

# LA PASSERELLE NÉGO

Message from the president

## We'll get there together!

We are entering a crucial phase in the negotiations, and our expectations are obviously high. Never have there been so many vacant professional positions.

In the consultations leading up to this round of negotiations, you were almost unanimous in your desire to form a common front. In the current context, with a government that invests in everything to save its public services, being 420,000 members is a major asset. We must do all we can to maintain this solidarity between the four organizations that make up the Common Front.

Yet, the greater the number, the harder it is to affect the

course of events. At FPPE and CSQ, we campaigned very hard to avoid having to hold an unlimited general strike before the holidays. Obviously, we would have preferred not to go on strike and to have a quicker outcome. However, it would be totally unacceptable in the current context to suffer setbacks in terms of retirement and impoverish ourselves.

Sector-specific issues are just as important when it comes to attracting and retaining professional personnel. We continue to call for an appropriate overall compensation package, tailored to the specific characteristics of each profession, as well as measures to make working conditions attractive and rewarding.

Following the mobilization efforts, we sensed an acceleration of discussions at the tables. We are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. We really want to bring this round of negotiations to a satisfactory conclusion as quickly as possible.

Fortunately, we have public opinion behind us, as several polls have shown. And we are faced with a government that is showing signs of fatigue and disconnection.

We need your mobilization – we'll get there together!



# Update on Negotiations at the Professional Staff Sector Table



For several weeks now, national negotiations have been taking up a lot of public space. A number of media reports, both from the Union Common Front and from the government, refer to certain discussions at the various negotiating tables. In addition, the three days of strike held last week also provided an opportunity to hear numerous reports on the status of negotiations.

We would like to update you today on the sectoral negotiations on working conditions for professional personnel. In fact, the Union Common Front, made up of 4 organizations and representing 420,000 employees in 3 sectors (health and social services, education and higher education) mainly negotiates salary and pension plans. You are well aware of the demands made on these issues and the colossal difference that remains between the parties. In terms of salaries, the Common Front is asking for a 21.3% pay rise over 3 years for all members, while the government is proposing a 10.3% pay rise over 5 years. It is because of this significant gap that the union movement is attempting to increase the pressure to reach an agreement before the holidays, by calling in a conciliator and announcing another strike sequences.



In addition to these national negotiations, several other tables are currently negotiating working conditions for specific groups in the public sector. This is the case for the Fédération des professionnelles et professionnels de l'éducation (FPPE-CSQ), which is currently negotiating all working conditions specific to professionals. We work at four negotiating tables, representing four different employers (the French school service centres, the English school boards, the Cree school board and the Kativik school board).

Reaching an agreement in principle will therefore require agreement on both fronts. Both on national demands for salaries, pension plan, parental rights and regional disparities negotiated by the Common Front for all employees, and on sectoral demands affecting working conditions. Together, these elements make up the collective agreement you may have to adopt. Although negotiation issues affecting professionals alone are receiving less media coverage, discussions are continuing apace, with the aim of reaching an agreement in principle as soon as possible. With this in mind, the Common Front has postponed its call for an unlimited general strike, opting instead for a 3rd 7-day period and keeping up the pressure for a settlement before the holidays.

We are still pursuing some twenty demands aimed at improving recognition for professional personnel, promoting work-life balance, and improving working conditions in the school network. These demands include higher pay for holders of advanced degrees, reimbursement of professional dues, flexible working hours, faster access to the 5th week of vacation, the addition of two days of personal leave, the creation of a working group on professional service thresholds, and more.

We have noted some openness on the part of the employer to our demands (support for trainees, mentoring), but these remain insufficient for the time being. For example, employers refuse all requests for leave or absences on the grounds that there is a labour shortage. They also refuse the request for reimbursement of the professional dues because of the high cost involved. In addition to refusing important demands for members, the employers are always making demands for greater flexibility in the organization of work for professionals. In concrete terms, at our sectoral tables, the employer wants to be able to more easily hire supernumeraries with precarious status and give the employer's physician more power to assign disability professionals to other tasks.

We would like to see a real awareness on the part of employers of the exodus of professionals, and concrete solutions to attract and retain them. We don't feel this eagerness to recognize professional personnel at their true current value, but we're still discussing at the tables, one or two days a week, and we're making some headway. We have also made ourselves fully available to the employer side to speed up the work, seven days a week. At the November 22nd meeting, held in the midst of a strike, the employer side finally presented us with new mandates, something we hadn't seen since last June. In other words, the exceptional mobilization in which you are taking part is coming to fruition.

As your negotiating team, rest assured that we will rigorously and convincingly support your demands and the mandates you have given us. We sense your determination, through these negotiations, to improve both your working conditions and the quality

of public services offered in schools and centres. We know your reality, we hear directly from you on the picket lines, by e-mail, and through your local representatives, and we carry your voice. We sincerely hope that this call from professionals will be heard by the government, and we're putting all our energies into it. We need you to keep up the pressure when we call on you, because the effect of mobilization is being felt.

In solidarity,  
Your Negotiating Team

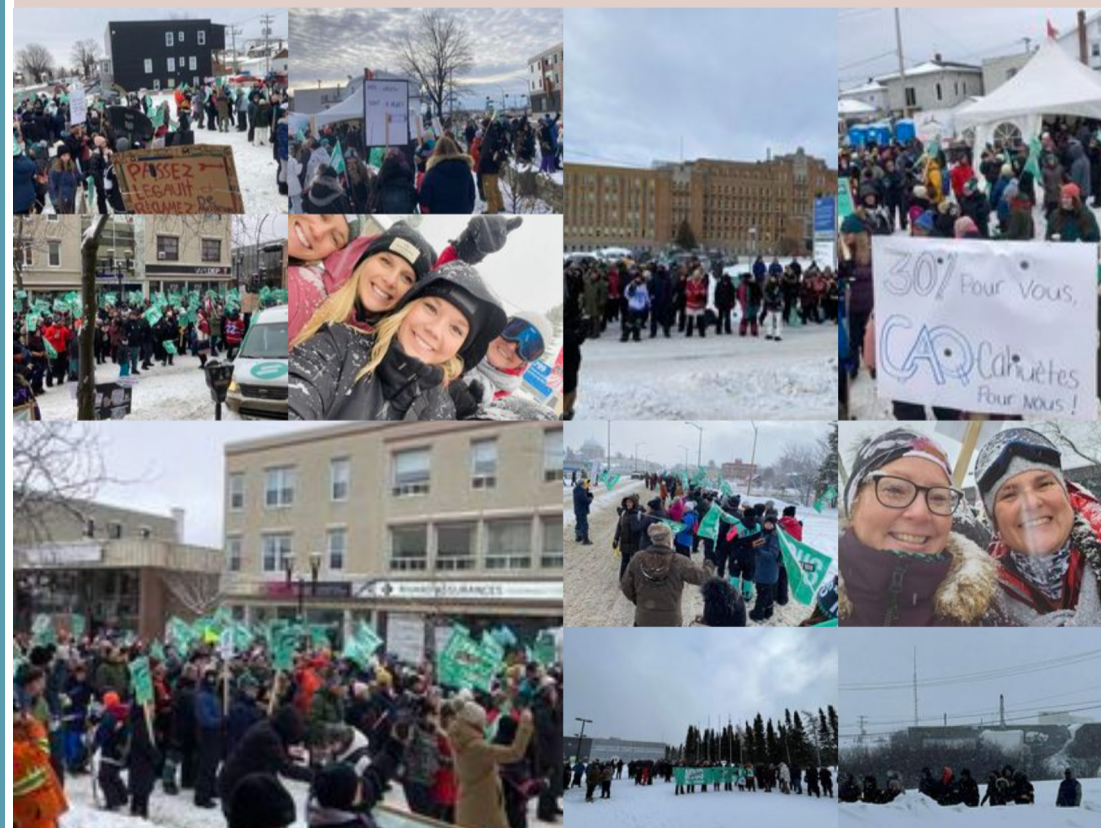
## Follow-Up to the Mental Health Table – Psychologists

Unfortunately, work has stagnated at the table set up by the government to deal with its priority, mental health. We remind you that this specific negotiating table was created at the initiative of the government to deal with subjects that the employers had unilaterally identified.

This table brings together several union organizations in the health, education and higher education sectors. We are well aware that mental health is not just a matter for school psychologists, but unfortunately this is the vision of the government at this table, which is proposing a change in the salary of psychologists.

We haven't had a meeting since October 16th, despite having expressed our complete willingness to discuss the salary of psychologists. At present, the government is proposing a 7.5% salary increase and a 7.5% bonus for psychologists working 37.5 hours a week. Currently, psychologists who work 35 hours a week receive a 9.6% bonus on their salary. In other words, if we implement the government's current proposal, there is a real risk of a reduction in salary for psychologists working 35 hours a week.

We'd like to agree on a salary scale for psychologists first, and then evaluate bonuses, but our proposal remains unanswered to date. As at the other sector tables, we remain fully available to reach a short-term agreement on this issue, but the government does not appear to share this eagerness.



## Negotiations in the North

The frequency of meetings for the Cree and Kativik tables remains steady, although exchanges are running behind those for the French and English tables.

The employers did not submit their requests until mid-November. For Kativik, we were rather surprised by the extent of the employer demands for a tightening of the disciplinary process. For Cree, the employer's ongoing demands seek to provide greater flexibility in hiring and managing professional staff.

In response to the employer proposals, we chose to respond promptly with refocused union filings in an effort to catch up. We have maintained all of our requests for compensation bonuses, as well as a number of requests specific to the northern tables, notably for compensation when the accommodation provided is deprived of a basic service.

We have several meetings scheduled between now and the holiday break, and we have indicated to the employers that we are fully available and that we, like all the negotiating tables, want to reach a satisfactory agreement quickly.

Your Negotiating Team

## Historic Mobilization of Professionals

Karine Lapierre, Communications and Mobilization Consultant

With 95% of the votes, a strike vote could go as far as an unlimited general strike, and there are 9 days of strike action looming. Never since the FPPE (CSQ) was founded in 1985 have education professionals and their Front commun colleagues shown such determination. This strike is historic: you are writing history from the picket lines.

Ever since the first half strike day on November 6, our professionals have braved the cold, wind and snow, and courageously forfeited their pay to send a clear message to the government: working conditions no longer allow us to attract and retain student-support professionals; the future of public services is at stake.

From picket lines to protests, from convoys to rallies, from Hâvre-Saint-Pierre to Alma, Montreal, Gatineau, Gaspé, Rouyn-Noranda, Oudjebougoumou and Rimouski, your voice, your footsteps and your anger resonate all the way to Québec City and the negotiation tables.

The public is honking their support and we're hearing touching stories of parents bringing teachers coffee and doughnuts, taking part in human chains and joining in the protest side-by-side.

The FPPE's Executive Board supports you and will continue to support you over the next few months.

Our collective efforts are paying off. In the media, columnists and influencers are talking about our student-support professionals, the issues they face and how crucial they are to the proper functioning of the education system and for the future of Quebec's youth. Over a hundred articles, overviews and mentions have been made about our professionals since the strike began.

It's all thanks to you.

The Fédération salutes your courage and strength. Your enthusiasm carries us forward and inspires us.

We will be off again this week.

Solidarity!



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«IL N'Y A PAS DE NÉGOCIATIONS»: DES MANIFESTATIONS DEVANT L'ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE, DES ÉCOLES ET DES HÔPITAUX À QUÉBEC

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For an overview of the pros in the media (articles and photos relevant to this round of negotiations), we invite you to regularly visit our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/>