

March 2009

No. 323



RTU-SER Newsletter

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WELCOME BACK!

We hope you had the chance to relax during the March break so that you can finish off the school year with renewed energy!

HOLIDAY INSURANCE PREMIUMS

There will be a break from paying disability insurance (3 months) and life insurance (4 months) premiums. Due to technical problems, these payment-free periods will only begin in May.

OVERSIZE CLASS PAYMENTS

The school board made the payments in February; usually, the details of the payments are stapled to the pay slips, but this has not been done; principals have this information and can provide it for you upon request.

PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY: WHAT ARE THE LIMITS?

Several teachers have concerns about being pressured by the Board to use a certain type of assessment tool. We asked the board what this was all about, and apparently those assessment tools were only suggested... It has been 12 years since the principle of professional autonomy was added to the *Education Act*, giving teachers to certain rights, including:

- **Choosing the tools used to evaluate their students:**
- **Adopting teaching approaches** suited to their students' needs. Although the *Programme de formation de l'école québécoise* [Quebec school training program] is a mandatory document, the teacher has the right to choose the most appropriate teaching methods.
- **Not working in teams:** various MELS documents suggest creating work teams, but there is no legal or contractual obligation to do so. It is totally optional.
- **Requiring that multiplication tables be memorized, or using dictations or any other traditional evaluation method:** teachers' right to use these tools to evaluate learning was recognized and confirmed in a MELS document¹.

Teachers have total flexibility in their choice of methods in the application of the QEP, as was pointed out in a February 2007 training session offered jointly by the CPNCA [Conseil patronal de négociations des commissions scolaires anglophones], QPAT, and the ADGESBQ [Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Quebec].

COMPULSORY END-OF-CYCLE EXAMS

The School Board has announced its list of required end-of-cycle exams; a considerable number of tests will take place in schools beginning in April. The list was sent to the principal of each school. The delegates received a copy during the assembly in February. Do you remember the early days of the Reform, when we were told that teaching by cycles would (finally) give teachers more time to teach, and that the burden of constant evaluations would be lifted...?

• CONSULTATION NEGOTIATIONS

• EXCESS TEACHERS

• IS YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL WORKING WELL? HELPFUL HINTS

¹ **Le renouveau pédagogique: ce qui définit le changement**, MELS, 2005
The Programme de formation [training program] requires students' active participation while allowing the teacher to choose his/her teaching methods according to the situation, the type of learning or students' abilities: lecture-style teaching, explicit teaching, teaching by projects, inductive teaching, strategic teaching, collaborative teaching, etc.

CONSULTATION: NEGOTIATIONS

I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the consultation in January. In all, 267 teachers took part. The main issues identified were:

1. Identifying students with learning disabilities (codes);
2. Lowering the number of students per class;
3. Teaching load;
4. The reform.

We have forwarded the results to the QPAT, and our negotiators are preparing our demands. A second series of consultations will take place in the spring.

EXCESS TEACHERS

The annual spring dance will soon begin: the School Board will determine the number of surplus teachers required for next year, if any. The important dates are the following:

- *April 30*, by which date the school principal will have determined his/her needs in terms of teaching staff and, if there is a surplus of teachers, will attempt to reassign them within the school, by seniority, category and subcategory. If there are still surplus teachers further to this process, they are informed, in writing, that they will be transferred to another school. In each school, the School Board posts a list of vacant positions in other schools under its jurisdiction. Within the next five (5) working days, te surplus teachers must inform the school principal of the position they have chosen from the list, using the appropriate form in Appendix F (5-21.16a), available at all schools.
- *May 18*, by which date the School Board will have assigned the surplus teachers to the positions available, according to seniority and category.
- *June 1*, by which date the School Board will have informed, in writing, the teachers who will be transferred to other schools.

IS YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL WORKING WELL? HERE ARE A SOME HELPFUL HINTS:

- The Council meets at least once a month.
- The agenda should be set by the chair, in consultation with the school principal, and is to be distributed to the appropriate staff members at least 24 hours before the meeting.
- We recommend that teachers who sit on a School council meet prior to the meeting to discuss the agenda.
- Do not add any items to the agenda during the meeting; plan another meeting to discuss any new matters that arise.
- Don't hesitate to invite guests to meetings if they can provide information that will help you in your decision-making process.
- A copy of the minutes will be distributed to all teaching staff. A copy will also be sent to the School Board and the Union.
- Since no change in school policy can be implemented without a prior consultation on the issue, the School Council must meet whenever changes are proposed.
- A staff meeting is not a consultation. A school council meeting is required.
- The consultation must be held at least seven (7) days before any changes in policy are made.

Michel Gagnon – President