

Jan. 2010

No. 331



RTU-SER Newsletter

• SPLIT CLASSES

• UNION FUNDS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY

• REMINDER REGARDING MEETING MINUTES

• WATCH YOUR STEP!

• 2010-2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR

• TOO MANY HIGH SCHOOL REPORT CARDS?

WELCOME BACK!

We hope that you enjoyed the holidays and wish you all a happy and healthy 2010!

SPLIT CLASSES

The year is starting off on a good note. Our negotiators have persuaded the government to extend support measures for teachers with split classes. As a result, **\$1.5 M will be invested in 2009-2010. Riverside School Board has received \$21,819** which, as previously, will be distributed by the Professional Improvement Committee.

UNION FUNDS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN DIFFICULTY

For the second consecutive (and last) year, we used the amount received as the settlement of a grievance to support teachers. We were able to provide support to 19 of the 20 requesting schools, in the total amount of \$168,086.

REMINDER REGARDING MEETING MINUTES

Please be sure to send us a copy of your **School Council and Special Needs Committee meeting minutes**. We read them carefully and ensure the necessary follow-up.

WATCH YOUR STEP!

If you slip on ice in the school parking lot, or while entering or exiting the school, be sure to record it in the **work accident log** at the school office. If the incident is not reported, in the eyes of the CSST, it never happened.

2010-2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Consultations on the school calendar will be held soon. Some changes are being suggested to take into account the Basic School Regulations and to simplify student evaluations:

1. End of second term moved to late February
2. Possibility for high schools to replace the first report card with an informal progress report.

We ask that you read the proposals and share your point of view during the consultation period, which should start at the end of January.

TOO MANY HIGH SCHOOL REPORT CARDS?

All high schools under Riverside School Board currently produce four graded report cards. Over the past few years, the Basic School Regulations have enabled high schools to reduce the number of graded report cards per year from four to three. Some Quebec high schools have replaced the first report card with an informal progress report sent to parents, in accordance with the laws and regulations in effect. The most obvious benefit of fewer report cards is that teachers have more time to assess students' skills instead of cranking out grades. If this scenario appeals to you, we suggest that you discuss it with your school administration.

• CONTRIBUTIONS AND DEDUCTIONS IN 2010

• LEAVE WITHOUT PAY AND LEAVE WITH DEFERRED PAY

• NEGOTIATIONS

• BILL 88

• DEPARTURES AND APPOINTMENTS

• CLOSURE OF ROYAL OAK SCHOOL

• NEW WEBSITE

CONTRIBUTIONS AND DEDUCTIONS IN 2010

If your contributions reached the annual limit (**Employment Insurance and Quebec Pension Plan**) in 2009, the School Board stopped making deductions and your net salary increased. The new year means that your annual contributions are back to zero and that the deductions will begin again.

LEAVE WITHOUT PAY AND LEAVE WITH DEFERRED PAY

Requests for leaves of absences without pay and deferred leaves of absences must be submitted to Human Resources by March 1.

NEGOTIATIONS

Negotiations to renew the collective agreement are underway. The Union's demands were submitted in late October, and the employers' offers were made in late November. Even though the parties appear to be far from reaching an agreement, they have agreed to negotiate to avoid another decree. Soon, support measures for our negotiators will be proposed to union members. We'll keep you posted.

BILL 88

The School Board is currently working to define the framework for parents and students to lodge complaints. The Bill stipulates that school boards must have a **system in place to manage complaints from students and parents**. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the response received can refer his/her complaint to the ombudsman, who will conduct a follow-up and make recommendations to resolve the issue. Another clause in the Bill enables the Council of Commissioners to **mandate** one of its members to attend a school's Governing Board meetings to gather information on any relevant issues. Prior to Bill 88, Commissioners could attend Governing Board meetings by invitation only. Stay tuned.

DEPARTURES AND APPOINTMENTS

After 10 years as Director General of the School Board, Kevin Lukian will step down in early January. His successor will be Mr. Stephen Lessard, currently Assistant Director General and Director of Secondary Schools.

CLOSURE OF ROYAL OAK SCHOOL

Just before the holidays, the students, parents and teachers at **Royal Oak** School were informed that the Council of Commissioners had decided to close the school on July 1, 2010. The teachers will be transferred in February to other schools for the next school year, and the Union will ensure that their rights are respected before, during and after the transition. On the other hand, both **Reach** and **Terry Fox** will remain open. **Royal Oak** School, just like **Royal Charles** and **Royal George** (which is now with Commission scolaire Marie-Victorin under the name l'AGORA), are all schools that were named after famous battleships of the British Navy! The **Royal Oak** was sunk by the Germans in 1939; the **Royal George** sank in 1782 while repairs were being made to it. The **Royal Charles**, which brought back King Charles in England in 1662, was abandoned in 1673 by the Dutch, who had stolen it from the English in 1667. Ironically, the **Royal Charles** was the only ship not to have been sunk...

NEW WEBSITE

Our website (www.rtu-ser.ca) has been completely revamped. Many thanks to Anne St-Pierre, Administrative Assistant, and Frank White, Union Advisor, for the time and energy they invested in this project.

Michel Gagnon
President