

# LA PASSERELLE NÉGO

## Message from the president

We always hope to have negotiations meet our aspirations with an understanding and generous employer. Unfortunately, the government (Conseil du trésor) does not check any boxes, it is a bad employer indeed. The latter states that it values the importance of public services, yet in reality, it shows very little consideration.

In fact, the CAQ government recently chose to lower taxes. This does not bode well for all its employees, especially for us who historically serve as a flexible component for SSCs.

It is known that the salary offers, proposed to the entire public service, are 9% for 5 years. However, inflation for 2022 alone was nearly 7%. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, more than 2000 members of the Front commun rallied in Quebec City to demonstrate their solidarity and determination "WITH ONE VOICE."

**Mobilization will be necessary and essential for a respectful and satisfactory agreement.**

I don't have to explain at length the problem of attracting and retaining professional staff. This is true at all levels for those who work directly in the following services: student, teaching and administrative.

**Our current priorities at the FPPE include wages, vacations and obtaining a minimum service threshold.**



Unfortunately, the sectoral offers presented are distressing and give rise to indignation. The government does not seem to understand the sense of urgency.

Like the Quebec Ombudsman, we are convinced that the best intervention is the one offered in the student's environment. In order to achieve this and to obtain sufficient qualified resources, working conditions must be incentive-based.

Nevertheless, with its amended offer, the government does not offer anything very attractive; on the contrary, its aim is to constrain us.

Let's not kid ourselves, if we are to make gains, we will have to stand together. Autumn is likely to get very heated.

Jacques Landry,  
President, FPPE(CSQ)

# Latest Developments at the Bargaining Tables

Since our last communication in January, we have seen a slow start to the sectoral negotiations. We began the presentation and detailed argumentation of our demands at a rate of one meeting every two weeks respectively at the Francophone (P1) and Anglophone (P2) tables. We noted that the discussions were sustained and serious. However, no progress on our requests was observed. At the end of March, the employer side informed all sectoral tables that it would be tabling a new, improved employer offer.

## THE FRENCH AND ENGLISH OFFERS

We received the French and English offers on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The employer side introduced its offers by indicating that it wanted to achieve a short-term settlement by June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

While the employer side had high hopes for this process, it must be noted that it did not deliver proposals that were commensurated with the challenges faced by professionals in the workplace.

In fact, little or no progress has been made on our demands, and the ones for significant recoveries on working conditions are required.

In the French offer, we saw progress on one of our demands, that is to say **the addition of a further remuneration of 2% for the professionals supervising probationary teachers**, but the means remain to be specified.

The employer also agreed to **increase the professional development budget by \$100 per full-time employee**. However, this increase (which was not included in our demands) comes with a significant trade-off. The employer is asking for a minimum annual continuing education requirement for all members and wants to make it a condition of continued employment.

Finally, the employer side proposes **an amount for school-to-work transition**, but specifies that these amounts will be paid to the school service centres and school boards, which will be able to use them as they wish. It is difficult to see this proposal as an improvement in the working conditions of professionals!

These are the only solutions that the employer side is proposing to deal with the many vacancies in schools. Of the fifty or so concrete solutions we brought to the table, the employer side has retained only one.

And that's not all, **since there are many recovery requests**. We find more than fifteen employer demands, some of which increase precariousness (increase in the duration of supernumerary work), others which affect salary insurance, or which penalize professionals who do not work full-time. As such, the employer is proposing to delay the salary progression of all professionals who work less than 35 hours per week.

On the Anglophone side, the employer is also asking to **abolish the 50 km limit for assigning professionals** and for the obligation to accept a position under the job security process. In concrete terms, the employer wants to be able to **assign English school board professionals anywhere in the territory of the school board**, which can mean more than 500 km away in some cases. It is not only unacceptable, but also insulting to the workers to receive such a proposal at the table.

You can understand that this offer was received with great disappointment from the union side, since we see that we are very far from an agreement. Obviously, we are not going to share the same objectives as the employer side. We want to **make positions attractive**, fill vacancies and address staff shortages, for example by increasing remuneration. We also want to improve the working conditions of the professionals who work in the school system, so that they stay in their jobs. To do this, we want **flexibility in the organization of work** (telecommuting, flexitime), **faster access to additional vacation time and protecting the workers' physical and mental health**. We also want to protect public professional services, for example by acting on outsourcing. These objectives are not shared by the employer side, who is turning a deaf ear at the bargaining table.

## LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AT THE BARGAINING TABLES (CONT.)

In addition, since those April 5<sup>th</sup> offers, the employer has been insisting that we already withdraw union demands, even though we have not completed our submissions. We have insisted on maintaining meetings, but the employer only agrees to listen to us, makes no progress on our demands and does not agree to negotiate with us. At the last meeting on April 26, we also learned that not all demands for paid time off could be negotiated with us.

We hope for a change in the employer's position. We are ready to negotiate and intensify meetings, but we must feel a real willingness on the part of school service centres, school boards and the ministère de l'Éducation to value and recognize professional jobs in the school sector. The survival of the public professional services model we know is at stake.

# Northern Bargaining Tables

**As with the Francophone and Anglophone bargaining tables, the pace of negotiations at the Cree and Kativik tables has been slow since the return to school in January.**

At both tables, the employer side presented attraction and retention issues regarding the problems and realities specific to each territory. We took the opportunity to point out that our union proposal contained many potential solutions to attract and retain professionals and that we were eager to discuss this topic.

On April 18, the Kativik School Board presented its "detailed" employer proposal. This includes essentially the same requests for employer recovery as at the Francophone and Anglophone tables, but also includes a specific request related to criminal records. The school board wishes to add an obligation for professionals to inform their employer of any change in their criminal record to the collective agreement. We have asked management several questions regarding this detailed proposal and the answers should be forthcoming in the next few meetings.

Note that the Cree School Board has not yet informed us of its intention to proceed with a detailed management offer, which has been the case at all the other bargaining tables.

Despite this situation, in the coming weeks, we will begin presenting all our proposals that aim to improve the employment conditions of the professionals working in the Cree and Kativik school boards.

