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LA PASSERELLE NÉGO

A word from the President

The new bargaining period is underway and we have passed the stage of employer deposits for each of our agreements.

I want to draw your attention to a new stakeholder at our tables...

Since 2020, the Treasury Board has gained more control, through a bill, to oversee all collective agreements for all organizations in the Quebec public system. You will also notice that the employer signatures in each of the new agreements are new. Under the usual signature of the Minister of Education, we now find that of Sonia Lebel, Minister of the Treasury Board.

Another new feature is that there will now be a Treasury Board representative at the French sectoral table. This suggests that there will be a great deal of coordination on the amounts of money allocated on the employer side. It is conceivable that there will be a great deal of analysis of every dollar spent.

In 2020, the sectoral tables were given a set amount of money to negotiate. For our part, we had often publicly stated that the offer was \$1 million for 10,000 professionals, or \$100 per professional. In 2023, there is no publicly established amount. But make no mistake, to get every one of our wins, we will have to be determined.

You have seen the wage offers made to the Common Front that are out of touch with reality and inflation. Unfortunately, the employer's proposals at the sectoral level are likely to be in the same mould.

However, with more than 500 vacancies and the need for a huge increase in workload, we are far from giving up. The fight is on and we are determined to lead it. We must significantly improve our working conditions. The future of public professional services offered to the population depends on it.

We will need everyone's determination, solidarity and mobilization!

Jacques Landry,
President, FPPE(CSQ)

Different Words, Same Tune



Negotiating Team

The patronal deposits at the Francophone, Anglophone, Cree and Kativik tables all took place a few days before the holiday break. They were certainly subject to a great deal of coordination, since, despite certain rare particularities, we must admit that the contents are similar when they are not simply the same.

In the preamble, each repository mentions the following 3 main objectives:

- to deal with the scarcity of labour;
- to provide for a flexible organization of work adapted to the needs of the community to promote the educational success of all students;
- to adapt the Agreement to the new work realities.

While returning to the elements of the presentations at the four negotiating tables, we will take advantage of these lines to return to certain aspects of our own demands. As you can see, we do not use the same means to achieve objectives that may sometimes seem common to us.

Let's take the example where each management team claims to want *"to obtain recognition by the national parties of the need to promote a positive image of the school network and to value the jobs of professional staff in education"*. This is the complete opposite of our Common Front's demand for whistleblower protection in our collective agreements.

The various employer texts have been drafted in a very broad manner, without targeting specific clauses. This approach would eventually allow for the introduction of certain provisions that we would not want to see in our agreements, in addition to being a strategy for modulating demands during negotiations. In this sense, our motivation to remain vigilant is only heightened.

This does not prevent us from seeing more clearly stated demands, such as an *"update of the provisions dealing with the reasons for work absences in order to agree on innovative solutions in line with the needs of the workplace"*. We note a significant desire for recovery on the reasons for absence and on disability. Indeed, there are too many absences in the network and the employer would like

to intervene on this aspect. This desire worries us enormously, especially since our own demands include faster access to a fifth week of vacation, and even a sixth. Not to mention our desire to obtain greater flexibility in our work schedule.

The employer also wishes to *"review the provisions of the Agreement that are no longer current or that lead to inequities"*. Our collective agreements are causing inequities and the employer, as a good vigilante, wants to put an end to them. This kind of magnanimity is enough to make the union side stunned!

When the employer says that *they want to adapt the Agreement to the new realities of the workplace*, arguing that our collective agreements are a product of the union's past and should be updated, it is not reassuring. We hear about streamlining processes, such as workforce planning and hiring. It makes you wonder which section of our collective agreements could be dropped and how this could improve student success.

As for the particularities mentioned at the beginning of the text, *at the Anglophone table, the declining school population and the particularities of Anglophones in relation to the professional orders were discussed as contextual elements.*

At the Cree and Kativik tables, the management party seems to have been content to add the words "Aboriginal" and "Northern" to the applications filed at the P1 and P2 tables. The P3 and P4 filings recognize that these school boards have specificities, but without naming them. The only solution identified is a desire to "broaden the recruitment pool of qualified workers" in order to increase the attraction and retention of professional staff.

In fact, the texts submitted to the respective tables are so similar that they give the impression of having been drafted in a "top-down" logic. An order from the government, repeated at each table, without taking into account the specific characteristics of each one. With their demands, which would be intended to "deal with the scarcity of labour", the employer never ceases to amaze us by its creativity in recomposing the same songs. We have proposed more than forty solutions to attract and retain professionals in the workplace, and the management party has not included any of them in their submission. For management, retention means restraint at work, by prohibiting absences. We can't help but notice that we are in a more *"restraint-repulsion"* context.

These filings may sound like the same old tune, but they are still the beginning of the bargaining game. In the weeks to come, at all four bargaining tables, we will have the opportunity to spell out our demands and hear the employer parties back up theirs. Stay tuned - we'll be sure to get back to you on this.

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To consult the analysis of the tabling of the inter-sectoral employer demands, as tabled with the Common Front representatives on December 15, 2022, click here:
<https://www.frontcommun.org/info-nego-reaction-aux-offres>