

RTU Newsletter

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- ◇ *Protection and advancement of the professional, social, and economic welfare of its members.*
- ◇ *Promotion of research and innovation in the field of education.*

REMINDER: LEAVES OF ABSENCES

March 1 is the deadline to request unpaid leave or deferred salary leave for next year. Please use the appropriate form from the Portal or visit our website at www.rtu-ser.ca/news

ABSENCES AND REJECTED CODES

We have been receiving an increasing number of calls and comments from teachers whose absence codes were rejected. The situation is causing frustration and dampening enthusiasm among teachers, many of whom have had been docked for being 20 minutes late because their car broke down or they were stuck in a traffic jam, even though these same teachers sometimes stay late for a school play, hockey tournament, etc. The School Board is surely saving some money by taking such measures, but at the cost of the staff's good will. This is the message we are constantly trying to convey to the Board.

ELECTRONIC PAY STUBS

At a meeting in mid-January, the School Board informed us of its intention to consider replacing paper pay stubs with an electronic version. We were told that teachers wishing to try out the new format will be able to do so starting in March (until the end of the school year). An e-mail will be sent to teachers to announce the implementation of the new system, and a link will be provided in order to view (and print) the new pay stub. Your employee number and password (to be issued by the Board) will be required to access your stub. We expressed our concerns regarding the security of the confidential information involved and the reliability of the information system. A decision on the fate of the new system will be made in June, based on the employee's feedback.

FUNDING OF THE REFORM

Quebec school boards receive funding from the MELS to help cover the cost of training teachers on the educational reform. According to the Ministry's **budgetary rules**, these funds cannot be used to hire staff at the school board's administrative office; however, half of Riverside's funding is used to do exactly that—hire office staff. We have raised this issue with the Board executive on several occasions, because we believe that all of the funds should be used for teacher training. The issue has not yet been resolved, but we will keep bringing that message to the Board.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The new \$410,000 allocation was distributed to schools in December, and the new positions have been posted. According to the School Board, the hiring process is well underway, and all positions will soon be filled.

Reminder: The school committees must analyze their needs for next year and inform the Parity Committee of those needs by **April 1, 2008**. A sub-committee is currently drafting a form to be used in the analysis, which will be sent to all school committees in **February**

SCHOOL CALENDARS

Consultations are ongoing to establish the school calendars for the next two years (2008-2009 and 2009-2010), and will continue until February 8, 2008. Address any comments/suggestions to your union delegate.

THE STRATEGIC PLAN IS BACK

At a meeting on January 22, the school commissioners adopted a resolution to resurrect the **Steering Committee on Strategic Planning**. The Strategic Plan contains the School Board's main guidelines for the coming years, and some initiatives may affect teachers' daily practice. We attend all meetings of the Council of Commissioners and will monitor any changes regarding this issue.

AFTER-SCHOOL MEETINGS

According to the collective agreement, the school administration or school board representative can call teachers to **a maximum of 10 group meetings per year** outside the 27 hours of presence. These meetings are held once the students have left for the day and last no longer than 90 minutes. The administration may also call a meeting inside the 27 hours of presence.

CHANGES TO THE PENSION PLAN (RREGOP AND TPP)

Starting January 1st, 2008 retired teachers can go back to teaching without any time restriction or penalties.

AXA GROUP INSURANCE

At the January 23rd assembly, the delegates voted on a resolution to accept AXA as the group insurer for Home and Auto insurance. AXA undertakes to offer insurance to RTU members at the best possible market rates. We encourage our members to compare AXA's rates under the group plan with other insurers. There is no obligation on the part of our members. Watch for further information.

Michel Gagnon

President