



I N F O - N E G O

Association provinciale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec

Intersectorial

Discussions in most recent meetings have been about pensions (RREGOP). The government is attempting to explain the rationale behind its demands. Essentially, they are trying to argue that they are not looking to generate savings by reducing benefits to RREGOP participants and that their proposals will not negatively impact people; these arguments are completely illogical. It is important to fully understand that these changes will have a significant impact on all of us. Since retirement is usually the end of a career, and the pension associated with it is the main source of income from then on, it is vital that you pay special attention to this topic whether you are a few years from retirement, in mid-career or at the very beginning of your career. Our position at the negotiating table is the status quo. With the pension plan's own facts to support our position, we can easily show that the RREGOP is financially sound, and that the arguments presented by the government are groundless. This is what our negotiators repeatedly say to the management side.

For us, the pension issue is very important. For this reason, in the weeks to come, QPAT will be presenting information sessions at a delegates' meeting held by your union on what is at stake. The information will prepare your delegates to communicate important information to you. Again, no matter what your age, it is important that you take the time to fully understand these stakes. The potential impact on the timing and the amount of the pension is huge.

On another topic, we have a clause in our collective agreement which stipulates that a maximum salary increase of 1% will be accorded on March 31, 2015, if salary increases during the life of the 2010-2015 agreement were less than the growth of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Obviously, we are entitled to an increase because the rise in the CPI from April 2010 to December 2014 has been 8.3%, while the salary increases have totalled 6.5%. According to a letter we have received from MELS, **salary scales and premiums will be increased by 1% starting on March 31, 2015.**

Sectorial

Since our last bulletin, both sides have continued to present their opinions. Just as with all the subjects already presented, the management side is only able to explain what it sees as problems. Solutions are still to come . . .

However, we have received a clarification which is important to note: all the appendices with a fixed termination date, generally for the end of the 2014-2015 school year, will be renewed for the 2015-2016 school year. This means that for the organization of the next school year, funding and services for students with special needs remain in place. With school boards immersed in planning for the next year, they need to know what rules will apply. This is the only reason for this management clarification. Their position wanting the disappearance of these appendices remains a subject for ensuing negotiations.

During the week of March 8, the presentation of both sides' positions was completed. The major subjects that were addressed were: workload, students with special needs, vocational education and adult education.

Subsequently, to the extent that the management side can give us details about its demands, we will be in a position to discuss each subject on its merits. We hope to begin this phase by the end of March.

February's Mobilization Actions

By now, everyone is aware that Minister Bolduc has left politics. His replacement, François Blais, is a relative newcomer to politics. Minister Blais has a fairly extensive background in the social sciences at the *Université Laval*. We hope that he will be more interested in supporting public education and will not just be focused on managing an austerity-driven budget.

Our mobilization actions to date, though limited in scope, have been successful. Our actions have given us the desired visibility without any negative effect on the general public whom we hope to have on our side throughout these negotiations.

QPAT continues working in cartel with the *Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement* (FSE), and the other Common Front partners. Recently, we were joined by the *Fédération autonome de l'enseignement* (FAE) in Blainville where we confronted former Minister Bolduc and asked him questions about the various aspects of management's demands.

Presidents from QPAT locals attended a *Refusons l'austerité* forum in Quebec City that brought together many public and private sector unions and citizen groups dedicated to fighting against Couillard's austerity package.

QPAT has been in the media on numerous occasions in the past month and each time we were able to get our message out that the government's demands are unacceptable to teachers.

We invite you to visit the negotiations section on our website at www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca for more photos and links to past media events. While you are there, "friend" us on the QPAT Facebook page. If you have pictures of teachers and actions that you would like us to share, send them to julie_montpetit@qpat-apeq.qc.ca.

Some recent actions that we have taken part in are:

February 12: *Refusons l'austerité* forum and demonstration in Quebec City

February 16: QPAT welcoming committee for Minister Bolduc in Blainville

February 18: CSQ early morning demonstration in front of Treasury Board in Quebec City

February 20: Flash Mob with FSE, CSQ, CSN and FAE in atrium of Place Desjardins

Action 1: Petition in Support of Quality Public Education

This petition was a great success! In a period of just a few weeks, over 50,000 signatures were gathered. Teachers and concerned citizens who chose to sign the petition showed their support by denouncing the potential changes in the education system made in the government offer, including the cutting of services to special needs students and not respecting maximum class sizes.

Action 2: Keeping Track of My Workload

This action took place from February 9-22 inclusively, and was also a great success. Here teachers recorded all work done outside of their workload. The idea was to document what teachers already do in their day. Every local has tallied its own information and is asked to present it in March at a school board meeting, ideally one where the professional autonomy of teachers is being discussed.

Action 3: Shock Actions

For the month of March, local unions will be encouraged to organize "shock" actions. "Shock" actions can be described as visible, fast and easy to set up and take down. You will receive information about them very shortly from your local union.

It is through the hard work of the union leaders and the strong participation of our members that we are able to move forward and support our negotiators in their work. Thank you for continuing to be united in our actions.

We must not let the government and school board management dismantle our world-class public education system and our collective agreement that so many teachers worked so hard to build.