

April 2009

No. 324



RTU-SER Newsletter

• INCREASE

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Note that, on the 141st work day the school year, i.e. April 2, 2009, our salaries will increase by 2%. Any subsequent increase will be the result of the upcoming negotiation process slated to begin this fall. Stay tuned.

• REPEATING A YEAR

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According to current legislation, a student can repeat a grade, but only in exceptional circumstances and under certain conditions. At the parents' request and providing that there is valid reason to believe that this measure is necessary, the school principal can authorize grade repetition. However, this measure can be applied only once at the elementary level. It is considered an exceptional measure that should only be used when in the student's best interest.

▪ **Education Act, section 96.18**

Exceptionally, in the interest of a student who has not achieved the objectives or mastered the compulsory notional contents of elementary school education at the end of the period fixed by the basic school regulation for mandatory promotion to secondary school and following a request, with reasons, made by the student's parents, the principal may admit the student, as prescribed by regulation of the Minister, to elementary school education for an additional school year, if there are reasonable grounds to believe that such a measure is necessary to foster the student's academic progress.

▪ **Basic School Regulations (Régime pédagogique) section 13.1**

For elementary education, the school principal may, exceptionally, in a student's interest, allow the student to remain for a second year in the same class if it is evident from the student's individualized education plan that such a measure is, among possible measures, a measure more likely to facilitate the student's academic progress. The measure, which may be used only once during elementary education, must not result in the student being promoted to secondary school after more than 6 years of elementary school studies, subject to the power of the principal, at the end of that period, to admit the student to an additional year of elementary school studies in accordance with the Act.

• INSURANCE PREMIUM HOLIDAYS

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The premium holiday from life insurance and long-term disability will begin on the **first pay in May** and run through to the end of August 2009.

• SMALLER CLASS SIZES?

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Education Minister Michelle Courchesne announced her intention to reduce the number of students per class starting next fall. Her action plan stipulates a **20% reduction** for schools in underprivileged areas, up to the Secondary V level. In all other schools, class sizes would **decrease by 10%**. We'll keep you posted.

- SENIORITY LISTS

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The seniority lists were sent to schools in early March and should already be posted in the teachers' lounges. If not, contact your school delegate. These lists also appear on our website (www.rtu-ser.ca) and are updated; however, an access code is required to view them. You can obtain the code either from your delegate or from our office at 450 465-2523.

- CROSS-CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES

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How many should be evaluated? And how often? **At least one** such competency should be evaluated at the end of the first year of a cycle, by a comment. Another one should be evaluated on the competency report (*bilan des apprentissages*), again by a comment. Note that **it is not mandatory to evaluate all cross-curricular competencies**, even on the end-of-cycle competency report. It seems that the legislator didn't think it was that important.

- BUSINESS CULTURE IN SCHOOLS?

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The school board is currently promoting using a school organization model borrowed from the private sector, known as *professional learning communities*. Essentially, it ensures that all members adhere to a shared vision, [or common values] based on measurable achievement objectives. **MELS** has provided training to school board staff, principals have been asked to encourage this management approach in their schools, and teachers are now being solicited to adopt this business model. This new model is being used to define the schools educational projects and success plans.. On the same note, the Liberal government has amended the **Education Act** in order to integrate mechanisms requiring school boards to achieve provincial success rates. The Act also stipulates **partnerships between schools and school boards**, to ensure that schools contribute to achieving these provincial success target rates. **Corrective measures** may be applied to school boards and schools that fail to meet the set rates. One wonders, what is the point to integrate into our schools an approach that has lead to such a dismal failure in the business sector. We encourage you to open the discussion with your school administration because the choice of the work model is a school decision

- WANTED: SCHOOL COUNCIL MINUTES!

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Please send us the **minutes of your School Council meetings**. We are looking forward to reading them, because it allows us to offer better support to our teachers. Thank you!

- KINDERGARTEN REPORT CARDS

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A small team of teachers collaborated with the Board to update the new Kindergarten Report Card. This new reporting tool will be presented to all Kindergarten teachers on May 26th.

Michel Gagnon – President