President's Report

Much has happened at the Federation since our last issue.

Onward to 2015
The first phase of consultation for the next round of negotiations is now over.

But stay tuned for further developments as your local union may want to consult you again to clarify certain demands. It’s important to make your voice heard during these consultations: your opinion is our federation’s strength.

In this sense, our desire to be “an organization close to its members” is a key factor in achieving our collective goals.

Hot Topics
Work on the issue of maintaining salary equity continues, while the issue of specialized trades workers has suffered setbacks we are not happy with.

The FPSS-CSQ Executive Committee in Your Region
In a few weeks we will begin our campaign to promote the work accomplished by support staff. The campaign will be launched with a regional media tour.

We will also use this opportunity to meet with your local union team to listen to the people you have appointed to run your union. Together, we will discuss our main concerns: how to remain close to our members and responsive to their needs.

Strength in Numbers
Before inviting you to read this issue of the Relais, with the next round of negotiations quickly approaching, I would like to say that alone, we are moving forward fast, but united and committed we will go much further!

Yours in solidarity.

Éric Pronovost
FPSS-CSQ President

1. See the press release issued by the Federation in this issue of the Relais.
BECAUSE EVERY SCHOOL NEEDS SUPPORT!

The Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ) has approximately 27,000 members, all of them support staff working in the schools and centres of 22 school boards across Quebec. Our organization is a major player in the education sector, especially known for the expertise it has developed in the field of academic support.

It’s important to keep in mind that school support staff, with jobs in 81 employment categories, are too often found working in the shadows and confronted every day with front-line interventions with students and parents.

It is time to shine a light on the work done by the people we represent! From now on support staff must be given greater visibility and more recognition from other education workers and the general public.

At the June 2013 Congress, the Federation was given a mandate to implement a communications plan aimed at publicizing the work accomplished by the people it represents. This will be done with an extensive campaign promoting the services we provide scheduled to be launched in March. We will visit the regions and with your local representatives make sure that the public and the media is made aware of who you are and what you do.

As part of this campaign, we will be conducting interviews and producing video clips of people in our schools and centres to publicize and promote the work accomplished in the community. You can now watch the first such clip made with Master Electrician, Pierre Duschensneau, on the Federation’s web site, as well as read the accompanying article in the Winter 2014 issue of CSQ News. Mr. Duschensneau gives a passionate testimonial to the work he has been proudly doing for the last 35 years, the last 11 as a school board employee.

So stay tuned, pay attention to your local publications and those of the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ) and the FPSS-CSQ to follow this grand campaign to gain fair recognition for the work school support staff do.

Mélanie Renaud
Vice President of Communications, the Secretariat and the Treasury

Because every school needs support!
Love them or hate them, social media networks are becoming more and prevalent in our daily lives. Even major newspapers are offering web-based versions of their publications in an attempt to reach as many people as possible.

Your federation is no exception. It has its own website, Facebook page and even a Twitter account.

For a long time the Federation has been working hard to reach and inform its members across the province. The speed at which information flows these days makes social media essential in the dissemination of information. Print communications, however, will always be maintained.

The Federation’s Web Site

The Federation’s web site is an information tool for both local unions and the membership. Among other things, you can find current news, collective agreements and issues of Le Relais. Go ahead and bookmark our page.

There’s no need to introduce Facebook, the most popular social network in the world with more than 850 million people participating. It is a tool we can easily use to get closer to our members. Among other things, this network enables us to stay in regular contact with a large number of people with personalized messages, making it possible to interact with our members on key issues related to socio-political issues as well as our own working conditions.

Go ahead and click on the page set up by the Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ) to gain access to the latest pertinent news and interact with us. We also invite you to share your comments on the articles we publish. Your opinions are very important to the Federation.

Do you prefer quick and brief messages? Twitter is there for you. Information circulates quickly and in real time. During negotiations, it will be easy and very fast to follow what’s happening, to comment and exchange on the latest developments.

It is important to mention that your local union also delivers a lot of information and will remain the primary conduit for information which affects you and the day-to-day realities in your school boards.

We must also keep in mind that unfortunately mainstream media tend to cover news in a sensationalized way, and if we want to be able to react quickly to public declarations and make our daily realities understood – what we accomplish on a daily basis – we cannot neglect these new methods of communication.

So I invite you all to subscribe to the news posted on our FPSS-CSQ web site. Just click on on our Facebook page and on Twitter. The more people who share news, the more we will get to know each other.
The RAND Formula

AN OFTEN FORGOTTEN IMPERATIVE!

The automatic deduction of union dues from paycheques has over time become so commonplace that we may have forgotten its origins, its purpose and its fundamental importance. Let’s take a look back at the roots and significance of mandatory union dues.

It’s 1946 and the Ford Motor Plant in Windsor is undergoing a protracted and painful labour conflict. The union is demanding that Ford deduct union dues directly off workers’ paycheques. With no resolution in sight, both sides agree to the appointment of an arbitrator. Justice Rand accepts the challenge and renders his sentence: compulsory union dues are granted. The Rand Formula is born.

Why did Justice Rand make this ruling? Because, according to him, all union members enjoy the benefits negotiated then introduced into the collective agreement. It is therefore normal that they all assume collectively the costs associated with the negotiation and application of their collective agreement.

Another important fact is that the Rand Formula for the first time gave unions the financial security they need to represent and adequately defend their members against employers who had all the resources to fight.

After this historic ruling, unions across the country started to demand the Rand Formula for their own collective agreements. Some employers said yes, others flatly refused, resulting in major labour disputes. One major dispute occurred in 1975-1976 at United Aircraft (now Pratt & Whitney) in Quebec. This conflict became violent with cars and homes of directors vandalized, telephone threats, non-unionized workers assaulted, striking workers clubbed, etc.

This bitter dispute led the Parti Québécois to adopt a measure in 1977 stating that, in return for paying union dues, unions are obliged to represent and defend all of their members, indiscriminately, consistently and with care. If not, the union may be sued by workers who feel they have not been properly represented.

If the Rand Formula was abolished, workers not paying union dues would have to defend themselves against employers who have far greater means at their disposal. Working conditions would deteriorate and there would be an increase in income inequalities... Is this really the kind of society we want? Simply asking the question is answer enough.

A Poorly Veiled Threat...

Why are we talking about the Rand Formula when it is already a legal obligation? Simply because an acquired right can always be attacked! For some time, certain members of the federal Conservative Party have been talking about the Rand Formula... and they are not talking about its virtues...

The Conservative Party and other organizations such as the Montreal Economic Institute, have maintained that the Rand Formula infringes upon the freedom of association of workers. They also protest against the way unions use the money they collect. Some believe that unions should use these funds strictly for labour relations and stay away from all forms of political or social struggle.

Getting the Facts Straight!

Two Supreme Court of Canada decisions, in 1991 and 2001, ruled that union dues do not infringe upon personal freedom. Even better, they stated that unions are justified in a free and democratic society because the economic survival of unions ensures greater social justice for all.

The judges were also unanimous in defending the idea that unions should not have to strictly limit themselves to negotiating working conditions. To quote the words of two eminent scholars: “In addition to collective bargaining activities, it is a natural progression for unions to be involved in socio-political causes. Political activities are inextricably linked to union ones.”

Quebec’s National Assembly also adopted a measure in 1977 stating that, in return for paying union dues, unions are obliged to represent and defend all of their members, indiscriminately, consistently and with care. If not, the union may be sued by workers who feel they have not been properly represented.

If the Rand Formula was abolished, workers not paying union dues would have to defend themselves against employers who have far greater means at their disposal. Working conditions would deteriorate and there would be an increase in income inequalities... Is this really the kind of society we want? Simply asking the question is answer enough.

Note: PICHÉ, Jean-François (2013). “Compulsory Union Dues... Why?”, CSQ News (Fall), p. 16-17.
Sisters and Brothers,

An important, but unfortunately very disappointing meeting was held on January 14 with President of the Treasury Board, Stéphane Bédard, to address the issue of specialized workers. Your union representatives attended the meeting along with representatives from other union organizations.

You may recall that after the last round of negotiations, a parity committee was established to try and reach a satisfactory settlement for specialized public sector workers whose wages are 34% below their counterparts in the private sector; a situation that has made it extremely difficult to recruit and retain workers.

During the last round of negotiations, the union party agreed in good faith to reach an agreement with the employer based on the promised creation of a working group that would look into the problem of specialized workers to find solutions. With great effort, the committee was eventually formed and work was begun.

Unfortunately, exchanges and discussions have been difficult, and it was impossible to agree on common recommendations to attempt to offer public sector specialized workers a fair deal. In desperation, a meeting was requested with the President of the Treasury Board to try to end the stalemate and find practical solutions.

The talks did not go as well as we had hoped. In fact, we left the meeting with the sad impression that once again, the government is not keeping its word. Exploiting the fact that the negotiations had been conducted by the previous government, Stéphane Bédard immediately made it clear that his government did not feel bound by the commitment that was made to specialized workers.

A Flagrant Lack of Respect

For the Fédération du personnel de soutien scolaire (FPSS-CSQ), this attitude represents a flagrant lack of respect for the specialized workers who ensure the day-to-day functioning of our institutions. But there is something worse. This is a very bad decision taken by a government concerned with the sound management of public finances because the salary gap that exists with public sector specialized workers generates increasingly serious problems with respect to recruitment, forcing the government to contract out for these services, which is much more expensive.

But we will not give up and we will formulate a strategy to demand respect and make our voices heard. We will keep you informed.
Pregnant or nursing school board employees are eligible for a program called For a Safe Maternity Experience administered by the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST). As its name suggests, this prevention program is specifically aimed at employees with jobs that may entail risks for their own health or the health of their unborn or nursing child. The actual goal of the program is to have such employees remain at work only when it is possible to immediately reassign them to other duties which they are able to perform that do not entail any such risks.

Employees who cannot be reassigned to risk-free jobs are entitled to temporarily stop working and receive CSST compensation. Usually, this compensation corresponds to 90% of the employee’s net income.

It is easy to determine the net income of an employee who holds a position with a regular number of working hours per week. The situation becomes complicated, however, for those not in such a position, for those on-call or replacing regular employees. For the latter, there are several ways to calculate gross revenue in order to determine how much income replacement compensation they are entitled to. In some cases, it is possible to determine a net income based on a defensible and reasonable projection of the person’s work situation. All of this must be done keeping in mind the purpose of income replacement compensation payable under the Act, which is to compensate for the loss of future earnings and the inability to perform a job.

Unfortunately sometimes, on a discretionary basis, the CSSTemploya method which uses the previous 12 months of work to determine the basic salary. This method often penalizes employees because it does not take into consideration income actually earned in the most recent period preceding the claim and what the employee would in reality probably have earned during her absence.

So, I suggest that employees covered by the For a Safe Maternity Experience program be vigilant about the way the CSST determines their basic salary which will be used to determine the amount of income replacement benefits they are entitled to receive. If you have any doubts, do not hesitate to contact your union to ensure the calculation method recommended by the CSST is representative of your reality.
A WORK ACCIDENT... REALLY?

You fall in the school parking lot and hurt your knee? Your friend injures his back during his coffee break? A co-worker is hit by a car on the corner just before arriving at the school? Are these accidents covered by the Act Respecting Industrial Accidents and Occupational Diseases? In other words, should the consequences of these accidents be compensated by the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST)? This short article is aimed at helping you decide if you should file a CSST claim.

Travelling between Home and Work
As a general rule, an accident that occurs while travelling between home and work is not considered to be a work accident. These situations are therefore not covered by the Act. There are, however, some exceptions.

First, if you are required to travel from one workplace to another during your work day and an accident occurs during this trip, it becomes an accident covered by the Act, and you must consequently file a CSST claim. Janitors and Special Education Technicians could, for example, find themselves in such a situation. There are also cases of accidents that occur in the parking lot of your workplace.

Parking
Accidents that occur while using access points made available by the school board are recognized as being covered by the Act. This rule applies to arrivals and departures before the beginning of your shift and before and after breaks. This means that accidents that occur in the parking lot or the entrance to the school a few minutes before or after your shift are considered to be accidents covered by the Act.

Breaks
Generally, it is acknowledged that taking a break is of some use to the employer. For this reason, accidents that occur during a break may be considered to be covered by the Act. But it is much more difficult to determine if an accident which occurs while the injured person is smoking will be considered to be a work accident. In some cases, the tribunal that hears such cases, the Commission des lésions professionnelles, decided that the fact that a worker went for a smoke is of no use to his employer. In other cases, the fact that the accident occurred on a paid break and in the workplace led the tribunal to recognize it as an accident covered by the Act.

In conclusion, it is important to remember that some accidents may appear to have no connection to work, but still be considered to be work accidents. For this reason, when in doubt, contact your union for the proper advice.

Frédéric Tremblay
FPSS-CSQ Advisor

WHY CHOOSE THE CAISSE DESJARDINS DE L’ÉDUCATION?

BECAUSE WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE!

WE UNDERSTAND:
• Your professional environment
• Your working conditions, your salary, your retirement plan and benefits
• Your union membership
• The issues and concerns that affect you

Contact us for personalized advice.

1 877 442-EDUC (3382)
www.desjardins.com/caisseeducation

Desjardins Caisse de l’Éducation
Winter in Quebec means snow. Too often, large accumulations result in water infiltration or the collapse of a roof or an above-ground pool. In addition to posing a risk to people walking close to the house, these failures can be very costly for home owners.

Here are a few tips to help you avoid serious trouble from the adjusters and prevention experts of La Personnelle, the CSQ’s auto, home and business group insurance provider.

**How to Deal with Snow on Your Roof**

Heavy snowfall followed by rain then freezing, can result in excessive weight on a roof and increase the risk of leakage or collapse. When accumulations of ice melt, water can seep under the shingles and then infiltrate the house.

It is therefore important to pay close attention to accumulations of snow or ice over 70 cm (a little over two feet). Arched or curved roofs should also be monitored, especially if the snow is not evenly distributed.

**When should you remove snow?**

- If cracks are appearing on your interior walls.
- If interior doors become difficult to open or get stuck.
- If the ceiling is warping.
- If there are signs of water infiltrating the house: droplets, water stains, etc.
- If the house has a history of problems.

**How should the snow be removed?**

There are risks involved when removing snow from a roof, especially if there are electrical installations close by. This is why La Personnelle advises its customers to hire an expert with the appropriate equipment and licensed by the Régie du bâtiment du Québec.

**Protecting Your Above-ground Pool**

Above-ground pools are primarily designed to withstand the lateral pressure produced by the weight of water. They are more vulnerable to vertical pressure. For this reason, you should never allow your pool to become completely buried in snow. Especially in the spring when snow expands and transforms into a block of ice, which can damage the pool. Hence the importance of properly removing snow from your pool.

**What to do?**

- Lift the lip around the edge of the pool with a plastic shovel so as not to scratch the rim.
- Avoid walking on the edge which could weaken the structure.
- Remove snow from within or in front of the skimmer to prevent snow from penetrating and causing a split with expansion.
- Do not remove snow from the inside of the pool; snow or ice could break under your weight.

**Insurance Coverage**

La Personnelle offers its clients all of the appropriate coverage they need to protect against damage to their above-ground pools or roofs caused by snow or ice.

For more information about this coverage or to request a quote, please visit [csq.lapersonnelle.com](http://csq.lapersonnelle.com). If you prefer to speak to an agent, call 1 888 476-8737.

**WHO CAN YOU CALL FOR HELP?**

- Association des Maîtres Couvreurs du Québec (www.amcq.qc.ca).
- Régie du bâtiment (www.rbq.gouv.qc.ca)
- Association des commerçants de piscines du Québec (www.acpq.com)

These tips are provided for information purposes only and do not constitute or replace those of an expert in the field. Any actions taken based on this document must be performed safely and, if necessary, by a qualified person with experience in the field. La Personnelle, assurances générales inc. disclaims any liability that may arise.

The terms and conditions pertaining to the described coverage are specified in the insurance contract. Certain conditions and exclusions may apply.