



Ontario
College of
Teachers

Ordre des enseignantes
et des enseignants
de l'Ontario

2023

Focus on Teaching: A Survey of Ontario Teachers





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INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Focus on Teaching: A Survey of Ontario Certified Teachers is a new survey. The questions in the survey provide insight into a variety of areas, including the labour mobility of teachers, employment patterns, teacher attrition and demographic information of the entire College membership.

It is a significant expansion of the work previously done with the *Transition to Teaching* survey, which was only distributed to Ontario Certified Teachers (OCTs) in the early stages of their careers. The final *Transition to Teaching* survey was conducted in 2022 and the report was released in 2023. The updated survey questions and report will provide more helpful information to teachers and teacher candidates when they are exploring career opportunities across the province.

It will also provide a broader data set that can be used to inform important decisions about the future of the profession.

Survey methodology

The *Focus on Teaching* survey was voluntary and open to all OCTs in Good Standing. Members were invited to take part in the survey via email and access to the survey was available to members via their online, password-protected accounts. The survey was open from June 24 – July 14, 2023, and asked 21 questions focused on:

- members' retirement plans and intentions to maintain College membership
- paid employment of members with Temporary Certificates of Qualification
- types of professional roles and employers; and
- awareness of duty to report incidences of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Respondents

The College received 15,765 responses for a response rate of approximately seven per cent of the College's overall membership¹.

- Almost six per cent (5.8 per cent) of the 15,765 valid responses were in French².
- Most responses (96 per cent) came from Ontario. Canadian residents from other provinces made up 2.6 per cent of the sample, and the remaining 1.6 per cent of respondents were residing in other countries.

**15,765 survey
responses received**



**96 per cent of respondents
are from Ontario**



2023 Facts and Stats

Focus on Teaching is a new annual survey of OCTs



21 questions asked



96 per cent of respondents are from Ontario



86 per cent reported College membership as an employment requirement



88 per cent of members plan to teach in 2023/2024 school year



80 per cent identified as classroom teachers



28 per cent said teaching is their second or subsequent career



72 per cent of respondents said teaching is their first career



8.5 per cent of respondents maintain their membership as point of pride



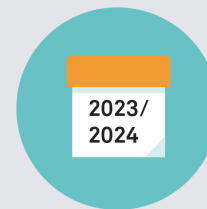
EMPLOYMENT AT A GLANCE

- Membership needed: the vast majority of respondents (86.4 per cent) said their employers made it a requirement for them to be an OCT in Good Standing.
- Working in education: a similar number (88.3 per cent) reported that they were planning to work in the teaching profession in the 2023/2024 school year.

**86 per cent reported
College membership as an
employment requirement**



**88 per cent of members
plan to teach in 2023/2024
school year**



Moving in and out of teaching in Ontario: among those (2,025) who did not work in a position requiring membership, 1,845 said they were transitioning in or out of teaching in Ontario for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons shared include:

**Seeking their first teaching
positions in Ontario**



**Teaching opportunities in
other provinces
or countries**



Retirement from teaching.



CAREER CHOICE

First career vs. a subsequent one:
72 per cent said the teaching profession was their first career, while 28 per cent said it was their second or subsequent career.

28 per cent said teaching is their second or subsequent career



EMPLOYER INFORMATION

Respondents were asked to provide information about their primary employer.

- Working in publicly funded schools: 81 per cent of respondents were employed in a publicly funded K-12 school in Ontario.
 - Of these respondents, 91.6 per cent taught in an English-language school board, and 8.4 per cent taught in a French-language school board. Please note: based on proportions of student enrolment in French- and English-language school boards, teachers employed by French-language school boards were slightly over-represented in the sample³.
- Working in private schools: six per cent of respondents were employed in private schools that provide K-12 education⁴.
- Working for a private company: less than two per cent of respondents were employed by a private company providing tutoring or adult education.
- Other employment: 11 per cent of respondents reported other kinds of employers, including post-secondary institutions, government, consulting, or private practices. Some respondents reported multiple roles. Respondents also used this category to report retirement and employment outside of Ontario.

ROLES IN EDUCATION

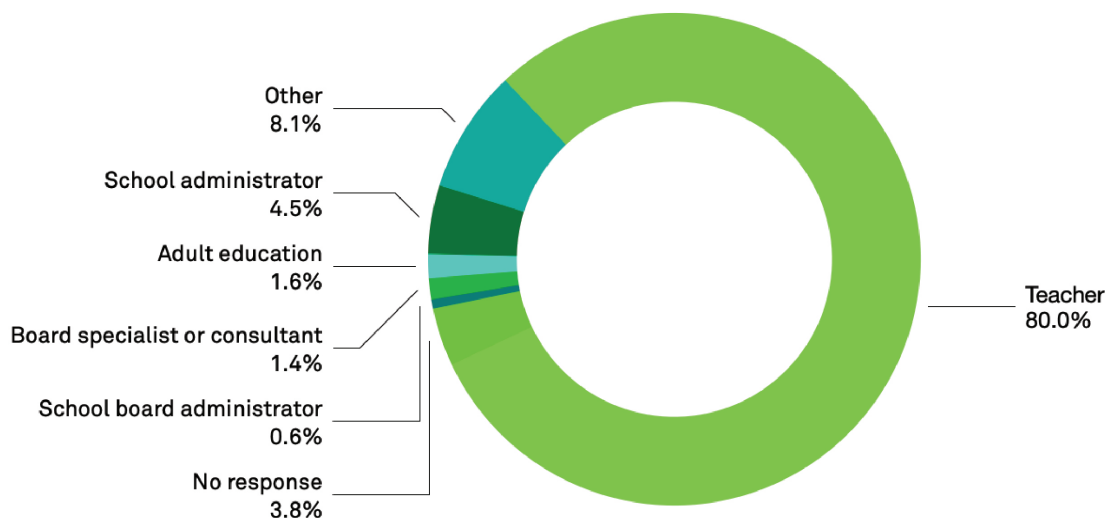
Survey respondents were asked to indicate their primary role as an educator.

- In classrooms: 80 per cent said they were classroom teachers.
- Administration: nearly five per cent (4.5 per cent) indicated as school administrators.
- Other: eight point one per cent of respondents indicated “Other” roles, which they were asked to specify. Specified roles include consultants,

researchers, continuing education teachers, educational assistants, and early childhood educators. This category also included occasional teachers (n=240) and fully retired teachers (n=93).

- Additional roles: respondents also indicated as working in adult education (1.6 per cent), or in system-level consultant roles (1.4 per cent).

Primary role as an educator



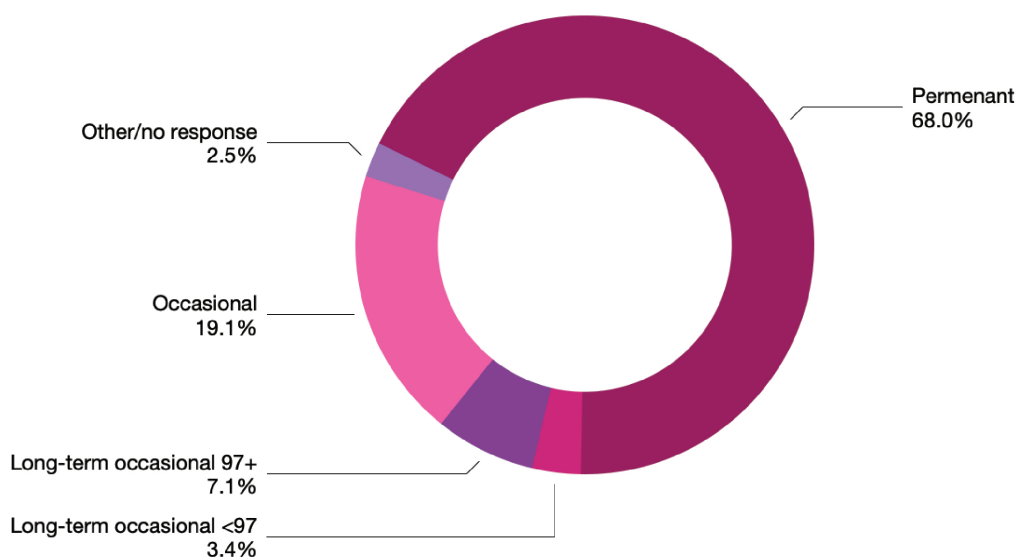
EMPLOYMENT POSITIONS

OCTs employed by publicly funded school boards in 2022-23 were also asked about what type of teaching position they held.

- Permanent: 68 per cent held a full-time, permanent contract with their school board.
- Long-term occasional 1: 7.1 per cent worked more than 97 days.
- Long-term occasional 2: 3.4 per cent worked fewer than 97 days.
- Daily occasional or supply teaching: 19.1 per cent.

Please note: historically, those who work more than 97 days are eligible for New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) support.

Types of positions held by Members employed by publicly-funded school boards



Respondents who did not hold permanent positions

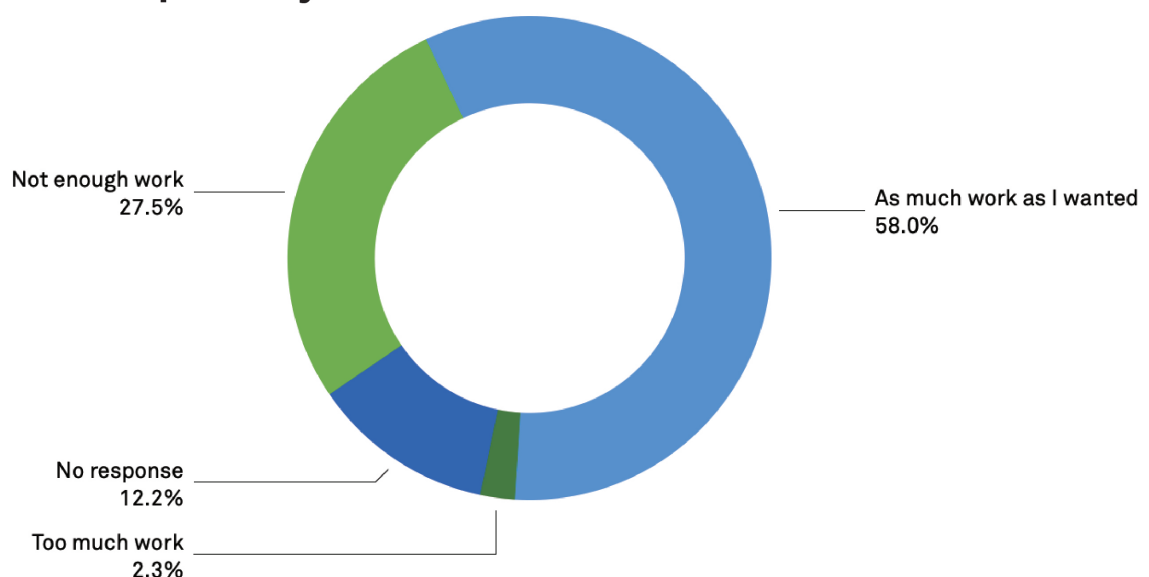
- Almost 60 per cent of these respondents worked as much as they would have liked.
- More than a quarter (27.5 per cent) stated that they did not have enough work.
- Two per cent of respondents stated that they had more work than they wanted.

Temporary Certificates of Qualification and Registration

In January 2021, the Ministry of Education directed the College to issue Temporary Certificates of Qualification in response to teacher shortages experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Requirements included satisfactory progress in the applicant's initial teacher education program, successful completion of a portion of the practicum requirement, and being endorsed by one's faculty of education.

Amount of work, non-permanent positions in publicly-funded school boards



All members with Temporary Certificates were invited to participate in the *Transition to Teaching* surveys in 2021 and 2022. These members also received the *Focus on Teaching* survey in 2023.

- Only a small fraction of all respondents held a Temporary Certificate
- 24 per cent of all members who held Temporary Certificates said they had paid employment after receiving their Temporary Certificate, with 86.1 per cent of them saying they worked 15 or more days.

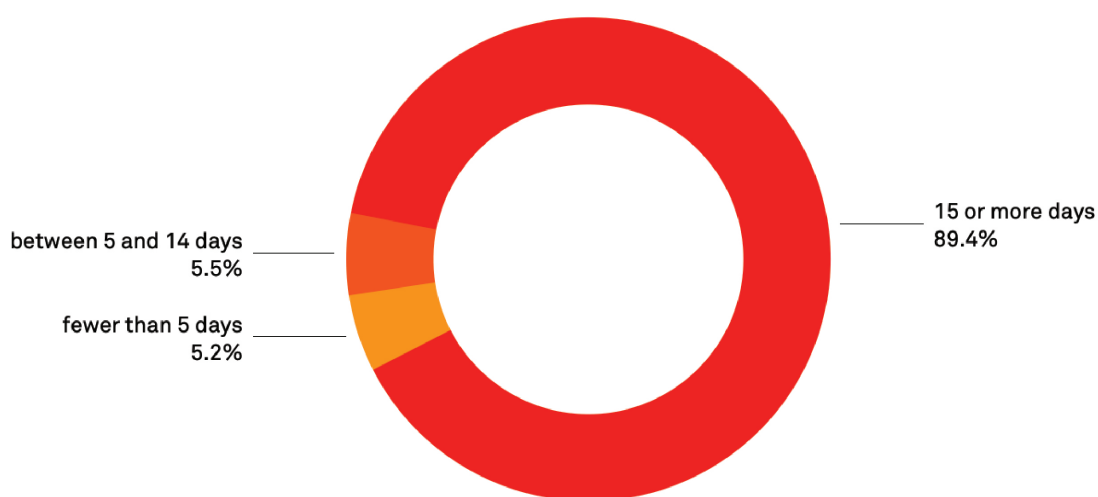
The number of Temporary Certificates converted to General Certificate of Qualification:

- January 2022 to the present 6,246
- September 2022 – June 2023 2,709

**Temporary Certificate end date:
December 31, 2023**



Members with a Temporary Certificate of Qualification paid days of employment



MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBER RETENTION

In the 2022-2023 academic year, a total of 229,268 licensees were Ontario Certified Teachers in Good Standing. A total of 2,861 new licenses were issued.

English	2,559
French	302

Source: College Membership

Almost 97 per cent (96.8 per cent) of respondents stated that they intend to maintain their Ontario College of Teachers membership in the future. This level of confidence differs from historic attrition data, which shows that more than 30 per cent of members are leaving the College within 10 years of initial membership.

Reasons for membership

When asked to specify their primary reason for holding College membership, responses showed that most of these reasons were employment-related:

- Working after retirement: open response data suggests that some members who reported they were “retired but likely to maintain my status” do so to remain open to the possibility of employment as occasional teachers or other contract roles.
- Looking for work: 6.4 per cent of respondents were seeking employment.
- Membership paid: two per cent stated they were “paid up,” meaning they had paid membership fees in 2023.
- Professional pride: more than eight per cent of respondents (8.5 per cent) maintain their memberships as a point of professional pride.

**A total of 2,861 new
licenses were issued**



DUTY TO REPORT

All Ontario Certified Teachers are expected to know their professional obligations.

In the *Focus on Teaching* survey, members were asked about their awareness of their duty to report actual or suspected child abuse or neglect directly to a children's aid society, in keeping with Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017*⁵.

In the know



98%
of members were
aware of this
professional obligation.

96.8%
confirmed that they were
aware that failing to report
child abuse or neglect could
constitute professional misconduct
and result in disciplinary action
by the College

RETIREMENT

Forecasting teacher supply partially depends on predicting when teachers leave the profession. Many career teachers remain until retirement, which is, on average 59 years of age⁶. Teachers may also leave the profession at earlier ages.

When OCTs plan to retire

Seventy-six per cent of all respondents reported an age at which they expected to retire. Of those:

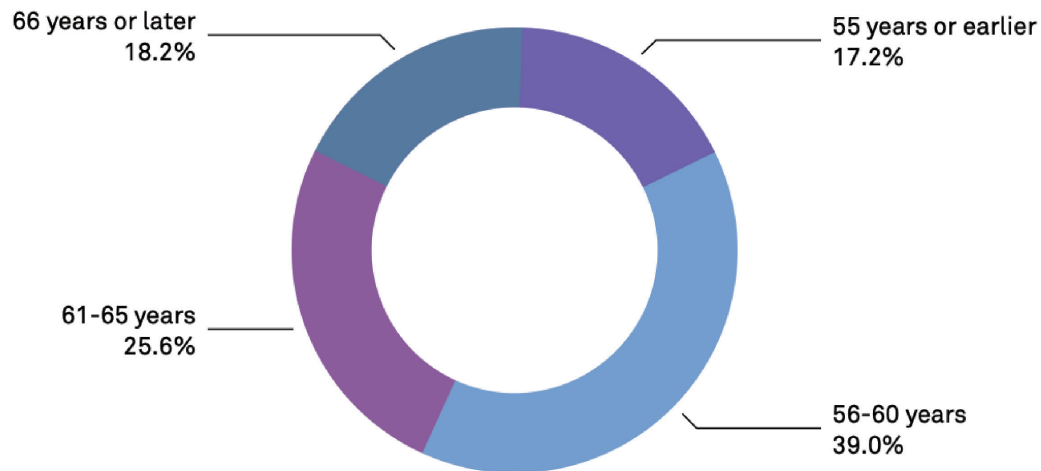
- Twenty-nine per cent – the largest proportion - planned to retire between the ages of 56 and 60. This peak aligns with the average retirement age.

However, a significant number of respondents selected other age ranges of planned retirement:

- A third of respondents (32.5 per cent) are teaching or planning to teach past the age of 60.

Analysis of open responses throughout the survey suggest that many educators remain active in the profession as occasional teachers or consultants after retirement.

Planned age for retirement



Respondents were also asked how many years they planned to remain in the teaching profession:

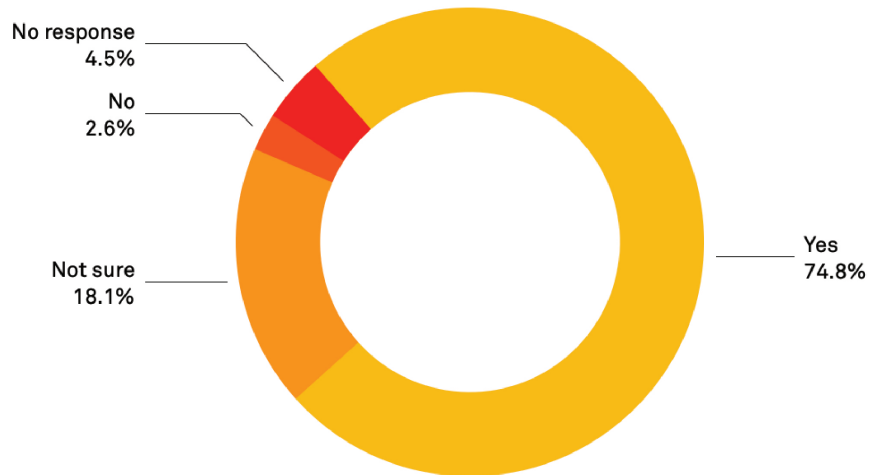
- Nearly half (47.3 per cent) expected to continue teaching for 10 or more years.
- Almost 16 per cent (15.6 per cent) are expected to continue to teach for another six to nine years.
- Slightly more than 22 per cent (22.4 per cent) are expected to continue to teach for two to five years.

Teaching until retirement age

Survey respondents were asked about their intentions to remain in the teaching profession until they retired.

- Almost 75 percent (74.8 per cent) of respondents indicated a positive intention to teach until retirement age.
- Meanwhile, 18 per cent expressed uncertainty.

Intention to remain in the teaching profession until retirement age



Planned number of years to continue in the teaching profession



Considerations for early retirement

In an open response question asking for possible reasons for early retirement, the majority cited challenging working conditions.

Key issues include:

- work volume and complexity,
- lack of respect and recognition,
- safety,
- mental health and,
- work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

Focus on Teaching: A Survey of Ontario Certified Teachers is a new survey of the College's entire membership, for OCTs in Good Standing.

The 2022-2023 *Focus on Teaching* survey marks a change from *Transition to Teaching*, which only surveyed early-career teachers. By expanding participation to all members, the new survey will monitor employment trends and educator experiences across all career stages.

The broadened scope of *Focus on Teaching* is evident in 2022-2023 report highlights:

- College membership is a long-term commitment. Almost all respondents (96.8 per cent) stated that they intended to maintain their Ontario College of Teachers membership in the future, and 75 per cent of members stated they intended to remain in the teaching profession until retirement.
- Eighteen per cent (18 per cent) of respondents expressed uncertainty about remaining in teaching until

retirement. In open response comments, working conditions were the most cited reason for considering a career change or early retirement.

- Twenty-eight percent (28%) reported teaching was a second career.
- Many College members who have retired from full-time positions remain active as occasional teachers and consultants.
- More than a quarter of respondents in non-permanent teaching roles (27.5 per cent) stated that they did not get as much work as they wanted in the 2022-2023 school year.
- Sixty per cent of respondents in non-permanent teaching roles stated that they had either enough or too much work during the 2022-2023 school year.

Focus on Teaching will provide information more broadly about mobility, employment patterns and attrition over a full spectrum of career pathways.

It is the College's intention to evolve and modify the survey to help ensure the data gathered will provide insight and trends into Ontario's teaching profession. Having a reliable dataset could help inform important decisions about the future of the teaching profession.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA COLLECTION

About the survey

In 2023, the Ontario College of Teachers asked members to take part in a voluntary and anonymous component of the *Focus on Teaching* survey. The purpose of this component is to better understand the composition of our membership.

This component brings the survey into alignment with the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*, which requires public sector employers to identify and monitor racial disparities in order to address systemic racism.

The questions asked members about ways in which they self-identify, including Indigeneity, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, gender identity, and whether they live with visible or invisible disabilities. The survey results provide insight into the diversity of College membership and may help to inform the College's development of policies and programs. The results may also be used to measure progress toward an educator workforce that reflects the diversity of Ontario students and families.

Using Statistics Canada 2016 census data, the Government of Ontario (2021) reports that almost 30 per cent of Ontarians identify as a visible minority. The Ontario Public Service (2017) projects that 48 per cent of Ontario's population will be racialized by 2036.

Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 165 observes that "all students benefit from having teachers with varying social identities and lived experiences," and requires school boards

to be mindful of equity and diversity at all stages of the hiring process.

In 2018, as part of Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategic Plan, school boards were authorized to conduct student censuses that include race-based data. In 2023, collecting this data became a requirement for all Ontario school boards. Under the *Anti-Racism Act, 2017*, public sector employers are obligated to identify and monitor racial disparities in order to address systemic racism.

Survey development

Participation in the demographic component of the *Focus on Teaching* survey was voluntary and anonymous.

Every effort was made to use the most current, inclusive language available, recognizing that terminology is fluid and ever-changing.

To develop the survey, the College consulted Statistics Canada, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate and scholarly resources. The survey reflected the principles recommended in the Ontario Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism.

All questions in the survey included a "prefer not to respond" option and respondents could choose to leave questions unanswered. The survey design also enabled respondents to designate identities not listed as response options, such as race or gender. In an open text box, respondents

could add an identity or comment on their responses. As respondents could choose multiple items, percentages of respondents in the tables presented may total more than 100 per cent.

Survey methodology and respondents

The College received 8,484 responses to the demographic segment of the survey, representing approximately 54 per cent of all survey respondents. Incomplete responses were removed, which resulted in a sample size of 8,078. This represents a valid response rate of 3.6 per cent of the College membership. Of this total, 427 responded in French.

Open text responses from members citing additional identities were analyzed and where appropriate, re-coding was used to aggregate responses. Descriptions and additional tables highlight patterns and themes drawn from open responses. The number of respondents to each question varies because not all respondents answered all questions. The number of respondents for each question is identified in each of the tables and figures below.

Survey results

Indigeneity

Two-hundred-and-eighteen respondents declared Indigenous identity, representing two per cent of the sample. Among these respondents, 15 declared more than one identity.

Indigenous identity	Response count (n=218)	%
First Nations	95	51%
Métis	78	42%
Inuit	18	10%
Another identity	12	6%

Additional identities include those who described themselves as non-status, or of mixed heritage. Four respondents identified with a specific Indigenous nation (Ojibway, Cree, Mohawk).

Racial identities

Respondents had the option of self-identifying according to a list of eight options. Eighty-two per cent of members who responded to the demographic component of the survey answered this question. They could choose more than one option or provide an additional identity as they saw fit. Results include:

- Of the respondents who answered this question, 90.8 per cent identified as White, or White alongside an additional identity.
- Twenty-one per cent of respondents who provided an answer to this question declared two or more identities. Two identities were the most common number selected. A small proportion of respondents declared three or four identities.

- Eighteen per cent chose not to answer this question, either by leaving it blank or stating that they preferred not to respond.
- The second and third most frequent identities were South Asian (8.1 per cent) and Black (7.0 per cent).

Racial Identities	Response count (n=6,601)	%
White or White and another identity	5,994	90.8%
South Asian	532	8.1%
Another racial identity	462	7.0%
Black	460	7.0%
East Asian	244	3.7%
Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian	178	2.7%
Southeast Asian	99	1.5%
Latin American	89	1.3%
Prefer not to answer	337	5.1%

Respondents were able to choose any number and combination of racial identities in the above chart, so the total number of selected identities exceeds the sample size. Respondents were also able to provide additional racial identities by completing an open-text section. The most commonly listed identities were Canadian, Jewish, Western or Eastern European, Canadian Indigenous, French Canadian, Indo-Caribbean, and African or North African.

Persons living with disabilities

Of all respondents:

- Fourteen per cent identified as persons living with one or more disabilities.
- Just under seventy-two per cent had invisible disabilities, and 20.9 per cent had visible disabilities.
- A small number (10 respondents) referred to learning disabilities or neurodiversity in their comments.

Type of disability	Response count (n=1,260)	%
Visible disability	263	20.9%
Invisible disability	906	71.9%
Another disability identity	52	4.1%
Prefer not to answer	39	3.1%

Gender identity

The survey's question about gender identity recognizes that Ontario teachers may not identify as male or female. The term "cis-gendered" describes people whose gender identities match their biological sex. However, some people identify differently, perhaps as transgender men or women, or as two-spirited individuals. Some reject gender binaries in favour of queer or gender-fluid identities.

Other findings show:

- A large majority of respondents identified as women, reflecting the predominance of women in the teaching profession.

- Ninety-six per cent of respondents answered the gender identity question, and 54 respondents chose multiple items to describe their gender identity.
- Among the 130 respondents who chose “another identity,” some chose to identify as “queer,” “non-binary” or “gender-fluid.” Approximately three per cent of respondents indicated that they preferred not to answer this question.

Gender identity	Response count (n=8,095)	%
Male/Cis	1,833	22.7%
Female/Cis	5,778	71.4%
Two-Spirit	19	0.2%
Non-binary	56	0.7%
Transgender man	7	0.1%
Transgender woman	4	0.05%
Another gender identity	130	1.6%
Prefer not to answer	268	3.3%

Sexual identity

Finally, the demographic survey asked respondents about their sexual identity. As with previous questions, this question was intended to recognize the diversity of Ontario educators.

- Among the respondents who answered this question, the majority (83 per cent) selected only one identity.
- The remaining 17 per cent chose two or three identities. However, a number of these responses included both a chosen sexual identity and a “prefer not to answer” selection.

- As a result, the total percentage of respondents for each item exceeds 100 per cent.
- In total, 1,206 respondents left this question blank, and an additional 683 selected the item “prefer not to answer.”
- Of respondents who chose at least one item in response to this question, 96.8 per cent identified as heterosexual.
- 7.4 per cent of respondents identified as 2SLGBTQ+.
- Many respondents who selected “another identity” used this open text option to express a preference not to be labelled within the 2SLGBTQ+ spectrum, or to comment on why they preferred not to answer the question.

Sexual identity	Response count (n=8,034)	%
Heterosexual	6,651	96.8%
2SLGBTQ+	510	7.4%
Asexual	76	1.1%
Another identity	114	1.7%
Prefer not to answer	683	9.9%

Endnotes

- 1: 16,177 responses were received overall. Valid responses were determined to be those with completion rates of ≥ 81 per cent. Percentage response rate was calculated as valid responses as a proportion of members who were in Good Standing on June 29, 2023.
- 2: Preferred or first language for all members is determined from preferred language of communication in the College membership database. Approximately 5.4 per cent of members at the time of the survey receive communications from the College in French.
- 3: Based on 2021/2022 ONSiS reports of student enrolment of 5.5 per cent French-language boards and 94.5 per cent English-language boards. Government of Ontario (2023, February 27). Facts about elementary and secondary education. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/facts-about-elementary-and-secondary-education#section-3>
- 4: Private schools may be businesses or non-profit organizations, see <https://www.ontario.ca/page/private-schools-0>
- 5: Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, S.O. 2017, c. 14, Sched. 1., s. 125(9-10)
- 6: 2022 Annual Report: Investing to make a mark, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan www.ontarioteacherspension.com/content/dam/otpp/documents/reports/2022-ar/otpp-2022-annual-report-eng.pdf.



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