

Falling Through the Cracks: A snapshot of Saskatchewan's schools

CUPE RESEARCH Saskatchewan Region

A recent online survey on education in Saskatchewan clearly illustrates the dire situation facing staff and students in the K-12 education system.

More than 750 Saskatchewan residents from over 20 school divisions took part in the online survey, which was conducted by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) – Education Workers Steering Committee.

The online survey was open to the general public. Respondents were not randomly selected.

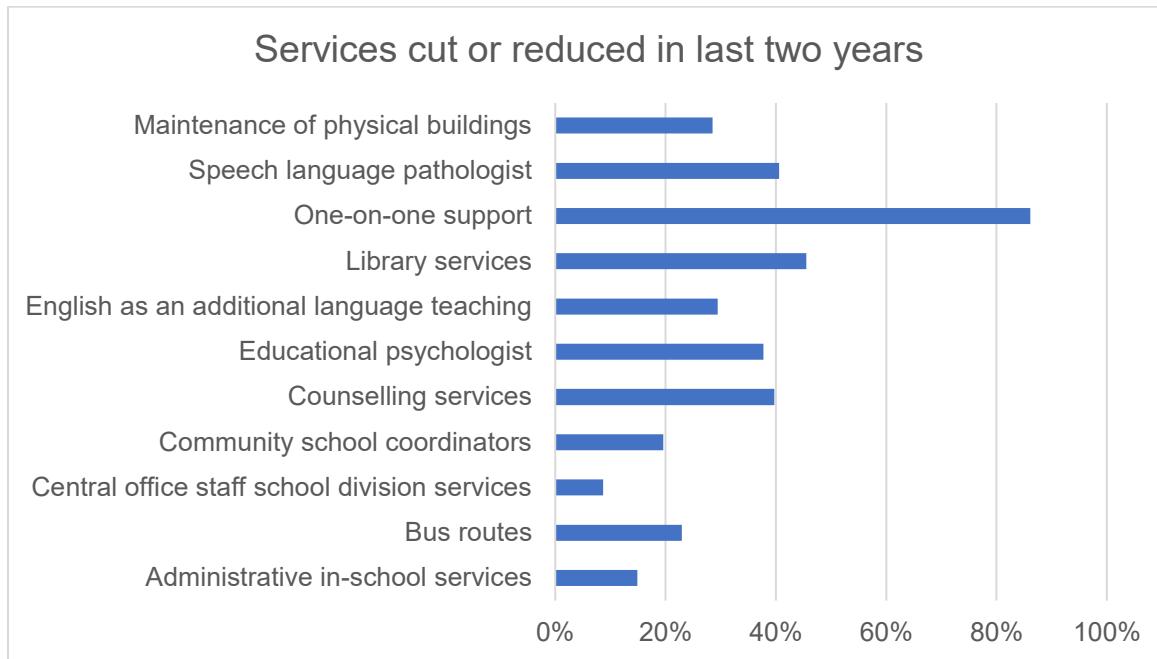
An overwhelming majority of survey respondents report less support for students and larger class sizes in the past two years.

Major Findings:

- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of those who responded to the survey said their school division had been impacted by cuts in the last two years.
- The most frequently cited cuts were to one-on-one support for students - 86% of respondents saying one-on-one student supports had been cut or reduced in the past two years.
- Those who responded also pointed to cuts to library services, speech language pathologists and counselling services.
- Almost a third of those who responded (29%) said maintenance of physical buildings had been reduced or cut in the past two years.

Service Reductions

We asked survey participants to identify which services have been cut or reduced in the last two years. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of those who responded to the survey said their school division had been impacted by cuts in the last two years.



We also included an open-ended question about how the cuts are affecting students and staff's psychological well-being. Here are a few statements:

“Our school has many students with safety and intervention plans. Those who had one-on-one support for years are now told it’s gone. All EAs are classroom-based – no more one-on-one.”

“I’m struggling to get my child on the speech-language pathologist’s caseload. Some students need so much support that others are left without help.”

“We lost seven EAs and two mentors this year. The lack of support is raising stress and lowering morale in ways we’ve never struggled with before.”

“Because my daughter can’t get the support she needs, the school suggested cutting her school day in half.”

“I have been an administrative assistant for 10 years. When I started, two staff served 600 students. Now one person does it. Schools with 1,000 students still have only two office staff. It’s overwhelming and has taken a serious toll on my mental and physical health.”

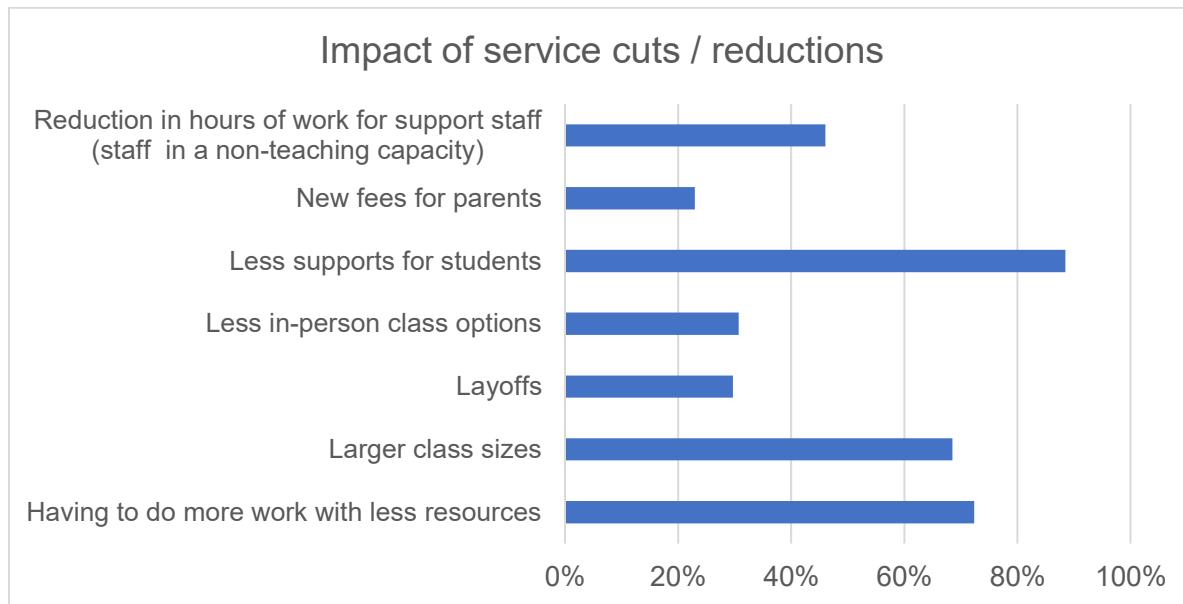
“Maintenance cuts mean buildings aren’t getting proper repairs – just temporary fixes as things break down.”

Impact of Service Reductions

Survey respondents pointed to impacts on both students and the staff who support them:

86% said there are less supports for students. More than 2/3 of respondents were concerned about larger class sizes.

Support staff overwhelmingly reported they have to do more work with less resources (68%).

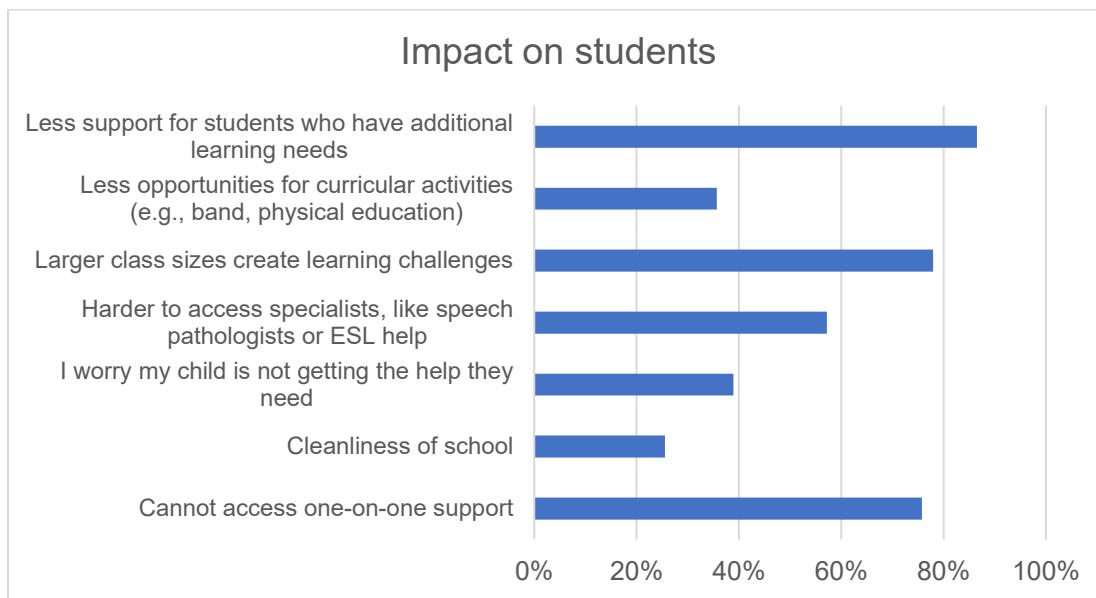


“My team of five maintains 38 school libraries. We’re in a different school every day, doing only the bare minimum. It feels like putting a Band-Aid on a water leak – things constantly fall through the cracks.”

“Every year I’m asked to do more with less. I teach multiple curricula in a single class.”

Impact on Students

Less support for students with additional learning needs was the number one concern cited by those who took the survey. Larger class sizes and difficulty accessing specialists like speech pathologists or ESL help were also raised by a lion's share of respondents.



Here are some statements from teachers, parents and support staff:

“My job as a teacher is much harder with fewer EAs. We lost six positions due to funding, leaving students who need one-on-one support in busy classrooms with no support. This leads to major behavioural outbursts and even injuries to staff.”

“Funding cuts mean only the bare minimum of students get help. With more special needs and fewer staff, kids who just need a little extra support in reading or math aren’t getting it. Teachers are overwhelmed.”

“Having to support multiple kids at once, some with violent behaviours, takes away help from others who need it. One-on-one support is gone.”

“Classes are too big with too little support. One EA now handles 3 – 4 autistic students plus others with FASD and ADHD. Needs aren’t being met.”

“I am now asked to support multiple students at once – students who had one-on-one help last year. EAs are stretched thinner than ever to cover understaffing.”

“I have been an EA for 15 years. I used to support 1 – 2 kids, and now it’s 5 or more. I’m spread so thin I can’t meet all their needs and often miss breaks because there’s too much to do.”

“We have 14 students on shortened school days because we don’t have enough EAs.”

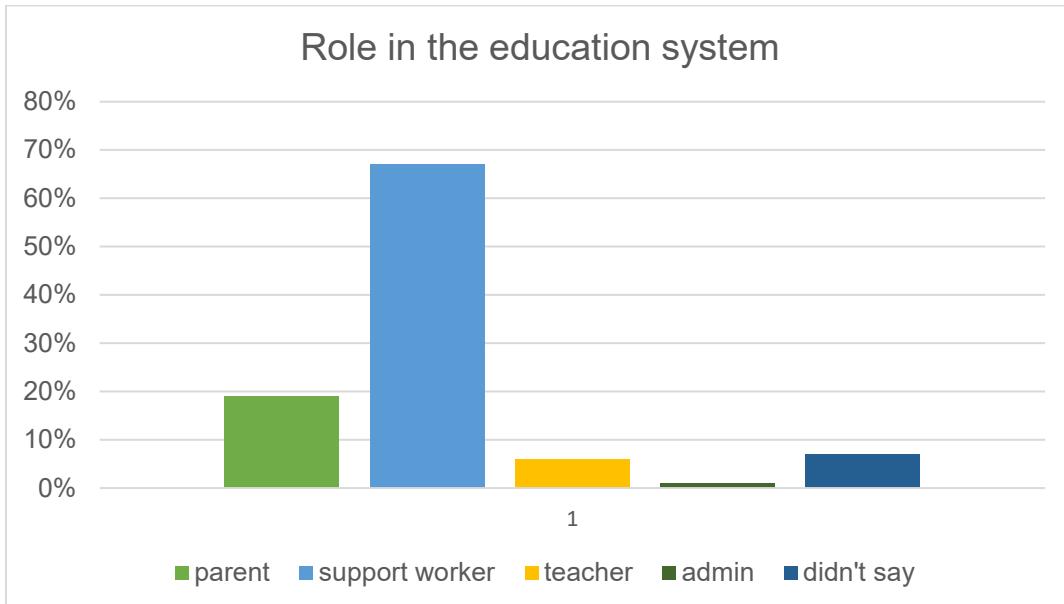
“Staff are burning out, and it’s only the second month of the school year. In 16 years, I’ve never seen it this bad.”

Who Participated:

The survey garnered responses from education support workers, parents and teachers - 2/3 of those who responded were education support workers and 19% were parents. The survey was open to the public from September 23, 2025, to October 15, 2025,

Participants from the following school divisions responded to the survey:

Creighton, Good Spirit School, Holy family, Holy Trinity, Horizon, Living Skies, Lloydminster Public, Northeast School Division, Prairie South School Division, Northwest School Division, Northern Lights School Division, Prairie Valley School Division, Prairie Spirit School Division, Regina Public Schools, Regina Catholic Schools, Sask. Rivers School Division, Prince Albert Catholic Schools, southeast Corner Stone, Sunwest School Division, Saskatoon Public, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Christ the Teacher Catholic Schools, Chinook School Division, and the Light of Crist School Division



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