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RELEASE: April 5, 2022

Report finds school principals and vice-principals struggled in dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Calm During Crisis: Leading Saskatchewan Schools Through Covid-19, developed in partnership with the University of Regina's Faculty of Education and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), examines the experiences of Saskatchewan principals and vice-principals addressing shifting demands and challenges in keeping schools open and safe during the pandemic in 2020-21.

"The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound effect on our schools and their leadership as they resumed operations in the Fall of 2020," said lead author, Dr. Pamela Osmond-Johnson with the Faculty of Education. "Responsibility for ensuring the daily functioning of each school was left primarily to individual principals and vice-principals who identified increased workload and the lack of clear direction, and sometimes even conflicting direction, as contributing to feelings of stress, isolation and burnout."

The report draws on data collected from six online focus groups conducted with 41 school principals and vice-principals, from October 2020 to June 2021. These subjects indicated that enforcing public health protocols and dealing with constantly changing and mixed messaging from the health authority and school divisions added an enormous amount of additional work to their already demanding responsibilities.

Participants also felt that while having a positive attitude and providing a calming influence for staff and students was an important part of their role, that it was taking a toll on their own emotional well-being.

"Dr. Osmond-Johnson has done vital work capturing the many difficulties faced by school principals in the pandemic," said STF President, Patrick Maze. "So much has been placed on their shoulders, and they have carried that weight through the many twists and turns of the past two years. This report will be an important tool for our work with partners in the education sector, as we continue advocating and finding solutions to support our members in times of crisis. When educators have the tools and resources they need, students are set up for success."

The study, [Calm During Crisis](#), identifies a number of important questions regarding how school leaders can cope with navigating the demands of the 2021-22 school year as the pandemic drags on and how this may affect the ability of schools to meet their educational mandates.



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About the University of Regina

The University of Regina—with campuses located on Treaty 4 and Treaty 6 territories, the ancestral lands of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota and Nakoda nations and the homeland of the Métis—is a comprehensive, mid-sized university that traces its roots back to the creation of Regina College in 1911. Today, more than 16,000 students study within the University's 10 faculties, 25 academic departments/schools, 18 research centres and institutes, and three federated colleges (Campion College, First Nations University of Canada, and Luther College). The University of Regina has an established reputation for excellence and innovative programs that lead to undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees.

About the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation has advanced the interests of teachers and advocated for excellence in public education for more than 80 years. We are a professional organization of over 13,500 teachers employed in PreK-12 schools across the province who are trusted and respected leaders and partners in education.