

## Call for criminalizing cyberbullying

**INTERNET: The Canadian Teachers' Federation votes unanimously in favour of the push**  
By THE CANADIAN PRESS

MONCTON, N.B. -- Delegates representing 220,000 teachers across the country unanimously voted in favour of pushing to make cyberbullying a criminal offence.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation is calling on the federal government to take a tougher stand on cyberbullying, and 100 delegates endorsed the move at the group's annual general meeting in Moncton, N.B. yesterday.

"We're going to be lobbying MPs to look at any and all kinds of legislation, including the Criminal Code, where there needs to be some updating and strengthening," said federation president Emily Noble.

Noble said the current legislation doesn't go far enough to address harassment and bullying that's carried out electronically via e-mail, instant messaging and posts on blogs and social networking sites.

The federation says it's a growing problem that affects students and teachers, and Noble said her group decided to take action after an increasing number of parents and teachers raised the issue.

"Teachers were finding that students would be writing things about them, threats to their physical well-being," Noble said.

The harassment makes it harder for teachers to do their job and for students to learn, Noble said, and should be viewed as a serious occupational health and safety issue.

According to an online poll of more than 2,500 Canadians conducted on behalf of the federation, one in five respondents said they were aware of a teacher who was a victim of cyberbullying.

One in three said they were aware of a student in their community who had been targeted.

A cyberbullying expert says that's consistent with other major studies, which have found that one-third of children and teens between 10 and 18 have been affected by cyberbullying.



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