

June 2010

No. 336

# RTU-SER Newsletter

## • EXPIRATION OF WARNING LETTERS

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November 5, 2010, will mark the **100th working day since warning letters** were issued to **122 of our teachers on April 19**. According to the collective agreement, these documents are valid for 100 working days, after which time the School Board is prohibited from using them for any reason whatsoever. The Union will make sure the original letters are sent back to the teachers.

## • SUCCESS PLANS

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Under Bill 88, schools must develop a Success Plan in the aim of meeting the measurable targets imposed on school boards by the MELS. The deadline for success plans is June 2010. Note that Bill 88 aims to integrate performance control mechanisms—much like those used in industry—into the school system, with the aim of boosting the graduation rate. Minister Courchesne intends to raise the province's average **graduation rate to 80% by 2020**. The current provincial average is around 60%. MELS is imposing a 88% graduation rate on RSB schools.

## • APPOINTMENT OF A STUDENT OMBUDSMAN

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The School Board has named **Peter Woodruff** as **Student Ombudsman**. His mandate is to receive complaints from students and parents, as a **second course of action**; the School Board initially receives complaints. If its response is not to the complainant's satisfaction, the complaint is then referred to the Ombudsman as a second course of action. Riverside School Board adopted **By-Law 14** to regulate the complaint mechanism.

## • PRESSURE TACTICS AND NEGOTIATIONS

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On May 19, during the annual general assembly, further pressure tactics were adopted:

- Picketing for 15 minutes once a week, before or after school hours, or at lunchtime;
- Not writing any comments on the next report card;
- Calling a **Special General Assembly on September 9, 2010**, to hold a **vote on a strike mandate** in conjunction with the Common Front.

We are also closely monitoring the progress of negotiations; if an agreement is reached, the assembly may be cancelled.

## • SOUTH SHORE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED TEACHERS

### SOUTH SHORE ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED TEACHERS

On May 19, some **30 retired teachers picketed in front of St-Lambert Elementary** to express their dissatisfaction with the warning letters issued to some of our teachers by the School Board, and with the delay in negotiations. **Peter Yaworski**, President of the Association, is planning other demonstrations in the near future. The RTU would like to express our heartfelt thanks to our former colleagues for this show of solidarity.

## • UNION PRESIDENT AND THE RTU CONSTITUTION

### UNION PRESIDENT AND THE RTU CONSTITUTION

According to our union's constitution, the president and executive members must be elected each year, since their terms are renewable every school year. Moreover, each president is **limited to four one-year terms**, after which a new candidate must run for office. This system was implemented some 30 years ago to impose renewal. That is why I could not run for president during the last election. Note that ours is the only union in the English sector whose statutes limit the length of the president's mandate. Since adopting this rule in 1981, we have had seven presidents: **Alan Smith, Ardèle Warr, Lloyd Brereton, Frank White, Liette Michaud-Hedge, André Melnyk** and myself.

## • OVERVIEW OF THE LAST FOUR YEARS

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The last four years have been full of new challenges for me, including negotiating the local agreement, settling labour relations issues on a daily basis, preparing for arbitration hearings, coordinating parity committees and ensuring that clauses from the collective agreement are respected. We won most of the grievances filed and were victorious in a dispute before the **Labour Board**. The best part about being president is visiting schools and speaking with teachers about the daily reality in our schools, with the aim of improving their situation. Sadly, this requires acknowledging the fact that teachers' working conditions are generally difficult, mainly due to the lack of support for special needs students and the government's repeated assaults on our profession. I would like to extend my thanks to all of the teachers who put their trust in me over the last four years. It has been a privilege to serve the RTU members.

## • FACEBOOK PAGES

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Increasingly, teachers, both in Quebec and elsewhere, are facing disciplinary measures for publishing information about their students on their **Facebook** page. Teachers are strongly advised to avoid referring to students on all online social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Also note that **messages created, sent and received through Riverside School Board's email system** become school board property and may be accessed and disclosed.

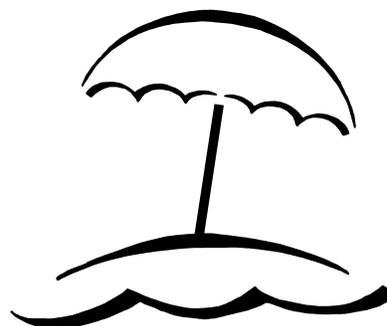
## • BEST OF LUCK TO THE NEW PRESIDENT!

### BEST OF LUCK TO THE NEW PRESIDENT!

On May 18, **Steven LeSueur** (Good Shepherd) was elected union president for the 2010-2011 school year. I wish him all the best in his new role and pledge my support. I tip my hat to **Ramona Romanuk** for running as a candidate in the election.

I wish you all an excellent summer!

**Michel Gagnon**  
President



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