

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.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Frank White, Anne St-Pierre and I would like to wish you all the very best for 2008!

CONTRIBUTIONS AND DEDUCTIONS IN 2008

Now that the New Year has begun, the deductions will start again. For those of you whose contributions (**EI** and **RRQ**) reached their maximums in 2007, the School Board had stopped making these deductions; therefore, your net pay was somewhat higher. Note that **RREGOP** contributions have increased from 7.06% to 8.19%; however, our salary will be raised (2%) on the 141st day of work, i.e. around April 3, 2008.

GROUP INSURANCE

Industrielle-Alliance is increasing its health insurance premiums by 5% in 2008 (long-term salary insurance remains unchanged). Those of you who opted for basic life insurance should note that your premiums will decrease by 10%. **QPAT** has sent a summary document to all schools. Contact us if you have not yet received a copy.

ARE YOU TEACHING A SPLIT CLASS?

The School Board has received \$19,045 for use by teachers of split classes. The professional Improvement Committee is mandated to oversee the allocation of this money. An information letter will soon be sent out, asking you to submit a proposal for the purchase of material, for release time to create educational material or to attend teachers' meetings. Note that **Appendix XXI** of the collective agreement stipulates \$1.25M to support teachers with this type of class. In 2008-2009, this amount will increase to \$1.5M.

CONDITIONAL PEDAGOGICAL DAYS

The Board has decided to use two conditional pedagogical days (**April 29** and **May 16**) to make up the two days of classes cancelled due to the snowstorms in December.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING: SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The Parity Committee on Special Education distributed the \$410,000 received in November; all schools received increased funding from the School Board. The resources were distributed according to the requests made by schools in June 2007 that had not yet been fulfilled, and to new needs. **Important reminder:** It's the **School Committee on Special Education** that decides how these new funds are distributed. Please note that this additional funding is not recurrent (unless otherwise advised).

INFORMATION SESSION FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRS

There will be an information session for the Chairs of school committees on special Education, on **Tuesday, January 15, 3-5 p.m.** The following topics will be on the agenda: the 2007-2008 budget, the

role of the school committee, the policy on integration, identifying special needs students, the role of the Board's primary professionals. Release time will be offered in order to attend the session.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE WITHOUT SALARY AND SABBATICAL LEAVES WITH DEFERRED SALARY

Requests for those leaves of absences must be forwarded to Human Resources before **March 1**. You must now use the official form to make your request: this form is downloadable from the RSB's portal.

DID YOU HAVE A STUDENT TEACHER?

Delegates have been informed of the amount credited to their schools for teachers who oversaw student teachers. The **School Council** must **approve** any decision regarding the use of these funds. School administrations cannot unilaterally deny a request to use these funds.

ABSENCES

The School Board has adopted a stricter, less tolerant policy on absences. Many of our members have called us to know why their absence forms, signed by the school administration, were rejected by the School Board weeks, or even months, later. All forms are scrutinized to ensure the reason for the absence falls under one of the categories of special leaves we are entitled to. Reasons that fall within a "grey zone" are rejected, and the Board then changes the absence code to that of time off without pay. This approach has caused much frustration, and we have addressed the issue with Human Resources on several occasions on which we intervened on behalf of members. Everyone agrees that absences must be managed effectively, and, a few years ago, the Union informed teachers about the costs associated with high rates of absenteeism. We will continue to bring these issues to the Board.

PREVENTATIVE LEAVES

The school board is now looking to reassign pregnant teachers on preventative leaves; this is a drastic change in their attitude towards teachers. So, if you are pregnant and have a medical note saying you have to be removed from class for a particular reason, the board will then try to reassign you to another position, even possibly to a different school. Let us know if this happens to you.

Michel Gagnon
President