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## Press release

**“We’re worth more than candy”**

### **CSQ school network’s federations and QPAT table their sectoral demands**

Québec, October 31, 2022. – With the upcoming start of a new negotiation round in the public sector, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) school network federations, that is, the Fédération des syndicats de l’enseignement (FSE-CSQ), the Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ) and the Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l’éducation du Québec (FPPE-CSQ), as well as QPAT, the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers, took advantage today, on Halloween, of the tabling of their sectoral demands to send a message to the management negotiating committees and to the government: “We’re worth more than candy.”

Early this morning, multiple union representatives held a demonstration in front of the school service centres’ and school boards’ management negotiating committees’ offices, located on René-Lévesque Boulevard, where they held a guard of honour for their negotiation spokespeople.

The activists then walked to the National Assembly where the President of the FSE-CSQ, Josée Scalabrini, the President of the FPSS-CSQ, Éric Pronovost, and the President of the FPPE-CSQ, Jacques Landry, as well as the President of QPAT, Heidi Yetman, made speeches.

#### **Teaching conditions to improve**

The FSE-CSQ and QPAT will once again negotiate as a cartel. Essentially, teachers that they represent feel that, to better support students’ education success, the government needs to improve teaching conditions by using three concrete measures:

- Review class composition;
- Lighten their load;
- Adjust groups’ size.

These demands will indeed be at the heart of the negotiations for teaching personnel, as explained the President of the FSE-CSQ, Josée Scalabrini: “I invite the government to take advantage of

Halloween to remove their masks! If education really is the priority of priorities, it must make concrete gestures to promote students' success and end the shortage! Teachers are overwhelmed by all kinds of tasks that turn them away from their primary mission. What they want is for teaching conditions to improve. They won't be bought by candies." Heidi Yetman, the President of QPAT, concurred: "To attract and retain teachers, we need to address working conditions and class composition. Québec's teachers still earn less than the average salary of their Canadian counterparts. When the government invests in teachers, it invests in students and in society's enrichment."

### **Improve support staff's job quality**

On the school support staff's side, the staff shortage issue represents a major challenge for the FPSS-CSQ members. The Federation thus intends to demand very precise measures that will have the effect of improving personnel attraction and retention, including:

- Full-time positions;
- The end of broken schedules;
- Recognition of the value of all school support jobs;
- Family-work balance.

The President of the FPSS-CSQ, Éric Pronovost, said that "we mustn't disguise the working conditions so they seem better, we need true concrete gestures so that they are. We won't let ourselves be fooled by a smokescreen, the magic will operate when support staff is fully recognized. We must resolve those issues, and it comes down to negotiation."

### **Retain and attract professionals alongside students**

On the professionals' side, the President of the FPPE-CSQ, Jacques Landry, explained that "currently, close to 500 professional positions are unfilled, which means about 500 ghosts in school service centres. The network increased its use of private professional services, extremely costly and disconnected from the school environment reality, to compensate for this shortage. Yet, it's documented that public services are the most efficient professional services, offered close to the student, in their environment, and in collaboration with their teacher, the other workers and their parents."

The FPPE-CSQ thus tabled today demands aiming to:

- give a global remuneration adapted to professional specificities;
- agree on measures to make working conditions attractive;
- protect the mental and physical health of professionals;
- protect and recognize the value of public professional expertise.

### **CSQ profile**

The CSQ represents close to 215,000 members, including some 125,000 education employees. The CSQ has 11 federations that unite some 240 affiliate unions and is affiliated with the AREQ (CSQ), the Association des retraitées et retraités de l'éducation et des autres services publics du Québec. The CSQ is also present in the health and social services, daycare services, municipal, leisure, recreational, community and communications sectors.

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