

June 2008

No. 317



RTU-SER Newsletter

This month!

• SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

- According to the School Board, we have reached the ratio stipulated in the collective agreement, i.e. **one (1) resource teacher for every 12.5 teachers** at the elementary level, and **one resource teacher for every 26.5 teachers at the high school level**. This ratio will be maintained in 2008-2009, as per the collective agreement.
- The identification of children with learning difficulties is done by teachers: an **Ad Hoc Committee** can be set up (8-9.06), to insure proper follow-up, and also to make recommendations to the principal to have certain students coded. If teachers recommend to formally identify a child with special needs so he gets a code, the principal may refuse, but has to give the reasons, in writing, within 15 days. This disposition exists to avoid a situation where **a principal would refuse to have a child coded, for instance, because they don't want the parents or the school board to think badly of their school...** If you have recommended that a child be formally identified, please be aware that the principal does not have the authority to simply refuse. If that has happened, please give us a call: **450 465 2523**.

PORTFOLIO : WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

The board has given it a new name, but it's still the same old portfolio, even if they now call it « **collective file** ». What has not changed, is the fact that no evaluation tool can be made compulsory by either a school board or a principal. The Education Act, which *is* compulsory, says the teacher has the right to:

1. **to select methods of instruction** corresponding to the requirements and objectives fixed for each group or for each student entrusted to his care;
2. **to select the means of evaluating the progress of students** so as to examine and assess continually and periodically the needs and achievement of objectives of every student entrusted to his care

Article 96.15 also says that it's the teachers who propose **the standards and procedures for the evaluation of student achievement** in their schools.

PRIORITY LIST

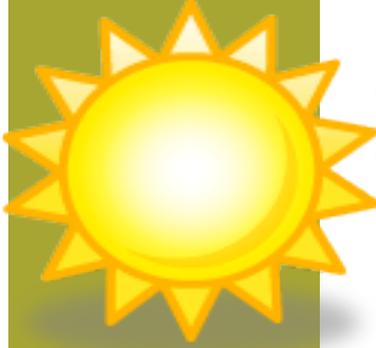
The Board will release the updated recall list for 2008-2009 in early July. The Union will send copies to those whose name appears on the new list. Note that **the first set of part-time contracts will be awarded on June 10 and a second set, on August 19**.

• PORTFOLIO : WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

• PRIORITY LIST

TEACHING CATEGORIES AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

Further to a request made by the delegates last year, we conducted a survey



• **TEACHING CATEGORIES AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL**

• **ABSENCES AND SPECIAL LEAVES**

• **A TEACHER, DELETED!**

among elementary school teachers, to know whether they preferred to keep the two current categories General Subjects, kindergarten-cycle 1 and General Subjects, cycles 2 and 3) or merge them to create a single field (General Subjects, kindergarten to cycles 3). In total, **115 teachers opted for a single field, whereas 39 preferred to maintain the status quo.** The school administrators appear to have got the message; they will entertain “discussions with the teachers” on this issue in September. It will be up to the teachers concerned to take part in the discussions and ensure their voices are heard. According to the collective agreement, the board has to consult the teachers on this.

ABSENCES AND SPECIAL LEAVES

We have been told that, starting next school year, all requests for special leaves will be processed by the school administrations and that funding for these leaves will be provided to the schools, which will be funded the equivalent of two (2) days' leave per teacher. For example, a school with 12 teachers will receive funding for 24 special leave days. If the teachers at that school were to require more than 24 days' leave in a year, the school would have to make up the difference; conversely, if the 24 days were not used, the remaining days would be carried over to the following year.. Note that each teacher is still entitled to **eight (8) special leaves per year** to compensate for absences due to weddings, funerals, doctor's appointments, etc. This new approach raises some concerns, which we voiced to the School Board:

- A school administration may be more budget-conscious than teachers-conscious and therefore exert pressure on teachers to avoid using the leaves;
- Non-Catholic, non-Protestant teachers could be discriminated against in the event that they take leaves to observe religious holidays;
- This could create tension between teachers due to the frequency of use of the leaves;

This could create tension between employee groups in schools where the secretaries are responsible for the daily management and funding of leaves.

A TEACHER, DELETED!

Occasionally, bureaucracy can be surprisingly fast. A teacher in one of our elementary schools submitted her resignation at approximately 3:30 pm on April 17. When she tried to open her e-mail inbox and download her files around 5 p.m. that same afternoon, she was denied access, and she discovered that all her files had already been deleted! The Board called it an “unfortunate error.” As a precaution, we suggest that you do not leave important files on your computer desktop or on the intranet. There were also reports of other cases of files being deleted without warning earlier in the school year.

INVENTING MARKS?

It is not compulsory to evaluate every competency in all disciplines on every report card. We are required to provide a mark for competencies that are actually evaluated. It is normal (and legal, since it's part of the *Quebec Education Act*) that a number of competencies not be evaluated at each term; however, they must all be included in the competency report at the end of each cycle. Despite the law, some school administrations insist that their teachers submit marks for all competencies, *even those that were not*

• **INVENTING
MARKS?**

• **SOUTH SHORE
UNIVERSITY
WOMEN'S CLUB**

evaluated. This is highly inappropriate. Teaching by cycles gives teachers some leeway specifically to enable them to use their professional judgment in decision-making regarding competency evaluations. The *Education Act* has recognized this approach for 10 years now. Trust your own judgment when reporting time comes.

SOUTH SHORE UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB

The **South Shore University Women's Club** is asking for donations of books for its annual August Book Sale. Proceeds from the sale will provide scholarships for high school, CEGEP and university students. This year, the sale will take place on August 13 from 5-9 p.m., August 14 from 3-9 p.m. and August 15 from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. at St. Barnabas Anglican Church, 95 Lorne, St. Lambert (450 672-1050 or 450 671-1308).

Michel Gagnon
President,
Riverside Teachers Union

**THE UNION OFFICE WILL BE OPEN UNTIL JULY 4 AND REOPEN
AUGUST 18.**

**WE WISH ALL OF YOU A WONDERFUL
SUMMER VACATION**

