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RTU-SER Newsletter

• INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS DAY

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October 5, 2008, is International Teachers Day. This year's theme is *Teachers can change lives!*

• DELEGATE WORKSHOPS

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This year, the delegate workshops will be held at **Manoir des Sables in Magog, on October 24 and 25**. On the agenda: powers held by the school council, presence time, school committee on students with learning difficulties. If you are a delegate and would like to attend these workshops, call 450 465-2523 as soon as possible.

• SPECIAL LEAVE DAYS: REALITY CHECK

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Individual schools are now processing requests for special leave days, not the school board. Principals have to deal with this new budget item, with the notion that any deficit in this area will have to be covered by their school's budget. As a result, some principals have told their teachers not to use too many special leave days, because any unspent money might be used to "buy stuff for the school"... At the last **Delegates Council**, it was reported that some teachers were even questioned as to why they had to take time off to go to a medical appointment. **Every teacher is still entitled to 8 special leave days** that can be used when the need arises; that has not changed. The method chosen to administer the special leave days is a separate issue and does not concern teachers. Please call the Union if you need assistance in this area.

• WHEN STUDENTS MAKE ACCUSATIONS...

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Occasionally, a student will accuse a teacher of being physically aggressive. Whether true or not, this kind of accusation can lead to actual assault charges if a report is filed with the police. Fortunately, this doesn't happen often; nonetheless, there are precautions to take if one finds himself or herself in this type of situation:

- **Maintain** a written account of all conflicts (both minor and major) involving students;
- **Record** the date and time of each incident;
- **Inform** the school administration and **the Union** if you are assaulted;
- **Log** any violent assault in the **Work Accident Log**, usually found in the secretarial offices;
- **Immediately notify** the Union if you are accused of assaulting a student.
- If the administration calls you to a meeting regarding such an incident, **make sure you are accompanied** by a Union representative;
- **Keep** all correspondence (memos, letters, etc.) from the

• **IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

• **SPLIT CLASSES**

• **EXCEEDING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS**

• **INTEGRATING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

- administration, parents or students;
- **Get the Union involved** as soon as possible.

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

If you are teaching students who, in your opinion, have specific learning difficulties, inform the school administration. This will trigger the identification process, the first step in obtaining the appropriate support, as needed. Refer to clauses **8-9.04 to 8-9.06** of the collective agreement. The school administration cannot refuse to initiate the process; however, a principal has the right to reject the recommendations of the ad hoc committee to put support in place for a particular child, but also has the obligation to explain why, usually in writing. If you need assistance on this, call us at 450 465-2523.

SPLIT CLASSES

The collective agreement stipulates an injection of **\$1.5 million** (in 2008-2009) to support teachers of combined classes, as in the last 2 years. More information on how these funds will be used is upcoming.

EXCEEDING THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS

The Board can only allow the set maximums to be exceeded when due to: a limited number of classrooms in the school; a small number of classes at the school; a shortage of available qualified staff; or the school's geographic location. The board has until **October 15th** to correct oversize classes without paying compensation.

INTEGRATING STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Before integrating a student with learning difficulties into a "regular class", the school administration must take the following steps, in accordance with the **Board's policy concerning the organization of educational services for students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties**:

- **Gather** information from the parents about the student's needs;
- **Set up** a meeting with the parents, teachers, an expert from the school board and the designated support worker;
- **Determine** which resources are needed to ensure the student's smooth integration;
- **Ensure** the appropriate placement of the student further to consultations with teachers, the expert from the school board and the designated support worker;
- **Develop** an integration plan with the help of the teachers, parents, support worker and expert from the school board.
- **Introduce** the student to the class into which he/she will be integrated.

These steps apply equally for new registrations.

UNION'S SPECIAL FUND FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Further to the recent settlement of a grievance filed in 2003, the school board has made a payment of \$300,000 for use by the union. This payment is compensation for a misinterpretation regarding the support offered to teachers of students with learning difficulties.. The



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• **UPDATE ON
TEXTBOOKS**

money must go toward **adding direct services** to support teachers who have students with difficulties. A committee of teachers is responsible for developing an action plan, which will then be submitted to the union delegates for approval. More to come on this.

UPDATE ON TEXTBOOKS

Better late than never: some English-language textbooks have been made available to our teachers. Here is what's out there right now:

- Provisional textbooks in **Secondary IV Mathematics: Cultural, Social and Technical, and the Science** options. The **Technical and Scientific** options will be available in the fall.
- Textbooks for **Secondary IV History and Citizenship Education** will be available at the beginning of this school year.
- A number of textbooks have been approved for **Geography, History and Citizenship Education** and **Science and Technology** courses for elementary and secondary cycle one.

These textbooks are being made available mainly because of the pressure QPAT has been putting on MELS people. The work is not all done, obviously, but efforts are being made. We'll keep you informed of further developments.

**Michel Gagnon – President
Riverside Teachers' Union**