

LA PASSERELLE

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Feminists until things change!



Johanne Pomerleau,
FPPE(CSQ) President

Feminist until things change: the 2018 theme for International Women's Day. This theme made me smile.

As a matter of fact, I dream of the day when we will no longer need groups to defend equality between men and women.

I dream of the day when it will be so normal, so obvious, that no one will see the relevance of advocating for equality, the day when women will have access to influential positions and assume those roles in their own way.

I dream of the day when women will no longer be war trophies, where they will be able to walk in the street at night without risk, where they will be as safe as their brothers, their husbands, their friends, and where they will no longer be victims of sexism. Unfortunately, I have to keep dreaming because despite unquestionable progress, we are still far from this reality. With the multiple forms of violence women face - including indigenous women - the sexual violence revealed by the #metoo movement, the systemic discrimination in employment that persists for all women - in particular for racialized or women with a disability - and the myth of already-reached equality, we can only note that the barriers erected before women are perpetuated. To this must be added the impact of austerity

measures, including cuts in public services and the privatization of educational childcare services, whose impact is clearly greater for women. The feminist movement must therefore continue to fight to eradicate these barriers that impede women's advancement.

Today, March 8, 2018, an issue that affects a large number of professionals, and especially female professionals, cannot go unmentioned: [Pay equity](#). As you all know, in 2010 the government assessed salaries and concluded that none of our job classes had undergone change that was significant enough to justify a modification in classification. As the trade union organizations did not agree with this conclusion, they, along with the FPPE and its unions, filed complaints in spring 2011. Our goal was to show the Treasury Board (Le Conseil du trésor) that considerable changes had in fact occurred and that they had to take them into consideration. We are now in March 2018, and the situation still has not been settled. After months of conciliation that ended in stalemate, and after many efforts undertaken in particular by the CSQ to resume the discussions and resort to an investigation to avoid starting from scratch, nothing has been done by the Treasury Board. While we thought we had no other choice than starting from scratch by investigating, we now find out, after several months of inertia, that the government has just agreed to meet with all the unions to reach a settlement by the end of March. This is great news, hoping that this time will be the right one!

feminists
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International
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As the provincial elections approach, the fine speeches reaffirming that equality between men and women is a fundamental value do not eliminate the economic and social inequalities that women face. It is high time for the government to take action to resolve this long-running issue, depriving many women of real pay equity. On our side, we will not give up!

I am and I will remain a feminist... and unionist until things change!

Happy International Women's Day!

Johanne Pomerleau,
FPPE(CSQ) President



Validation : Disappointment

Last November, [a special issue](#) of the Passerelle informed you of changes the Ministère had made in the validation process. It read: « the Ministère made it clear to us that these changes were intended to reduce the administrative burden on professionals and to provide speedier funding to school boards. We expressed our satisfaction with the near elimination of the validation process. » We informed you that this was a transition year and that it was important to keep your union informed of the impact of these changes in your community.

Thanks to information received from a member, we learned, to our great surprise, that the Direction de l'adaptation scolaire et des services éducatifs complémentaires (DASSEK) had asked that, for this year, the school boards complete all files as was done in previous years, and that is, for the end of June! After verifying with the DASSEK and the Deputy Minister this information, we found out that the exact message was the following: "In addition, for student H or TGC files that will not be verified or validated for school boards choosing this option, you will have the period until the end of June to complete the documentation to support this clientele."

I said that there is an important difference for the professional between « making sure they have all the elements justifying that an identified student meets the criteria of the MEES » (a task that professionals must do to identify a student, whether validated or not) and « complete the records as done in past years » (which requires additional reporting and much more details). The message they sent is open to interpretation. The director took note and assured us that this directive concerns only the transition year, 2017-2018. He hopes that being able to finalize these files by June, rather than in the usual time frame, will take some pressure off the shoulders of the professionals involved. I made him aware, as well as the Deputy Minister, of my doubts about this subject and also of our unpleasant impression that the Ministry has publicly shunned a false decrease in the administrative tasks of professionals, if their intention is only to deconcentrate the work required by validation.



We will be consulted on the course of events. Rest assured that we will be present when obtaining a real relief for the professionals we represent.

Johanne Pomerleau,
FPPE(CSQ) President

International Women's day

Born out of the socialist and Soviet movements, it was not until 1977 that the UN formalized this day, thereby inviting countries to celebrate women's rights and more equality.

But what about the origins of feminism? The adjective feminist was coined in 1872 by Alexandre Dumas (son), the well-known author of L'homme-femme in which he mentions twice feminists who defend the equality of men and women. At this time, feminism is also applied to men and raises the issue of the loss of virility among them.

From its origin to the latest worldwide movements (#MeToo#Moiaussi), feminism has been moving from one claim to another (women's suffrage, gender equality in the workplace, in politics, and in religion) and has broken down into several branches based on the realities and demands of the women involved. The word feminism, which declined in popularity in the early 2000s, regained momentum in 2017 when it was nominated "Word of the Year" by Merriam-Webster, an American dictionary, due to the verbal attacks of their president and the flood of sexual assault accusations.

The year 2017 ended with the nomination of #MeToo's initiators as personalities of the year by the Time Magazine, and the New Year started off with the presentation of four women who embody power and success.

Let us hope today that visibility given to feminism is not simply the flavour of the day and that this word will be forgotten one day because it will no longer be needed.

Mireille Laroche, AVSEC
FPPE(CSQ) Member of the Committee of the status of women
Member of SPP Lac ST-Jean Pays des Bleuets, Baie-James

Union Involvement in a Changing School Environment

Transformations in the labour market have led to significant changes in work organization for workers in all industries, including professional staff in school communities.

In a context where the State's role is questioned, people who work in public services experience the daily impacts of underfunding and of the State's disengagement. The State's political choices directly influence work. Management approaches from the private sector have made their way into our schools and impose a vision of clientelism as well as principles of flexibility, efficiency, and effectiveness. Results-based management and increased accountability are now part of the discourse, as are the principles of decentralized budgets. The State's progressive disengagement also leads to greater outsourcing of certain mandates and the development of partnerships with the private and community sectors in order to move toward outsourcing and even privatization.

This situation creates more precariousness and makes several people feel that they do not master their job. There is strong pressure on the staff to provide quality services, but without the necessary resources. And each individual carries this weight, as collective action is undervalued.

Precariousness takes on new forms. What are the impacts for professional staff working for school boards? How can we act collectively?

In the context where everything is individualized, do we see new barriers to union involvement? If so, how can they be overcome? Do women experience this differently? Should we revise the conditions to promote work-family-activism conciliation by further taking into account members' need for professional achievement?

Here are some of the questions that will be discussed during the FPPE's Réseau de la Condition des femmes to be held in the city of Québec on April 4, 2018. An invitation for the Réseau will soon be sent to those who those involved in the issue of women's status.

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Women, Overload, and Exhaustion

Nurses can't take mandatory overtime (MOT) any more. All health and social services staff denounce overload and exhaustion. Minister Barrette has never been so unpopular. Following a reform that has been criticized from all sides, the health network seems on the brink of collapse.

And what about professionals of the education sector? Here too, the consequences of years of austerity measures are taking its toll. Decentralization of budgets toward schools tends to weaken the organization and work groups. Sporadic resource additions do not provide stability. The lack of services for students with difficulties is often a headline issue, but little is said about the suffering experienced by professional staff.

What about the consequences of a task divided among five institutions, the frustration of not being able to provide sufficient follow-up after assessing a student, or the feeling of guilt that leads to hours of unpaid overtime?

If, for a minority—which is unfortunately growing—these issues result in diagnosed psychological health problems, a majority feels breathless and is always on the verge of exhaustion. It is a problem that concerns us all. It is a collective issue.

Moreover, this is a situation most heavily experienced by women. In both the health and education sectors, women represent a significant majority. These are workplaces where *caring*—the commitment to take care of others selflessly—is at the centre of all efforts. It is documented that jobs with high psychological demands are associated with a higher level of psychological distress in women ([Institut de la statistique du Québec](#)). In addition, women are prescribed almost twice as many psychotropic drugs as men

([Conseil du médicament](#)).

It is not women's "nature" that makes them prone to burnout. According to the World Health Organization, it is the multiple roles women play and the variety of responsibilities they assume that expose them to more mental health problems. ([Le journal des psychologues](#)). Women bear more of the mental burden of the family. Even today, women spend more time than men on unpaid tasks, including domestic chores and caring for family members, whether or not they live in the household. In this regard, a [study](#) by IRIS is very enlightening. While work-



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life balance is an important issue for both men and women, it should not be denied that the double task affects women more severely, especially when they work in demanding environments such as those of the education and health sectors.

Nurses are asking for ratios. What about education professionals? Such findings should lead us to reflect and together find solutions for the education community.

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