VIOLENCE AT SCHOOL: FACTS, TESTIMONIALS, SOLUTIONS

RAMQ’s new powers

Ending abusive billing and extra fees?

No pay equity for CPEs?
Five school boards already burdened by austerity measures will be taking part in a pilot project using the Lean-Toyota method to improve performance. After the multiple failures it generated in the health care network, it is rather surprising that well-informed administrators in the education sector would let themselves be tempted by a management model originally created in the automobile sector...

In fact, that might be at the heart of the problem. The logic of profit meets that of service, in which one deals with people. Even in the manufacturing sector, where the method was born, it has been highly criticized because of the significant toll it takes on the health of employees.

A CONTROVERSIAL MANAGEMENT STYLE

Every time a problem is encountered with this method, it is said to be due to the fact that it wasn’t applied in the right spirit and that it should not be used with the only goal of reducing costs. However, this is exactly what’s happening with the school boards concerned. There is no question that Lean management is exactly what it says it is, lean. We’ve heard it before and know how it ends...

In the health care network, use of this method has led social workers, occupational therapists and homecare nurses to near burnouts. To improve productivity in this sector, a multinational firm was hired to time every action taken by workers. As soon as the delays weren’t met, workers were asked to justify why.

The result: dehumanization of care, burnout and bureaucratization of work. The perverse effects of the Lean method having been widely documented, one wonders why some school boards have taken on such a risky venture.

As it is, we strongly protest against management that is strictly results-oriented in the school system because of the problems it creates and constraints it puts on personnel.

“What counts can’t always be counted; and what can be counted doesn’t always count.” This quote from Albert Einstein should give pause to administrators in education who, perhaps, are getting ready to embark on roads already taken.

LOUISE CHABOT
PRESIDENT
EARLY CHILDCARE CENTRE

CNESST POSITION DETRIMENTAL TO PAY EQUITY

A “gap in the law” and the absence of a male comparator deprives early childcare workers from equal treatment.

MARIE-EVE IMONTI CSQ ADVISOR

During the summer, the Commission des normes, de l’équité, de la santé et de la sécurité (CONESt) judged as inadmissible complaints related to pay equity tabled by some unions of the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIPEx-CSQ).

Currently, early childcare centres must determine if, during the reference period, any predominantly male job classes were created. If not, the exercise stops and the pay equity audit process is deemed complete by the CNESt.

According to the CSQ, this position does not respect the objective of the Loi sur l’équité salariale, which is to eradicate systemic discrimination towards workers in predominantly female job categories. Without valid comparison between female and male job classes, it is impossible to determine if a salary gap was created or recreated during the period in question.

In order to ensure that early childcare workers benefit from equitable treatment just like other workers in Québec, the Centrale has called upon minister Vien to look urgently into what it considers to be an erroneous interpretation of the law.

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FUNDING EARLY CHILDCARE CENTRES

NEW RULES, OLD MENTALITY

Unveiled at the end of spring, the new budgetary rules for funding early childcare centres (CPEs) stem from the old austerity mentality, which has been denounced repeatedly.

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG FIPEQ-CSQ ADVISOR

Despite the unprecedented mobilization of parents in Québec, the government has decided to move ahead with annual recurring cuts of $120 million to CPEs. Already victims of repeated cuts over the last few years, CPEs are seeing their budgets decrease considerably, particularly amounts for caring for children 4 years of age.

The decision to continue cutting is even more objectionable given the surpluses the Québec government posted in its last budget.

“The Québec government can no longer hide behind the deficit since it no longer exists. If it wants to continue dismantling Québec’s childcare network, it is purely for ideological reasons, taking the private model and using it to justify cuts to CPEs, even though the services they provide are of superior quality,” says Valérie Grenon, Vice-President of the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIPEQ-CSQ).

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

The liberals topped it all off with a transitional allowance accompanied by specific rules. This year’s budget of $60 million was supposed to ease the immediate effects of cuts to childcare services. Yet, in a document explaining the allowance, the government recommends using the amounts for employment purposes or to pay lawyers in cases of litigation related to employment.

“The Couillard government wants to use taxpayer contributions to get rid of childcare workers. It goes completely against the best interests of the children. The public network is the best choice for our children and a choice our elected officials should make as well,” says Valérie Grenon.

As the government continues to maintain its reductive accounting approach to early childhood, the CSQ and the FIPEQ-CSQ will continue to push for a change to save Québec’s network of public childcare services.

More than 2000 childcare centres on monmilieufamilial.org!

Less than a year after its launch, monmilieufamilial.org has more than 2000 childcare centres registered. Parents who want to put their children in a quality home childcare centre run by a responsible member of the FIPEQ-CSQ can visit monmilieufamilial.org to find spots available near them.
RésAut CSQ coverage

A SUCCESS STORY
CELEBRATED WITH A DIVIDEND

Les protections RésAut CSQ is celebrating its 30th anniversary. To highlight the event, a $30 dividend will be paid to each home or auto insurance policy in effect on March 31, 2016, and for all new policies in effect before December 31, 2016. In total, more than $2.7 million will be shared among insured customers this year. This is the 3rd dividend to be paid out during the history of the plan. In 2011 and 2014, insured members shared more than $2 million ($25 per policy).

Strength in numbers makes all the difference

The plan offers several benefits, which translate into an average savings of $300 per year for individuals who insure their homes and automobiles with The Personal. The plan also offers:

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Mr. Lafrenière reminds us that Les protections RésAut CSQ are the fruit of an important partnership, created in 1986, between the CSQ (CEQ at the time) and The Personal (La Sécurité at the time). This innovative agreement has served as a model for all auto, home and business insurance programs since then. Today, the CSQ is The Personal’s most important partner, with more than 83,000 active insurance policies.

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1. These dividends will be paid on every new auto or home policy subscribed to in 2016 and in effect on December 31, 2016, or going into effect in 2017. Certain conditions, limitations and exclusions may apply.

2. Amount calculated for a home or auto policy holder in a study conducted in 2013. The amount includes the discount granted for a combined home and auto insurance policy. The amount may vary and is not guaranteed. It is calculated in relation to the rates of other insurers.
PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND BOLSTERING THE MISSION OF SOCIALIZATION

Do recent preventive measures constitute promising avenues for safer school environments?

FRANÇOIS BEAUREGARD COLLABORATION

In 2012, An Act to prevent and stop bullying and violence in schools radically changed the way schools do their jobs. Sylvie Bourgeois and Sophie Bourque are responsible for the Climat scolaire, violence et intimidation (School atmosphere, violence and bullying) program in their respective school boards. They support schools in their efforts to better structure interventions and meet their obligations. For these two professionals, prevention is the cornerstone of measures to be implemented.

Schools maintain their powers to sanction and suspend students in extreme cases, but new legislation focuses mostly on prevention.

“Traditionally, punitive measures were applied, with more or less success. Now, with the use of more preventive measures, we are able to significantly reduce violent situations,” explains Sylvie Bourgeois, a guidance counselor at the Commission scolaire de la Rivière-du-Nord with a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology.

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WE NEED TO WORK WITH EVERYONE INVOLVED: THE PLAYERS, VICTIMS AND WITNESSES.

PREVENTING THE UNPREDICTABLE

How can spontaneous violent behaviour resulting from unpredictable interactions be prevented? “To be effective, we need to work on prevention. We must clearly define, teach and encourage expected behaviours. It’s not conditioning, but rather positive reinforcement. In fact, rewarding positive behaviour is one of the most compelling ways to counter violence in schools,” she says.

Certainly, prevention can contribute to improving the atmosphere in schools. However, incidents requiring adult intervention will continue to occur. How should these situations be handled?

“When it comes to dangerous behaviours, we may need to resort to crisis management protocols. However, it is important to determine what lies behind the behaviour and provide the support needed for the student to develop empathy and self-discipline, and help them find more appropriate ways to manage their relations with classmates. But, to intervene effectively, we need to work with everyone involved: the players, victims and witnesses. The latter, too often forgotten, play an important role in the prevention process,” she says.
A MORE RIGOROUS PROCESS

Sophie Bourque works at the Commission scolaire de Montréal. She also notes the work and progress since the Act was passed. Every institution must now adopt a plan to fight against violence and implement measures to do so.

“Schools are also responsible for reporting violent behaviour when it occurs in their establishments and ensuring appropriate follow-up. The process is more rigorous and systematic,” says the guidance counselor.

On a daily basis, she supports school committees (consisting notably of educational psychologists, special education workers and teachers) in their approach to prevention and proposes tools to facilitate their interventions. With the support of a working committee, she put together a guide for the development of expected behaviours.

“In the management of violent situations, we’ve moved from a repressive approach to an educational one. This evolution meets a real need that teaching personnel have when it comes to managing their classrooms and managing difficult behaviours,” she says.

NEW ISSUES FOR SOCIETY

Sophie Bourque is also part of a committee of experts on cyberbullying. She has contributed to the development of a model to assess and manage online situations.

“Students today interact in areas that are outside a school’s physical property. Intervening in cyberspace means entering uncharted territory and facing ethical questions, notably as they concern the private lives of students. And, adults who intervene in social media expose themselves to finding information they weren’t looking for, but are now required to act on. It is therefore critical to reflect on these new societal issues as a group,” she says.

PROMISING AVENUES

It is obviously impossible to completely eradicate violence and bullying in schools. However, recent prevention initiatives look promising. According to the two guidance counsellors, several factors explain these recent successes, such as clearer definitions of responsibility, better professional networking, increased coordination of regional initiatives, shared effective practices, and training for personnel. The availability of specialized resources in every area is therefore essential for this approach to work.

“By not assuming that all students know how to behave properly and by promoting expected behaviours, we reduce the incidence of violence while reinforcing the school’s mission of socialization. We solve two problems at once!” concludes Sylvie Bourgeois.

1 Sylvie Bourgeois and Sophie Bourque are, respectively, members of the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels de l’éducation de Laurentides-Lanaudière and the Syndicat des professionnelles et professionnels du milieu de l’éducation de Montréal, affiliated with the CSQ.
INTERVENING IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

Alexandre Dupré is regularly called upon to manage crises. His role as a Special Education Technician (SET) demands that he intervene in a preventive manner with high school students.

“...about to escalate, we use a calming tone with them, we ask them to verbalize, explain what is upsetting them, which often prevents the crisis from getting worse,” he explains.

STOPPING DANGEROUS BEHAVIOUR

In January, he followed a training offered by the school board on the topic of non-violent intervention during crisis situations.

“We’ve already taken crisis intervention training courses as part of our cégep studies, but this training helped refresh some of the information and standardize certain practices. The training allowed us to put words to what we already do,” says Alexandre Dupré.

“When we impose a time out, we need to be safe and so does the student. We learned a few techniques to intervene safely while stopping the dangerous behaviour,” he adds.

HELPING A YOUNG PERSON OUT OF A CRISIS

Sometimes, the goal is to protect the student from themselves. “Some groups, for example, students presenting an autism spectrum disorder, require vigilance in this respect. When a situation arises, we want to protect the child from getting hurt. During the training, we had the opportunity to practice these techniques. In fact, we would have liked to have more practice because it was so useful.”

Before resorting to physically restraining a student, Alexandre Dupré adopts a softer approach to defuse crisis situations. “I use a different tone of voice, a tone that isn’t threatening, and I try to determine what stage of the crisis the young person has reached.”

All of these intervention techniques require proper judgement of the situation. “We need to help the young person out of their crisis, using physical intervention only as a last resort. Thankfully, we rarely need to go there as there are many other options before that.”

IMPORTANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

According to Martin Contant, the training Alexandre Dupré received from the school board is a step in the right direction for the employer.

“I’m pleased the training was offered to Special Education Technicians, attendants for disabled students, lunch supervisors, administrative personnel, in short, all support personnel who might need to intervene with students in crisis situations. It’s an important acknowledgement of support personnel in our schools. We’ve been asking for this kind of training and rules for intervening in these types of situations for years, and it needs to continue!”

1 Alexandre Dupré is a member of the Syndicat lavallois des employés de soutien (SLESS-CSQ).
2 Martin Contant is vice-president of the SLESS-CSQ.
BUILDING SCHEDULES AND GRIDS, A DAILY CHALLENGE

Behind the schedules and the grids, there is a school organization technician.

MARTIN CAYOUETTE  FPSS-CSQ ADVISOR

Mylène Robillard\(^1\) is a school organization technician. She acknowledges that she was attracted by the jigsaw puzzle nature of this job. “You have to put many different elements together to form a coherent whole. What feeds your sense of pride is succeeding in positioning all the pieces to everyone’s satisfaction.”

There certainly are more than a few puzzles! She has been patiently and efficiently solving them for eight years at the Pointe-aux-Trembles secondary school in the Commission scolaire de la Pointe-de-Île. “For this kind of position, you have to be pragmatic and logical,” she said.

THE ART OF MANAGING STUDENTS’ CHOICES

Once the master schedule is defined, you have to manage the students’ schedules while trying to take into account their preferences. “At the start of the year, everything happens fast and you have to make changes quickly.”

Although applications such as GPI, Excel or Access simplify her task, the work has become more complex over time. “A few years ago, there were few optional courses and they did not necessarily meet everyone’s needs. Now, there are more options that better reflect the interests of the students, but the greater range of choice requires management,” Mylène Robillard explained.

SO MANY CHALLENGES

The school year is always very busy. “At the beginning of the year, we adjust the schedules. In the middle of the year, we record course choices for the following year. At the end of the year, we draft exam schedules, while compiling statistics about academic success. Between September and June, we also have to develop exam periods, produce report cards and prepare general statistical reports.”

Lines and columns are also a part of her day-to-day work. Over the years, she created a comparative grid that is highly appreciated. “It allows you to see, at a glance, students’ results and absences. I developed this grid in collaboration with IT resources. It is a precious tool for monitoring students who are experiencing difficulties,” she said, with pride.

“We also have to make sure that all the files comply with the rules of the Ministère, because they are verified every year, and certain types of errors may have financial consequences for the school.”

A FANTASTIC TEAM

When Mylène Robillard processes the registration of new students, she works closely with the guidance counsellor and the secretaries to make sure everything is in order. “We have a wonderful team, we all work together, and I love my workplace!”

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\(^1\) Mylène Robillard is a member of the Syndicat du soutien en éducation de la Pointe-de-Île (CSQ).
NEW POWERS OF THE RAMQ

An ineffective band-aid for staunching the budget haemorrhage?

The multiple problems with abusive billing condemned by the Auditor General of Québec have forced the government to grant greater power to the RAMQ, so that it can more effectively exercise its monitoring and investigative role.

LISE GOULET CSQ ADVISOR

For the CSQ, this band-aid is far too small for staunching the budget haemorrhage brought on by out-of-control billing by doctors and abusive, illegal extra fees.

THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM

The RAMQ will be able to recover from a health professional, or a third party, an illegally obtained amount of money, without prior presentation of a request for reimbursement. According to Health Minister Gaétan Barrette, the extended powers of the RAMQ, additional administrative monetary penalties and a significant increase in imposed fines should rectify improper practices. Really?

The problems of abusive billing, intentional or otherwise, stem from current highly complex remuneration models that cause many billing errors, according to statements issued by the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec.

“Adding increasingly complex and costly management and monitoring mechanisms is certainly not the way to go. In fact, there is an urgent need to revise the remuneration model for Québec doctors,” stresses Sonia Ethier.1

Even the Québec Medical Association (QMA), which represents some 10,000 doctors, acknowledges that it’s imperative to scale back the importance of payment by medical act and to favour a mixed remuneration model in which capitalization1 and salary would receive greater weight.

PUTTING AN END TO EXTRA FEES

The necessity of enhancing the powers of the RAMQ is also linked to the explosion of abusive fees billed to patients. As such, the CSQ is somewhat relieved to welcome the government’s announcement that it would prohibit the billing of extra fees that nevertheless have been authorized in Québec since November 2015, but remain illegal by virtue of the Canada Health Act.

The CSQ will closely monitor developments in this matter. “As proposed by Health Minister Gaétan Barrette, the inclusion of extra billing in remuneration agreements that are negotiated in a confidential manner raises major concerns. This method would deprive us of information that is essential to conducting a collective evaluation of the relevance of such choices. To automatically include them means assuming, from the outset, that they are legitimate. Well, we will not be fooled!” the union activist warned.

Payment by act in 2014-2015

- Over 11,000 billable codes
- 55 million payment requests processed by the RAMQ
- 2% of doctors subjected to verification...

1 Sonia Ethier is the Vice President of the CSQ.
2 Financial resources allocated based on the number of persons receiving care.
A woman in action for aboriginal youth

Two years ago, inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, teachers at Dawson College launched The First Peoples Initiative to offer support services to young aboriginal people. Last February, the First Peoples Centre opened its doors. CSQ News met with the Centre’s coordinator, Orenda Boucher.

NICOLE DE SÈVE COLLABORATION

“Born in Kahnawake, I grew up in a single parent home. My mother was always studying. It was a priority for her that my brother and I get an education,” she says. It wasn’t easy for her, not knowing where to find the resources to help her stay in school. “Coming from a culture in which oral tradition is important, I learned differently, more by listening and experimentation than through books.”

A DEEP DESIRE TO CHANGE THINGS

During her time in school, Orenda Boucher never met an aboriginal educator. “When I got to Dawson as a student, there were no services specifically for aboriginal students. I felt alone. I kept to myself. And it was the same at Concordia University,” she adds.

She also noticed the absence of aboriginal people in school books and programs. “I quickly understood that the system was designed to exclude us. This motivated me to further my studies, because I wanted to change that!”

AN IMPORTANT PLACE FOR ABORIGINAL YOUTH

After four years of teaching at Odanak’s Kiuna College – the first cégep dedicated to the education of aboriginal students – and with links to her community and her research as a PhD Candidate at University of Ottawa, Orenda Boucher is ready to meet the challenge.

“The First Peoples Centre is a place for young aboriginal people to get together, decompress in a safe environment, have access to computers for their work, and get the pedagogical support they need.”

AN IMPORTANT CONFIDANT

As a first line of support, Orenda Boucher is a confidant to many. “For students who have left their communities to pursue college studies, loneliness becomes a significant problem.” She sometimes guides students towards the college’s different services, notably pedagogical support. “Sometimes, I hold their hand to accompany them to their first appointment or support them in emergency situations.”

HIGH STAKES

There are several initiatives underway at the centre: the Three Sisters Garden, the harvest festival, the involvement of young aboriginal people in community volunteer projects, and the organization of activities related to First Nations’ culture designed for the cégep’s student population.

The experience is new, but the stakes are high. This year, 22 new aboriginal students will attend Dawson College. The challenge: to allow them to develop a sense of belonging and succeed at school. Stay tuned for more information.
Over time, the tasks and responsibilities of workers, and the requirements of their jobs, have considerably evolved. Today, all of the elements are in place to justify the creation of a new employment class.

“In health technology programs, it is not unusual for laboratory technicians to manipulate ionizing radiation, administer drugs, perform blood tests or subcutaneous injections, or combine substances to prepare a medication. These specific activities are part of their daily work and require membership in a professional order,” explains Anne Dionne.

“In fact, cégeps require that lab technicians hold a permit for their discipline, but do not recognize the particularity or complexity of their work, nor their responsibilities or particular skills. Yet, this requirement – which costs several hundreds of dollars per year and is not refunded by the employer – is not accounted for in the job classification plan of support workers in cégeps. We believe that all of this justifies the creation of a new employment class,” she says.

A COMMITTEE THIS FALL

Since 2010, the Fédération has been working on creating this new class of job. During the last negotiation, the Comité patronal de négociation des collèges agreed to discuss this issue as part of a committee whose work will begin this fall. Stay tuned!
In a nutshell

SERVICE DE LA SÉCURITÉ SOCIALE TRAINING
A DRAWING WITH HAPPY WINNERS!

At a drawing held by the CSQ General Council last May, Élizabeth Caya-Roberge of the Syndicat de l’enseignement des Bois-Francs won a $2000 trip voucher offered by SSQ Groupe financier and Les protections RésAut CSQ. The second prize, won by Joyce Timotheatos of the Syndicat des employés des Écoles Socrates, was a one-year membership for CAA-Québec. It was by participating in one of the training sessions offered by the CSQ’s Service de la sécurité sociale that these individuals were eligible for the drawing. Congratulations!

WOMEN OF ACTION AT THE HELM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

For the very first time, three women will be at the helm of the CSQ federations of the higher education network. Coming from the university community, Anne Dionne has served as President of the Fédération du personnel de soutien de l’enseignement supérieur (FPSES-CSQ) since June 2013. A mechanical engineering technician at the Polytechnique, she held a number of union responsibilities before becoming president, both with her union and her federation.

Last May, Suzanne Tousignant was elected to lead the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC-CSQ). A psychologist by training, she previously served as Vice President of her union at the Collège de Valleyfield while working as a pedagogical counsellor in the regular sector. Then, in June, Lucie Piché was elected President of the Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep (FEC-CSQ). A history teacher at the Cégep de Ste-Foy, up until her election, she was the coordinator of the Status of Women Committee of the Federation and a member of the Status of Women Committee of the CSQ.

These three new faces reflect the increasing number of women in key positions at the CSQ. Moreover, at the last Congress, in June 2015, more women took part in the event as delegates. There are also more women at the helm of CSQ’s federations.

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QUÉBEC: SIGNIFICANT SURPLUSES

According to preliminary results, the Québec government closed the 2015-2016 year with a surplus of $3.3 billion. The numbers show that austerity measures were more severe than predicted, with an increase of only 0.4% for all programs, rather than the predicted 1.7%. For the Éducation et Culture mission, the increase in expenses was limited to 0.9% rather than the anticipated 1.3%. These cuts explain the large surplus in 2015-2016.

During the last budget and with great fanfare, the Couillard government announced a token reinvestment plan in education and higher education. Yet, it currently has a large margin to maneuver, allowing it to substantially increase its investment plan and loosen the purse strings for other public services that also need it.

Good news for regional cégeps

The CSQ and FEC-CSQ (Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep) welcomed the Québec government’s announcement that it will be investing $1.5 million in the creation of an interregional mobility program for students. The Centrale and the Fédération have been working on the project for more than five years. They hope the program will last as it will help ensure the survival of certain college programs threatened by low enrolment numbers.

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