perpetrated by the teacher against the student

(Krauss, Krauss, O'Day, & Rente, 2005), sexual assault or abuse occurring between two

teachers, between a teacher and a parent, or between a teacher and someone in a

nonteaching role or administrative position within the school. Taken from the

Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey, the comments presented in Table 2

illustrate the different types of sexual assault and sexual harassment that teachers have

been subjected to.

Table 2

Teacher's Comments Illustrating Different Types of Sexual Assault and Harassment

Teachers' Comments
"Most cases of the abuse were by males! The particular student has a history of harassing female teachers but never male teachers" (p. 11).
"One student remarked on my pregnancy and wanted to know who 'got between my legs'" (p. 11).

Table 2 (continued)

Teachers' Comments

"I feel that if I had been a man, the parent would have been much more hesitant to

insult and swear at me" (p. 11).

"It is solely the female teachers who are a target of this one male teacher's abuse"

(p. 11).

"Males have become easy targets for slanderous remarks made about them especially

in regard to their alleged perversity" (p. 12).

Note. Participant comments from *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers* (pp. 11–12), by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994, Saskatoon, Canada: Author. Copyright 1994 by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

Violence in Rural Schools

There is a vast array of studies that examine the impact of school violence on

students in urban settings, and with the increased media attention on violent events in

rural communities, research is pooling on the effects of school violence on rural students

as well. There have been a few attempts to understand the perceptions of teachers in

relations to school violence in the urban context (Smith & Smith, 2006). However, even

with the increased recognition that school violence is occurring everywhere (Ting et al.,

2002), few studies have been located that discussed the impact of school violence on

teachers working in rural settings. This research will aid in filling this gap. In this

section literature is presented that demonstrates why school violence in rural settings should be considered a major concern.

Concern over school violence in the rural setting. A Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey on the abuse of teachers found that abuse is generally equal in urban and rural areas, while Schroth and Fishbaugh (2000) suggested that many rural schools, particularly those located near larger cities, have even worse violence problems than the average urban school. Property damage in particular was found to occur more frequently in rural schools (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994). Petersen, Beekley, Speaker, and Pietrzak (as cited in Schroth & Fishbaugh, 2000) discovered that when rural teachers were asked to rank their greatest concerns, results indicated that respondents were fearful of verbal and physical threats or attacks from students and parents. Petersen et al. also discovered that nearly half of the respondents had experienced some form of violence in their school at least once in the past 2 years, and that respondents believed that student on student violent behaviour was increasing in their schools. Rural schools lack the resources and funding to implement the safety features that urban schools are able to access (Schroth & Fishbaugh, 2000). Rural schools do not have local police services, lack security officers, and function in smaller spaces, which may mean more difficulty in avoiding or escaping possible threatening situations.

Seaton (2007) listed a number of reasons why rural students are at an increased risk to commit acts of violence. The first reason Seaton suggested is that rural students are more likely than their urban counterparts to face conditions of isolation. Rural students are isolated by physical distance and, therefore, have limited opportunities to establish relationships with a wide network of peers and supportive adults. In other

words, there are only a select number of people to befriend; if an individual does not get along with community members, he or she has few other options. If you live in a small rural community it is difficult to simply change schools when things are not going well, and all recreational activities outside of school that one might attend to meet other people are likely to include the same people as the student attends school with.

The second reason that rural students are at a greater risk to commit violent forms of behaviour in school is due to the overlapping relationships that occur in small towns (Seaton, 2007). Rural students who are labelled early on may find these stigmas difficult to shed. Knowledge of a student's prior school experiences is easily communicated amongst teachers and peers, and they are then faced with the opportunity to make judgments based on this information prior to personal experience with the student (Seaton, 2007). Most importantly, there is the recognition that students in rural settings are likely to have increased access to dangerous weapons such as guns, as activities such as hunting are more popular and accepted in rural areas (Seaton, 2007). Knowledge of this fact alone indicates the need to be aware of the possibility of rural school violence, and the impact that the accessibility of guns might have on the perceptions teachers have of their safety while on the job in rural communities.

Another issue with rural communities is the lack of anonymity that teachers have outside of the school environment. In most small towns and cities everyone is well aware of where their teachers live, who their friends and family are, and where they frequent. This puts teachers at a greater risk for stalking and other violent behaviours. In the *Bullying in the Workplace* (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2005) study,

teachers who worked in rural communities were found more likely to be bullied than their urban counterparts.

The Psychological Impact of School Violence on Teachers

In a search of academia and media almost all literature and information on school violence focused on the impact of violence by students and against students. People know that students are often the victims because the media tells them so. Although there is limited information about the impact of school violence on teachers, it appears that teachers may be up to three times more likely to be the victims of violent crimes in schools than students (Kondrasuk et al., 2005). The information that does exist on the effects of school violence on teachers will be presented in the following section. The psychological impact on the teaching profession will be outlined, followed by information on the effect that school violence has on teachers' mental health and functioning. Finally, the section will conclude by identifying the reasons why addressing the impact of school violence on rural teachers is so important, despite the lack of research that has been conducted thus far.

Psychological Impact of the Teaching Profession

Among high risk professions, teachers are considered to be subject to a particularly high level of stress on the job. When teachers' mental health is compared to that of other occupational groups, results indicate higher levels of mental fatigue among teachers, including such things as psychological distress and burnout (Kovess-Masfety, Rios-Seidel, & Sevilla-Dedieu, 2007). Some studies have found that factors associated with psychological distress differ based on teaching level (Finlay-Jones, 1986). Kovess-Masfety et al. (2007) found, however, that for females, differences between teaching

levels were insignificant. The occupational factors that they discovered to be more relevant were the support received from colleagues and the school administration (Schonfeld, 2001), and the fear of physical abuse or verbal attacks while on the job. Kovess-Masfety et al. (2007) found that female teachers seemed to be more sensitive to the misbehaviour of students. This was demonstrated by the increased impact that their fears of verbal or physical abuse by their students, or by their students' parents, had on their mental health. This result was even significant for teachers who worked with very young children.

Schonfeld (2001) suggested two explanations that link teachers working conditions with psychological stress. The first condition is that the school environment in which some teachers work is too uncontrollable for them to develop a sense of work-related mastery, which in turn leads to burnout. Obtaining a sense of competence in one's profession is extremely important both to one's mental health and to one's job satisfaction. The second condition relates to "mobbing" (Schonfeld, 2001, p. 134), which the author described as the bullying and other aggressive social interactions that some individuals, in a group, direct at others. These types of interactions occur in numerous professions, but typically not on the day-to-day basis, as it does in the school setting. For teachers, mobbers tend to be students (Schonfeld, 2001), but they can also include: administrators, colleagues, and students' parents.

Schonfeld (2001) concluded that the often verbally assaultive or mobbing nature of many school environments has negative effects on educators, particularly with regard to stress and job satisfaction. These effects are heightened by the fact that the threatening events that teachers encounter are often unpredictable or unanticipated, outside of their

control, as well as being physically draining. Following academic training, few individuals entering professions expect to be met with disrespect, insult, and violence as everyday working conditions (Schonfeld, 2001).

The impact of violence on health and functioning. There is a growing concern amongst teachers in regards to personal safety, as the number of teachers reporting experiences with some form of school violence continues to rise. Teachers affected by school violence display similar reactions to other victims of violent crimes; however, they need additional coping mechanisms, as they are unable to avoid reminders of the situation as easily as others (Ting et al., 2002). Ting et al. (2002) recognized that because the violent event occurs on the job, returning to work is be a daily reminder for the victim of the trauma that took place. Interacting with and building trusting relationships with students may become more difficult if the trauma is not appropriately dealt with (Ting et al., 2002).

A teacher does not even have to directly experience physical violence to be concerned for their own personal safety in their professional setting. Studies support the notion that simply being threatened or witnessing aggressive violence between others in the school environment, without actually being assaulted, can have adverse effects on teachers (Schonfeld, 2006). Schonfeld (2001) determined that simply being exposed to difficult school environments adversely effected the teacher's job satisfaction, self-esteem, motivation to continue the profession, and levels of depressive symptoms. Being exposed can even mean listening to others describe their experiences of school violence. This indirect level of harm is known as vicarious traumatization.

In relation to school violence, teachers' psychological well being is also threatened by their decisions whether or not they intervene in potentially violent and dangerous situations. Teachers face intense pressure to make these difficult decisions, and face even more serious scrutiny when they do. According to Behre, Astor, and Meyer (2001), teachers may choose not to intervene because they fear personal harm and liability, or because they do not believe that as teachers it is their professional role to intervene. Meyer, Astor, and Behre (2002) discovered that the majority of teachers (i.e., 66%) agreed that female teachers were at a greater risk of injury should they attempt to intervene. However, the majority of teachers supported intervening, despite the belief that female teachers were at higher risk of physical injury (Meyer et al., 2002).

There is also stress on teachers that if they do intervene, their efforts will not be supported by the administration, and they will be risking the beginning of further violent situations, both for the students on whose behalf they intervened and for themselves. Astor, Behre, Wallace, and Fravil (1998) provided an account of a teacher demonstrating such feelings:

> I can't tell you how many fights I see right outside the school gate here [he points to school gates], students beating the crap out of each other, just in front of my office. So what am I supposed to do? If I decide to go out there and break it up, will the vice principal and principal support me, or will they [the students] be back out there 15 minutes after I bring them to the office. (p. 217)

Many teachers also deal with similar stress in reporting violent behaviour. They feel that they will not receive the necessary support, and it will just put them in the position to

receive even more abuse at the hands of their students, colleagues, administrators, or students' parents.

Tuettemann and Punch (1992) determined that psychological distress levels among teachers were disturbingly high. These authors also identified that factors in the school environment were positively associated with this distress (Tuettemann & Punch, 1992). Two of the four identified factors were student misbehaviour and societal expectations. Tuettemann and Punch (1992) also concluded that multiple stressful factors dramatically increased teachers' likelihood of experiencing psychological distress. In other words, the more negative experiences to which teachers are exposed, the greater the likelihood of distress and burnout. Student misbehaviour and social expectations directly relate to the experiences of school violence that are being examined. It seems logical to expand student misbehaviour to include all possible perpetrators of negative actions towards teachers, and societal expectations can be thought of in terms of the pressures of teaching in a small community where most members are familiar with the teacher and critical of his or her actions.

Importance of addressing the impact of school violence on teachers.
According to Smith and Smith (2006), understanding the impact of school violence on teachers is crucial. Teachers play an extremely important role in society, and the need for teachers is great. In the United States, statistics suggest that as many as one out of every three teachers leaves the profession within the first 3 years of teaching (Smith & Smith, 2006). This would seem to suggest that something is occurring within the school environment that is making this profession no longer appealing to those who 3 years earlier were enthusiastic and determined to make a difference. The literature that exists

would seem to indicate that part of the reason this occurs is teachers no longer feel safe on the job, and they are unable to deal with the stress of incessant violent incidents and threat (Kovess-Masfety et al., 2007).

This is an important matter in that our communities still need to attract new individuals to the teaching profession, as well as provide supportive and safe environments for those who are already working within the field (Smith & Smith, 2006). Statistics on the situation in Canada are harder to locate. However, there is little doubt that if the impact of school violence on teachers is not addressed, Canada could soon be facing a significant shortage of qualified and willing educators for Canadian students.

In addition to retaining teachers, there are other important reasons for addressing the impact of school violence on teachers. The first reason is the financial cost. Lyon and Douglas (1999) reported that, based on their study sample, the estimated costs of coverage for British Columbia teachers' violence-related absence from work may reach $5 million each year, although conservative estimates put this figure closer to $2 million annually. The second reason is that experiences of violence typically impact occupational functioning and, therefore, impact the quality of education that students receive. A third reason is that addressing the impact provides insight into how to manage further incidents, as well as ways to prevent such incidents in the future. One further reason for acknowledging the effects of school violence on teachers is to provide them with a chance to report on the experiences; it enables teachers to have influence. Lyon and Douglas (1999) noted that often victims of violence do not report. If teachers begin to recognize that this reported information is important and useful, more teachers will feel

confident opening up about their experiences and more progress will be made in dealing with and preventing violence against teachers.

What Can be Done to Help Teachers Prevent and Cope with Incidents of School Violence?

It should not be surprising that with the increased attention paid to school violence came an outcry from concerned citizens to intervene and prevent these types of tragic incidents from occurring, as well as to develop ways to help those who have been involved in such incidents deal with the situation. Many programs and interventions have been and continue to be developed with no general consensus as to what is most effective. However, what once again seems to have been forgotten is what needs to be done to protect teachers from school violence, and to help them deal with the violent events that they witness or experience, in some schools, on a daily basis. Suspensions and expulsions, school ground safety, and creating better working environments are all areas that have been examined as ways to help teachers deal with school violence. These topics are examined in this section. There are likely many other areas that can be addressed to help protect teachers from violence in the schools, the results of this research study should provide some ideas to explore.

Suspensions and expulsions. Punishment has long been a staple to deter school violence (Breulin, Cimmarusti, Hetherington, & Kinsman, 2006). The most common forms of punishment are usually suspension and expulsion. Teachers' responses to this type of intervention vary from support in all cases, to concern about what happens to students who are suspended or expelled (Astor et al., 1999). One teacher expressed this concern:

> Part of our fear is our knowing that no one gets rid of these kids. They just move from school to school. So, in the middle of the semester when you get a new kid all of a sudden, you know that kid has probably been put out of some other school for carrying a weapon. Astor et al., 1999, p. 28)

Significant concerns obviously exist regarding suspensions and expulsions. Additional reasons for concern are that suspensions are seldom applied uniformly, and that they create increased alienation in students who are already feeling isolated and angry (Breulin et al., 2006).

Safety within the school and on school grounds. Steps can be taken to prevent violence within the school building itself and on the school grounds. Adjusting traffic flow in hallways can decrease the chance students have for adverse encounters (Eisenbraun, 2007). Eisenbraun (2007) also suggested that dividing the entrance and exit of the cafeteria, staggering periods, and increasing staff supervision during high traffic times could help to reduce school violence and protect students, teachers, and additional school employees. Violent acts tend to occur in isolated areas like the ends of hallways and corners of the school yard. It is, therefore, important that the faculty is aware of these areas and that students are prohibited from being around them (Eisenbraun, 2007). Electronic monitoring is another intervention that is often used as a technique to combat school violence. However, the extent to which these devices work is untested (Greene, 2005). Astor et al. (1999) found that in schools with state-of-the-art electronic security systems in place, violence was still a significant problem.

Creating a better working environment for teachers. According to Kovess-Masfety et al. (2007) a better working environment for teachers could be achieved

through programs that impact four essential aspects of school life: the relationship between students and teachers, the level of social support in schools, parental participation in schools (to improve the relationship they or their children have with teachers), and administrative management skills (abilities to support the teaching team). This type of initiative has been adopted and encouraged in some countries and organizations such as the World Health Organization, which promotes schools' efforts to prevent social problems such as violence (Kovess-Masfety et al., 2007).

Conclusions

School violence is not a new phenomenon; it has been documented throughout history. School violence is often misconstrued to consist only of the most violent and horrific crimes, but it is far more encompassing than that. School violence includes all incidents of violent behaviour that occur in schools. Although there is an abundance of research literature on the experiences of school violence from students' perspectives, minimal information exists on how these behaviours impact teachers. There is even less literature discussing the impact on rural teachers. Research suggests that teachers are already facing increased occupational stress and that school violence further increases mental health problems as well as affects teachers' job satisfaction. A discontented teacher means students are not receiving the best education possible. More needs to be done to learn about the types of violence rural Alberta teachers are facing and the psychological impacts of school violence on teachers. As well, ways in which to help teachers prevent and cope with such violence need to be developed. This study is intended to begin to fill in aspects of this perceived gap in the school violence literature.

Chapter 3: Method

This chapter discusses the method used in conducting this study. First, the purpose of the study will be introduced. Secondly the participants, the procedure, the measure, and the method used for the collection and analysis of the research data will be outlined.

Purpose of the Study

Severe forms of school violence receive sizeable amounts of attention, due in large part to the media coverage that follows tragic cases such as those that occurred in Columbine and Taber ("10 Years After Taber," 2009; Stancato, 2003). However, a much smaller amount of consideration is given to the effects of other less deadly forms of school violence, and the impact of such incidents on individuals other than students who might have witnessed or become victim to such events. In particular, little attention is directed towards assessing the types of school violence experienced and the impact of such incidents on teachers. In the early 1990s a number of teachers' associations in Canada carried out surveys on violence in their schools. A common theme that was uncovered was a mounting concern among teachers over the increase of violence in schools. Although educators considered the majority of students relatively well-behaved and respectful, an often-stated perception of teachers at this time was that the number of abusive and violent students was growing (MacDougall, 1993). Despite these interesting results few follow-up reports on violence against teachers have been conducted, and those that do exist have obvious limitations or lack generalizability across various demographics, particularly, rural Alberta.

The results on the effects of violence on school employees in the Kondrasuk et al. (2005) study were limited, due to the fact that the majority of their respondents were administrators and, therefore, were themselves not witnesses of much of the violence that occurred on their schools' property. Kondrasuk et al. suggested that further research was needed on the impact of school violence on employees and that, in doing so, it would be useful to select a more carefully contrived sample, with front-line employees such as teachers as participants. Therefore, the purpose of this research study was to first provide insight into the types of school violence currently being experienced by rural Alberta teachers. Second, the study aids in the better understanding of the effects of such violence on these educators. Furthermore, this study examines teachers' insights on possible ways to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence.

Participants

The target population of this study was rural Alberta teachers. One school division and its teachers were selected as the sample population for this study. This school division was chosen through purposeful sampling. It is located in central Alberta, and includes 37 schools, 10 of which are located within city limits, while the remaining 27 are rural schools. As the focus of this study was on the rural impact, only the 27 schools outside the city limits were included in this study. Of these 27 schools, six are Hutterite colony schools and two are outreach schools. Kindergarten through Grade 12 is represented amongst these 27 rural schools. The grade makeup at each school is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Grades Represented in the 27 Rural Schools Included in this Study

No. of Schools	Grades Represented
6	K – 12
5	1 – 9
3	1 – 12
1	K – 4
1	K – 6
1	5 – 12
1	7 – 12
7*	K – 9
2**	10 – 12

Note. K = Kindergarten; * the number 7 represents six colony schools and one additional school; ** two outreach schools.

The school division requested that the researcher, contact the principal from each school to receive permission to conduct the research with the teachers in his or her school. Some of the principals granted full permission to send the survey to all teachers in the school, while others requested that the survey be sent to them and that they forward the survey on to teachers who expressed interest in receiving it. Therefore, the exact number of teachers who received the survey could not be obtained; however, the researcher estimates the total surveys sent to be in excess of 200. All teachers within the schools were invited to participate regardless of how many hours a week they worked or

the number of subjects or grades they taught. From the approximately 200 invitations to participate that were extended, a total of 68 completed surveys were completed and returned, for an approximated response rate of 34%. This response rate is similar to the rates in both *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers* published in 1994 by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the *Violence Against British Columbia Teacher*s report published in 1999 by Lyon and Douglas, with rates of 38.3% and 34.4% respectively.

Rural teachers working in the specific school division selected were surveyed. In order to access this sample the researcher first contacted the superintendent of the school division to seek permission to complete the study in his division. A formal letter was sent seeking the superintendent's consent (Appendix A). Permission was granted with the condition that the researcher contact the principal of each school to obtain his or her consent to conduct the survey using the teachers working within each school. Each principal was contacted either by phone, email, or both in an effort to seek their consent. Most agreed to permit the researcher to contact their teachers personally by email to request permission to participate, but a number of principals requested that the survey be sent to them by email and then they would forward the survey on to teachers in their school who expressed interest in participating.

Once all principals had been contacted, a list of email addresses was constructed. This list included the email addresses of all teachers in the schools at which the principal had consented to the survey being sent to each teacher personally, and the email addresses of the principals in schools who requested that the survey be sent to him or her for distribution to those willing to participate. Due to the fact that in many rural schools the principal teaches classes in addition to his or her administrative duties, many of the

principals were also eligible to complete the survey. Each email address was then sent a

participant recruitment letter outlining the purpose of the survey and requesting

participation (Appendix B). A few weeks following the email of the recruitment letter a

second email was sent to all addresses with a link to the online survey. When

participants clicked on the link they were taken to the participant consent form (Appendix

C). When the participant read and agreed to the conditions of the study he or she was

immediately connected to the research questionnaire (Appendix D). When the participant

had completed the survey it was submitted electronically and data was compiled in a

computer database. Participants were not required to provide identifying data and

therefore the researcher was unaware of which teachers (i.e., email addresses) completed

the survey and which did not.

Participants were given approximately 3 weeks to complete the survey. A few

days prior to the date that the surveys were requested to be completed a reminder email

was sent to all email addresses on the list (Appendix E), as the researcher was unable to

identify who had completed the survey. Following the reminder email the response rate

still remained very low. The researcher looked into the problem by contacting a number

of the principals to determine if they had been receiving the emails. It was discovered

that a number of the mass emails that the researcher had sent were being blocked by the

division's spam protection on their email system. Every email address on the list was

then sent an individual email with the link to the consent form and survey. A 2-week

extension was given to complete the survey. There were 68 completed surveys by the

end of the extended deadline for a response rate of approximately 34%.

Measure

This study was conducted using a survey method. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) described this method of data collection is as "a method of data collection using questionnaires or interviews to collect data from a sample that has been selected to represent a population to which the findings of the data analysis can be generalized" (p. 230). A survey was chosen because the intention of this research was to learn about a specific population by selecting and studying a sample of people who belong to it (Anderson, 1998). The survey used in this study was constructed for gathering data on teachers' experiences of school violence in rural Alberta.

The study's questionnaire entitled, *A Survey of Rural Alberta Teachers' Experiences of School Violence* (Appendix D), was modeled after *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers* published in 1994 by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and aspects of the *Violence Against British Columbia Teacher*s report published in 1999 by Lyon and Douglas from Simon Fraser University. Aspects of questions were borrowed from both of these research studies when designing the survey, and the researcher also included questions constructed for the specific purpose of this research study. The purpose of the questions chosen was to uncover the different types of violence rural teachers are facing, how it psychologically impacts them, and what they believe can be done to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence in the future. The questions were also geared towards understanding rural school violence specifically, as well as how school violence impacts teachers based on different demographical information such as age, gender, years spent teaching, and grades and subjects taught. The questionnaire had five sections: (a) background information, (b) rural Alberta teachers' experiences of school violence,

(c) impact of school violence on rural Alberta teachers, (d) how to help rural Alberta teachers prevent and cope with school violence, and (e) additional comments.

Analysis of Data

All survey questions were closed ended with the exception of when participants were asked to comment in response to a specific question. Data analysis of these closed-ended questions involved calculations of general descriptive statistics were applicable (mean, median, mode, range, and frequency). To determine significant relationships between question responses, chi-square analysis was applied. The likelihood ratio chi-square statistic was chosen over the Pearson chi-square statistic due to instances where large numbers of cells existed with small expected counts. All analyses were completed using the SPSS statistical program (Softonic®, 2011). In regards to the open-ended comment sections, commonalities emerged in participant responses. The responses were coded based on commonalities and separated into appropriate themes. The next chapter outlines the results of the analyzed data from this study.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter the researcher will report on the analysis of the data using both descriptive statistics and likelihood ratio chi-square methods. The data gathered in the 68 completed surveys from this study provided insight into answering the study questions:

1. What types of school violence are rural Alberta teachers facing?

2. What psychological impact does school violence have on teachers in rural Alberta?

3. What can be done to help rural Alberta teachers prevent and cope with incidents of school violence?

Data analysis – Descriptive statistics

Part I: Demographical information. The first section of the survey gathered data on the demographics of the participants. This survey section included nine questions regarding age, gender, total number of years spent teaching, total number of schools taught at, total number of years spent teaching in a rural school, number of years spent teaching at the current school, employment status, current grades taught, and current subjects taught.

Age. There were 68 respondents ranging in *age* from *20 to 64* (see Table 4). The median *age* was *35 to 44 years old.*

Table 4

Question 1: Age of Participants

Age (Years)	*N*	%
20–24	2	2.9
25–34	22	32.4
35–44	22	32.4
45–54	14	20.6
55–64	8	11.8
65 +	0	0.0
Total Responses	68	100.1

Note. The total percentage is not exactly equal to 100% because the percentage values were rounded to one decimal point.

Gender. When asked to indicate their *gender*, 64.7% (*n* = 44) of the sample reported being *female,* while 35.3% (*n* = 24) of the sample stated that they were *male* (see Table 5).

Table 5

Question 2: Gender of Participants

Gender	N	%
Male	24	35.3
Female	44	64.7
Total Responses	68	100.0

Table 6

Question 3: Total Number of Years Spent Teaching

Years Teaching	N	%
Less than 1	1	1.5
1–5	18	26.5
6–10	10	14.7
11–15	11	16.2
16–20	9	13.2
20 or more	19	27.9
Total Responses	68	100.0

Total number of years spent teaching. The respondents were asked to best indicate the *total number of years they had spent teaching*, and these results are presented in Table 6. The *number of years spent teaching* ranged from *less than one* (*n* = 1; 1.5%) to *20 plus years* (*n* = 19; 27.9%). The median *number of years the respondents had spent teaching* was *11 to 15 years*.

Table 7

Question 4: Total Number of Schools Participants Have Taught At

No. of Schools	*N*	%
1, my present	10	14.7
2–3	35	51.5
4–5	15	22.1
6–7	5	7.4
8–9	1	1.5
10 or more	2	2.9
Total Responses	68	100.1

Note. The total percentage is not exactly equal to 100% because the percentage values were rounded to one decimal point.

Total number of schools taught at. Table 7 provides the data obtained when the respondents were asked to indicate *how many schools they had taught at over the course of their teaching career*. The *number of schools taught at* ranged from *1, my present*

school (*n* = 10; 14.7%), to *greater than 10 schools* (*n* = 2; 2.9%). Both the median and mode were *2 to 3 schools* (*n* = 35; 51.5%).

Years spent teaching in a rural school. The survey respondents were asked to indicate *how many years in total they had spent teaching in a rural school.* The results ranged from *less than one year* (*n* = 1; 1.5%) to *more than 20 years* (*n* = 17; 25.0%). The mode was *1 to 5 years* (*n* = 20; 29.4%). This information is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Question 5: Years Spent Teaching in a Rural School

Years Spent in a Rural School	*N*	%
Less than 1	1	1.5
1–5	20	29.4
6–10	14	20.6
11–15	7	10.3
16–20	9	13.2
20 or more	17	25.0
Total Responses	68	100.0

Years spent teaching in present rural school. Table 9 shows the results when participants were asked to indicate *the total number of years that they had been teaching*

in their present rural school. The number of years ranged from the *present year being*

the first (n = 10; 14.7%) to *greater than 10 years (n =* 18; 26.5%). The mode was

greater than 10 years.

Table 9

Question 6: Years Taught at Current School

Years at Current School	*N*	%
This is my first year	10	14.7
2–3	14	20.6
4–5	14	20.6
6–7	3	4.4
8–9	9	13.2
10 or more	18	26.5
Total Responses	68	100.0

Current teaching position. When asked to indicate their *current teaching*

position, 85.3% (*n =* 58) of the sample reported working *full time*, while 11.8% (*n =* 8)

stated that they worked *part time*, and 2.9% (*n =* 2) chose *other* (see Table 10).

Table 10

Question 7: Current Teaching Position

Teaching Position	*N*	%
Full time	58	85.3
Part time	8	11.8
Other	2	2.9
Total Responses	68	100.0

Grade level of current students. The 68 participants were asked to indicate *all applicable grade levels that they were currently teaching*, and the results of this question are presented in Table 11. The most frequently taught level was *Grades 7 to 9*, with 54.5% (*n* = 37) of the sample teaching these classes.

Subjects currently taught. Respondents were asked to indicate *all subjects that they were currently teaching* and the data from this question is presented in Table 12. The most frequently taught subjects were those considered core subjects: *Language Arts/English* (*n* = 46; 67.6%), *Math* (*n* = 45; 66.2%), *Science* (*n* = 37; 54.4%), and *Social Studies* (*n* = 35; 51.5%). The least frequently taught subject was the *Trades* (*n* = 1; 1.5%).

Table 11

Question 8: Grade Level of Current Students Taught

Grade Level	*N*	%
Kindergarten	4	5.9
1–3	26	38.2
4–6	35	51.5
7–9	37	54.4
10–12	28	41.2

Note. *n* = 68. Percentages do not total to 100% because participants selected all of the grade levels applicable to the current studies that they taught.

Table 12

Question 9: Subjects Currently Taught

Subject	*N*	%
Language Arts/English	46	67.6
Other Languages	10	14.7
Trades	1	1.5
Mathematics	45	66.2

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

Subject	N	%
Home Economics	2	2.9
Music	14	20.6
Science	37	54.4
Physical Education	24	35.3
Social Studies	35	51.5
Art	21	30.9
Other	25	36.8

Note. *n* = 68. Percentages do not total to 100% because participants selected all of the current subjects that they taught.

Part II: Rural Alberta teachers' experiences of school violence. Part two of the survey was comprised of 12 questions designed to ascertain the participating teachers' opinions on, and experiences with, school violence. The first set of questions sought to understand whether violence is in fact an issue for rural Alberta teachers. The second half of this section collected information on whether the participants experienced school violence, if so how recently and to what degree, as well as to gather further information regarding the sources of this reported violence. The results of these inquires are following.

Definition of school violence. Table 13 shows the respondents' answers to

Question 10, which asked *whether the definition of school violence provided with the*

survey was similar to how they would have previously defined school violence. Of the 68

who responded, 89.7% (*n* = 61) stated *Yes,* while 5.9% (*n* = 4) replied *No,* and the

remaining 4.4% (*n* = 3) were *Unsure.*

Table 13

Question 10: Study Definition of School Violence versus Personal Definition

Similar Definitions	*N*	%
Yes	61	89.7
No	4	5.9
Unsure	3	4.4
Total Responses	68	100.0

Is school violence an issue? Question 11 asked respondents their opinion on

whether school violence was an issue in their area or not. Table 14 reveals these results.

Of the 68 respondents, 11.8% (*n* = 8) indicated that school violence was a *serious issue,*

48.5% (*n* = 33) reported that it was an *occasional issue,* 38.2% (*n* = 26) stated that it was

a *minor issue,* while only 1.5% (*n* = 1) found that school violence was *not an issue* in his

or her area.

Table 14

Question 11: Is School Violence an Issue?

School violence is:	N	%
Not an issue	1	1.5
A minor issue	26	38.2
An occasional issue	33	48.5
A serious issue	8	11.8
Total Responses	68	100.0

School violence as a personal issue. Table 15 reveals the respondents' answers to question 12, which asked *to what degree they believed that school violence was a personal issue to them as a rural Alberta teacher.* Of the 68 participants who responded, 17.6% ($n = 12$) *strongly agreed* that it was an issue, 23.5% ($n = 16$) *agreed* that it was an issue, 51.5% ($n = 35$) *disagreed* that school violence was a personal issue, and 2.9% ($n = 2$) *strongly disagreed*. The remaining 4.4% ($n = 3$) participants were *undecided.*

Have you ever experienced school violence? Table 16 shows the respondents' answers to question 13, which asked *whether they had ever experienced an incident of school violence.* Of the 68 teachers who responded, 82.4% ($n = 56$) stated that *yes* they had experienced school violence, while the remaining 17.6% ($n = 12$) indicated that they *had not.*

Table 15

Question 12: School Violence is a Personal Issue For Me

Participant Response	*N*	%
Strongly Disagree	2	2.9
Disagree	35	51.5
Agree	16	23.5
Strongly Agree	12	17.6
Undecided	3	4.4
Total Responses	68	99.9

Note. The total percentage is not exactly equal to 100% because the percentage values were rounded to one decimal point.

Table 16

Question 13: Have you Ever Experienced School Violence?

Participant Response	*N*	%
Yes	56	82.4
No	12	17.6
Total Responses	68	100.0

Most recent incident of school violence experienced. Table 17 displays the results when the participants were asked in question 14 to report *when their most recent incident of school violence experienced had occurred.* Of the 68 total survey respondents, 17.6% (*n* = 12) had *never experienced* an incident of school violence and were, therefore, excluded from answering this question. Of the remaining sample, 42.6% (*n* = 29) reported that their most recent experience had been in *the last year*, while 39.7% (*n* = 27) indicated that their most recent experience had been *more than a year before.*

Table 17

Question 14: Most Recent Incident of School Violence Experienced

Most Recent Incident	*N*	%
In the last year	29	42.6
More than a year ago	27	39.7
Never experienced	12	17.6
Total Responses	68	100.0

Experiences of violence in the last year. Question 15 asked respondents to indicate the *number of incidents of each form of school violence that they had experienced in the last year,* and these results are presented in Table 18. Only those participants that had experienced an incident of school violence in the last year (*n* = 29; 42.6%) were asked to complete this question.

Table 18

Question 15: Experiences of School Violence in the Last Year

Type of Violence	Prevalence											
	No Experiences		0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10 or more	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Personal insults and name calling	39	57.4	4	5.9	7	10.3	4	5.9	4	5.9	10	14.7
Rude or obscene gestures intended to offend or insult you	39	57.4	8	11.8	8	11.8	5	7.4	3	4.4	5	7.4
Remarks/statements made to harm your reputation or relationships	39	57.4	7	10.3	10	14.7	7	10.3	1	1.5	4	5.9

(continued)

Table 18 (continued)

| | No Experiences | | Prevalence | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 0 | | 1 to 3 | | 4 to 6 | | 7 to 9 | | 10 or more | |
Type of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Behaviour intended to make you fearful or intimidated	39	57.4	9	13.2	6	8.8	6	8.8	4	5.9	4	5.9
Damage to personal property	39	57.4	13	19.1	15	22.1	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Threatened/attempted/or actual violence against a family member	39	57.4	24	35.3	5	7.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Threatened physical violence	39	57.4	16	23.5	7	10.3	4	5.9	2	2.9	0	0.0

(continued)

Table 18 (continued)

	No Experiences		0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10 or more	
						Prevalence						
Type of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Attempted physical violence	39	57.4	20	29.4	5	7.4	2	2.9	2	2.9	0	0.0
Actual physical violence	39	57.4	21	30.9	4	5.9	3	4.4	1	1.5	0	0.0
Violence with a weapon	39	57.4	26	38.2	3	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sexual harassment	39	57.4	24	35.3	4	5.9	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sexual assault	39	57.4	29	42.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	39	57.4	28	41.2	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Analysis of the mean number of experiences was done for each method of school violence experienced in the last year. This was completed by representing the value of zero as 0, the value of 1–3 as 2, the value of 4–6 as 5, the value of 7–9 as 8, and lastly the value of 10 or more incidents as 10. The average number of experiences of *personal insults and name calling* for respondents in the last year was 5.7 experience*s*. The average number of *rude or obscene gestures intended to offend or insult* experienced in the last year was 4.0 experiences, while the average for *remarks or statements meant to harm someone's reputation or a relationship* was 3.6 incidents. The average number of *incidents of behaviour intended to make someone fearful or intimidated* in the last year was 3.9, while the average number of incidents of *damage to property* was 1.2.

Threatened, attempted, or actual violence against a family member was experienced an average of 0.3 times in the last year, while *threatened physical violence* was experienced at an average overall rate of 1.7 experiences per respondent. The average *attempted physical violence* rate was 1.2 incidents per person in the last year, while *actual physical violence* was experienced at a rate of 1.1 incidents. *Violence with a weapon* was reported as having been experienced on average 0.2 times in the last year. *Sexual harassment* was reported as occurring at an average of 0.4 experiences in the previous year, while *no experiences* of *sexual assault* were reported. The most commonly endorsed form of *violence experienced in the last year* was, therefore, *personal insults and name calling* (5.7), while the least frequent was *actual sexual assault,* with *no experiences* of such reported in the last year by respondents.

Sources of violence in the last year. Question 16 asked respondents to *indicate in the last year how often they had experienced incidents of violence from a number of*

different sources, and these results are presented in Table 19. Only those participants who had experienced an incident of school violence in the last year (*n* = 29, 42.6%) were asked to complete this question.

Analysis of the mean number of experiences was done for each source of school violence. This was completed by representing the value of zero as 0, the value of 1–3 as 2, the value of 4–6 as 5, the value of 7–9 as 8, and lastly the value of 10 or more incidents as 10. The average number of experiences of school violence in the last year involving *teachers' own students* was *3.5*, while *other students in the school* was 2.1*, and *other youth* was *1.0 incidents. Other teaching staff* were reported as being the source of violence on average 0.5 times in the last year, while *school administration* averaged 0.2 incidents, and *nonteaching staff* had an average of 0.1 incidents per teacher in the last year. *Parents or guardians* were reported as being the source of violence an average of 1.7 times in the last year, while *other relatives* had a rate of 0.3 times. The option *others* was given as a final option if the source of violence was not presented in the comprised list. This was endorsed for an average rate of 0.1 experiences in the last year. Therefore, the *most frequent source of violence identified in the last year* involved *teachers' own students,* with an average of 3.5 incidents per teacher who had experienced violence. The *least frequent sources* were *other youth/others* at an average rate of 0.1 incidents per teacher in the last year.

Table 19

Question 16: Sources of Violence in the Last Year

Source of Violence	No Experiences		0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10+	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your students	39	57.4	8	11.8	10	14.7	5	7.4	2	2.9	4	5.9
Other students	39	57.4	14	20.6	10	14.7	1	1.5	2	2.9	2	2.9
Other youth	39	57.4	19	27.9	7	10.3	3	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other teaching staff	39	57.4	23	33.8	5	7.4	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0

Prevalence

(continued)

64

Table 19 (continued)

Source of Violence	No Experiences		Prevalence									
			0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10+	
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
School administration	39	57.4	27	39.7	1	1.5	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Nonteaching staff	39	57.4	27	39.7	2	2.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Parents/guardians	39	57.4	13	19.1	12	17.6	3	4.4	0	0.0	1	1.5
Other relatives	39	57.4	26	38.2	3	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Others	39	57.4	28	41.2	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 20

Question 17: Experiences of School Violence Throughout Your Career

| | | | | | | Prevalence | | | | | |
| Type of Violence | No Experiences | | 0 | | 1 to 3 | | 4 to 6 | | 7 to 9 | | 10+ | |
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal insults and name calling	12	17.6	5	7.4	22	32.4	9	13.2	4	5.9	16	23.5
Rude or obscene gestures intended to offend or insult you	12	17.6	16	23.5	19	27.9	7	10.3	5	7.4	9	13.2
Remarks/statements made to harm your reputation or relationships	12	17.6	18	26.5	17	25.0	8	11.8	4	5.9	9	13.2

Table 20 (continued)

		Prevalence										
Type of Violence	No Experiences		0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10+	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Behaviour intended to make you fearful or intimidated	12	17.6	20	29.4	16	23.5	11	16.2	4	5.9	5	7.4
Damage to personal property	12	17.6	26	38.2	25	36.8	2	2.9	3	4.4	0	0.0
Threatened/attempted/or actual violence against a family member	12	17.6	41	60.3	12	17.6	3	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Threatened physical violence	12	17.6	35	51.5	16	23.5	4	5.9	1	1.5	0	0.0

(continued)

Table 20 (continued)

Type of Violence	No Experiences		Prevalence									
			0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10+	
	N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Attempted physical violence	12	17.6	41	60.3	12	17.6	2	2.9	1	1.5	0	0.0
Actual physical violence	12	17.6	46	67.6	9	13.2	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Violence with a weapon	12	17.6	49	72.1	7	10.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sexual harassment	12	17.6	48	70.6	8	11.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Sexual assault	12	17.6	55	80.9	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Other	12	17.6	55	80.9	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Experiences of violence throughout career. Question 17 asked respondents to *indicate the number of incidents of each method of school violence that they had experienced throughout their career,* and these results are presented in Table 20. Only those participants who had experienced an incident of school violence at some point in the career (n = 56; 82.4%) were asked to complete this question.

Analysis of the mean number of experiences was done for each method of school violence. This was completed by representing the value of zero as 0, the value of 1–3 as 2, the value of 4–6 as 5, the value of 7–9 as 9, and lastly, the value of 10 or more incidents as 10. The average number of experiences of *personal insults and name calling* for respondents throughout their career was 5.0 experiences. *Rude or obscene gestures intended to offend or insult* were experienced an average of 3.6 times in the last year, while *remarks or statements meant to harm reputations or relationships* occurred on average 3.5 times per teacher. *Behaviour intended to make someone fearful or intimidated* occurred on average 3.0 times throughout ones career, while the average rate of incidence of *damage to personal property* experienced was 1.5 times per teacher.

Threatened, attempted, or actual violence against a family member occurred at an average rate of 0.7 incidents per respondent throughout their career, while threatened physical violence was experienced at an average overall rate of 1.1 experiences per respondent. The average rate of *attempted physical violence* throughout respondents' career was 0.8 experiences, and *actual physical violence* occurred at an average of 0.5 incidents per respondent. *Violence with a weapon* was reported as having been experienced on average 0.3 times throughout respondents' careers. *Sexual harassment* was reported on average 0.3 times, and *sexual assault* was reported to have occurred only

once for an average rate of 0.0. *Other forms* of school violence throughout one's career were experienced at an average rate of 0.0 as well. The *most commonly endorsed form of violence experienced throughout respondents' careers* was, therefore, *personal insults and name calling* (5.0), while the *least frequent* was actual *sexual assault*, with only *one experience* throughout respondents' careers (0.0).

Sources of violence throughout career. Question 18 asked respondents to *indicate throughout their career as a teacher how often they had experienced incidents of violence from a number of different sources*, and these results are presented in Table 21. Only those participants that had experienced an incident of school violence throughout their career ($n = 56$; 82.4%) were asked to complete this question.

Analysis of the mean number of experiences was done for each source of school violence experienced throughout respondents' careers. This was completed by representing the value of zero as 0, the value of 1–3 as 2, the value of 4–6 as 5, the value of 7–9 as 8, and lastly the value of 10 or more incidents as 10. The average number of experiences of school violence throughout teachers' careers involving their *own students* was 3.9, while *other students in the school* was 1.9, and *other youth* was 0.8 incidents. *Other teaching staff* were reported as being the source of violence on average 0.5 times throughout careers, while *school administration* averaged 0.7 incidents, and *nonteaching staff* had an average of 0.3 incidents per teacher throughout careers. *Parents or guardians* were reported as being the source of violence an average of 2.5 times throughout teachers' careers, while *other relatives* were reported to have been the source on average 0.2 times.

Table 21

Question 18: Sources of Violence Throughout Your Career

	No Experiences		0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10+	
						Prevalence						
Source of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your students	12	17.6	9	13.2	24	35.3	9	13.2	7	10.3	7	10.3
Other students	12	17.6	25	36.8	21	30.9	6	8.8	2	2.9	2	2.9
Other youth	12	17.6	41	60.3	12	17.6	2	2.9	1	1.5	0	0.0
Other teaching staff	12	17.6	49	72.1	4	5.9	2	2.9	1	1.5	0	0.0
School administration	12	17.6	47	69.1	5	7.4	2	2.9	1	1.5	1	1.5

(continued)

Table 21 (continued)

					Prevalence							
	No Experiences		0		1 to 3		4 to 6		7 to 9		10+	
Source of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Nonteaching staff	12	17.6	50	73.5	5	7.4	1	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Parents/guardians	12	17.6	19	27.9	25	36.8	5	7.4	3	4.4	4	5.9
Other relatives	12	17.6	53	77.9	2	2.9	0	0.0	1	1.5	0	0.0
Others	12	17.6	54	79.4	2	2.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

"Others" was given as an option if the source of violence was not presented in the comprised list, and was endorsed for an average rate of 0.1 experiences throughout career. Therefore, the *most frequent source of violence identified throughout teachers' careers* was *teachers' own students* with an average of 3.9 incidents per teacher who had experienced violence. The *least frequent source* was *others* at an average rate of 0.1 incidents per teacher throughout their career.

The problem of school violence in the teacher's daily work setting. Question 19 asked all respondents to *indicate how much of a problem in their daily work setting each form of school violence is for teachers.* The forms of violence listed were *physical, nonphysical,* and *sexual violence* as experienced by a number of different sources. The responses to this question are summarized in Table 22.

Parents were the only source that was endorsed as a *significant* problem in regards to *physical violence* ($n = 2$; 2.9%); however, a number of respondents stated that *physical violence* was an *occasional* issue when perpetrated by their *own students* ($n = 5$; 7.4%), *other students* ($n = 6$; 8.8%), and *parents* ($n = 4$; 5.9%). *Nonphysical violence* was endorsed as a *significant* problem when the source was *own students* ($n = 5$; 5.9%), *other students* ($n = 2$; 2.9%), and *parents* ($n = 1$; 1.5%). All sources were found to be an *occasional* problem in regards to *nonphysical* violence, with *parents* ($n = 17$; 25.0%) the *most frequently* suggested. *Sexual violence* was found to be a *very little* problem in regards to all sources, with higher numbers for *your students*, *other students*, and *parents*. Interestingly, none of these sources were selected when respondents were asked if *sexual violence* was considered an *occasional* problem, while instead *other teachers* ($n = 1$; 1.5%), *nonteaching staff* ($n = 1$; 1.5%), and *administration* ($n = 1$; 1.5%) were selected.

Table 22

Question 19: How Problematic for Teachers is School Violence in Your Work Setting

	Responses							
	Not at All		Very Little		Occasional		Significant	
Type of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Physical								
a. By your students	41	60.3	22	32.4	5	7.4	0	0.0
b. By other students	40	58.8	22	32.4	6	8.8	0	0.0
c. By parents	46	67.6	16	23.5	4	5.9	2	2.9
d. By other teachers	64	94.1	4	5.9	0	0.0	0	0.0

(continued)

Table 22 (continued)

	Responses							
	Not at All		Very Little		Occasional		Significant	
Type of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
e. By nonteaching staff	65	95.6	3	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
f. By administration	66	97.1	2	2.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Nonphysical								
a. By your students	21	30.9	29	42.6	14	20.6	4	5.9
b. By other students	21	30.9	31	45.6	14	20.6	2	2.9
c. By parents	20	29.4	30	44.1	17	25.0	1	1.5

(continued)

Table 22 (continued)

	Responses							
	Not at All		Very Little		Occasional		Significant	
Type of Violence	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
d. By other teachers	46	67.6	16	23.5	6	8.8	0	0.0
e. By nonteaching staff	53	77.9	12	17.6	3	4.4	0	0.0
f. By administration	55	80.9	10	14.7	3	4.4	0	0.0
Sexual								
a. By your students	58	85.3	10	14.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
b. By other students	57	83.8	11	16.2	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 22 (continued)

			Responses						
	Not at All		Very Little		Occasional		Significant	
Type of Violence	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
c. By parents	62	91.2	6	8.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
d. By other teachers	65	95.6	2	2.9	1	1.5	0	0.0
e. By nonteaching staff	66	97.1	1	1.5	1	1.5	0	0.0
f. By administration	66	97.1	1	1.5	1	1.5	0	0.0

Table 23

Question 20: Level of Agreement with School Violence Statements

	Responses							
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Questions	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Violence in schools is on the increase	2	2.9	27	39.7	32	47.1	7	10.3
b. Violence against teachers is on the increase	4	5.9	24	35.3	34	50.0	6	8.8
c. Violence against teachers will increase in the next 5 years	2	2.9	24	35.3	34	50.0	8	11.8
d. The media coverage of school violence spawns further violence	0	0.0	21	30.9	36	52.9	11	16.2
e. The media coverage of incidents of school violence impacts how safe I feel as a teacher	3	4.4	23	33.8	38	55.9	4	5.9

Statements regarding school violence. Question 20 asked survey respondents *how strongly they agreed or disagreed with five statements regarding school violence* using a 4-point Likert scale that included: *strongly disagree, disagree, agree*, and *strongly agree*. The results of these statements are presented here and in Table 23.

Table 24

Question 21: Rural Versus Urban School Violence: Do You Believe That Violence Against Teachers is as Common in Rural School Settings as it is in Urban Schools?

Participant Response	*N*	%
Yes	27	39.7
No	41	60.3
Total Responses	68	100.0

Rural versus urban school violence. When asked whether they believed that *violence against teachers is as common in rural school settings as it is in urban schools,* 39.7% (*n* = 27) responded *yes*, it was *equally common*, while 60.3% (*n* = 41) stated that it was *not as common*. These results are presented in Table 24.

Part III: Impact of school violence on rural Alberta teachers. Part three of the survey was comprised of eight questions designed to ascertain information on the impact of school violence on the survey respondents, which could then be used to provide insight into the impact school violence has on the greater population of rural Alberta teachers. This section of the survey gathered information on whether or not respondents were aware of the possibility for danger when they became teachers, how safe they feel they

are personally at work and how safe teaching is in general, as well as how school

violence has impacted them in regards to career, physical and emotional symptoms. The

results of these inquires are described in the following sections.

    Awareness of occupational violence. Table 25 shows the respondents' answers

to the following question: *When you decided to pursue a teaching career were you aware*

of the possibility for occupational violence? Responses to this question indicated that

50.0% (*n* = 34) of survey respondents stated that *yes* they were aware, while 35.3%

(*n* = 24) replied *no* they were not aware. The remaining 29.4% (*n* = 20) of survey

respondents were *unsure* whether or not they were *aware of the possibility for violence*

when they decided to become a teacher.

Table 25

Question 22: Awareness of Occupational Violence: When You Decided to Pursue A

Teaching Career Were You Aware of the Possibility for Occupational Violence?

Participant Response	*N*	%
Yes	34	50.0
No	24	35.3
Unsure	10	14.7
Total Responses	68	100.0

    Occupational safety comparison. When asked *how safe they felt the teaching*

profession was in comparison to other occupations using a 5-point Likert scale with *far*

safer and *far less safe* as the extreme ends, 17.6% (*n* = 12) indicated they found it was

less safe, 47.1% (*n* = 32) indicated it was *equally safe*, 19.1% (*n* = 13) reported it was

safer, and 16.2% (*n* = 11) stated it was *far safer*. No respondents reported that teaching

was *far less safe* than other occupations. Table 26 presents these results.

Table 26

Question 23: Teacher Safety Compared to Other Occupations: How Safe Do You Feel

the Teaching Profession is in Comparison to Other Occupations?

Participant Response	*N*	%
Far Safer	11	16.2
Safer	13	19.1
Equally Safe	32	47.1
Less Safe	12	17.6
Far Less Safe	0	0.0
Total Responses	68	100.0

Personal sense of safety throughout career. Question 24 asked respondents to

indicate *how safe they have felt throughout their career* by choosing one of four options.

Option 1, *I am always concerned about my safety*, was endorsed by 2.9% (*n* = 2) of

respondents. Option 2, *I have questioned my safety numerous times*, was selected by

13.2% (*n* = 9) of the sample. Another 64.7% (*n* = 44) of respondents selected option 3, *I*

have rarely questioned my safety, while the remaining 19.1% (*n* = 13) selected option 4, *I have always felt completely safe* (see Table 27).

Table 27

Question 24: Personal Sense of Safety Throughout Career: Please Indicate How Safe You Have Felt Throughout Your Career as a Teacher

Participant Response	*N*	%
I have always felt safe	13	19.1
I have rarely questioned my safety	44	64.7
Numerous times I have questioned my safety	9	13.2
I am always concerned about my safety	2	2.9
Total Responses	68	100.0

Note. The total percentage is not exactly equal to 100% because the percentage values were rounded to one decimal point.

Present safety. Teachers were asked to indicate *how safe they felt presently in their current school and role as opposed to past positions*, using a 5-point Likert scale with extremes of *far safer* and *far less safe;* these results are captured in Table 28. No respondents reported that they felt *far less safe*, but 10.3% (*n* = 7) stated they felt *less safe*, while 47.1% (*n* = 32) felt *equally safe*, 25.0% (*n* = 17) felt *safer*, and the rest of respondents, 17.6% (*n* = 12) felt *far safer*.

Table 28

Question 25: Present Safety: Please Indicate How Safe You Feel Presently in Your

Current School and Role as Opposed to Past Positions

Participant Response	*N*	%
Far Safer	12	17.6
Safer	17	25.0
Equally Safe	32	47.1
Less Safe	7	10.3
Far Less Safe	0	0.0
Total Responses	68	100.0

Career areas impacted by school violence. Survey respondents were asked to indicate using a 5-point Likert scale *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that school violence had impacted numerous areas of their career*, the results of which are presented in Table 29. *Decreased job satisfaction* was the most commonly endorsed item, with 39.7% (*n* = 27) of respondents *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that it had been impacted by school violence.

Table 29

Question 26: Career Areas Impacted by School Violence: School Violence has Impacted the Following Areas of My Career.

					Responses					
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Career Areas	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a. Decreased job satisfaction	22	32.4	19	27.9	16	23.5	11	16.2	0	0
b. Poor occupational performance	26	38.2	26	38.2	14	20.6	1	1.5	1	1.5
c. Absenteeism	38	55.9	26	38.2	3	4.4	1	1.5	0	0
d. Change of role assignment within a school	33	48.5	24	35.3	9	13.2	1	1.5	1	1.5
e. Changing schools	35	51.5	16	23.5	10	14.7	5	7.4	2	2.9

(continued)

Table 29 (continued)

		Responses								
Career Areas	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
f. Changing school districts	37	54.4	21	30.9	5	7.4	4	5.9	1	1.5
g. Other	41	60.3	11	16.2	2	2.9	0	0.0	14	20.6

Physical symptoms resulting from school violence. Survey respondents were asked to indicate using a 5-point Likert scale *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that fear of or experiences with school violence had resulted in their experiencing a number of physical symptoms*, the results of which are presented in Table 30. *Fatigue* was the *most commonly endorsed physical symptom as a result of school violence*, with 48.5% (*n* = 33) of respondents *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that they had been impacted

Table 30

Question 27: Physical Symptoms Related to School Violence: I have Experienced the Following Physical Symptoms as a Result of Fear of/or Experience(s) with School Violence.

	Responses									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Physical Symptoms	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Sleep disturbances	22	32.4	15	29.4	20	29.4	11	16.2	0	0.0
Fatigue	23	33.8	12	17.6	21	30.9	12	17.6	0	0.0
Headaches	27	39.7	11	16.2	21	30.9	8	11.8	1	1.5
Gastrointestinal effects	33	48.5	16	23.5	11	16.2	6	8.8	2	2.9

(continued)

Table 30. (continued)

Physical Symptoms	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Teeth grinding	31	45.6	19	27.9	11	16.2	4	5.9	3	4.4
Weight changes	31	45.6	20	29.4	12	17.6	4	5.9	1	1.5
Backaches	35	51.5	22	32.4	8	11.8	3	4.4	0	0.0
Appetite changes	30	44.1	17	25.0	15	22.1	4	5.9	2	2.9
Hyper-alertness	29	42.6	24	35.3	7	10.3	5	7.4	3	4.4
Nausea	32	47.2	22	32.4	9	13.2	3	4.4	2	2.9
Uncontrolled crying	38	55.9	23	33.8	5	7.4	0	0	2	2.9
Sweating	34	50.0	22	32.4	8	11.8	2	2.9	2	2.9
Dizziness	35	51.5	25	36.8	5	7.4	1	1.5	2	2.9
Tremors	34	50.0	27	39.7	5	7.4	0	0.0	2	2.9
Others	40	58.8	11	16.2	2	2.9	0	0.0	15	22.1

Responses

Emotional symptoms resulting from school violence. Survey respondents were asked to indicate using a 5-point Likert scale *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that fear of or experiences with school violence had resulted in their experiencing a number of emotional symptoms,* the results of which are presented in Table 31. *Increased stress* was found to be the *most common emotional symptom resulting from fear of or experiences with school violence*, with 72.1% (*n* = 49) of respondents *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that they had experienced this as a result.

Table 31

Question 28: Emotional Symptoms Related to School Violence: I Have Experienced the Following Emotional Symptoms as a Result of Fear of/or Experience(s) With School Violence.

	Responses									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Emotional Symptoms	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Frustration	15	22.1	7	10.3	27	39.7	19	27.9	0	0.0
Increased stress	13	19.1	6	8.8	31	45.6	18	26.5	0	0.0
Anger	16	23.5	9	13.2	30	44.1	13	19.1	0	0.0

(continued)

Table 31 (continued)

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Emotional Symptoms	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Anxiety	19	27.9	10	14.7	22	32.4	16	23.5	1	1.5
Helplessness	23	33.8	13	19.1	19	27.9	12	17.6	1	1.5
Irritability	22	32.4	11	16.2	24	35.3	11	16.2	0	0.0
Sadness	24	35.3	11	16.2	23	33.8	9	13.2	1	1.5
Disgust	20	29.4	8	11.8	28	41.2	11	16.2	1	1.5
Low self-esteem	28	41.2	25	36.8	9	13.2	5	7.4	1	1.5
Depression	31	45.6	20	29.4	10	14.7	4	5.9	3	4.4
Mistrust of others	24	35.3	14	20.6	19	27.9	10	14.7	1	1.5
Guilt	30	44.1	20	29.4	13	19.1	4	5.9	1	1.5
Fear of revictimization	28	41.2	18	26.5	14	20.6	7	10.3	1	1.5
Other	38	55.9	11	16.2	1	1.5	0	0.0	18	26.5

Responses

Table 32

Question 29: Negative Influences of School Violence: How Has Your Experience With School Violence Negatively Influenced Each of the Following for you?

	Responses									
	Not at all		Very Little		Moderately		To a Large Degree		Undecided	
Negative Influence On:	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
Morale	20	29.4	16	23.5	23	33.8	9	13.2	0	0.0
Teaching effectiveness	29	42.6	14	20.6	21	30.9	4	5.9	0	0.0
Classroom management	27	39.7	16	23.5	18	26.5	7	10.3	0	0.0
Learning environment	28	41.2	16	23.5	17	25.0	7	10.3	0	0.0
Delivery of services	29	42.6	18	26.5	15	22.1	5	7.4	1	1.5
Job satisfaction	21	30.9	18	26.5	14	20.6	15	22.1	0	0

Negative influences of school violence. Survey respondents were asked to indicate using a 5-point Likert scale *whether or not their experience with school violence*

negatively influenced a number of classroom elements, the results of which are presented in Table 32. *Morale* was the *most negatively influenced element*, with 45.6% (*n* = 31) of respondents stating that their *morale* was *negatively influenced moderately* or *to a large degree* as a result of *experiences with school violence.*

Part IV: How to help Rural Alberta teachers prevent and cope with school violence. Part four of the survey was comprised of two questions. Question 30 was included to determine whether teachers' educations, in the past and more recently, included instruction on the possibility for danger in the profession and how to manage it. Question 31 was designed to ascertain the respondents' opinions on prevention strategies and supports that might be useful in helping rural Alberta teachers in preventing and coping with school violence. The data collected from the sample in regards to these two questions are presented below.

Discussing school violence in educational training. Table 33 shows the respondents' answers to question 30, which asked the participants *whether the possibility for violence in the teaching profession and how to deal with the effects was covered at some point in their educational training.* Of the 68 who responded, 66.2% (*n* = 45) replied *no*, while 19.1% (*n* = 13) stated *yes*, and the remaining 14.7% (*n* = 10) were *unsure*.

Table 33

Question 30: Discussing School Violence in Educational Training: Was the possibility for Violence in the Teaching Profession and How to Deal With the Effects Covered at Some Point in Your Educational Training?

Participant Response	*N*	%
Yes	13	19.1
No	45	66.2
Unsure	10	14.7
Total Responses	68	100.0

Strategies for preventing and coping with school violence. Survey respondents were asked to indicate using a 5-point Likert scale *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that a number of prevention strategies and supports would help rural Alberta teachers in preventing and coping with school violence*, the results of which are presented in Table 34. The most frequently endorsed strategy was *policies for dealing with school violence*, with 98.5% (*n* = 67) of respondents *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that this would be *useful in preventing and coping with school violence.*

Table 34

Question 31: Strategies for Preventing and Coping with School Violence: The Following Prevention Strategies and Supports Would Help Rural Alberta Teachers in Preventing and Coping with School Violence

	Responses									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Strategies & Supports	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Policies for dealing with school violence	0	0.0	0	0.0	45	66.2	22	32.4	1	1.5
Anger management/ conflict resolution programs for students	0	0.0	2	2.9	42	61.8	23	33.8	1	1.5
Anger management/ conflict resolution programs for teachers	1	1.5	4	5.9	42	61.8	17	25.0	4	5.9
Smaller classroom sizes	0	0.0	7	10.3	23	33.8	36	52.9	2	2.9

(continued)

Table 34 (continued)

	Responses									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Strategies & Supports	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Decreased work loads	0	0.0	9	13.2	29	42.6	28	41.2	2	2.9
Additional supports and resources for students with special needs	0	0.0	2	2.9	25	36.8	38	55.9	3	4.4
A larger police presence in the community and school environment	1	1.5	12	17.6	36	52.9	12	17.6	7	10.3
A school resource officer always present in the school	3	4.4	12	17.6	30	44.1	16	23.5	7	10.3

(continued)

Table 34 (continued)

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Strategies & Supports	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Better lighting conditions	5	7.4	23	33.8	22	32.4	2	2.9	16	23.5
Greater supervision during high traffic periods	1	1.5	13	19.1	34	50.0	13	19.1	7	10.3
Staggering periods and lunch breaks	7	10.3	27	39.7	19	27.9	6	8.8	9	13.2
Ensuring that teachers are not working alone	2	2.9	13	19.1	36	52.9	7	10.3	10	14.7
Monitoring accesses to the school	1	1.5	7	10.3	42	61.8	15	22.1	3	4.4

The "Responses" header spans across all response category columns.

Table 34 (continued)

| | Responses | | | | | | | | | |
| | Strongly Disagree | | Disagree | | Agree | | Strongly Agree | | Undecided | |
Strategies & Supports	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Metal detectors	18	26.5	28	41.2	13	19.1	1	1.5	8	11.8
Stricter punishment for acts of violence	1	1.5	6	8.8	31	45.6	24	35.3	6	8.8
Parents being more supportive of teacher and administrative decisions	1	1.5	1	1.5	22	32.4	42	61.8	2	2.9
Increased support from administration	1	1.5	9	13.2	34	50.0	21	30.9	3	4.4
Increased reporting of acts of violence	0	0.0	4	5.9	42	61.8	20	29.4	2	2.9

Table 34 (continued)

	Responses									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Undecided	
Strategies & Supports	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Improved action when violence is reported	0	0.0	3	4.4	32	47.1	28	41.2	5	7.4
Teacher support groups/ support from colleagues	1	1.5	12	17.6	37	54.4	13	19.1	5	7.4
Counselling services	0	0.0	5	7.4	44	64.7	18	26.5	1	1.5
Defusing/debriefing following incidents of school violence	0	0.0	1	1.5	40	58.8	26	38.2	1	1.5

Data Analysis – Cross Tabulation (Chi Square)

Likelihood ratio chi-square tests. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted on numerous survey questions to test the significance of relationships between answers provided. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were used due to the large number of

cells with small counts. Numerous significant relationships were found to exist and are identified in this section.

School violence as an issue for schools in my area versus demographics. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether there were relationships between the participants' responses to question 11 (*whether or not they believed school violence was an issue for schools in their area*) and the demographical information that they provided in part 1 of the survey. Two analyses were significant ($p < .05$). There was a statistically significant relationship between *teaching kindergarten* and *opinions on school violence being an issue in their area* ($x_2 = 9.308$, $df = 3, p = .025$). Of those respondents who taught *kindergarten*, 75.0% ($n = 3$ out of 4 kindergarten teachers) stated that they felt that school violence was a *serious* or at least *occasional* issue. There was also a statistically significant relationship between *teaching art* and *opinions on school violence in their area* ($x_2 = 8.711, df = 3, p = .033$), 95.0% of the *art teachers* regard violence as either a *minor* issues ($n = 8$) or an *occasional* issue ($n = 12$). Interestingly, none of the 21 responding *art teachers* regarded violence as *serious* in their area.

School violence as a personal issue versus demographics. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether there were relationships between survey participants' responses to question 12 (*how strongly they agreed or disagreed that school violence was a personal issue as a rural Alberta teacher*) and the demographical information that they provided in part 1 of the survey. Only one analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that more *females,* 61.4% ($n = 27$), than *males,* 33.3% ($n = 8$), *disagreed* with *school violence being a personal issue* ($x_2 = 10.707$,

df = 4*, p* = .03). In addition, *males,* 37.5% (*n* = 9), *strongly agreed* that *school violence*

was a personal issue for them far more often than did *females,* 6.8% (*n* = 3).

   Experiences of school violence versus demographics. Likelihood ratio chi-

square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 13 (*have you*

ever experienced an incident of school violence) were impacted by participants'

demographical information provided in Section 1 of the survey. Three analyses were

found to be significant (*p* < .05). The results showed that teaching *Grades 1–3* was

negatively associated with *experiences of violence* (x_2 = 4.862*, df* = 1*, p* = .027), as

30.8% (*n* = 8 out of 26) of *Grade 1–3 teachers* stated that *they had never experienced an*

incident of school violence, which is significantly higher than the total sample response of

17.6% (*n* = 12 out of 68) indicating they had never experienced an incident of school

violence. Results also show that *teaching social studies* was negatively associated with

experiences of violence (x_2 = 6.407*, df* = 1*, p* = .011), with 28.6% (*n* = 10 out of 35) of

social studies teachers stating *they had never experienced an incident of school violence*,

which is again larger than the total sample response of 17.6% (*n* = 12 out of 68). Lastly,

teaching art is negatively associated with *experiences of violence* (x_2 = 12.380*, df* = 1*,*

p = .000), as 42.9% (*n* = 9 out of 21) of *art teachers* had *never experienced an incident*

of violence, significantly higher than the total sample response rate of 17.6% (*n* = 12 out

of 68).

   Experiences of school violence versus opinions on the issue. A likelihood ratio

chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses to question 13 (*have you*

ever experienced an incident of school violence) varied significantly with *opinions on*

whether school violence is an issue for schools in their area (question 11). The results

were found to be nonsignificant (*p* < .05). A likelihood ratio chi-square test was also

conducted to determine whether responses to question 13 (*have you ever experienced an*

*incident of school violenc*e) varied significantly with respondents' responses to question

12 (*how strongly they agree or disagree that school violence is a personal issue for them*

as a rural Alberta teacher). These results were also found to be nonsignificant (*p* < .05).

Problem of school violence in work setting versus demographics. Likelihood

ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 19 (*how*

much of a problem for teachers is each of the following forms of school violence in your

daily work setting) varied significantly with respondents' *age* (question 1), *gender*

(question 2), *total number of years they have been teaching* (question 3), *number of*

schools taught at (question 4), or *current grade level of students being taught* (question

8). A number of results were found to be significant (*p* < .05). There was a statistically

significant relationship between *age* and problems with *nonphysical violence* as

perpetrated by other teachers (x_2 = 16.087*, df* = 8*, p* = .041). Of those respondents who

reported that *nonphysical violence perpetrated by other teachers* was a *very little*

problem, 100.0% were between *25 and 54 years of age*. None of the respondents were

from the extreme ends of the age breakdown (*20–24 or 55–64 years of age*).

There was also a statistically significant relationship between *gender* and

problems with *physical violence* as *perpetrated by parents* (x_2 = 16.924*, df* = 3*, p* = .001).

When asked whether they felt that *physical violence as perpetrated by parents was a*

problem in their daily work setting, 79.5% (*n* = 35 out of 44) of *females* stated that it was

not at all, while only 45.8% (*n* = 11 out of 24) of *males* indicated that it was *not at all*. A

statistically significant relationship also existed between *gender* and problems with

sexual violence perpetrated by the respondents' students ($x2$ = 5.911, *df* = 1, *p* = .015).

Of the *female* respondents, 93.2% (*n* = 41 out of 44) reported *no problem with sexual violence* by their *students*, while only 70.8% (*n* =17 out of 24) of *males* reported *none*. There was also a statistically significant relationship between *gender* and problems *with sexual violence perpetrated by other students* ($x2$ = 4.409, *df* = 1, *p* = .036). Much like sexual violence perpetrated by their own students, *female* respondents (*n* = 40 out of 44; 90.1%) reported that *sexual violence* by *other students* was *not an issue at all* more frequently than did *male* respondents (*n* = 17 out of 24; 70.8%).

There was a statistically significant relationship between the *number of schools respondents had taught at* and problems with *physical violence perpetrated by other teachers* ($x2$ = 12.321, *df* = 5, *p* = .031). Only 5.9% (*n* = 4 out of 68) of respondents reported that *physical violence perpetrated by other teachers* was a *very little* problem; however, of those who did, 50.0% (*n* = 2) had indicated that they had taught *at over eight schools* in their career. Those who taught at more schools reported more physical violence by other teachers in their daily setting. There was also a statistically significant relationship between *the number of schools respondents had taught at* and reports of *physical violence by nonteaching staff* ($x2$ = 16.814, *df* = 5, *p* = .005). In regards to *physical violence by nonteaching staff*, only 4.4% of total respondents indicated it was a *very little* problem, but 100.0% (*n* = 3) of those who did had taught at *six or more schools* during their career.

A number of statistically significant relationships were found between *grades taught* and reported *school violence problems in respondents' daily work settings*. The first statistically significant relationship was between *teaching Grades 1–3* and *physical*

violence perpetrated by parents ($x_2 = 9.098$, *df* $= 3$, *p* $= .028$). Those respondents who indicated that they *taught Grades 1–3* were more likely (19.2%) than teachers of other grades (2.4%) to report that *physical violence perpetrated by parents* was an *occasional* (*n* $= 4$) or *significant* (*n* $= 1$) problem. There was also a statistically significant relationship between *teaching Grades 1–3* and reports on the existence of *physical violence by nonteaching staff* ($x_2 = 5.994$, *df* $= 1$, *p* $= .014$). While only 4.4% (*n* $= 3$ out of 68) of the sample reported that *physical violence by nonteaching staff* was a *very little* problem, 100.0% of those who said so were *teachers of Grades 1–3.*

A statistically significant relationship was found between *teaching Grades 4–6* and reported *physical violence by other teachers* ($x_2 = 6.050$, *df* $= 1$, *p* $= .014$). Of those respondents who indicated that they *taught Grades 4–6* (*n* $= 35$), 100.0% indicated that *physical violence perpetrated by other teachers* was *not a problem at all*. There was also a statistically significant relationship between teaching *Grades 4–6* and reports of *nonphysical violence perpetrated by other students* ($x_2 = 10.655$, *df* $= 3$, *p* $= .014$). Only 8.6% (*n* $= 3$ out of 35) of *Grades 4–6 teachers* found that *nonphysical violence perpetrated by other students* was an *occasional* problem, while 39.4% (*n* $= 13$ out of 33) of teachers of *other grades* indicated it was an *occasional* (*n* $= 11$) or *significant* (*n* $= 2$) problem.

There was a statistically significant relationship between *teaching Grades 7–9* and reported *physical violence by nonteaching staff* ($x_2 = 4.879$, *df* $= 1$, *p* $= .027$). None of the participants who indicated that *physical violence by nonteaching staff* was a problem (*n* $= 3$) in their daily work setting *taught Grades 7–9*. There was also a statistically significant relationship between *teaching Grades 7–9* and reported *nonphysical violence*

perpetrated by administration ($x_2 = 6.168$, *df* $= 2$, *p* $= .046$). Of those who indicated that *nonphysical violence perpetrated by administration* was an *occasional* problem in their daily work setting, 100.0% (*n* $= 3$ out of 68) of them were *Grades 7–9 teachers*.

A statistically significant relationship also exists between *teaching Grades 10–12* and reported *physical violence by parents* ($x_2 = 9.391$, *df* $= 3$, *p* $= .025$). *Grade 10–12 teachers did not* report any *occasional* or *significant* problems with *physical violence perpetrated by parents*; however, 35.7% (*n* $= 10$ out of 18) did indicate *very little* problems with this in their daily work setting. Also statistically significant was the relationship between *teaching Grades 10–12* and reported *nonphysical violence perpetrated by administration* ($x_2 = 6.027$, *df* $= 2$, *p* $= .049$). More *Grades 10–12 teachers* reported *no* problems (*n* $= 25$ out of 28; 89.3%) in their daily work setting in regards to *nonphysical violence perpetrated by administration* than did teachers of all *other grades* (*n* $= 30$ out of 40; 75.0%).

Problem of school violence in work setting versus opinions on the issue.
Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to question 19 (*how much of a problem for teachers is each of the following forms of school violence in your daily work setting*) varied significantly with *opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their area* (question 11). The results were found to be nonsignificant (*p* $< .05$). Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to question 19 (*how much of a problem for teachers is each of the following forms of school violence in your daily work setting*) varied significantly with respondents' responses to question 12 (*how strongly they agree or disagree that*

school violence is a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher). These results were also found to be nonsignificant ($p < .05$).

Problem of school violence in work setting versus experiences of school violence. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 19 (*how much of a problem for teachers is each of the following forms of school violence in your daily work setting*) varied significantly with respondents' responses to question 13 *(have you ever experienced an incident of school violence)*. Only one analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between *experience with school violence* and reported *nonphysical violence as perpetrated by nonteaching staff* ($x_2 = 6.845, df = 2, p = .033$). Interestingly, despite having themselves reported that they had *never experienced an incident of school violence*, 50.0% ($n = 6$ out of 12) of respondents stated that *nonphysical violence perpetrated by nonteaching staff* was a *very little* ($n = 4$) or *occasional* ($n = 2$) problem for teachers in their daily work setting, significantly higher reported numbers than by those who had *experienced an incident of violence* during their career.

Violence in schools is on the increase. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20a (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that violence in schools is on the increase*) varied significantly with respondents' *age* (question 1), *gender* (question 2), or *total number of years they have been teaching* (question 3). The results of these tests were found to be nonsignificant ($p < .05$). Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to question 20a varied significantly with respondents' *opinions on whether*

school violence is an issue for schools in their areas (question 11), *a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher* (question 12), as well as with *whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence* (question 13). Only one analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between responses to question 20a and question 12 ($x_2 = 29.253$, $df = 12$, $p = .004$). Of those respondents who *strongly agreed* that *violence was on the increase* ($n = 7$ out of 68), 100.0% *strongly agreed* ($n = 5$) or *agreed* ($n = 2$) that *school violence was a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher*. Lastly, likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20a varied significantly with answers to questions 23 (*how safe do you feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations*), question 24 (*indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a teacher*), and question 25 (*indicate how safe you feel presently*). The results of these tests were found to be nonsignificant ($p < .05$).

   Violence against teachers is on the increase. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20b (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that violence against teachers is on the increase*) varied significantly with respondents' *age* (question 1), *gender* (question 2), or *total number of years they have been teaching* (question 3). Only one analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between responses to question 20b and question 1, regarding age ($x_2 = 21.285$, $df = 12$, $p = .046$). Of those participants who *strongly agreed* that *violence against teachers is on the increase,* 100.0% ($n = 6$) are *age 35 and over*, while 61.8% ($n = 21$) of those who *agreed* are *age 35 and older*. Younger participants agreed less frequently.

Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to question 20b varied significantly with respondents' *opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas* (question 11), *a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher* (question 12), as well as with whether or not they have *experienced an incident of school violence* (question 13). Two analyses were found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between responses to question 20b and question 11 ($x_2 = 17.920, df = 9, p = .036$). Of those participants who *strongly agreed* that *violence against teachers is increasing,* 100.0% ($n = 6$) indicated that *school violence is an occasional* ($n = 3$) or *serious* ($n = 3$) *issue for schools in their area.* There was also a statistically significant relationship determined between question 20b and question 12 ($x_2 = 27.873, df = 12, p = .0061$). Of those respondents who *strongly agreed* that *violence against teachers is increasing*, 100.0% ($n = 6$) *strongly agree* ($n = 4$) or *agreed* ($n = 2$) that *violence is a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher.*

Lastly, likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20b varied significantly with answers to questions 23 (*how safe do you feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations*), question 24 (*indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a teacher*), and question 25 (*indicate how safe you feel presently*). One analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between responses to question 20b and question 23 ($x_2 = 30.290, df = 9, p = .000$). Of those respondents who indicated that they *strongly agreed* that *violence against teachers is increasing*, 66.7% ($n = 4$) *felt that teaching was less safe than other occupations*, while

75.0% ($n = 3$) of those who *strongly disagreed* that *violence against teachers is increasing* indicated the teaching profession is *far safer* than other occupations.

Violence against teachers will increase in the next 5 years. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20c (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that violence against teachers will increase in the next five years*) varied significantly with respondents' *age* (question 1), *gender* (question 2), or *total number of years they have been teaching* (question 3). The results of these tests were found to be nonsignificant ($p < .05$). Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to question 20c varied significantly with respondents' *opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas* (question 11), *a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher* (question 12), as well as with whether or not they *have experienced an incident of school violence* (question 13). One analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between responses to question 20c and question 12 ($x_2 = 21.700, df = 12, p = .041$). Of those respondents who *strongly agreed* ($n = 8$) or *agreed* ($n = 34$) that *violence against teachers will increase in the next 5 years,* 47.6% *strongly agreed* ($n = 8$) or *agreed* ($n = 12$) *that school violence is a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher.*

Lastly, likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20c varied significantly with answers to questions 23 (*how safe do you feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations*), question 24 (*indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a teacher*), and question 25 (*indicate how safe you feel presently*). One analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$).

The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between responses to question 20c and question 23 ($x_2 = 24.050$, *df* = 9, *p* = .004). Of those respondents who *disagreed* that *violence against teachers will increase in the next five years*, 54.2% indicated that teaching was *safer* (*n* = 8) or *far safer* (*n* = 5) than other occupations, while the remaining 45.8% reported that teaching was *equally as safe* (*n* = 11) as other occupations. Those who found teaching to be *as safe if not more safe* then other occupations were more likely to *disagree* that *violence against teachers will increase in the next five years.*

>>>>>>>*Media coverage spawns further violence.* Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20d (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that the media coverage of school violence spawns further violence*) varied significantly with respondents' *age* (question 1), *gender* (question 2), *or total number of years participants have been teaching* (question 3). The results of these tests were found to be nonsignificant (*p* < .05). Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to question 20d varied significantly with respondents' *opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas* (question 11), *a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher* (question 12), as well as with *whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence* (question 13). The results of these tests were found to be nonsignificant (*p* < .05).

Lastly, likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20d varied significantly with answers to questions 23 (*how safe do you feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations*), question 24 (*indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a teacher*), and question 25

(indicate how safe you feel presently). One analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$).

The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between

responses to question 20d and question 23 ($x_2 = 15.025$, *df* $= 6$, *p* $= .020$). Of those

participants who indicated that they *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that the *media coverage of*

school violence spawns further violence, 66.0% ($n = 31$) reported that teaching is *less*

safe ($n = 10$) or *equally as safe* ($n = 21$) as other occupations.

>   ***Media coverage impacts how safe I feel as a teacher.*** Likelihood ratio chi-

square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 20e (*how*

strongly do you agree or disagree that the media coverage of incidents of school violence

impacts how safe you feel as a teacher) varied significantly with respondents' *age*

(question 1), *gender* (question 2), or t*otal number of years they have been teaching*

(question 3). The results of these tests were found to be nonsignificant ($p < .05$).

Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also conducted to determine whether responses to

question 20e varied significantly with respondents' *opinions on whether school violence*

is an issue for schools in their areas (question 11), *a personal issue for them as a rural*

Alberta teacher (question 12), as well as with *whether or not they have experienced an*

incident of school violence (question 13). The results of these tests were found to be

nonsignificant ($p < .05$).

>   Lastly, likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether

responses to question 20e varied significantly with answers to questions 23 (*how safe do*

you feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations), question 24

(*indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a teacher*), and question 25

(*indicate how safe you feel presently*). Two analyses were found to be significant

($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship

between responses to question 20e and question 23 ($x_2 = 21.275,\ df = 9,\ p = .011$). Of

those who stated they *strongly agreed* that *media coverage of school violence impacts*

how safe they feel as a teacher, 100.0% ($n = 4$) also reported that they feel *teaching is*

less safe than other occupations. However only 18.4% ($n = 7$) of those who *agreed* that

media coverage impacts their feelings of safety stated that they found teaching to be *less*

safe, with an additional 31.6% ($n = 12$) indicating that teaching is *safer* ($n = 7$) or *far*

safer ($n = 5$) than other occupations. There was also a statistically significant

relationship between question 20e and question 25 ($x_2 = 19.950,\ df = 9,\ p = .018$). Of

those who *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that media coverage impact their feelings of safety,

16.7% ($n = 7$) feel *less safe than past schools*, while the remaining 83.3% felt *equally*

safe ($n = 19$), *safer* ($n = 12$), or *far safer* ($n = 4$).

    Rural violence. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine

whether responses to question 21 (*do you believe that violence against teachers is as*

common in rural school settings as it is in urban schools) varied significantly with

answers to questions 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of*

schools you have taught in), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6

(*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an*

issue for schools in their areas), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether*

school violence is a personal issue for them), 13 (*whether or not they have experienced*

an incident of school violence), 23 (*how safe they feel the teaching profession is in*

comparison to other occupations), question 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their*

career as a teacher), and question 25 (*how safe they feel presently*). Only one analysis

was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between *beliefs that violence against teachers is as common in rural school settings as it is in urban schools* and *how safe they feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations* ($x_2 = 18.825, df = 6, p = .004$). Of those respondents who stated *no, they did not believe that rural school violence was as common as urban school violence* ($n = 41$ out of 68), 87.8% found that the teaching profession was *far safer* ($n = 10$), *safer* ($n = 9$), or *equally safe* ($n = 17$) in comparison to other occupations, while 25.9% ($n = 7$) of those who stated that *violence was equally or more common in rural areas* ($n = 27$ out of 68) reported the teaching profession was *less safe*.

Awareness for occupational violence. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 22 (*when you decided to pursue a teaching career were you aware of the possibility for occupational violence*) varied significantly with the *age* of respondents (question 1) or the *number of total years the respondent had spent teaching* (question 3). One result was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between respondents' *age* and their *awareness for the possibility of occupational violence* ($x_2 = 15.867, df = 8, p = .044$). Of those teachers *34 years of age and younger*, 70.8% ($n = 17$ out of 24) stated *yes they were aware of the possibility for occupational violence*, whereas only 40.5% ($n = 17$ out of 68) of those teachers *35 years of age or older* stated they *were aware*.

How safe is teaching versus other careers. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses to question 23 (*how safe do you feel the*

teaching profession is in comparison to other occupations) varied significantly with

respondents' *opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas*

(question 11), *a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher* (question 12), as well

as with *whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence* (question

13). One result was found to be significant (*p* < .05). The results showed that there was

a statistically significant relationship between whether or not respondents had

experienced school violence and how *safe they felt the teaching career was in*

comparison to other occupations (*x*2 = 11.239, *df* = 3, *p* = .011). Interestingly, of those

respondents who reported that *they had never experienced an incident of violence during*

their teaching career (*n* = 12 out of 68), 41.7% (*n* = 5) stated that the teaching profession

was *less safe* than other occupations, as opposed to only 12.5% (*n* = 7) of the respondents

(*n* = 56) who reported *they had experienced an incident of school violence during their*

career.

   Level of safety throughout career. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were

conducted to determine whether responses to question 24 (*indicate how safe you have felt*

throughout your career as a teacher) varied significantly with respondents' answers to

questions 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of schools*

you have taught in), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6 (*years*

spent teaching at present school), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an issue for*

schools in their areas), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether school*

violence is a personal issue for them), and 13 (*whether or not they have experienced an*

incident of school violence). Two results were found to be significant (*p* < .05). The first

result showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between question 24

and question 4 (x_2 = 25.898, *df* = 15, *p* = .039). Of the respondents (*n* = 10 out of 68)

who stated they had *only worked in one school, their present one*, 100.0% reported they

had *rarely questioned their safety* (*n* = 7) or *always felt completely safe in their role as a*

teacher (*n* = 3). While 72.7% (8 out of 11) of those who reported *there had been*

numerous times they have questioned their safety (*n* = 6) or *they are always concerned*

about their safety as a result of their career (*n* = 2) had taught at *4 schools or more*

during their career. The second significant relationship was between question 24 and

question 11 (x_2 = 20.403, *df* = 9, *p* = .016). Of those respondents who indicated *school*

violence was a serious issue for schools in their area (*n* = 8 out of 68), 62.5% reported

they *are always concerned about their safety as a result of their career* (*n* = 2) or *there*

have been numerous times that they have questioned their safety (*n* = 3).

Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were also performed to determine whether

responses to question 24 (*indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a*

teacher) varied significantly with respondents' answers to question 29 (*how has your*

experience with school violence negatively influenced each of the following for you:

[a] morale, [b] teaching effectiveness, [c] classroom management, [d] learning

environment, [e] delivery of services, and [f] job satisfaction). Each result was found to

be significant (*p* < .05). The results showed that there was a statistically significant

relationship between *how safe the respondents have felt in their career* and their *morale*

(x_2 = 29.446, *df* = 9, *p* = .001), *teaching effectiveness* (x_2 = 17.674, *df* = 9, *p* = .039),

classroom management (x_2 = 29.841, *df* = 9, *p* = .000), *learning environment*

(x_2 = 34.238, *df* = 9, *p* = .000), *delivery of services* (x_2 = 23.016, *df* = 12, *p* = .028), and

job satisfaction (x_2 = 29.847, *df* = 9, *p* = .000).

Of those respondents who stated they are *always concerned about their safety as a result of their career* or have *numerous times questioned their safety* (n = 11 out of 68), 100.0% stated their *morale* was affected *moderately* (n = 8) or to *a large degree* (n = 3), 72.7% stated their *teaching effectiveness* was impacted *moderately* (n = 6) or to a *large degree* (n = 2), 72.7% noted *classroom management* was effected *moderately* (n = 4) or to a *large degree* (n = 4), 81.8% reported the *learning environment* was negatively impacted *moderately* (n = 5) or to a *large degree* (n = 4), 72.7% stated *delivery of services* was negatively impacted *moderately* (n = 6) or to a *large degree* (n = 2), and finally 81.8% indicated their *job satisfaction* was negatively impacted *moderately* (n = 3) or to a *large degree* (n = 6). It appears that the more an individual was concerned for their safety on the job, the more strongly they indicated that school violence was negatively impacting the six occupational factors presented.

Present safety as opposed to past positions. A likelihood ratio chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses to question 25 (*please indicate how safe you feel presently in your current school and role as opposed to past positions*) varied significantly with respondents' answers to questions 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of schools you have taught in*), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6 (*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas*), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether school violence is a personal issue for them*), and 13 (*whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence*). Only one analysis was found to be significant (p < .05). The results showed there was a statistically significant relationship between *how safe respondents' felt in their current school as*

opposed to past positions and their *opinions on whether school violence was an issue for schools in their area* (x_2 = 22.744, *df* = 9, *p* = .007). Of those who stated they *felt less safe in their current position as opposed to past positions*, 100.0% (*n* = 7 out of 68) indicated that school violence was an *occasional* (*n* = 2) or *serious issue* (*n* = 5) *for schools in their area*. Interestingly, of those respondents who were *equally safe, safer*, or *far safer* in their *present position as opposed to past positions*, 45.0% or more still considered school violence to be an *occasional* or *serious issue for schools in their areas*.

    Career impact. A likelihood ratio chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses to question 26a (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that school violence has resulted in decreased job satisfaction*) varied significantly with respondents' answers to questions 1 (*age*), 2 (*gender*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of schools you have taught in*), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6 (*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas*), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether school violence is a personal issue for them*), 13 (*whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence*), 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their career*), and 25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as opposed to past positions*). Two analyses were found to be significant (*p* < .05). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between question 26a and question 11 (x_2 = 19.102, *df* = 9, *p* = .024), and between question 26a and question 24 (x_2 = 23.032, *df* = 9, *p* = .006).

    Of those who *strongly agreed* (*n* = 11 out of 68) that school violence had *decreased their job satisfaction*, 90.9% (*n* = 10 out of 11) indicated that school violence

was a *serious* (*n* = 4) or *occasional* (*n* = 6) issue for schools in their area. Also, of those

who *strongly agreed* (11 out of 68) that school violence had *decreased their job*

satisfaction, 54.5% (*n* = 6 out of 11) stated *they were always concerned about their*

safety (*n* = 1) or had *numerous times questioned their safety* (*n* = 5). Whereas no

respondents who *strongly disagreed* (*n* = 22 out of 68) *that school violence had decrease*

their job satisfaction stated *that they were always* or *numerous times concerned about*

their safety.

A likelihood ratio chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses

to question 26b (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that school violence has resulted*

in poor occupational performance) varied significantly with respondents' answers to

questions 1 (*age*), 2 (*gender*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total*

number of schools you have taught in), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural*

school), 6 (*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school*

violence is an issue for schools in their areas), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on*

whether school violence is a personal issue for them), 13 (*whether or not they have*

experienced an incident of school violence), 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their*

career), and 25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as opposed to past*

positions). One analysis was found to be significant (*p* < .05). The results showed that

there was a statistically significant relationship between *how strongly respondents agreed*

or disagreed that school violence was resulting in poor occupational performance and

how safe they have felt throughout their career (x_2 = 26.901*, df* = 12, *p* = .008). Of those

respondents who stated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that school violence had

resulted in *poor occupational performance*, 50.0% noted they are *always concerned*

about their safety as a result of their career (*n* = 1) or *that there have been numerous times they have questioned their safety* (*n* = 6). Of those who *disagreed,* only 7.7% stated they were *always* (*n* = 1) *or numerous* (*n* = 3) times *concerned about their safety as a result of their job.*

A likelihood ratio chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses to question 26c (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that school violence has resulted in absenteeism*) varied significantly with respondents' answers to questions 1 (*age*), 2 (*gender*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of schools you have taught in*), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6 (*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas*), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether school violence is a personal issue for them*), 13 (*whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence*), 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their career*), and 25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as opposed to past positions*). One analysis was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed there was a statistically significant relationship between *how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that school violence was resulting in absenteeism* and *whether or not they had ever experienced an incident of school violence* (*x2 = 8.526, df = 3, p = .036*). Interestingly, of those respondents who stated *they had experienced an incident of school violence,* only 1.5% (*n* = 1) *agreed* school violence resulted in *absenteeism*.

A likelihood ratio chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses to question 26d (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that school violence has resulted in change of role assignment within a school)* varied significantly with respondents'

answers to questions 1 (*age*), 2 (*gender*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of schools you have taught in*), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6 (*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas*), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether school violence is a personal issue for them*), 13 (*whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence*), 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their career*), and 25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as opposed to past positions*). No analyses were found to be significant ($p < .05$).

A likelihood ratio chi-square test was conducted to determine whether responses to question 26e (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that school violence has resulted in change of school*) varied significantly with respondents' answers to questions 1 (*age*), 2 (*gender*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of schools you have taught in*), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6 (*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their areas*), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether school violence is a personal issue for them*), 13 (*whether or not they have experienced an incident of school violence*), 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their career*), and 25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as opposed to past positions*). One result was found to be significant ($p < .05$). The results showed that there was a statistically significant relationship between how *strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that school violence was resulting in changing schools* and *how safe they feel in their present school as opposed to past positions* ($x_2 = 21.658$, *df* $= 12$, $p = .042$). Of those respondents who stated they *strongly agree* that *school violence had resulted in*

them changing schools, 80.0% (*n* = 4) also *reported they feel far safer in their present*

school then in past positions, while of those who *agreed,* 60.0% (*n* = 6) reported that

they felt *far safer* (*n* = 1) *or safer* (*n* = 5) in *their present work situation than in previous*.

Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether responses

to question 26f (*how strongly do you agree or disagree that school violence has resulted*

in change of school districts) vary significantly with respondents' answers to questions 1

(*age*), 2 (*gender*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 4 (*total number of*

schools you have taught in), 5 (*total number of years spent teaching in a rural school*), 6

(*years spent teaching at present school*), 11 (*opinions on whether school violence is an*

issue for schools in their areas), 12 (*level of agreement or disagreement on whether*

school violence is a personal issue for them), 13 (*whether or not they have experienced*

an incident of school violence), 24 (*how safe they have felt throughout their career*), and

25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as opposed to past positions*). No

analyses were found to be significant (*p* < .05).

Violence prevention in educational training. Likelihood ratio chi-square tests

were conducted to determine whether responses to question 30 (*was the possibility for*

violence in the teaching profession and how to deal with the effects covered at some point

in your educational training) varied significantly with respondents' answers to questions

1 (*age*), 3 (*total number of years you have been teaching*), 11 (*opinions on whether*

school violence is an issue for schools in their areas), 12 (*level of agreement or*

disagreement on whether school violence is a personal issue for them), 13 (*whether or*

not they have experienced an incident of school violence), 24 (*how safe they have felt*

throughout their career), and 25 (*how safe they feel in their present school and role as*

opposed to past positions). Two analyses were found to be significant ($p < .05$). The

results showed there was a statistically significant relationship between *whether the*

possibility for violence in the teaching profession and how to deal with it was covered in

educational training and respondents' *age* ($x_2 = 22.101$, *df* $= 8$, $p = .005$). Of those

respondents *34 years of age or younger*, 37.5% ($n = 9$) stated *violence was covered in*

their education, as opposed to only 9.1% ($n = 4$) of those *over the age of 35 reporting*

yes. This indicates that younger respondents were more likely to have had violence

covered in their training. There was also a significant relationship discovered between

the number of years spent teaching and whether *violence and how to deal with it was*

covered in educational training ($x_2 = 22.120$, *df* $= 10$, $p = .015$). Of those respondents

who replied *yes, violence was covered in their training*, 84.6% ($n = 11$) had been

teaching for *10 years or less*, while only 15.4% ($n = 2$) had been teaching for *11 or more*

years.

This concludes the reporting of the results of this research study. Chapter 5 will

discuss the implications of these results. Chapter 5 will also present suggestions for

teachers in dealing with and preventing incidents of school violence, offer suggestions for

future research on this topic, and outline the limitations of this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This research study has examined the types of school violence experienced by rural Alberta teachers, the psychological implications of such violence, and also looked to identify what strategies and supports could be introduced to help rural Alberta teachers to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence. This chapter summarizes and discusses the implications of the results of the study as detailed in Chapter 4, including suggestions for helping rural Alberta teachers to prevent and cope with future incidents of school violence. In addition, the strengths and weaknesses of this study are outlined as well as suggestions for future research on the topic.

Summary of the Results

The nature of school violence. School violence is not a new matter, as long as schools have been in existence, violence has been occurring within them. However, the definition of school violence and who and how it impacts has been amended over the years. The numerous massacres in the last two decades have sensationalized school violence and altered how people identify what school violence encompasses. The less severe, but still damaging nonphysical acts of school violence may be overlooked as focus has shifted to these more violent crimes. Victims and perpetrators of school violence have also varied depending on the historical period examined. Although in recent decades research has typically been concerned with the impact of violence on students (Borg, 1999; Fekkes et al., 2005; Guerra, 2003), an increase in violence towards teachers is an emerging concern in the 21st century and deserves attention.

Defining school violence. This study addressed rural Alberta teachers' present definition of school violence. The definition of school violence provided was "any

threatened, attempted, or actual harm to a person or persons" (Lyon & Douglas, 1999, p. 5) within a school setting, broken down into three categories: physical violence, nonphysical violence, and sexual violence. Of the survey respondents, 89.7% (*n* = 61) indicated this was *similar to how they would have defined school violence.* Implying a consistency in how school violence is presently identified by rural Alberta teachers. However, what this does not address is each teacher's ability to correctly identify what is harm (school violence) when it has or is occurring, especially in regards to the violence experienced by the teachers themselves.

Is school violence a present issue? Respondents were asked to identify *whether or not school violence was an issue for schools in their area*, and 98.5% (*n* = 67) reported violence was *an issue to some degree*, which seems to speak to the fact that school violence continues to occur in rural Alberta. Likelihood ratio chi-square analysis determined a relationship between *teaching kindergarten* and *increased opinions on violence being an issue*. It was also determined using likelihood ration chi-square analysis that *Art teachers* identified violence to be *less of an issue* than those who taught other subject matter. No other grade or subject relationships were significant.

In addition to knowing if school violence occurs in rural Alberta, it is also important to know if the teachers within the region are being impacted. When the participants were asked, 41.1% (*n* = 28) stated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that *school violence was a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher.* More specifically, 82.4% (*n* = 56) of respondents reported that they *had experienced an incident of school violence throughout their teaching career,* and within that group 51.8% (*n* = 29) of those *had experienced an incident of school violence within the last year.*

Likelihood ratio chi-square testing determined that there was a significant relationship between *opinions on violence being a personal issue* and *gender*. *Male teachers strongly agreed* that *school violence was a personal issue for them* far more often than did *female teachers*. No relationship was found in regards to age or years spent teaching. In terms of significant relationships between experienced incidents of school violence and demographic information, only three were determined. *Teaching Grades 1–3,* being a *social studies teacher*, and being an *art teacher* were all found to be *negatively associated with experienced incidents of school violence*. It is important to highlight that age, gender, and years spent teaching were not related to whether or not respondents had experienced violence.

These statistics are fairly consistent with previous studies on school violence and Canadian teachers. The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey found that 66% of teachers had experienced an incident of abuse throughout their career, with 40% of those reporting that the most recent incident had occurred in the last year. In Lyon and Douglas's *Violence Against British Columbia Teachers* (1999), 81.3% of respondents had experienced some form of violence during their career, with 49.5% of those experiencing at least one incident in the past year. The data from the present study are also consistent with studies from other countries. Dzuka and Dalbert (2007) found that almost half of Slovakian teachers surveyed had experienced at least one violent act in the last 30 days.

Increasing violence in schools. Researchers disagree as to whether or not school violence is on the increase, with some studies concluding that violence is increasing (Carter & Stewin, 1999), and others finding that it has decreased or at the very least remained stable (Brener et al., 1999). One reason for the uncertainty is that statistical

information is dependent on how the data were collected and whether or not the incidents

of violence were being properly reported. This study was specifically interested in rural

Alberta teachers' perceptions of whether or not violence is increasing. Teachers are often

witness to the violence whether it is perpetrated against themselves or other individuals

within the school environment. As firsthand witnesses, teachers can report more

accurately the actual number of events, which means that statistical data is not dependent

on whether the events have been reported.

As first hand witnesses of violence it is useful then to ask rural Alberta teachers if

they feel that violence is increasing in schools. When research participants from the

present study were asked *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that violence in schools

is on the increase,* 57.4% (*n* = 39) stated that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that it was.

This is a sizable number, and a majority of the sample; however, it is down from the 78%

of respondents who indicated that violence in schools was on the increase when surveyed

for the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation report in 1994. This decrease in response rate

may be attributed to teacher desensitization to incidents of violence, or the fact that newer

teachers are more accustom to violence from the start of their career, unlike their longer

serving coworkers who may have seen violence in schools grow over the course of their

careers. Or perhaps it may just be that violence is in fact levelling off or declining as

many researchers believe (Brener et al., 1999).

Likelihood ratio chi-square tests were performed to determine whether participant

responses regarding the increase of violence in schools varied significantly with

responses to numerous other survey questions. Age, gender, years spent teaching,

whether or not an incident of violence had been experienced, and opinions on safety were

all found to be nonsignificant, which may place doubt on the desensitization hypothesis previously presented. It was determined that there was a significant relationship between *opinions on the increase of violence in schools* and *how strongly respondents agreed or disagreed that school violence was a personal issue for them*. Each respondent who *strongly agreed* that *violence is on the increase* also *agreed* that *school violence is a personal issue for them*. This finding suggests that when individuals feel that school violence is a personal issue they are more likely to feel that violence in schools is increasing, likely because they are experiencing it firsthand.

It is also important to ascertain whether violence against teachers is on the increase. Many feel that it is. One such reason being the accessibility of popular social media, which results in forms of abuse like cyberbullying (Pytel, 2007). Survey participants were asked to indicate *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that violence against teachers is on the increase*, and 58.8% ($n = 40$) of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that it is. This is very similar to the 60% of respondents who agreed in *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers* published by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in 1994.

Likelihood ratio chi-square testing was used to determine whether participant responses regarding increased violence towards teachers varied significantly with responses to numerous other survey questions. *Age* resulted in significant variation, in that *younger teachers* were *less likely to agree that violence against teachers was increasing* as compared to their *older colleagues*. Those who *agreed* that *violence against teachers was increasing* were also *more likely* to feel that *school violence was a serious or occasional issue for schools in their area* and also that *school violence was a personal issue for them as a rural Alberta teacher*. Also notable, participants who

agreed that *violence against teachers was increasing* were *more likely* to feel that teaching *was less safe than other occupations*.

Lastly, participants of this study were asked to indicate *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that violence against teachers will increase in the next 5 years*, and 61.8% of participants *agreed* that it would. This suggests that not only do the majority of teachers surveyed feel like violence towards them is increasing, they also feel that violence will continue to increase over the next 5 years. Likelihood ratio chi-square testing determined that less than half of participants who *agreed* that there would be an *increase in the next five years* also *agreed* that *school violence was a personal issue for them*. This suggests that it is not just those who feel violence is a personal issue that believe violence against teachers will continue to increase. However, further results did indicate that those who feel teaching is *as safe, if not more safe than other occupations* were *more likely* to indicate that *violence against teachers will not increase in the next 5 years*. An interesting point to address is that respondents' gender was not found to be significant in regards to increasing violence.

Media and school violence. The impact of media on school violence is another controversial topic. Media coverage of school shootings has been significant in the last two decades. However, researchers suggest that this coverage distorts the rate at which this violence is actually occurring (Killingbeck, 2001), as well as the public's view of the range of violent acts that encompass school violence. Since teachers and students are likely to view this media, it can be assumed that media coverage of school violence may be responsible for impacting student and teacher behaviours, assessment of threat, as well as their personal sense of security. This study looks to identify teachers' opinions on

whether media coverage of school violence increases the possibility for additional violence and decreases their sense of safety.

Participants in the present study were asked *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that media coverage of school violence spawns further violence*. Almost 70% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that it does. Likelihood ratio chi-square analysis determined that those who *agreed* that the *media coverage of school violence spawns further violence* were also *more likely* to indicate that *teaching was less safe than other professions*. When participants were asked *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that media coverage of incidents of school violence impacts how safe they feel as a teacher,* 61.8% *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that it does. Those who *strongly agreed* to this question also reported that *teaching was less safe than other occupations*. These results would seem to suggest that the media, whether accurate in its portrayal of school violence or not, is influencing teachers' feelings of safety. Perhaps this is because teachers believe that the more attention school violence gets, the more likely these incidents are to be observed and copied in their schools. It should again be noted that there was no significant relationship between the impact of media and age, gender, or years spent teaching.

In the *Survey of the Abuse of Teachers,* the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) asked their respondents how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the media contributes to the atmosphere that spawns abuse against teachers, and a large majority (71%) agreed that it does. Although the phrasing is different from the present study's questions, both address the impact of the media, offering a platform for comparison. When compared data suggest that the influence of media is down slightly from 1994 even with increased reporting of school violence. This may be due in part to people like

Killingbeck (2001) who offer insight on the distortion. Or it may reflect the fact that

rural residents pay less attention to news programs from larger centers as they feel the

information is irrelevant to their rural communities. Even with a noticeable decrease of

influence overtime, the media is still impacting over 60% of respondents, which is

significant. Perhaps teachers would benefit from information on the actual rates of

school violence and how the media distorts this data, as Killingbeck (2001) suggested.

Is rural school violence as common as in urban schools? The Saskatchewan

Teachers' Federation (1994) survey on the abuse of teachers determined that abuse was

generally equal in urban and rural areas. Other studies have suggested that rural schools

may have even worse violence than the average urban school (Schroth & Fishbaugh,

2000). The present study was interested in the experiences of school violence in regards

to rural Alberta schools and teachers, and asked respondents to indicate *whether or not*

they believed that violence is as common in rural school settings as it is in urban ones.

Responses indicated that 40% of participants felt violence was *as common or more so* in

rural areas, while 60% reported that school violence *was not as common*.

Respondents were asked to expand on why they felt violence was less, equally, or

more common in rural schools than in urban school settings and some common themes

emerged in their explanations. Those participants who reported they felt violence was

less common in rural areas indicated that it was due to the following four reasons:

(a) community spirit, (b) stronger sense of family and family support, (c) stronger

teacher–student relationships, and (d) smaller population. The participants who felt

violence was as common if not more so provided these three common reasons for this:

(a) people are people, it does not matter where they reside; (b) small-town mentality; and (c) transient population. The following sections discuss these themes.

Rural violence is less common. When participants were asked to explain why they felt that rural school violence was not as common as urban violence the first theme that emerged was community spirit. Respondents spoke often of the value in a sense of community and the connectedness that they felt that urban schools were less likely to possess (see Table F1 in Appendix F). The second theme is that rural communities not only have community spirit, they also foster stronger families and have parents who are more supportive of teachers. A number of respondents also indicated that rural parents instil stronger work ethic into their children and they hold their children to higher standards in regards to their behaviour (see Table F2 in Appendix F). The third theme that emerged is that rural schools allow for stronger teacher–student relationships. Students in these smaller rural schools typically have more frequent contact with their teachers both inside and outside of the school and, therefore, they are known more personally by each other (see Table F3 in Appendix F). Lastly, theme four is that violence is less common in rural schools simply due to a smaller population, as respondents noted "less students' results in less trouble"(see Table F4 in Appendix F).

Rural violence is equally or more common. When the participants were asked to explain why they felt rural school violence was as common if not more so than urban school violence, the first theme identified was that people are people; it does not matter where they reside (see Table F5 in Appendix F). Respondents noted that students in rural schools still have access to the same negative influences that urban children do, and that rural populations have the same diversity as many urban areas. A second commonly

expressed explanation for rural violence was the small-town mentality. Rural teachers, students, and their families are all well known to each other and, therefore, there is a greater likelihood that incidents within the school will follow the teacher outside of the school. Rumours, gossip, and social alienation are all a constant threat in small communities and can take extreme form because of the mob mentality that develops. Damage to property is thought to be more common in rural schools in part as a result of the small-town mentality and the awareness of what property belongs to certain teachers and their families (see Table F6 in Appendix F). Lastly, transient population was the final theme expressed. Transient population refers to the fact that just like in urban centers, students are coming and going in rural communities, which constantly changes the make-up and dynamics of the school environment (see Table F7 in Appendix F).

There are many possible explanations aside from violence levels or experiences with violence for why respondents may feel as they do towards school violence in their rural teaching environment. One reason for supporting the belief that rural violence is less common than urban school violence is an allegiance to the community and school in which they live and work. Many teachers in rural schools were once a student at the school, have children who go to the school, and grew up and now presently live in the community that the school is situated in. Therefore, they have a strong attachment and a desire to protect what is theirs from scrutiny. They want to put forth the image that their environment is especially safe and productive. This may be why many respondents spoke so highly of community spirit, the strength of the family, and the relationships between students and teachers. They are interconnected with all of these dynamics personally (Seaton, 2007).

Inversely, respondents may have felt that violence was equally or more common in rural schools because they are not originally from the area and, therefore, they are treated like an outsider. Small communities foster multigenerational relationships and it is difficult being new to the community to immerse oneself into a culture that has existed for decades. Another reason that survey participants may have felt that rural violence was equally or more common than urban violence is based on the small-town mentality that many respondents mentioned. In most rural areas everyone is well aware of where their teachers live, who they associate with, and where they frequent, putting them at greater risk for abuse. Lyon and Douglas (1999) suggested that this was also the reason for the increase in violence directed towards teachers' families reported in their research. It may be a function of the fact that it is easier to identify and target victims. It should be noted that there were no significant relationships between thoughts on the level of rural school violence and participant's age, gender, years spent teaching, years spent teaching in a rural school, number of schools taught at, or years spent teaching in current school. There were also no significant relationships between opinions on whether violence was an issue personally or for schools in their area or between experiences of violence.

Types of violence experienced and the perpetrators involved. The present study was undertaken to answer numerous questions related to school violence and rural Alberta teachers. This section addresses the first question: What types of school violence are rural Alberta teachers facing? As previously noted, 42.6% ($n = 29$) of study participants reported having *experienced an incident of school violence in the last year,* with an additional 39.7% ($n = 27$) stating that they *had experienced at least one incident throughout their career*. Taken together, these numbers support the conclusion that

school violence is being experienced by the large majority of rural Alberta teachers surveyed, with over 80% admitting to having experienced school violence at least once throughout their career. The following section highlights the types of violence that teachers are experiencing beginning with those incidents in the last year, followed by reported career incidents. This section also outlines data collected on the perpetrators of these violent incidents. In addition, it will look at respondent's perceptions of how much a problem for teachers numerous forms of violence are in their daily work settings.

All incidents in the last year. Reporting on incidents of school violence experienced in the last year suggests that prevalence generally decreases as the severity of the violence increases, which is consistent with previous Canadian research (Lyon & Douglas, 1999). *The most common form of violence experienced in the past year* by participants were *nonphysical personal insults and name calling.* Of the total sample, 36.8% (*n* = 25) indicated *at least one incident* of *personal insults and name calling,* with 14.7% (*n* = 10) noting *10 or more incidents* of such in the *last year.* Restated, 25 of the 29 (86.2%) respondents who had experienced an incident of school violence in the last year, indicated that they had experienced personal insults and name calling. *Property damage* occurred *one or more times* to 23.5% (*n* = 16) of the total sample in the *last year*.

One or more incidents of *actual physical violence* were reported by 11.8% (*n* = 8) of the total sample in the *last year*, with 19.1% (*n* = 13) noting *one or more incidents* of *threatened physical violence* and 13.2% (*n* = 9) stating they had experience *one or more incidents* of *attempted physical violence*. Again to clarify, eight of the 29 (27.6%) respondents who had experienced an incident of school violence in the last year indicated

that they had experienced actual physical violence. *Threatened, attempted, or actual*

violence against a family member was indicated to have occurred *one or more times* in

the *last year* by 7.4% (*n* = 5) of the sample.

Sexual violence was the *least experienced* form of school violence for teachers in

the *last year*. Of those teachers surveyed, 7.4% (*n* = 5) reported that they had

experienced *one or more incidents* of *sexual harassment* in the *last year*, while there were

no reported incidents of *sexual assault*. Therefore, of those respondents who had

experienced school violence in the last year, five of 29 (17.2%) reported having

experienced an incident of sexual harassment, while none of the 29 (0.0%) noted the

occurrence of sexual assault.

Like both the surveys that this study was based on, the most common forms of

violence experienced were nonphysical, with incident numbers decreasing as the severity

of the violence increased. A total of 36.8% of this study's sample indicated an incident

of personal insults and name calling in the last year, in contrast to 25.0% of teachers in

the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey and 29.5% of Lyon and Douglas's

(1999) sample reported this form of violence. Property damage occurred to 23.5% of the

current sample, while occurring to 12.0% and 11.2% of respondents in the other two

surveys respectively. Actual physical violence was reported by 11.8% of this sample,

while 9.0% of Saskatchewan (1994) teachers and 5.1% of Lyon and Douglas's (1999)

sample had experienced incidents of physical violence in the last year. There is no

comparable data on sexual harassment or assault in the last year.

What the comparison of this data seems to suggest is that teachers are reporting

more school violence in recent years. For each type of violence highlighted the number

of teachers impacted has grown over time. One reason for reporting increased incidents of insults or name calling might be the rapidly growing access individuals have to social media. Insults no longer need to be face to face anymore, they can now be posted in the cyber world whether it be on RateMyTeacher (2011), Twitter (2011), Facebook (2011), or someone's blog. Significantly higher levels of property damage were also reported in the present study. One possible explanation that might help to account for this increase is that the present study focused strictly on rural teachers, while the other two studies sampled their entire respective provinces' population. It has been reported that property damage tends to be higher in rural areas (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994).

Respondents were asked to describe any of the incidents of school violence that they had experienced in the last year in further detail, and these results are presented in Table F8 found in Appendix F. All three types of violence were represented as having been experienced in the comments received. The comments provided also illustrate the fact that there were numerous perpetrators of violence against teachers in the last year that will now be explored.

Perpetrators of violence in the last year. Those who perpetrated the violence against teachers in the last year were also examined. Results indicated that the *most common sources of violence* were *students. Teachers' own students* were selected to have been *the source of violence one or more times* by 30.9% (*n* = 21) of the sample, while *other students in the school* were noted as the *source of violence one or more times* by 22.0% (*n* = 15). These numbers mirror the results of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey, which also found that the most common sources of school violence against teachers were their own students (29%), as well as other students (18%)

in the school. According to the present research the *second most common sources of school violence against teachers* in the *last year* were *parents or guardians*, with 22% (*n* = 15) of the survey respondents noting *an incident of violence perpetrated against them* by a *parent/guardian* in the *last year*. This finding is also similar to data from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey, where parents/guardians were the second most common source of violence, with 15% of the total sample listing them as a source of teacher violence in the last year.

Although *other teaching staff* and *administration* were not the most common sources, they were listed as perpetrators by a number of participants in both the present and Saskatchewan studies. When the violence is perpetrated by someone who holds power over their intended target it can be particularly devastating, as one participant expressed when asked to provide comments on perpetrators of violence in the last year: "I have experienced threats from the administrative office, which included loss of job if I underperformed. I believe this threat was made because of a culture of 'violence' which is engrained within the school division."

All incidents throughout career. In total, 82.4% (*n* = 56) of the sample acknowledged experiencing some form of *school violence throughout their career*. Data on incidents of school violence experienced throughout teachers' careers, like in the last year suggested that prevalence generally decreases as the severity of the violence increases. *The most common form of violence during participants' careers* was *nonphysical personal insults and name calling*, with 75.0% (*n* = 51) of the total sample indicating *at least one incident*, and 23.5% (*n* = 16) of these noting *10 or more incidents* of such *throughout their career*. Restated, 51 of the 56 (91.1%) respondents who had

experienced an incident of school violence during their career indicated that they had experienced personal insults and name calling at least once at some point throughout. *Property damage* had occurred *one or more times* to 44.1% (*n* = 30) of the sample *throughout their career.*

One or more incidents of *actual physical violence* were reported by 14.7% (*n* = 10) of the total sample *throughout their careers*, with 30.9% (*n* = 21) noting *one or more incidents* of *threatened physical violence*, and 22.1% (*n* = 15) stating they had experienced *one or more incidents* of *attempted physical violence.* Again to clarify, 10 of the 56 (17.9%) respondents who had experienced an incident of school violence at some point during their career indicated that they had experienced actual physical violence. *Threatened, attempted, or actual violence against a family member* was indicated to have occurred *one or more times during participants' careers* by 22.1% (*n* = 15) of the sample.

Sexual violence was the *least experienced form of school violence* for teachers *during their careers.* Of the teachers surveyed, 11.8% (*n* = 8) reported that they had experienced *one or more incidents* of *sexual harassment during their career*, while only *one sexual ass*ault was reported (*n* = 1, 1.5%). Therefore, of those respondents who had experienced school violence during their career, eight of 56 (14.3%) reported having experienced an incident of sexual harassment, while one of 56 (1.8%) noted the occurrence of sexual assault.

The data collected in this study on incidents of school violence against teachers throughout their careers have similarities to data from previous research on the topic (Lyon & Douglas, 1999). Similar to the *Violence Against British Columbia Teachers*

Report (Lyon & Douglas, 1999), the most common forms of violence experienced were nonphysical, with incident numbers decreasing as the severity of the violence increased. While 75.0% of this study's sample indicated an incident of personal insults and name calling during their career, 60.6% of Lyon and Douglas's (1999) sample reported this form of violence. Property damage occurred to 44.1% of the current sample, while occurring to 34.2% of British Columbia teachers surveyed (Lyon & Douglas, 1999). Actual physical violence was reported by 14.7% of this sample, while 13.5% of Lyon and Douglas's (1999) sample of British Columbia teachers had experienced incidents of physical violence throughout their careers. Data on sexual harassment from the British Columbia research suggests a prevalence rate of approximately 12.2%, which is slightly higher than the 11.8% reported in the present study. No data are available to compare rates of sexual assault.

The comparison of the data from the present study to Lyon and Douglas's (1999) work suggests that the self-reported rate of school violence experienced by teachers has increased in the last 10 years. The same plausible explanations given for the increase in violence in the last year may also explain the increase in career experiences. It may also be that present teachers have experienced more violence because they are now more aware of what constitutes school violence than their colleagues were 10 years ago. The small decline in the rate of sexual harassment is encouraging, even if it is taken to mean nothing more than the fact that sexual violence does not appear to have grown.

Participants in this study were asked to describe any of the incidents of school violence that they had experienced in their career in further detail, the results of which are presented in Table F9 found in Appendix F. Numerous forms of violence are mentioned

in these comments. Participants also identified the many sources of violence throughout one's career, which will now be examined in further detail.

Perpetrators of school violence throughout career. Those who have perpetrated the violence throughout teachers' careers were also examined. Results indicated that the *most common sources of violence* were *students* and *parents or guardians. Teachers' own students* were selected to have been the *source of violence one or more times* by 69.1% (*n* = 47) of the sample, while *other students in the school* were noted as *the source of violence one or more times* by 45.6% (*n* = 31). The *second most common sources of school violence* were *parents or guardians*, with 54.4% (*n* = 37) of the survey respondents noting *an incident of violence perpetrated against them by a parent or guardian during their career. Other teaching staff* (*n* = 7; 10.3%) and *administration* (*n* = 9; 13.3%) were also listed by a number of participants as *sources of violence one or more times throughout their careers*. One participant described his or her traumatic career experiences: "I have experienced stalking and threats from administration, vengeful and unprovoked threats from parents not from my class, gossip, lies and shunning. It is too disturbing to talk about."

The problem of school violence in a teachers' daily work setting. The ability of rural Alberta teachers to correctly identify whether or not school violence is occurring, especially towards themselves has been questioned. This was considered in designing the survey for this study. It was hypothesized that perhaps teachers may provide a more accurate account of violence experienced if they were asked to evaluate violence they had witnessed towards colleagues as opposed to experienced themselves. Therefore,

respondents were asked: *How much of a problem for teachers is physical, nonphysical, and sexual violence perpetrated by a number of sources in your daily work setting?*

Administration, other teachers, and nonteaching staff were indicated as *perpetrators of sexual violence* by less than 5% of the sample. *Parents* were seen as a problem in regards to *sexual violence* by fewer than 9% of participants. *Students* were considered the *most problematic perpetrators of sexual violence* with approximately 15% of respondents identifying both *teachers' students* and *other students* as the *sources of sexual violence in their daily work settings.*

In regards to *physical violence*, less than 6% of respondents indicated that *other teachers, nonteaching staff, or administration* were a *problem* in their *daily work setting.* *Parents* were identified as a *potential problem* by 30% of the sample, and were the only source of *physical violence* that was identified to be a *significant problem*, with 2.9% stating so. *Students* were identified as at least a *minor problem* when it comes to *physical violence in a teacher's daily work setting* by approximately 40% of research participants.

All potential perpetrators were thought to be a risk when it comes to nonphysical violence. *Administration and nonteaching staff* were seen as the *least likely to commit nonphysical violence*, with approximately 15% of respondents finding them to be at least a *minor problem in their daily work setting.* Over 20% of participants saw *other teachers as a minor problem* when it comes to *nonphysical forms of school violence.* *Parents* were seen as a *significant problem* by 1.5% of respondents, *an occasional problem* by 25% more, and a *very small problem* by an additional 44%. Otherwise stated, more than 70% of respondents indicated that *parents* are a problem when it comes to *nonphysical acts of school violence.* *Students* were seen as just *slightly less of a problem* than their

parents, with almost 70% of respondents indicating that they were at least a *minor*

problem in regards to *physical violence perpetrated against teachers in their daily work*

settings.

The data respondents provided on the violence they observed against teachers in

their daily work setting sheds light on a number of interesting conclusions. When

examining self-reported and observed school violence against teachers, it is clear that for

both the rate of violence tends to decrease as incidents of violence become more serious.

Perpetrators of all forms of violence were also most frequently students or parents

whether it was self-reported or witnessed. In addition, like the data collected in *A Survey*

of the Abuse of Teachers (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994), it seems that the

most frequently observed type of violence against teachers is nonphysical, which is also

consistent with self-reported data.

Psychological impact of school violence on the rural Alberta teacher. The

present study was undertaken to answer numerous questions on the impact of school

violence on rural Alberta teachers. This section addresses the second question

specifically: What psychological impact does school violence have on teachers in rural

Alberta? This section discusses how safe respondents feel the teaching profession is as

well as how safe they feel personally. This section also seeks to understand the

emotional, physical, and career impact that school violence has on the individuals that

experience such incidents. Lastly, this section discusses the cost of this impact.

Safety and teaching profession. According to Kondrasuk et al. (2005), teachers

may be up to three times more likely to be the victims of violent crimes in schools than

students. This increased possibility for violence can create fear, and fear of violence

plays a significant role in workplace satisfaction. Budd, Arvey, and Lawless (1996) found that 15% of their respondents, whether victimized or not, stated that fear of violence had caused them to think about a job change, and 12% acknowledged that this fear had caused mental or physical distress. Survey respondents from the present study were asked to *indicate how safe they felt the teaching profession was in comparison to other occupations.* Approximately 20% felt that it *was less safe*, while just under 50% indicated that they felt that teaching was *equally safe*. These data are comparable to a study by Pietrzak, Petersen, and Speaker (1998), who determined that 24% of school personnel were concerned or very concerned about safety while at school.

Likelihood ratio chi-square testing determined an interesting significant relationship between *experiencing incidents of school violence* and *opinions on the safety of the teaching profession*. Almost half of the respondents who reported that they *have never experienced an incident of school violence during their teaching career* felt that teaching was *less safe than other occupations,* as opposed to only 13% of *those who had reported that they had experienced an incident of violence.* One possible explanation for this is that the fear of violence is often as impactful as experiencing violence directly. Fear of violence occurring may be enough to precipitate adverse feelings regarding occupational safety (Budd et al., 1996; Schonfeld, 2001, 2006; Wilson, Douglas, & Lyon, 2011).

Respondents were also asked to indicate *how safe they have felt throughout their career.* Only 3% of the sample reported that *they are always concerned about their safety*, while another 13% indicated that they have *questioned their safety numerous times*. The majority of participants (65%) stated that they have *rarely questioned their*

safety. In addition to career feelings of safety, participants were asked to indicate how *safe they felt presently as opposed to past positions.* Almost half of the sample (47%) reported that they felt *equally safe*, with an equally large number (43%) indicating that they *felt safer.* Only 10% of participants reported that they felt *less safe at present.*

Likelihood ratio chi-square testing was also completed on these two questions and in regards to career safety, 100% of respondents who had *only worked in one school* reported *no or rare concerns with safety*, while 73% of those who reported that they *were always or numerously concerned about their safety* had taught in *four or more schools throughout their career.* Suggesting that the more schools a teacher has taught in, the more likely they are to have experienced fear for their safety while on the job. It was also discovered that those who felt that *violence was a serious issue for schools in their area* were also *more likely* to have had *safety concerns throughout their career.*

Likelihood ratio chi-square analysis also determined that respondents *morale, teaching effectiveness, classroom management, learning environment, delivery of services,* and *job satisfaction* were negatively impacted *moderately* or *to a large degree* more often when they also indicated that they were *always concerned about their safety as a result of their career or have numerous times questioned their safety.* It appears that the more an individual felt concerned for their safety on the job, the more strongly they felt that school violence was negatively impacting the six occupational factors presented. Lastly, chi-square analysis identified a significant relationship between how safe *respondents felt in their current school as opposed to past positions* and their *opinions on whether school violence is an issue for schools in their area.* It was determined that 100% of those who stated that they *felt less safe in their current position* also indicated

that school violence was an *occasional* or *serious issue for schools in their area*. However, 45% of the remaining sample (those who felt *equally safe or safer*) still considered *school violence to be an issue for schools in their area*.

In Lyon and Douglas's (1999) *Violence Against British Columbia Teachers Report* participants were asked to rate how often they felt afraid at school. Lyon and Douglas found that 65% of their participants never felt afraid, significantly higher than the less than 20% of this study's population who reported that they have always felt completely safe in their role as a teacher. These results suggest that perhaps fear has increased in recent years. The overall impact of violence on those who are victimized has been found to be extensive both in the present study and past research on the topic (Lyon & Douglas, 1999). Fear for personal safety due to experience violence causes a significant impact on emotional health, physical health, and career satisfaction and performance. These areas of impact are each examined in further detail in this section.

Emotional symptoms. Tuettemann and Punch (1992) determined that psychological distress levels among teachers are disturbingly high. This high level of teacher distress identified in previous academic literature is consistent with the results of the present study. The present research evidence suggests that experiences with school violence have had a serious emotional impact on rural Alberta teachers.

Participants from the present study were asked whether they *agreed that they had experienced a number of emotional symptoms as a result of fear of, or experiences with, school violence*, and the reported occurrence of emotional symptoms was shockingly high. Agreement ranged from 72% of the sample agreeing that they had experienced *increased stress* as a result of school violence to 20% indicating they had experienced

low self-esteem or *depression.* *Frustration* had been experienced by 68% of the sample, while 63% acknowledged *anger*, 57% *disgust*, and 56% admitted to experiencing *anxiety* as a result of school violence. *Irritability, sadness, helplessness*, and *mistrust of others* were all experiences by over 40% of respondents. In addition, 30% reported *fear of revictimization* and 25% reported feelings of *guilt* due to fear of or experiences with school violence. To summarize the endorsement of emotional symptoms as a result of school violence is alarming: 1 in 5 teachers surveyed indicated having experienced low self-esteem and depression, and almost 3 in 4 reported increased stress and frustration as a result of school violence.

Lyon and Douglas's (1999) *Report on Violence Against British Columbia Teachers* also gathered information on the psychological impact of school violence on teachers. Like the present study, the highest level of reporting was found for emotional impact symptoms, with 84% of the participants who experienced violence acknowledging the presence of at least one emotional symptom. Stress, frustration, and anger were the most frequently reported symptoms, which mirrors the most common emotional symptoms identified in the present study.

The majority of violence experienced according to the present study is nonphysical verbal victimization, often times in high frequency. This repetitive, long-lasting form of violence needs to be taken seriously because it is strongly linked to the emotional symptoms of teacher stress and burnout (Galand, Lecocq, & Philippot, 2007). Anxious, depressed, disengaged teachers are often unable to sustain the engagement of their students (Galand et al., 2007), which causes the teachers to question their abilities and career choice, negatively impacting their self-confidence and efficacy.

Physical symptoms. Participants were also asked if they had *experienced a number of physical symptoms as a result of fear of, or experiences with, school violence,* and the reported occurrence was significant. Results ranged from 48% of the sample agreeing that they had experienced *fatigue* as a result of school violence to 7% indicating they had experienced both *tremors* and *uncontrolled crying*. *Sleep disturbances* and *headaches* were experienced by over 40% of the respondents, while *gastrointestinal effects, teeth grinding, weight changes*, and *appetite changes* were experienced by 22% or more. *Hyper-alertness* and *nausea* were experience by almost 18%, *sweating* by 15%, and *dizziness* by 9%. These numbers suggest that almost one in two rural Alberta teachers' reports fatigue, sleep disturbance, and headaches as a result of school violence.

Lyon and Douglas (1999) gathered information on physical symptoms experienced by teachers attributed to incidents of school violence that they had experienced. Approximately 60% of Lyon and Douglas's victimized sample reported having experienced some kind of physical symptom. Sleep disturbances, fatigue, and headaches were the most frequently reported symptoms, as was the case in the present study as well.

Career impact. Study respondents were also asked to report on *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that school violence had impacted numerous areas of their career.* Results indicated that almost 40% of the total sample *agreed* that they had experienced *decreased job satisfaction* as a result of school violence, in other words, approximately one in two individuals who had experienced a violent incident (80% of the total sample) experienced decreased job satisfaction as a result. This is consistent with Lyon and Douglas's (1999) research as they found that over half the participants in their study who

had experienced violence reported decreased job satisfaction. In addition, 22% of the total sample from the present study had experienced *poor occupational performance* due to school violence, while 6% of participants reported *absenteeism* as a result. Approximately 10% of the participants in Lyon and Douglas's (1999) study who had experienced violence reported poor occupational performance and absenteeism.

In regards to their professional role, 22% of respondents *agreed* that school violence had resulted in *changing schools*, 15% *agreed* that school violence had caused them *to change role assignment within a school*, and a surprising 13% *agreed* that they had *changed school districts* as a result of school violence. There was no way in the present study to determine the number of teachers who leave the profession as a result of violence given that the survey was distributed to teachers presently employed, but likely many do. Research compiled by the Canadian Teachers' Federation (2004) reported that "more than 25% of Canada's teachers leave the profession within their first five years of employment" (p. 3). With this percentage of teachers leaving the profession and the rate of those changing roles and schools due to violence, the cost on the education system is enormous. This will be examined further shortly.

Participants were also *asked how their experiences with school violence had negatively influenced their morale, teaching effectiveness, classroom management, learning environment, delivery of services, and job satisfaction*. Almost half of the sample indicated that their *morale* was *negatively impacted by their experiences with school violence*. In addition, over 40% reported their *job satisfaction* had been impacted, while at least 30% of respondents indicated a *negative impact due to school violence*

when it came to their *teaching effectiveness, classroom management, learning environment, and delivery of services.*

It is important to note that in regards to career symptoms, there were no significant relationships discovered when cross tabulated with age, gender, or years spent teaching. The low predictive power of demographical characteristics is consistent with previous research studies on factors of teachers stress and burnout. Studies have repeatedly determined null or small relationships with age, gender, number of years spent teaching and level of teaching (Galand et al., 2007).

Cost of impact. The data gathered on the psychological impact highlights the long-term costs of violence on the physical and emotional well being of the victim as well as on their occupational performance. This in turn impacts the quality of student education and puts financial strain on the individual, the education system, and society. According to the Canadian Policy Research Networks, stress-related absence costs Canadian employers $3.5 billion per year, and further mental health problems cost Canadian business $33 billion per year when nonclinical diagnoses such as burnout are included (Noble, Lewis, Kennedy, & Pollock, 2006)

The significant impact that school violence has on occupational satisfaction and performance of teachers is costly to the education of their students as well. Ting et al. (2002) found that as a result of workplace violence teachers experienced avoidance behaviour towards their students. Feeling unsafe also resulted in teachers who were unmotivated and less committed to their jobs. The Canada Safety Council reported that bullied employees waste between 10–52% of their time at work (Noble et al., 2006), which would certainly impact teachers' effectiveness and the quality of education that

they are providing to their students. Additional costs of violence would include the necessity of hiring new teachers to replace those who are off on medical or stress leave, as well as those who end up eventually leaving the profession. The question then becomes, what can be done to mitigate these costs? The next section addresses this.

Preventing and coping with incidents of school violence. The final question this study aimed to answer was: What can be done to help rural Alberta teachers to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence? This section looks at whether or not teachers are being prepared for the possibility of occupational violence and how to handle it. This section also provides participants insights on improvements that could be made to better prepare future generations of teachers for such circumstances. This section also examines participants' opinions on the effectiveness of numerous strategies and supports for preventing and coping with school violence once they are on the job, and again outlines suggestions provided by the respondents.

Preparedness. McClure (1996) stated in her writing on violence in the workplace "ignorance of risk will not protect anyone from dangerous behavior at work. Nor will it protect you from the responsibility of managing the risk" (p. 4). McClure's statement applied to teaching suggests that teachers need to be aware of the possibility for violence in their work place. Teachers need to have learned the skills to manage it and gained competency in putting them into action. Lack of awareness and preparedness is harmful to themselves, their students, and society. According to Darling-Hamond (2003), a growing body of evidence supports the theory that teachers who lack proper initial preparation are more likely to leave the profession.

Survey respondents were asked *whether they were aware of the possibility for occupational violence when they decided to pursue a teaching career,* and only 50% (*n* = 34) of respondents stated that *they were*. What this suggests is that half of our current rural Alberta teachers had entered into the profession without considering the possibility that they might encounter violence. This is important because people choose careers based on numerous factors, and for some people such factors might include risk of violence or, in other words, sense of safety and security on the job. Without awareness, people fail to realize that choosing to be a teacher will mean putting themselves in an occupation in which the possibility for experiencing violence and its side effects exists. The result of this being that teachers are not prepared psychologically for the possibility that violence will occur, and lack of preparedness leads to increased risk of harm. If teachers are entering into their jobs without knowledge for the possibility of violence and understanding of how to manage it, then they cannot be expected to appropriately handle the situations that arise.

The results of this study show that not only are teachers not aware of the possibility for violence when they choose to pursue teaching as a career, but their education is not providing them with the training and knowledge to increase their personal and professional awareness. The survey asked respondents if *the possibility for violence in the teaching profession and how to deal with the effects was covered at some point in their educational training* and only 19.1% (*n* = 13) stated that *it was,* with a staggering 66.2% (*n* = 45) certain that it *was not*. These numbers suggest that less than 20.0% of current rural Alberta teachers began their career with the preparation *to prevent and cope with the violence* that 98.5% (*n* = 67) of them stated is an issue.

When data regarding the respondents' *awareness for occupational violence when they decided to pursue a teaching career* was compared with their *age,* results indicated that *younger teachers* may have been *more aware of the possibility for violence in their occupation* than their *older colleagues* were when they entered the teaching profession. The data appear to suggest that younger teachers and the next generation of new teachers may in fact be more aware of the possibility for occupational violence in the teaching profession. This is likely because violence in schools has been more openly discussed in the last couple of decades as these individuals were considering their career paths.

When participants' responses as to *whether or not the possibility for violence in the teaching profession and how to deal with the effects was covered in their educational training* were compared to their *age* and *years spent teaching* both results were found to be significant. Of those teachers between the *ages of 25–34*, 40.9% ($n = 9$) stated that *violence was covered in their education* as opposed to less than 15% for *all other age categories*. In regards to *years spent teaching*, 100.0% ($n = 1$) of those who had taught *less than a year*, 33.3% ($n = 6$) of those who had been teaching for *1–5 years*, and 40.0% ($n = 4$) of those who reported *6–10 years of teaching experience* noted that *violence had been covered in their education*, as opposed to 0% reported in both the *11–15* and *16–20 age ranges* and 10.5% ($n = 2$) in the *25+ years spent teaching* category. In other words, the younger the respondent and the fewer years they had spent teaching, the more likely they were to have received some training on school violence. Although there is still room for major improvement, perhaps with the increased awareness for the possibility of violence for not only students but teachers as well, university programs are in fact doing a better job of introducing curriculum to address this topic.

Respondents who indicated that school violence had been discussed in their programs provided these bleak descriptions of the information given. One participant stated, "We were told how to deal with verbal violence in parent–teacher interviews, but I don't remember anything else." Another participant explained that he was told, "'Students may sue you and/or try to get you fired. Call the ATA for everything.' This was the extent of this training." A few of the participants' responses identified more positive training. One individual explained the training as follows: "Yes. I took a behaviour management course where we were given many strategies to deal with a variety of violent acts." A second participant noted, "We were told that there is always a possibility of a situation turning violent, so the university provided a course on Non-Violent Crisis Intervention at a discounted rate for the students, teaching them how to more effectively deal with a situation that is turning violent." What was interesting about this response was that the school did address the possibility for violence and also offered training, however, it was an option and at an additional cost, two barriers that likely significantly interfered with student participation numbers.

When those who had answered that the possibility for violence and its effects had not been covered were asked to provide suggestions for what they wish had been covered, a number of individuals noted that reviewing possible violent scenarios and solutions for best dealing with them would have been useful. Others described wanting information on dealing with difficult parties, including students, parents, and staff. One individual commented that information on "drugs, sex, alcohol the spectrum of what Gr. 7–12 are doing in their free time and how it will affect you as a teacher" would have been useful. It would appear that what teachers are missing is open discussion about what they

can expect to encounter in regards to violence. They want to have the opportunity to practice handling different scenarios and to generate discussion around best practices for doing so. Teachers would appreciate information on the specific environment in which they plan to work as well as possible perpetrators of violence they may encounter there.

Nims and Wilson (1998) agreed that teachers are not being prepared with the knowledge and skills to implement appropriate policies and preventions strategies for managing school violence. Nims and Wilson indicated there is a role for the institution of higher education to prepare teachers to address the violence they are to face in local schools. So the questions becomes how best to implement education around school violence preparation? Research has determined that the more field-based opportunities students have to practice their skills the lower their levels of stress and apprehension when they enter the field (McLaurin, Smith, & Smillie, 2009). This practical application provides students with a comprehensive, realistic perception of the teaching profession, with the intended goal being to increase self-esteem and the ability to flourish in the classroom environment. This field-based learning could be adapted to include more violence-based awareness and training. Darling-Hamond suggested that good teachers can be retained by providing them with both the proper preparation and a positive support system once they begin teaching, which could interpreted as student teaching.

Strategies and supports. Preparedness is an important aspect for preventing and coping with school violence, but it is just the first step. Strategies and supports must be implemented in schools if teachers are to effectively prevent violence, and cope with it if unfortunately it does occur. Suspensions and expulsions, school ground safety, and better working environments are all areas that have been examined in literature as ways to help

deal with school violence (Astor et al., 1999; Eisenbraun, 2007; Kovess-Masfety et al., 2007), with no consensus on which of these approaches are successful. What is important to determine in regards to violence against rural Alberta teachers is which strategies and supports they feel will be most effective, as this study attempts to do.

Survey participants were asked to indicate *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that a number of strategies and supports would be helpful to rural Alberta teachers in preventing and coping with school violence.* Results suggest that teachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* to numerous strategies and supports being helpful, with the *most frequently* endorsed being *policies for dealing with school violence* (98.5%), *defusing and debriefing following incidents of school violence* (97.0%), and *anger management and conflict resolution programs for students* (95.6%). The strategies and supports suggested to teachers in this study have been broken down for discussion into three roughly drawn categories: punish and deter, school ground management, and relationships and programming.

Punish and deter. Punishment has long been a tool for deterring violence (Breulin et al., 2006), yet literature suggests that teachers' attitudes vary in regards to its effectiveness. When respondents were asked *how strongly they agreed or disagreed that stricter punishment for acts of violence would be useful*, only 80.9% *agreed* or *strongly agreed*. While this may seem like a high response rate, it is only slightly above the average rate of agreement (77.0%) in the present study, and much lower than for numerous other strategies and supports. It may be that teachers recognize that the issue with punishment as a deterrent is that it is not uniformly applied. As the report by the American Psychological Association Board of Education Affairs, Task Force on

Classroom Violence Directed Against Teachers (2011) outlined, "Schools need to have a clearly articulated plan for responding to students who violate behavioural expectations" (p. 14). This task force noted that consequences need to be reasonable, feasible, and proportional based on the magnitude of the infraction, and delivered in a way that prevents unnecessary interruptions (American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs, Task Force on Classroom Violence Directed Against Teachers, 2011). This report suggested that minor and major infractions need to be defined so that all parties involved are clear as to what constitutes the infraction, and what the procedures are for responding to it. This report emphasized that the key is consistency (American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs, Task Force on Classroom Violence Directed Against Teachers, 2011). As Breulin et al. (2006) identified, lack of consistency in punishments is likely to result in further alienation of the isolated, angry student. Respondents from the present study also support changes in regards to action, with 88.3% indicating that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that *improved action when violence is reported* would be useful.

Additional methods to deter violence in schools were suggested. In regards to a *larger police presence in the community and school environment*, 70.5% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that this prevention strategy would be useful for deterring school violence, while only 67.6% of respondents *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that a *school resource officer always present in the school* would be a useful. While many obviously feel that these are not useful strategies, other respondents disagreed. One participant remarked that a "Student Resource Officer is an invaluable tool. Should be present more often in every school." It is useful to remember that agreement on all strategies and

supports is based on opinion, and opinions are based on personal experiences. Positive experiences with strategies are likely to influence individuals' perceptions of their usefulness, likewise with negative experiences. Aside from a lack of support for punishment, the low agreement rate may also be due to the fact that many rural teachers have never experienced the usefulness of increased police presence or a resource officer in their schools, as both are less likely given the budget and access constraints of smaller, more distant rural school settings (Seaton, 2007).

   School ground management. School ground management is the second category that many of the strategies and supports for preventing and coping with school violence fall under, they include: *better lighting conditions, greater supervision during high-traffic periods, staggering periods and lunch breaks, ensuring that teachers are not working alone, monitoring access to the school*, and *metal detectors*. The range of support for these suggestions varied, with 83.9% of teachers *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that *monitoring access to the school* would be useful, and only 20.6% *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* that *metal detectors* would be a useful prevention strategy. The results seem to suggest that controlling the school environment is important to many teachers when it comes to preventing violence, as Eisenbraun (2007) suggested. Violence does tend to occur in areas that are not controlled (Eisenbraun, 2007); therefore, part of managing the risk of violence is awareness of and management of as areas such as entrances, and during high-traffic periods like breaks and the start and end of the day. However, teachers in this study did not feel that metal detectors were necessary, and instead supported less extreme measures to prevent and control violence in their schools.

Relationships and programming. Relationships and programming is the third category of strategies and supports and encompasses the rest of the options for preventing and coping with school violence provided in the survey. These include: *policies for dealing with school violence, anger management and conflict resolution programs for students, anger management and conflict resolution programs for teachers, smaller classroom sizes, decreased workloads, additional supports and resources for students with special needs, parents being more supportive of teacher and administrative decisions, increased support from administration, increased reporting of acts of violence, teacher support groups and support from colleagues, counselling services*, and *defusing and debriefing following incidents of school violence.* The strategies and supports that were considered *most useful* by teachers *for preventing and coping with school violence: policies, defusing and debriefing, and anger management* and *conflict resolution for students* are all part of this category and are examined more closely in this section.

Policies for dealing with school violence were the *most frequently endorsed strategy for preventing and coping with school violence*, with 98.5% of teachers surveyed stating that they *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that this would be useful. This finding is consistent with both the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) survey and Lyon and Douglas's (1999) *Violence Against British Columbia Teacher*s report. Lyon and Douglas found that when the British Columbia teachers who they surveyed were aware of policies in their schools addressing violence, violence was less common. Day, Golench, MacDougall, and Beals-Gonzalez's (as cited in Lyon & Douglas, 1999) explanation for the affect of policies on rates of reported violence, is that teachers' perceptions of violence are inversely related to their own perceptions regarding their ability to manage

student behaviour and the level of support from the school administration in the form of appropriate policies that are consistently followed.

The benefits of policies are substantial. Policies regarding punishment provide the uniformity in implementation that was discussed in the previous section, which allows for clearly articulated plans for responding to students who violate behavioural expectations. This uniformity also allows teachers to implement disciplinary measures without worrying whether or not they are acting appropriately and fairly. Policies also ensure that teachers have the support from administration in regards to their decisions. In addition, policies provide teachers with useable explanations to justify their actions when dealing with upset students and parents. Additionally, policies on whether or not to and how to intercede in violent situations would ease the indecision teachers feel over how to respond in these situations, as well as over whether their actions will results in negative repercussions or lack of support (Astor et al., 1998). Lastly, policies would provide direction in reporting violent incidents. Teachers would understand the utility of reporting, which would serve to ease their worry over the process and allow for more consistent, beneficial, and productive responses to violence. It may also result in greater prevention of similar incidents in the future. In other words, policies on how to cope with experiences of violence can potentially result in prevention of future violence. Policy usefulness cannot be underestimated, as teachers have obviously noted.

Defusing and debriefing following incidents of school violence was seen as the *second most useful strategy or support* according to teachers surveyed, with 97.0% of respondents *agreeing* or *strongly agreeing* with its *usefulness in preventing and coping with incidents of school violence.* Looking at defusing and debriefing more closely, they

are most often used as supports to help individuals cope immediately following a traumatic event. Literature has identified that there are both immediate and long-term effects to exposure of traumatic events such as school violence.

In terms of immediate effects, victims of school violence may experience acute stress disorder. Acute stress disorder occurs within one month of exposure to a traumatic event and is characterized by a cluster of dissociative and anxiety symptoms (American Psychological Association, 2000, p. 469). Traumatic incidents can also cause long-term impairment, which is seen in the development of posttraumatic stress disorder. Symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder usually begin within the first 3 months after the trauma, although there may be a delay of months, or even years, before symptoms appear (American Psychological Association, 2000, p. 468).

The purpose of early psychological interventions such as defusing and debriefing is to mitigate the impact of critical incidents, with the hope of preventing or limiting the harmful effects of the development of acute stress disorder or posttraumatic stress disorder at a later date (Flannery & Everly, 2004). Critical incident stress debriefing is a common method that has been utilized in working with student victims; however, there is little literature on services that have been offered to teachers following an act of school violence (Daniels, Bradley, & Hays, 2007). There are those who challenge the effectiveness of the group process in handling the aftermath of critical incidents. They worry about participants who find self-disclosure threatening, that become overwhelmed by other member's trauma, that feel coerced, or are targeted as scapegoats, in addition they are concerned with domination of the group by one member, unwanted reactions or material being introduced, as well as secondary traumatization (Dyregrov, 1999).

Defusing and debriefing is dependent on the training and experience of the facilitators and the care taken to provide supportive and healing environment. It requires "respect for the complexity of people, groups, and group-processes" (Dyregrov, 1999, p. 156).

Anger management and conflict resolution for students was the *third most frequently endorsed strategy or supports for managing incidents of school violence.* A total of 95.6% of survey participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that these strategies would be *useful for preventing and coping with incidents of school violence.* Literature supports the value of anger management programs for students as a means to reduce school violence (Massey, Bouroughs, & Armstrong, 2007). Massey et al. (2007) found that the anger management and conflict resolution curriculum, Think First, resulted in improved teacher ratings of social, emotional, and behavioural functioning in secondary students. Specifically, Massey et al.'s (2007) study identified that larger effect sizes were found for students in the class-based program because the setting was consistent with the students learning environment, and because the classroom teacher who the students already had rapport with was utilized as cofacilitator of the course.

Aside from the three most frequently endorsed strategies and supports in the Relationships and Programming category, additional suggestions received significant support from survey respondents as well. Almost 87% of respondents in the study indicated that *teachers could also benefit from anger management and conflict resolution programs.* Fitting in with support of increased policies, 91% off teachers *agreed* that *increased reporting of acts of violence* was useful, and as mentioned earlier, 88% called for *improved action when violence is reported.* Also in line with this thinking, 81% of participants *agreed* that *administration needed to be more supportive*, while 94% *agreed*

that it would be useful if *parents were more supportive of teacher and administrative decisions.* Again, these are all areas that policies might serve to improve.

Another realm of strategy and support within this category involves teacher workload. Almost 84% of respondents *agreed* that a general *decrease in their workload* would help them to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence. *Smaller classroom size* was *agreed* to be useful by 87% of teachers, which would allow teachers more time to form relationships with their students and offer necessary support. Also endorsed as a useful mechanism for preventing and coping with school violence were supports *and resources for students with special needs*, as *agreed* upon by almost 93% of the sample.

The final supportive strategies in this category are *teacher support groups and support from colleagues*, with a little more than 73% *agreeing* to their usefulness, and *counselling,* which gained an *agreement rate* of 91% useful for preventing and coping with incidents of school violence. It is unclear why teachers were less likely to agree that peer support would be useful. Past research on the topic has found that teachers benefited from supportive colleagues (Schonfeld, 2001). As for counselling, unlike defusing and debriefing, which is immediate and one time, counselling provides longer term support following incidents of violence, which many people find very helpful in continuing to manage after an event. This long-term support would be particularly useful for teachers who when returning to work have to endure the daily reminder of the trauma that took place (Ting et al., 2002).

Implications

This section illustrates the importance of the present findings to literature on the subject of school violence. The implications of this study focus on the need to understand rural Alberta teachers' risk for and experiences with school violence, how they are impacted by violence, and what can be done to mediate this impact. Most importantly, it can be inferred from the data gathered in this study that almost all rural Alberta teachers believe that school violence is an issue to some degree for schools in their area, independent of their personal issues and experiences with violence. Furthermore, teachers are at significant risk to become victim to school violence, with just over 80% of those surveyed reporting experiences with violence during their career and 40% sighting violence as a personal issue. Therefore, this study highlighted the fact that the impact of violence against teachers should be seen as a priority, as it has been for students (Dzuka & Dalbert, 2007). The education system has work to do to make the teaching profession more safe and rewarding.

Incidence numbers identified in this study for different forms of violence are consistent with past Canadian studies, therefore it appears that violence against teachers is not declining like suggested. In fact the majority of respondents indicated that school violence against teachers and school violence in general was increasing. In addition, participants felt that school violence will continue to increase over the next 5 years.

The present research exemplifies by what means teachers are most likely to experience violence in the school environment. Although a large portion of teachers have been impacted by violence during their professional lives, it remains that the majority of experiences are nonphysical forms of violence. While this implies less risk for physical

injury, it does not mean that the consequences of violence are any less detrimental to the individual, their students, or the community. Repetitive, long-lasting forms of nonphysical violence need to be taken seriously because they are strongly linked to stress and burnout (Galand et al., 2007). This stress and burnout identified results in an unhealthy work force and an unproductive, unhappy environment, which costs everyone.

The most likely perpetrators of school violence against teachers in the present day were also uncovered in this study. As in past research on Canadian samples, students are the most likely source of violence, but their parents are close behind. Current media allows any possible perpetrator access to their intended targets, which means that violence no longer has to be experienced in person, opening up teachers to increased targeting. It can be assumed that nonphysical violence such as bullying and more specifically cyber-bullying will continue to grow in popularity, which indicates that new methods for managing and coping with these behaviours will have to be devised.

Research data collected indicated that while 60% of respondents felt that rural violence was not as common as urban school violence, 40% reported that it was. Interesting themes emerged as to why each side felt as they did. It was inferred that connection to the community in which the individual was working likely impacted their feelings on the subject. This could not be confirmed from the data gathered but would make for interesting research in the future. Regardless, there is little doubt that school violence is an issue in rural Alberta communities. Teachers who intend to teach in rural Alberta communities need to be prepared for the specifics of the environment. For example, property damage was discovered to be a significant issue for rural teachers due to greater awareness of what property belonged to them in smaller communities.

As noted earlier the impact of violence on rural Alberta teachers' health and functioning is significant. Study results identified that close to 75% of teachers' experienced increased stress, and almost 50% reported fatigue, sleep disturbance, and headaches as a result of experiences with or fear of school violence. In addition, 40% noted decreased job satisfaction, 20% indicated poor occupational performance, and 6% reported absenteeism as affects of school violence. Also surprising was that 20% of teachers acknowledged that they had changed schools as a result of experiences with or fear of school violence, and interestingly 15% of participants noted that they had to change school districts. Taken together, these statistics make it hard to deny that school violence is impacting rural Alberta teachers to a large degree.

Research supports the conclusion that many teachers are leaving the professional early in their careers (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2005). Several causes of this have been identified; these include: lack of teacher preparation, absence of coping skills, and nonsupportive environments. Preparation was seen in the present study as extremely important to career success, and many of the current rural Alberta teachers' surveyed indicated that they did not feel they were prepared for experiencing or managing incidents of violence in their professional role. It has been identified that violence is occurring in rural Alberta schools; therefore, it is critical that teachers are being prepared for it. One positive point is that research indicated that younger, more recent teachers to the profession were in fact more prepared then their colleagues before, a sign that preparation is positively evolving. It is imperative that educational departments continue to improve how they prepare future teachers for what they may encounter.

Lastly, teachers are seeking strategies and supports to help them manage and prevent school violence, and are open to many alternatives. Participants of this study identified policies for handling violence, defusing and debriefing following incidents of violence, and anger management and conflict resolutions for students as most useful. School districts need to implement these suggestions if they want to decrease violence and the impact it is having on their workforce and their students.

Need for Further Research

While a number of implications and conclusions can be drawn from the present study, more research is necessary to fully understand the impact of school violence on rural Alberta teachers and how to best cope with and prevent it. School violence has been found to take many forms, but one form that was not specifically addressed in data collection was cyberbullying. Although violence experienced as a result of social media was discussed, respondents were not asked to specifically report on their experiences with this form of violence. Media reports that cyberbullying is becoming a more serious issue for teachers, but it would be useful to have research data and firsthand accounts to back this up. If it is the case that cyber bullying is becoming more salient, prevention and coping mechanisms for this specific type of violence would also be useful to examine.

Although this study examined violence both experienced by teachers and observed occurring to colleagues, further research should include more statistical comparison of these two reports of school violence to determine whether teachers are accurately identifying when they have experienced violence, or whether they are better at identifying violence that occurs to others. Another area where further research would be useful is in regards to rural versus urban violence. As will be noted in the limitations, the

clerical error made in the question design may have impacted the results obtained. Further research could determine this. Researchers should also examine rural experiences with violence against teachers in other districts of Alberta and the rest of the country to increase generalizability. In addition, further research could address the possible reasons why violence is seen as more or less common in rural areas, such as the allegiance to the home community that was identified in the discussion. It would be very interesting to see if people who worked in their home communities agreed that there was less rural school violence than urban.

Research has shown that the more violence a teacher has been exposed to the greater the likelihood for distress and burnout (Tuettemann & Punch, 1992). The present study did not analyze the data to determine if increased incidents of violence experienced by the rural teachers surveyed resulted in increased reporting of impact symptoms, but it would be interesting to look at this further. Doing so would provide additional insight into whether or not you can experience the same impact from one experience as you can from repeated exposures. Examining reporting of impact symptoms may also address the issue of whether teachers can experience psychological impact from fear of violence or from witnessing violence, rather than experiencing an actual incident.

This study encouraged teacher insight into the prevention and coping methods they felt would be most useful in managing school violence. It would be important for further research to address whether or not the implementation of these measures impacts the rates of violence and the sense of safety and security teachers felt. It will also be important for future research to continually sample teacher's suggestions for these methods, as they will have to change as the types of violence experienced change.

Lastly, further research should be focused on accurately identifying the costs of school. It would also be useful to research why teachers are leaving the profession so that solutions can be implemented to prevent this from happening. Future research should also address how to best incorporate school violence education into university programs.

Strength and Limitations of this Study

Numerous strengths and limitations exist within the present research. The first strength is that the survey data was obtained from the frontline workers in the schools, the teachers, as the Kondrasuk et al. (2005) study suggested. Teachers are most likely to witness violence within the schools, and therefore can report more accurately the actual rates of existing violence. Also because data was collected on both personal experiences of violence as well as on the observed experiences of other colleagues, it increases the chance that incidents are not missed, and allows for comparisons of rates of violence.

Secondly, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (1994) study questioned the validity of their sample given that they were unable to ascertain the characteristics of the nonrespondents versus the respondents. These researchers stated that they needed to be sensitive to whether or not those who chose not to complete their survey did so because they did not feel as strongly about the subject, felt that they had experienced no violence and therefore had nothing to report or felt too uncomfortable with their experiences to report (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, 1994). Although this is still a concern in the present study, precautions were taken to minimize the unknown. Questions 11 (In my opinion, school violence is a serious/occasional/minor/not an issue for schools in my area) and 12 (School violence is a personal issue for me as a rural Alberta teacher: strongly disagree/disagree/agree/strongly agree/undecided) were added to the survey to

determine whether or not respondents felt violence was an issue for themselves or within their area. These questions then allowed for cross tabulation with the other survey questions to determine significant relationships between respondents opinions on violence and their responses to the additional questions.

The third strength is that data were gathered both on career reporting of incidents of violence as well as reports on violence experienced in the last year (January 2009– February 2010). This study provided a snapshot of how teachers saw school violence during the previous year, but also collected information on their overall experience with school violence, allowing for reflection on changes that have occurred in regards to violence in their schools over the years. Incorporating aspects of other Canadian surveys on the topic into the present survey design allowed for important comparisons of the statistical data collected, while designing the survey specifically for this study allowed the research to add questions that were relevant to rural school violence and coping with and preventing it, which were not included in the other studies on the topic.

The first limitation of this study is the small response rate of approximately 34% that was obtained, and the difficulty in acquiring it. Although this response rate is comparable to other studies on the topic, it was less than desired. The trouble in obtaining the sample came first from selected principals insisting that the study be sent to them to distribute. The second issue was in providing those willing to participate with the survey. The researcher encountered a problem emailing the sample, as the school divisions' spam protection blocked mass emails unknowingly. Although strength of this study was its ability to elicit the data from the frontline teachers, teachers are influenced

by their personal biases. Therefore, the data they provided are influenced by their views of the world, and are therefore simply opinions and perceptions, not necessarily facts.

In addition, the way in which the sample was selected is in itself a limitation. The sample was purposefully chosen based on convenience and relevance to the researcher. All participants were from rural schools within the same school district in Alberta. As a result the representativeness of this population to the rest of the province and the rest of Canada is limited. According to Anderson (1998), "A fundamental principle in sampling is that one cannot generalize from the sample to anything other than the population from which the sample was drawn" (p. 197). Therefore, the generalizability of the results is limited to rural teachers from the Province of Alberta. An additional limitation is the fact that eight of the 27 schools included in the sample were outliers, including six Hutterite colony schools and two outreach schools. There is the possibility that they are not representative of the majority of rural Alberta schools based on their unique dynamics, and therefore limit the generalizability of the data.

Under reporting and over reporting are always concerns when respondents are asked to self-report on questionnaires. Memory is selective, and influenced by numerous factors. The limitations of this study include the possibility that individuals may report more present violence because it is fresh in their mind, or perhaps less career violence may be reported as some of the incidents have been forgotten with time. Respondents may also have had trouble properly remembering what incidents occurred within the last year, which is referred to as telescoping (Lavrakas, 2008).

Lastly, the final limitation involves researcher error in the wording of question 21. Respondents were asked, "do you believe that violence against teachers is as common in

rural school settings as it is in urban schools"? Possible responses included: yes, no, and equally common. In reviewing the results it was noted that based on the wording of the question yes and equally common mean the same thing. It is likely that respondents were aware of this error and took yes to mean more common, but the researcher cannot be certain. Data from both yes and equally common were combined into the category equally or more common for analysis. However, this was an important aspect of the survey, and it is unfortunate that this error was not caught and corrected prior to data collection. There is no way for the researcher to conclude how this would have influenced the results; therefore, further research on the topic would be beneficial.

Conclusion

This study investigated how rural Alberta teachers experience school violence and the impact that it has on them. This study gathered teachers' suggested methods for preventing and coping with school violence. The research has added to the understanding of school violence experienced by teachers specifically, as the majority of research in the past has been dedicated to the experiences of students involved. The present research also aided in the understanding of rural experiences, which are typically assumed to be less of an issue than urban. These findings will help guide administrative and district policy makers in understanding what their teachers are encountering on a daily basis and how these experiences are impacting their ability to successfully do their job. The findings also highlighted the cost that inattention to these matters has on the education system as a whole, as well as on teachers, students, and communities. These findings will also guide administrators' efforts to devise methods for helping their teachers to cope with experiences of violence, in addition to preventing future incidences of violence.

Violence against teachers within the rural Alberta school environment is a serious social and psychological issue; it can no longer be overlooked given the information gathered in this study.

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Appendix A

University of Lethbridge

School Division Recruitment Letter and Consent Form

Faculty of Education

The Experience and Psychological Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers

Chelcie Zimmer
[Address]
Phone: [telephone number]
Email: [email address]

January 4, 2010

Dear Battle River School Division:

Hello, my name is Chelcie Zimmer and I am completing my Masters of Education at the University of Lethbridge. For my thesis I am completing a research study entitled: The Experience and Psychological Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Education. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Thelma Gunn. She may be contacted via her email at [email address], or by phone at [telephone number].

I am writing to request the participation of the Battle River School Division in this study. I have chosen this division because I am especially interested in the opinions of rural teachers, and plan to pursue a counselling career in this area upon completion of this program. This research requires the ability to send out a link using email to an online questionnaire for participants to respond to. Participants must be teachers who are working at a rural school in this selected school division. Should you agree to participate in this research, your participation will include consent for the researcher to access information on teachers who qualify, and consent to use teachers from your school division in the collection of data for this study. All qualifying teachers will be sent a recruitment letter through their email followed up by a second email which will include a consent form, and when agreed to, a link to the online questionnaire.

The purpose of this research project is to help fill in what is perceived to be a significant gap in the literature on school violence. The goal of this study is to gain insight into the experiences and effects of school violence on rural Alberta school teachers, and to

explore their perceptions of what needs to be done to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence. It is my intention to compile the information received into a list of recommendations as to what conditions may need to be met to provide rural Alberta teachers with more healthy and happy working environments. These recommendations will be based on the opinions of the teachers, an often unheard voice in relation to school violence.

Research of this type is important because very little work has been done in this area, and even less pertaining directly to rural Alberta school teachers. School violence is a very serious issue, and not just students are impacted. Teachers' reactions to school violence can have ramifications on the education system, effecting the quality of students' education in the way teachers teach, in their attendance, and in their relationships with their students. Children deserve the best education possible, and in order to achieve this goal, we need to ensure that the environment in which their teachers work is as productive, safe, and healthy as possible. This research will help in contributing to this important goal.

The potential benefits of participation in this research study include the opportunity for division teachers to reflect on how school violence impacts them and to help in developing strategies to deal with these effects and to prevent other similar incidents from occurring. The data collected will help fuel a new area of research and will aid in the development of recommendations to help our educational system support teachers in regards to school violence. In doing this, the school system as a whole should benefit from more healthy, productive, and satisfied teachers, and thus, a better learning environment for students.

The potential inconveniences of this study are that the researcher will need to contact school division staff to generate an email list of all qualifying teachers, and that participants will have to devote approximately a half hour of their time to completing the survey. It is my hope, however, that interest in this topic will outweigh these minor inconveniences.

It may also be the case that some teachers who participate may feel that if their identities become known their job security may be at risk. Please be assured that the information provided will be kept anonymous and confidential as surveys will be completed electronically and participants will not be asked to provide their names on these surveys, as well, the school division will be referred to only by pseudonyms in the research data. Furthermore, any stories provided will be retold so that the true identities of the participants and the school division remain concealed. All names, locations, and any other identifying information will not be included in any results.

Please also be advised that for some individuals the issue of school violence may be an emotional topic. A list of therapeutic services has been developed should anyone require more support in dealing with the topic of school violence. This list is as follows.

[Counsellor Name] M.A. Registered Clinical Counsellor	[telephone number]
St. Mary's Hospital – Psychiatry	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.ED. Counselling Psychology, RSW,	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Counselling Psychology	[telephone number]
Solutions Psychological	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Registered Counsellor	[telephone number]
Wilton Psychological Services Inc./ Equine Wise Services Inc.	[telephone number]
Killam Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]
Camrose Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]

Finally, the data collected from this school division's teachers will be retained, analyzed and published in my thesis. The results of this study may also be presented at scholarly meetings, published in journals and magazines, as well as possible on the Internet. Thesis findings may also be shared with the general public, this school division, and the Alberta Teacher's Association. An agreement to participate will also mean an agreement to disseminate the findings to these various sources.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and the supervisor at the previously listed phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns that you may have, by contacting the Chair of the Faculty of Education Human Subjects Research Committee, Dr. Richard Butt, at the University of Lethbridge [telephone number].

Should you have any further questions that I can answer please do not hesitate to contact me. I am requesting that you please confirm your agreement to participate in this research study by January 11, 2010. Thank-you for considering participating, I hope that this study will be of value to the school division, and will positively impact the lives of your teachers and students.

Sincerely,

Chelcie Zimmer

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher. You are hereby giving consent for the Battle River School Division to participate in the above mentioned study.

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   *Signature*   *Date*

Appendix B

University of
Lethbridge

FIAT LUX

Faculty of Education

Participant Recruitment Letter

The Experience and Psychological Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers

Chelcie Zimmer
[Address]
Phone: [telephone number]
Email: [email address]

January 15, 2010

Dear Rural Alberta Teacher:

Hello, my name is Chelcie Zimmer and I am completing my Masters of Education at the University of Lethbridge. For my thesis I am completing a research study entitled: The Experience and Psychological Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Education. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Thelma Gunn. She may be contacted via her email at [email address] or by phone at [telephone number].

I am looking for participants to volunteer approximately a half hour of their time to help me complete this research study. Participants must be teachers who are working at a rural school in this selected school division. If you agree to participate in this research, your participation will include consent for the researcher to involve you in an online research questionnaire. You will be expected to respond to numerous questions regarding your experiences with, reactions to, and thoughts about school violence. If you are willing to participate please watch for a follow-up email that will be sent out to everyone on January 18, 2010. When you receive it you will be asked to read and agree to the attached consent form and once you have done so you will be provided with a link to the online research questionnaire.

The purpose of this research project is to help fill in what is perceived to be a significant gap in the literature on school violence. The goal of this study is to gain insight into the effects of school violence on rural Alberta school teachers, and to explore their

perceptions of what needs to be done to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence. It is my intention to compile the information received into a list of recommendations of what conditions need to be met to provide rural Alberta teachers with a more healthy and happy working environment. These recommendations will be based on the opinions of you, the teachers, an often unheard voice in relation to school violence.

Research of this type is important because very little work has been done in this area, and even less pertaining directly to rural Alberta school teachers. School violence is a very serious issue, and not just students are impacted. Teachers' reactions to school violence can have ramifications on the educational system, effecting the quality of students' education in the way teachers teach, in their attendance, and in their relationships with their students. Children deserve the best education possible, and in order to achieve this goal, we need to ensure that the environment in which their teachers work is as productive, safe, and healthy as possible. This research will help in contributing to this important goal.

Also, in case you feel that if your identity becomes known your job security may be at risk, please be assured that the survey will not ask for your name, and the researcher will not be aware of who has and who has not completed the survey. In addition, any information you provide will be kept confidential, and you will be referred to only by pseudonyms in the research data. Furthermore, any stories provided will be retold so that the true identities of the participants remain concealed. All names, locations, and any other identifying information will not be included in any presented results. Finally, please remember that this research is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from this study at any time prior to data submission, without pressure or prejudice. However, if you submit your questionnaire the data will be combined in a database and individual answers will no longer be distinguishable. Therefore, you have up until you submit your data to withdraw.

Please be advised that for some individuals the issue of school violence may be an emotional topic. If you have any concerns about participation do not hesitate to request further information. A list of numerous therapeutic services in the area has been developed and included below should you require any additional support in dealing with this topic.

[Counsellor Name] M.A. Registered Clinical Counsellor	[telephone number]
St. Mary's Hospital – Psychiatry	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.ED. Counselling Psychology, RSW,	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Counselling Psychology	[telephone number]
Solutions Psychological	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Registered Counsellor	[telephone number]
Wilton Psychological Services Inc./ Equine Wise Services Inc.	[telephone number]
Killam Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]
Camrose Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this research study, please feel free to contact me by email at [email address] or by phone at [telephone number]. Thank-you for considering participating, I hope that this study will be of value to individuals in your profession.

Sincerely,

Chelcie Zimmer

Appendix C

University of
Lethbridge

Faculty of Education

PARTICIPANT (Teacher) CONSENT FORM

The Experience and Psychological Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled: The Experience and Psychological Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers that is being conducted by me, Chelcie Zimmer. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge and I may be contacted should you have any questions or concerns on my cell at [telephone number], or via email at [email address].

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Education. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Thelma Gunn. She may be contacted via her email at [email address] and by telephone at [telephone number].

The purpose of this research project is to help fill in what is perceived to be a significant gap in the literature on school violence. The goal of this study is to gain insight into the effects of school violence on rural Alberta school teachers, and to explore their perceptions of what can be done to prevent and cope with incidents of school violence. It is my intention to compile the information received into a list of recommendations as to what conditions need to be met to provide rural Alberta teachers with a more healthy and happy working environment. These recommendations will be based on the opinions of you, the teachers, an often unheard voice in relation to school violence.

Research of this type is important because very little work has been done in this area, and even less pertaining directly to rural Alberta school teachers. School violence is a very serious issue, and not just students are impacted. Teachers' reactions to school violence can have ramifications on the educational system, effecting the quality of students' education in the way teachers teach, in their attendance, and in their relationships with their students. Children deserve the best education possible, and in order to achieve this goal, we need to ensure that the environment in which their teachers work is as productive, safe, and healthy as possible. This research will help in contributing to this important goal.

You are being asked to participate in this study because I believe that it is important to understand the unique conditions of school violence that rural teachers face. I am also

interested in the experiences and opinions of teachers in your division because I plan to pursue my counselling career in your area.

If you agree to participate in this research, you are giving consent for the researcher to provide you with the online study questionnaire which will take you approximately a half an hour to complete and permission to use the data you provide in examining the issue of school violence for rural Alberta teachers.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you in that you will have to devote roughly half an hour of your time to completing the online research questionnaire. I am hoping that your interest in this subject will outweigh the cost. Also, in case you feel that if your identity becomes known your job security may be at risk, please be assured that your name will not be requested and that the researcher will be unaware of who has and has not completed the survey. Furthermore, any stories provided will be retold so that the true identities of the participants remain concealed. All names, locations, and any other identifying information will not be included in any presented results. Finally, please remember that your involvement is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from this study at any time prior to data submission without pressure or prejudice. Specifically, you have up until you submit your questionnaire data to withdraw.

You face potential risks by participating in this research. School violence is an often difficult subject, and some participants may have emotional issues arise during the completion of the questionnaire. To prevent or to deal with these risks please ensure that before agreeing to participate you understand the nature of the topic. Should you require additional support in dealing with the topic of school violence a list of therapeutic services has been compiled and provided below.

[Counsellor Name] M.A. Registered Clinical Counsellor	[telephone number]
St. Mary's Hospital – Psychiatry	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.ED. Counselling Psychology, RSW,	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Counselling Psychology	[telephone number]
Solutions Psychological	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Registered Counsellor	[telephone number]
Wilton Psychological Services Inc./ Equine Wise Services Inc.	[telephone number]
Killam Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]
Camrose Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include an opportunity for you to reflect on how school violence effects you, to help develop strategies to deal with these effects, and to prevent other similar incidents from occurring. By sharing your opinions regarding these topics you are helping fuel a new area of research, as well as providing the information necessary to put forth recommendations that will help our educational system support teachers in regards to school violence. In doing this, the school system as a whole should benefit from more healthy, productive and satisfied teachers, and thus, a better learning environment for the students will be created.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time prior to data submission without consequences or explanation. However, please be advised that once you submit your data electronically it is combined in a data base, and individual responses can no longer be identified, therefore, you have up until you submit your responses to withdraw.

The data collected from you will be retained, analyzed, and published in my thesis. The data from this research may also be shared with the general public, school division, Alberta Teachers Association, and may also be made available through publication. Data will be kept for five years and then information will be deleted and destroyed. Your anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved at all times, and no one will have a record of any individuals' responses.

The results of this study will be shared with others, specifically; they will be included in the thesis findings, and once completed and approved, the thesis will be published. The findings may also be presented at scholarly meetings, published in journals and magazines, as well as possibly the internet. An agreement to participate will also mean an agreement to disseminate the findings to the various sources indicated.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns that you may have, by contacting the Chair of the Faculty of Education Human Subjects Research Committee, Dr. Richard Butt, at the University of Lethbridge [telephone number].

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Click here indicate your consent. This will grant you access to the online questionnaire.

Appendix D

Definitions

For the purposes of this survey, the following definitions will be used [1]:

SCHOOL VIOLENCE is "any threatened, attempted, or actual harm to a person or persons" within a school setting (Lyon & Douglas, 1999, p. 5). School violence has been grouped into three different categories: **physical violence, non-physical violence**, and **sexual violence.** Each of the three categories has a psychological effect, they are distinguished only by the type of behaviour of the perpetrator. Physical violence is actual contact, while non-physical violence does not involve contact. Sexual violence is gender related and may or may not involve physical contact.

Physical Violence

Physical violence includes contact, either harmful or with the intention to harm, against another person or against the other person's family, as well as wilful damage to the person's property

Non-Physical Violence

Non-physical school violence includes such acts as: personal insults or name-calling (either spoken in person, on the telephone, through letters, or on the internet), remarks about someone meant to harm the person's reputations or relationships, rude or obscene gestures, stalking behaviour, and threats of physical violence or other harm to the person or the person's family.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence includes sexual assault and sexual harassment. Sexual assault is defined as any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature imposed on another individual (examples include: kissing, fondling, touching or inviting to touch, oral or anal sex, and intercourse). Sexual harassment is any unwanted sexual advance, request for sexual favours or other contact of a sexual nature (examples include: sexual jokes or comments, repeated touching or close contact, and threats to job security if one does not comply with sexual favours).

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[1] The definitions provided for this survey are largely based from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's 1994 survey entitled *A Survey of the Abuse of Teachers*.

A Survey of Rural Alberta Teachers' Experiences of School Violence

I. Demographical Information

1. Please indicate which of the following **BEST** represents your current age.
   - ☐ 20-24
   - ☐ 25-34
   - ☐ 35-44
   - ☐ 45-54
   - ☐ 55-64
   - ☐ 65+

2. What is your gender?

   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Female

3. Please indicate which **BEST** represents the total number of years you have been teaching.
   - ☐ Less than 1 year
   - ☐ 1-5 years
   - ☐ 6-10 years
   - ☐ 11-15 years
   - ☐ 16-20 years
   - ☐ 21+ years

4. Please indicate which **BEST** represents how many schools you have taught at over the course of your teaching career.
   - ☐ 1, my present school
   - ☐ 2-3 schools
   - ☐ 4-5 schools
   - ☐ 6-7 schools
   - ☐ 8-9 schools
   - ☐ 10+ schools

5. Please indicate which **BEST** represents how many years in total you have spent teaching in a rural school.
   - ☐ Less than 1 year
   - ☐ 1-5 years
   - ☐ 6-10 years
   - ☐ 11-15 years
   - ☐ 16-20 years
   - ☐ 21+ years

6. Please indicate which **BEST** represents how many years you have been teaching at the school you are currently employed at.
   - ☐ This is my first year
   - ☐ 2-3 years
   - ☐ 4-5 years
   - ☐ 6-7 years
   - ☐ 8-9 years
   - ☐ 10+ years

7. Please indicate your current teaching position.
   ☐ Full Time   ☐ Part Time   ☐ Other

   If other please

   specify_____

   _____

   _____

8. What is the grade level of the students you are currently teaching? Please check all that are applicable.
   ☐ Kindergarten   ☐ Grades 1-3   ☐ Grades 4-6
   ☐ Grades 7-9   ☐ Grades 10-12

9. Please indicate what subjects you are currently teaching? Check all that are applicable.
   ☐ Language Arts/English   ☐ Other Languages   ☐ Trades
   ☐ Mathematics   ☐ Home Economics   ☐ Music
   ☐ Science   ☐ Physical Education   ☐ Mathematics
   ☐ Social Studies   ☐ Art   ☐ Other

II. Rural Alberta Teachers' Experiences of School Violence

Please review the definition of school violence provided at the start of this questionnaire to remind yourself of what incidents are considered school violence before you complete this section of the survey.

10. Is the definition of school violence provided with this survey similar to how you would have previously defined school violence?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Unsure

11. In my opinion, school violence is:
    ☐ Not an issue for schools in my area
    ☐ A minor issue for schools in my area
    ☐ An occasional issue for schools in my area
    ☐ A serious issue for schools in my area

12. School violence is a personal issue for me as a rural Alberta teacher:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Strongly Disagree)	(Disagree)	(Agree)	(Strongly Agree)	(undecided)

13. Have you **EVER** experienced an incident of school violence?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No   *Please Proceed to Question 19*

14. When was the **MOST RECENT** incident of school violence that you experienced?
    ☐ In the last year
    ☐ More than one year ago   *Please Proceed to Question 17*

15. In the last year, **HOW OFTEN** have you experienced each of the following forms of school violence?

	Number of Incidents				
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
a. Personal insults or name-calling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Rude or obscene gestures intended to offend or insult you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Remarks/statements made to harm your reputation or relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Behaviour intended to make you fearful or intimidated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Damage to personal property	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Threatened/attempted/or actual violence against a family member	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Threatened physical violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Attempted physical violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Actual physical violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Violence with a weapon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Sexual harassment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please use this space to describe any of the incidents of school violence that you have experienced in the last year in further detail.

_____

_____

_____

16. In the last year, **HOW OFTEN** have you experienced violence from each of the following **SOURCES**?

	Number of Incidents				
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
a. Students you teach/work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
b. Other students in your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Students/youth from outside your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Other teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. School administrative staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Non-teaching school staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Parents/guardians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Other relatives	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please specify: _____

17. Throughout your career as a teacher, **HOW OFTEN** have you experienced each of the following forms of school violence?

	Number of Incidents				
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
a. Personal insults or name-calling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Rude or obscene gestures intended to offend or insult you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Remarks/statements made to harm your reputation or relationships	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Behaviour intended to make you fearful or intimidated	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Damage to personal property	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Threatened/attempted/actual violence against a family member	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Threatened physical violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Attempted physical violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Actual physical violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Violence with a weapon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Sexual harassment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Sexual assault	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please use this space to describe any of the incidents of school violence that you have experienced in your career in further detail.

_____

_____

_____

18. Throughout your career as a teacher, **HOW OFTEN** have you experienced violence from each of the following **SOURCES**?

	Number of Incidents				
	0	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
a. Students you teach/work with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Other students in your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Students/youth from outside your school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Other teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. School administrative staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Non-teaching school staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Parents/guardians	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

h. Other relatives ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

i. Other ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Please specify: _____

19. How much of a problem for teachers is each of the following forms of school violence in your daily work setting (i.e. school(s) that you work in)?

Physical:

	Not at all	Very Little	Occasional	Significant
a. By your students	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. By other students	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. By other teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. By non-teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. By administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐

Non-Physical:

	Not at all	Very Little	Occasional	Significant
a. By your students	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. By other students	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. By other teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. By non-teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. By administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐

Sexual:

	Not at all	Very Little	Occasional	Significant
a. By your students	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. By other students	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. By parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. By other teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. By non-teaching staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. By administrators	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Undecided
a. Violence in schools is on the increase	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Violence against teachers is on the increase	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Violence against teachers will increase in the next 5 years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. The media coverage of school violence spawns further violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. The media coverage of incidents of school violence impacts how safe I feel as a teacher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

21. Do you believe that violence against teachers is as common in rural schools
    settings as it is in urban schools?

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Equally Common

    Please explain: _____
    _____
    _____

III. Impact of School Violence on Rural Alberta Teachers

22. When you decided to pursue a teaching career were you aware of the possibility
    for occupational violence?
    ☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Unsure

23. How safe do you feel the teaching profession is in comparison to other
    occupations?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Far Safer)	(Safer)	(Equally Safe)	(Less Safe)	(Far Less Safe)

24. Please indicate how safe you have felt throughout your career as a teacher.
    ☐ I have always felt completely safe in my role as a teacher
    ☐ I have rarely questioned my safety
    ☐ There have been numerous times that I have questioned my safety
    ☐ I am always concerned about my safety as a result of my career

25. Please indicate how safe your feel presently in your current school and role as
    opposed to past positions.

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Far Safer)	(Safer)	(Equally Safe)	(Less Safe)	(Far Less Safe)

26. School violence has impacted the following areas of my career.

		Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Undecided
a.	Decreased job satisfaction	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.	Poor occupational performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.	Absenteeism	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.	Change of role assignment within a school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.	Changing schools	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f.	Changing school districts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g.	Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please specify_____

27. I have experienced the following physical symptoms as a result of fear of/or experience(s) with school violence.

		Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Agree	Agree	Strongly Undecided
a.	Sleep disturbances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.	Fatigue	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.	Headaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.	Gastrointestinal effects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.	Teeth grinding	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f.	Weight changes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g.	Backaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h.	Appetite changes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i.	Hyper-alertness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j.	Nausea	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k.	Uncontrolled crying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l.	Sweating	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m.	Dizziness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n.	Tremors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o.	Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please specify_____

28. I have experienced the following emotional symptoms as a result of fear of/ or experience(s) with school violence.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Undecided
a.	Frustration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.	Increased stress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.	Anger	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.	Anxiety	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.	Helplessness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f.	Irritability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g.	Sadness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h.	Disgust	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i.	Low self-esteem	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j.	Depression	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k.	Mistrust of others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l.	Guilt	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m.	Fear of re-victimization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n.	Other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please specify_____

29. How has your experience with school violence **NEGATIVELY** influenced each of the following for you?

A. Morale

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Very little)	(Moderately)	(To a large degree)	(Undecided)

B. Teaching Effectiveness

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Very little)	(Moderately)	(To a large degree)	(Undecided)

C. Classroom Management

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Very little)	(Moderately)	(To a large degree)	(Undecided)

D. Learning Environment

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Very little)	(Moderately)	(To a large degree)	(Undecided)

E. Delivery of Services

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Very little)	(Moderately)	(To a large degree)	(Undecided)

F. Job Satisfaction

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
1	2	3	4	5
(Not at all)	(Very little)	(Moderately)	(To a large degree)	(Undecided)

IV. How to Help Rural Alberta Teachers Prevent and Cope |with School Violence

30. Was the possibility for violence in the teaching profession and how to deal with the effects covered at some point in your educational training?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Unsure

If you chose yes, please indicate what was covered. If you replied no, please provide suggestions for what you wish had been covered or ideas for what should be covered in educational training.

_____

_____

31. The following prevention strategies and supports would help rural Alberta teachers in preventing and coping with school violence

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Undecided
a. Policies for dealing with school violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Anger management/conflict resolution programs for students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Anger management/conflict resolution programs for teachers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Smaller classroom sizes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Decreased work loads	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Additional supports and resources for students with special needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. A larger police presence in the community and school environments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. A school resource officer always present in the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Better lighting conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Greater supervision during high traffic periods	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Staggering periods and lunch breaks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Ensuring that teachers are not working alone	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Monitoring accesses to the school	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Metal detectors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Stricter punishment for acts of violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Parents being more supportive of teacher and administrative decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Increased support from administration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Increased reporting of acts of violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
s. Improved action when violence is reported	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
t. Teacher support groups/ support from colleagues	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
u. Counselling services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
v. De-fusing/de-briefing following incidents of school violence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please offer suggestions of additional prevention strategies or supports that you feel would be useful to yourself or other teachers in terms of managing and dealing with school violence.

_____

_____

_____

V. Additional Comments

32. Please feel free to provide any **ADDITIONAL** comments about school violence and teachers, or to add any further descriptions of incidents which have happened to you.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY

If you would like to speak further to someone about the incidents described in this survey, please call one of the following counselling services:

[Counsellor Name] M.A. Registered Clinical Counsellor	[telephone number]
St. Mary's Hospital – Psychiatry	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.ED. Counselling Psychology, RSW,	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Counselling Psychology	[telephone number]
Solutions Psychological	[telephone number]
[Counsellor Name] M.SC. Registered Counsellor	[telephone number]
Wilton Psychological Services Inc./ Equine Wise Services Inc.	[telephone number]
Killam Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]
Camrose Mental Health Clinic	[telephone number]

Appendix E

Dear Battle River Teachers,

This is a reminder e-mail regarding my thesis research survey. You can complete the survey at the following link:

Go to - [Survey Link]

I am asking that all those willing to participate please do so by the end of February. I would greatly appreciate your participation, as I hope that this research will give rural teachers a voice in regards to their and other co-workers experiences of school violence.

I thank-you again for your involvement in this study.

Sincerely,

Chelcie Zimmer

Appendix F

Table F1

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Being Less Common due to Community

Spirit

Teachers' Comments
"I know I am very lucky in the setting I get to teach in. The community spirit goes a long way to ensuring that teachers are respected."
"Community culture plays a large role in what is considered 'allowable' conduct at a school and as a result communities with a respectful and nonviolent culture, have schools with a similar culture."
"Rural schools have a stronger sense of community and connectedness than urban schools and are less transient. Teachers are a part of that community and are impacted on less."

Table F2

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Being Less Common due to a Stronger Sense of Family or Family Support

Teachers' Comments
"I feel that rural students, as a whole, have more respect for adults than urban kids. Most of them are raised to work hard, get chores done and bring that responsibility and work ethic to the school setting."
"The family unit is in my opinion stronger in the rural setting."
"I think that we have much better parent support in a rural school than may be in larger urban schools."

Table F3

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Being Less Common due to a Stronger Teacher–Student Relationships

Teachers' Comments
"Generally, rural schools are smaller than urban schools. As such, students typically have more frequent and meaningful contact with staff and students and therefore tend to be more accountable for any violent behaviours. As a result I suspect the frequency of violent behaviours would be less."

Table F3 (continued)

Teachers' Comments

"Rural students you get to know much more personally so it is less likely that they will respond violently."

"I believe that due to the smaller size of the school population, teachers are able to form quality relationships with the students and thereby influence student behaviour."

"Generally, rural school teachers have a closer personal connection with students because we are smaller in size and many students go to the same school for their entire school career. This connection helps the students to feel secure and safe and could reduce their need to react violently. As well, with a small staff everyone works together to help students deal with issues that may lead to a violent outburst. Urban schools are very large and students may feel disconnected and use violence to express how they feel."

Table F4

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Being Less Common due to a Smaller Population

Teachers' Comments
"Our sheer numbers of students and therefore number of 'problem' students is much less."
"Smaller schools have more of a family atmosphere. Everyone knows everyone. Larger urban schools have many different cliques, just the numbers makes it more common."
"Not as common in rural because we tend to have a smaller student body."
"More people more incidents (urban areas)."
"I believe that we live in a fairly controlled population and that urban schools face greater risks."
"I think that the probability is not as common because the population is not as large."

Table F5

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Equally or More Common due to People
Being People

Teachers' Comments

"In rural settings we still deal with all kinds of people, just like a city school."

"The students today in rural school are not different than the students in urban schools. They have seen and heard everything that their urban friends have experienced through the media, movies, and video games."

"We experience the same violent situations that you hear about happening in urban schools and they occur in my school often enough."

"It all depends on the well being of the kids."

Table F6

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Equally or More Common due to the Small Town Mentality

---

Teachers' Comments

"Demographically speaking, rumors and gossip are a constant threat in small rural communities."

"Rural schools have a strong sense of community . . . teachers are a part of that community and are impacted on less, unless there are significant issues in the community such as teachers on strike or negative events that happen at the school that become well known through the media. Then teachers are targeted more so than urban schools because they are so visible and have no where else to go."

"I believe violence experienced by teachers in rural schools is different from how violence is experienced by teachers in urban settings. Rural schools are most often set within small communities in which teacher students and their families are well known to each other. There is a heightened sense that aggression within school will follow the teacher outside of the school. I know of at least 2 cases in which a teacher was harassed at their home during holidays from students. I am also aware of the situation in which teachers chose not to deal with a violent incident at school in fear that it may escalate to something worse that would effect the quality of their lives outside of the school setting."

Table F6 (continued)

_____

Teachers' Comments

_____

"I feel that the damage done to teachers' personal and professional lives is more extreme in the rural school because a mob mentality can be developed. Also although there may be less physical and sexual violence, the non-physical is more frequent, especially personal insults, indirectly delivered, and 'remarks/statements made to harm your reputation or relationships.' It is difficult to be a 'person' and a teacher in a rural community."

"Everybody knows everyone so less at school violence but perhaps more incidents outside of school to property because students know where you live."

"Violence in schools is not on the rise, nor is it more common in rural or urban settings. However, the violence in a rural setting does differ from an urban setting in that it is of a more personal nature. This is because teachers have a closer relationship, due to reduced class sizes and a less transient population, with students, and in some cases will teach different generations of the same family. Teachers in an urban setting may have to deal with their property being damaged at school, but rural teachers are more likely to have to deal with attacks on their homes, as well as the gossip that comes with a smaller community.

Table F6 (continued)

Teachers' Comments

 "Sometimes students in rural areas know their teachers better. They live in the same small community and so know their teachers' families, their likes, dislikes, their hobbies, etc. They know where their teacher lives, and that makes it easier to act on frustration that they may feel, and take those frustrations out in a personal way by making fun of some aspects of the teacher's life or other members of the teacher's family. They may damage teacher's property or threaten to hurt teacher's children. In a city setting the teacher is less familiar to students and students would have to really go out of their way to know whose tires to slash in the parking lot, or to find out where the teacher lives so they could damage property."

Table F7

Teachers' Comments Relating to Rural Violence Equally or More Common due to the Transient Population

Teachers' Comments

"It doesn't make a difference. Rural schools are just as accountable as they have a population of students that are transient. Often times, students moving from urban areas into the rural created a more urban lifestyle and way of thinking in rural areas."

Table F8

Respondents' Descriptions of Incidents of School Violence in the Last Year

Type of Violence	Respondents' Description of Incidents
Nonphysical	"Car keyed on both sides—may not be work related."
	"School violence, I have experienced in the last year includes damage to my vehicle, students lying to damage my reputation."
	"Students/parents deciding you aren't fit to teach before you have actually started teaching."
	"Most incidents involve agitated, angered students making comments directed at me."
	"Student used an obscenity while referring to me in a conversation with student and parent."
Nonphysical	"Student used an obscenity while referring to me in a conversation with student and parent."
	"Parents threatening to fire me."
	"Parents writing letters in the local paper trying to discredit me as an administrator."

(continued)

Table F8 (continued)

Type of Violence	Respondents' Description of Incidents
Physical	"At parent teacher interviews this year, I had a family that was unhappy with the comments that had gone onto their child's report card. They entered my classroom and I immediately felt uncomfortable. Perhaps the father was under the influence of some type of stimulant, but his behaviour was odd and frightening. They were both very aggressive with their words and with their body language. I felt very unsafe, and tried to put my body closer to the door. I ended the interview as quickly as I could."
	"One act of physical contact in which a student act aggressively during a game in P.E. [physical education]."
	"I was physically attacked by a student 3 different times."
Sexual	"Inappropriate sexual behaviours focused on me while supervising an extracurricular event. Not suggestive, but mimicking a movie."

Table F9

Respondents' Descriptions of Incidents of School Violence in Their Career

Type of Violence	Respondents' Description of Incidents
Nonphysical	"There are always incidents of name calling (mostly over heard by accident) and rude gestures."
	"Name calling in the hallway. In most cases, it is a common joke between the two parties. However, one occasion it escalated into a verbal confrontation where many insults and obscene language was used."
	"A student falsely reported that I had hit another student."
	"Parents trying to verbally intimidate to get intended results, only verbal assault."
	"Throughout my career I have experienced mentally disturbed administrations that made my life miserable and a disturbed outsider who wished to create problems by spreading untruths."

Table F9 (continued)

Type of Violence	Respondents' Description of Incidents
Physical	"A student looked very agitated and through his books down making me feel uncomfortable that he would turn violent." "I once had a student pull out a knife in my class. I removed the other students from around him and called the office. He was taken out of my class and talked to. The mother promised it would not happen again and he was back in my classroom the next day. It was not discussed again and I did not have any more problems with this student."