

LA PASSERELLE NÉGO

Message from the président

The demands of the unions have been known since October, and the demands of the employers since December. Negotiations have been underway for nearly six months now.

As always, these negotiations take place on two fronts:

Central bargaining table: wages, retirement, parental rights and regional disparity

FPPE Sectoral table: for all other items

Let's start with the first: with the **Front commun** (CSQ, CSN, FTQ and APTS), we're heading for a major confrontation, barring an unexpected turn of events. In terms of wages, we're being offered 9% over five years, which doesn't even cover the increase in the cost of living. It's a far cry from the catch-up we're calling for. There's nothing wrong with refusing to be impoverished and demanding at least an increase aligned with inflation. One thing is for sure: the government is infinitely less generous with its employees than with its MPs.

That's not all: **in terms of pensions***, the government is also being greedy (even though our pension fund is capitalized at nearly 115%). At the table, it demanded that each contributed year count for only 1.4% in the cumulative calculation of benefits, instead of the current 2%. Still on the subject of retirement, the government also wants to reduce the minimum retirement age to 57. It's important to understand that with this proposal, anyone who retires before the age of 65 will be penalized to a greater or lesser extent than under the current regulations.

By offering a less generous pension plan, it hopes to keep as many public service workers as possible working until the age of 65. This strategy is shameful, especially after years of abandoning public services (austerity). We're outraged and strongly condemn these measures, which seek quite simply to keep public service workers captive.



JACQUES LANDRY, PRESIDENT

Regarding the **FPPE negotiations**, the employer side informed us of the extent of its openness or reluctance to all our demands. It comes as no surprise that their response fell far short of our expectations. **Our top priority is to see improvements in compensation for all positions, along with better working conditions** (including flexible working hours, teleworking, vacations, paid days off, and service thresholds). Once again, the government offered very little when it came to its priorities and ignored ours.

To raise public awareness of our issues, we'll be doing a **media tour** early in the fall, with each of the unions affiliated to the FPPE, to expose the government's lack of action and put forward our priorities across all regions of Québec.

There are also plans for a huge collective protest by all **Front commun stakeholders on September 23 in Montréal**. Mark your calendars now! You'll be invited by your union to attend (except for very remote regions). Bus transportation will be provided. **It is important to come out in large numbers to demonstrate our dissatisfaction with the government's contemptuous and disconnected offers.**

From mid-September onwards, **the entire Front commun will be looking for strike mandates**. The amount demanded is still unknown and will have to be agreed upon by all organizations.**

To achieve satisfactory results, our only choice is to be consistent, present, and united within the Front commun. There are almost 420,000 of us, and our slogan is **"One voice united."**

Now is the time to stand up!

Here's to solidarity!

**Jacques Landry,
President**

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Latest Developments at the Bargaining Tables

It's been a busy few weeks at the negotiation tables. We're continuing our sessions at a steady pace as we head into summer. We're not seeing any acceleration in our work pace, but rather a continuation of our regular discussions—approximately one meeting every ten days at the Francophone table, and the same on the Anglophone side.

Our detailed presentation of our demands and the arguments that support them are completed, and we've recently been discussing the openness (or lack thereof) of the employer side to our demands.

Despite well-founded and well-documented, the solutions proposed by the union side to counter the shortage of professionals in the school sector has gained little responses from service centres, school boards, and the ministère de l'Éducation. It's becoming clear that we're at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of our vision of the problem. For the employer, it's unthinkable to authorize more absences, to review certain leaves or to provide accommodations for family life given that they feel like they cannot cut any of the services. For our part, we believe that with greater flexibility and better working conditions professionals will want to work in schools, and positions will be filled. We're facing a major hurdle, and we'll need to mobilize to convince the employer of the necessity to review working and practice conditions.

While the employer side shows a cautious openness to some of our demands, it adopts a more assertive stance on its own issues and priorities. It also refuses to discuss many issues at our table, that of the Front commun, where subjects that are common to all employees, such as retirement and wage increases, are discussed. However, we fear that issues specific to professionals will receive very little attention at the central table, since they obviously don't affect all employees.

In this context, we'll continue our work until mid-July. After that, we'll be taking a break for a few weeks, hopefully returning to our constructive work at the end of August.

Rest assured that we're putting all our energies to convince the employer side of the validity of our demands. We sincerely believe that our proposals are effective, relevant, and beneficial to our members, and we expect the employer side to treat the shortage of professionals issue as seriously, just as we do with the proposals put forward by the union side. We'll certainly need to step up our efforts this fall if we hope to reach a collective agreement that meets our expectations and reflects the importance of professional staff to the success of all students.

Enjoy your vacation!

Northern Bargaining Tables

For the Cree and Kativik tables (P3 and P4), as for the other Front commun tables, requests for mediation and the first meetings with the conciliators took place during the first week of June.

The union side has completed the presentation of all its demands to the Kativik table, and discussions will continue over the summer with the employer side, who has announced that it intends to provide its position on some of our demands at our next meeting.

For the Cree table, the presentation of union demands is well underway, and we have had several questions for clarification. We'll be able to complete the presentation of all our demands at our next meeting once we return from the summer vacation.