

Violence Against Teachers Among the 50 Largest U.S. School Districts: Predictors, Consequences, and School Responses

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Purpose of the Research

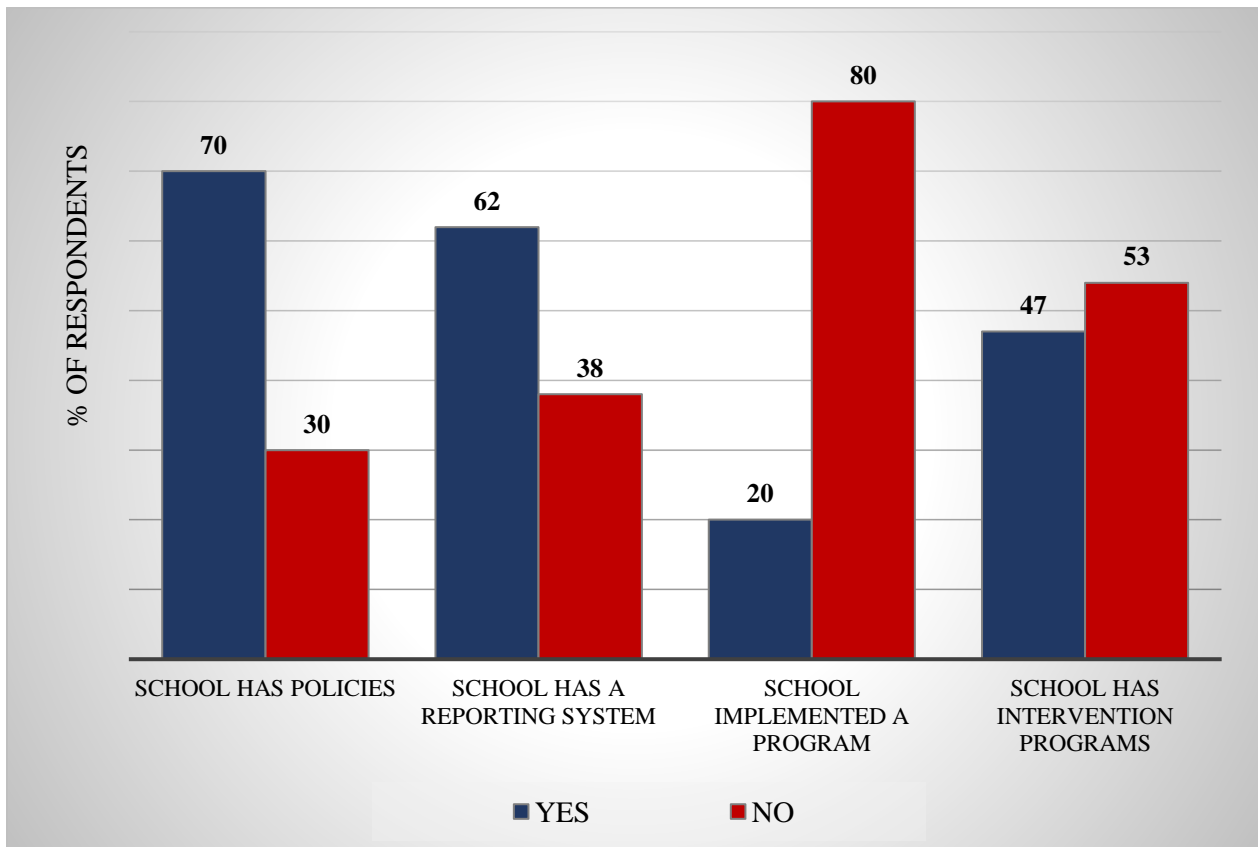
- There is an increasing concern about violence toward and victimization of teachers across the United States, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. A growing number of empirical studies on violence against teachers suggest a high prevalence of teacher victimization by students at schools and negative effects on victimized teachers.
- Despite these impressions, there is no nationwide empirical study investigating the prevalence/risk factors and negative consequences of teacher victimization and how schools have responded to violence against teachers after resuming in-person classes across the nation.
- To address this gap, the present two-wave longitudinal research, funded by the National Institute of Justice, was implemented to understand the prevalence and predictors of seven different types of victimization against teachers at schools, examine negative effects of teacher victimization, and explore school responses to teacher victimization among the 50 largest U.S. school districts.
- This data brief reports findings from combining Waves I and II datasets, with approximately 4,000 middle and high school teachers responding from among the 50 largest school districts across the U.S. Its purpose is to generate a comprehensive knowledge base about teacher victimization, and to serve as a resource for the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies to improve and enhance school safety, especially among teachers.

MAIN FINDINGS

School Policies on Violence Directed Against Teachers

- Teachers were asked about their school’s policies regarding violence targeting teachers, and whether the school implemented prevention and/or intervention programs to address teacher victimization.
- The findings in Figure 1 show that 70 percent of participants in the survey indicate the existence of school policies addressing violence directed against teachers by students, while 30 percent of them reported the absence of such polices at their school.

Figure 1: School policies on teacher victimization – teachers’ perspectives (N=4,005)

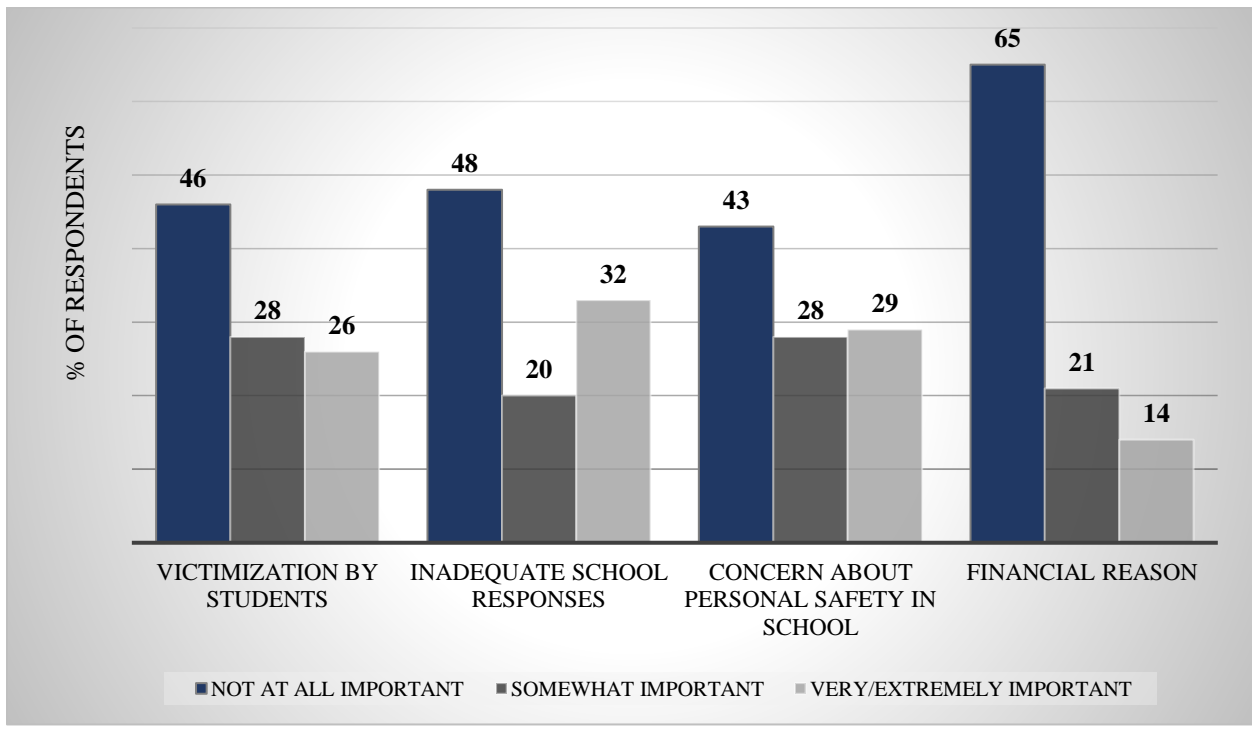


- However, the results suggest that only 20 percent of survey participants reported the actual implementation of a program in their school to address teacher victimization, whereas 80 percent indicated the absence of such programs.
- Concerning the implementation of intervention programs in school, 47 percent of teachers in the sample reported that their school has intervention programs on teacher victimization, while 53 percent stated that their school does not have such intervention programs.

The Effects of Victimization and School Responses on Former Teachers’ Decision to Leave

- At Wave II, 274 former teachers, that is respondents who decided to leave the teaching profession since wave I, were asked to indicate the level of importance the victimization experience and their school’s responses to victimization incidents in influencing that decision.
- The results in Figure 2 show that 26 percent of former teachers considered the experience of victimization by students as a very/extremely important factor in their decision to leave the teaching profession, while 46 percent indicated that victimization by students had no impact on their decision to leave.

Figure 2: Negative impact of victimization on the level of victimized teachers’ distress (N=274)



- Concerning the impact of school responses to victimization on their decision to leave, one in three (32%) of those who left the teaching profession indicated that school administrators' indifference, lack of support, and ineffective intervention were very/extremely important reasons for their departure from the teaching profession. In total, approximately 52 percent of those who left reported that inadequate school responses and interventions had at least some impact on their decision to exit the career.
- Former teachers were also asked about whether their concern regarding personal safety in school influenced their decision to leave the teaching career. The findings show that 29 percent of them reported their concern about personal safety in school was a very or extremely important factor in their decision, while 43 percent of them indicate no impact at all.
- Regarding the impact of financial reason on the decision of those who left, the results indicate that 14 percent of them considered it as a very or extremely important factor for leaving the teaching profession, while almost two-thirds of them (65 percent) said it had no impact at all.
- These findings may imply that the experience of victimization, inadequate school responses, and concerns about personal safety in school exert a more substantial impact on former teachers' decisions to leave their teaching career, as compared to financial reasons.

Thank You!

- As the data collection and research continues, we expect to share more results. We greatly appreciate the cooperation of the teachers who were surveyed and responded to the questionnaire.
- We sincerely hope that all respondents will consider continued participation in Wave III, which we anticipate will commence data collection in Spring 2024.