

May 2010

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RTU-SER Newsletter

• WERE OUR PRESSURE TACTICS ILLEGAL?

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The School Board claims that it is illegal to extend recess or lunch by 10 minutes. However, in a decision dating back to 2005, identical pressure tactics (i.e. extending recess by 10 minutes) were used in the French-language system, the **Essential Services Council** ruled against both the **MELS** and the **Quebec Federation of School Boards**, and declared this particular pressure tactic **legal**. If extending recess by 10 minutes did not concern the **Essential Services Council**, why did it ruffle our school board's feathers?

• ACTION PLAN: THE SCHOOL BOARD'S HYSTERICAL REACTION

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Here's what happened:

- **March 24, 2010:** The members at the special general assembly in a secret ballot voted 95% in favour of the action plan.
- The next day, the Union advised the School Board of the 10-minute extension of recesses and lunch breaks: the School Board did not object to the extension of recesses or lunch breaks, provided that students are supervised, as stipulated in our action plan.
- **April 7, 2010:** Day 1 of the action plan: The action was taken as planned, and no incidents were reported. There was no mention by the School Board of disciplinary measures being imposed on teachers.
- **April 13, 2010:** The **School Board did an about-face and went back on its word**, announcing that disciplinary measures would be imposed on any teacher taking part in pressure tactics.
- **April 14, 2010:** Day 2 of the action plan.
- **April 16, 2010:** **150 teachers** received a notice to appear at a **disciplinary meeting**. Since the collective agreement stipulates that a union representative can be present at such meetings, the Union recommended that the president accompany the teachers.
- **April 19, 2010:** All teachers who received a notice to appear asked their school administration to reschedule their meeting to enable the president to attend.
- **April 21, 2010:** Day 3 of the action plan: The Union recommended that elementary school teachers extend recess *in class*, to avoid further disciplinary measures being imposed by the school board, i.e. letters of reprimand and insubordination accusations. None of the schools administrations reported teachers to the School Board.
- **April 23, 2010:** The School Board advised the Union that any teacher failing to attend their disciplinary meeting **would be accused of insubordination**.
- **April 28, 2010:** Last day of the action plan. None of the schools administration reported teachers to the School Board.

The School Board claimed that the so-called "illegality" of the pressure tactics justified its repressive measures. It is interesting to note that, according to the CSQ, none of the 60 school boards in the francophone system saw fit to impose disciplinary measures on their teachers, with a few exceptional cases. Five out of nine school boards in the English-language network systematically imposed disciplinary measures on their teachers. Five of Quebec's 70 school boards applied disciplinary measures, including Riverside School Board.

- **MICHEL LA RUE HOSPITALIZED**

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Human Resources Director Michel La Rue was hospitalized following a stroke on **April 9**. The last word was that he was progressing well and was due to be transferred to a rehabilitation centre. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him back at work soon!

The School Board has appointed Wendy Bernier to oversee Human Resources during Michel's absence.

- **SPONTANEOUS PROTEST AT HERITAGE !**

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A spontaneous protest took place at Heritage on April 26; more than 50 teachers marched in front of the school, waving blue QPAT flags.

- **LETTERS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD**

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Teachers from 2 of our elementary schools sent protest letters to the school board regarding the warning letters campaign.

- **SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

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At the very last minute, the MELS decided to maintain funding for services for special needs students, which will save the jobs of six (6) elementary school teachers and six (6) high school teachers.

- **CREATION OF A SPECIAL CLASS AT ST-MARY'S**

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The School Board decided to create a special class for children with special needs without consulting the Parity Committee on the Organization of Services for Special Needs Students. The Committee was informed of the decision at the April 22nd meeting. The committee's mandate, while clearly spelled out in the Collective Agreement, was not followed by the board. Should we be issuing a letter of warning?...

- **PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE**

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At the April 28 meeting, a motion by the Union to reimburse a teacher's tuition fees (submitted after the deadline) was denied.

- **THE FRAMEWORK**

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MELS Minister Courchesne confirmed it again in the media last week: there will be profound changes to student evaluation procedures in the fall. If you haven't done so yet, please discuss this issue at School Council and request an immediate suspension of all work related to the development of the evaluation framework. If not, you risk having done all that work for nothing, and end up with an obsolete document comes July 1st. Changes include the elimination of half the competencies in the QEP, an overhaul of all evaluation criteria and a permanent hold on Scales of Competencies and cross-curricular competencies evaluation.

- **FUNDRAISER**

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The South Shore University Women's Club is now accepting donations of books for their annual *August* Book Sale fundraiser. Profits provide scholarships for students at the CEGEP and university levels. No condensed Reader's Digest books, National Geographic magazines or pre-2005 school textbooks, please. To make arrangements to donate items, please call *450-672-1050 or 450-672-6327*

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