



Sectoral negotiation progress report

Five months have passed since we submitted our union sectoral demands on October 28th, 2022. Since then, the government has made numerous media statements. To state the facts, a negotiations progress report is in order.

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CLARIFYING VAGUE MANAGEMENT DEMANDS

On December 16th, the CPNCA (Comité patronal de négociation pour les commissions scolaires anglophones) and the CPNCF (Comité patronal de négociation pour les centres de services francophones) presented us with their employer proposals. Taken as a whole and the manner in which they were written, their offers target the collective agreement in its entirety. For example, we find propositions thus labelled: "Review the provisions relating to the process of assignment, abolition, and creation of positions." or "Review the provisions regarding the work week and working hours".

There is definitely cause for concern.

We are extremely disappointed in how slowly the negotiations have moved forward since the employer proposals were submitted in December. Coincidentally, the Treasury Board President, Sonia LeBel, exclaims to the media that the government wants a settlement by the month of September. Over a month has passed since the last negotiation session, and on April 5 and 6, two CPN(s) surfaced with submissions outlining

As we write this report, we are still in the process of analyzing the CPNCA's recommendations. After the first go-around, we saw an interesting proposal to increase the budgets dedicated to professional improvement, training for staff who work with special needs students, as well as integrating funds allocated to stagiaire and mentorship support.

The CPNCA has also proposed to encourage an increase the participation rate of support staff in school committees, certainly a part of the realization of the "équipe classe" or classroom team originally proposed by the Government.

But, surprise – surprise, we have also found many setbacks!



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SETBACKS IN THE MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

- Increase the hours we need to work to obtain overtime compensation.
- Annualize schedules for Special Education Technicians
- Severely limit the mobility of permanent staff during the displacement process (staffing sessions).
- Increase the flexibility of administrators to add extra working hours to existing posts without abolishment.
- Review the provisions of the 50 km travel radius.

Since the start of negotiations, the government and its management representatives have been claiming that their propositions would create concrete improvements to working conditions and practices. They seem truly serious in their idea that such improvements would be possible with these kinds of demands.



DISCUSSION FORUMS: CIRCUMVENTING THE SECTORAL NEGOTIATION TABLES

The Government submitted their salary offer at the central table on December 15th, 2022. Within this submission was a proposition to create “discussion forums” in parallel to the negotiation tables, with one specifically targeting the classroom team. We received two invitations to participate in the discussion forums. The invitations limited the presence of only one representative per union organization and would include external stakeholders, whose identity was never specified.

With one voice, the Common Front refused to participate in such forums, namely for the following reasons:

- According to the Law, we address these issues through negotiating tables;
- Working conditions concern the unions and more precisely, the elected negotiating committees;
- These forums are above all a space where the discussion would focus solely on the Government’s issues.



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IT TAKES TWO TO NEGOTIATE

On February 22nd, 2023, following these two refusals, the Government sent the union organizations, via email, a proposition with regards to classroom teams. We tried to get answers about this proposition at the negotiating tables, but our vis-à-vis had no answers for us.

In the last few days, the Government announced that the forums are in fact dead in the water. The Government must understand that it cannot solely speak to their own priorities but must also hear our demands.

THE CLASSROOM AIDE: INTERESTING PROPOSITIONS, BUT NOT AT ANY PRICE

The network-wide implementation of classroom aides is one of the Government's objectives. By enabling day care educators to work longer hours, this proposal in particular, may help reduce job instability. But we have a few issues that we want to bring up with management.

The responsibilities of the classroom aide must be specified in positions that benefit from the collective agreement (tenure, fringe benefits, etc.). These responsibilities cannot be added to work schedules at the expense of our special education staff (special education technicians and attendants for handicapped pupils). In brief, the funds allocated for classroom assistants cannot be made up for by cutting back on other services.

The Government has claimed that the introduction of classroom aides will help school staff—especially teachers—who are currently overworked. In response to this assertion, we invite the Government to adopt a more comprehensive strategy to address the issues of work overload faced by all support staff during these negotiations.

We cannot honestly claim that those we face are taking the numerous ongoing crises in the education network seriously given the proposals currently on the table. The government must place a higher priority on sincere negotiations rather than public relations campaigns if these issues are to be truly resolved.

A UNION IS ITS MEMBERS

In the recent weeks, union representatives have been out in the field educating members about the solutions we have brought forward.

We cannot back down now, the only way to strengthen our show of force is through everyone's participation!



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