



Liaison

L'ASSOCIATION PROVINCIALE DES ENSEIGNANTES ET ENSEIGNANTS DU QUÉBEC

www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca

Survey for Teachers about Violence and Cyber-bullying

QPAT would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the survey. This information will enable us to get a clearer picture of the Anglophone sector when it comes to violence in our schools. In the early fall edition of the Liaison, we will provide you with an overview of these results and the action-plan we will be preparing in response to the situation.

From the President's Desk



Maureen Morris

Solidarity Forever, the union makes us strong.

Within a few short weeks, we will be enjoying our summer holidays. I, like many of you, will begin a permanent holiday called retirement, but before I go I would like to share with you some of the changes I have experienced since I began teaching in 1965.

As a starting teacher, I earned \$3000 a year and the salary of a teacher at the top of the scale in those days was a long way from that of today's salary of \$68,973. In the early days, teachers did not earn the same salary across the province as we do today. For example, if you taught in an area where property taxes were higher, you earned more money than if you worked in a less wealthy area.

(continued on page 2)

Contents

Liaison is the official newsletter of the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT). It is published at least five times a year.

Editor: Jean-Paul Fossey

Address all correspondence to:
QPAT, c/o Jean-Paul Fossey,
17035 Brunswick Blvd, Kirkland, Québec H9H 5G6

Telephone: (514) 694-9777 – 1 800 361-9870
Fax: (514) 694-0189

- 3** Serge Laurendeau President 2008-2010
New Teacher Workshops – Convention 2008
- 4** The Magnificent Mentor – by: Julie Montpetit
- 5** New Teacher Profile: Marcy Clark
- 6** Reforming the Reform

(continued from page 2)

Despite the cost of living today, I believe that as teachers we are a lot better off financially in the year 2008 than were our colleagues of years gone by.

In my early teaching years, there was no such thing as maternity or paternity leave. Consequently women were obliged to return to work, leaving their very young children with a baby sitter or they were forced to resign from their post in order to stay home to care for their children. As a result, many of us lost several years of seniority. I personally lost seven years, so I was thrilled for my fellow teachers when we finally negotiated access to maternity and paternity leave.

When I began teaching, I was on duty every day, either on the play ground, in the cafeteria or in the gymnasium. We were also expected to supervise an evening sports activity at least every second month. Times have certainly changed for the better. We are obliged to do considerably less supervision and most of our other activities are voluntary.

I certainly remember class sizes were very large. I recall teaching a grade four of 45 students and wondering if I would make it through the year. Fortunately times have changed and although many of us have at times taught oversize classes at least we have the possibility of financial compensation.

Although we continue to work to improve our situation, there is no question that we have made significant changes over the years that have made our job better. These changes came about as a result of the work of teacher unions. As teachers we are the union and although we have union executive members and staff officers who do the leg work for those of us in the classroom, our active involvement makes all the difference when we are looking for change or improvement in our class rooms.

When your union leaders call for action, please join them in their call and encourage your colleagues to join you. Our success depends entirely on our willingness to fight for what we believe is important. I truly believe that “the union makes us strong” because I have seen it work and I know that each one of us is the union. With our involvement and commitment we will succeed in our goals.

I thank you all for your personal support during the many years that I have taught and been active in the union movement and I wish you success in the years to come.

Yours in solidarity,



Maureen Morris



Serge Laurendeau President 2008-2010

My best wishes go to Maureen for a well-deserved retirement after a career filled with great accomplishments in education and in the teachers' union movement.

I am honoured to represent QPAT. My 30 years of experience as a teacher, both at the elementary and secondary levels, my 4 years as President of the Pearson Teachers Union, and my association with the QPAT Board of Directors and Executive will serve me well as I work for the best interests of all the members in the preparation of our next provincial demands.

Part of my mandate will be to continue the work already started in bringing support to new teachers, countering violence and cyber-bullying, closely monitoring the dossier of the integration of students with special needs and putting pressure on the MELS in order to provide proper textbooks and materials for students in the English schools.

Serge Laurendeau



New Teacher Workshops – *Convention 2008*

QPAT is pleased to announce that it will be hosting two New Teacher centered workshops at the 2008 Convention. There will be an all-day pre-convention workshop presented by Ron Morrish on Thursday, November 20. Ron Morrish is an educator, behaviour specialist, and author who shows teachers how to inspire our students to be respectful, co-operative, and responsible through positive discipline. Because space is limited, be sure to apply early in September through your Professional Improvement Committee to ensure that you receive your release to attend this very practical and entertaining workshop.

Additionally, there will be a 75 minute workshop during the evening of Thursday, November 20 presented by Audrey McAllister which is open to all. Teachers who attend her workshop will leave with easy-to-use and effective ideas which can be incorporated in the classroom the very next day.



The Magnificent Mentor –

by: Julie Montpetit

As a teacher, I became well aware of how important a mentor could be. It didn't start off that way. During my first year teaching, I made the mistake of trying to do everything on my own. My colleagues were very kind and supportive, however I had the impression that if I did it on my own, it would be proof that I was indeed cut out to be a teacher. It was a good year. Only later did I realize that if I had reached out to others, that good experience could have been great. During my second year teaching, because my confidence had grown, I was more open to asking for help. It no longer seemed to be a sign of weakness; it was a way for me to learn from those I respect.

In my opinion, this is what a mentor should be: someone who teaches you and allows you to grow, someone who is proud when you do something great, someone who is there in your time of need, someone who wants to help you and not judge you. They are a rare breed, but they are around. I like the Wikipedia's definition of a mentor: "Mentors inspire their mentee to follow their dreams". What a gift it is to have the chance to learn from these people.

This past year was my first year at QPAT. This time I was a rookie of a different sort, but it felt the same way. I was lucky enough to have had a mentor, and that person has been Ronald Hughes. Some of you may know him. He has helped a great number of people throughout the years. For those of you who don't, let me tell you a little about him: He is a man who cares deeply. When someone honestly cares, everything that this person does is done beautifully. Because Ron cares, he takes his work very seriously. Whenever someone has a question, he truly listens. I hear him on the phone daily with people, giving them a chance to express themselves, and then taking the time to walk through each situation and giving them every solution possible. When you honestly care, every person gets 100% of you – even if it does require time, which is precious and we sometimes feel there isn't enough of. Ron makes those around him feel valuable and their situation

important. He has helped me so much this year. I had little prior experience when it came to labour relations, yet he took the time (sometimes we needed several rounds) to walk me through the process. He helped me without ever enabling me. He made me feel like his equal colleague, even if he is light years ahead of me.

He has inspired me to always do my best. He has inspired me to always give people who come to me for help my all. He has taught me that if I know that I have done everything that I am capable of doing (and you always know this deep down inside) I will sleep well at night. He has taught me that no matter what is going on around me, I have to have faith in myself and stand up for what I believe.

I hope all teachers have some kind of mentor that they can turn to. Mentors aren't just for people who are starting out – everyone can benefit from this type of relationship. We all need someone we respect to discuss ideas with, someone who has experienced something similar to our own situation who may be able to shed some light for us. I strongly encourage you to look around your school environment and keep your eyes open for someone who has the same values as you and who is experiencing success in their work. Energy is contagious, why not reach for some positive energy and let it spill over into your life?

Ron is retiring on June 30, 2008. Needless to say, he will be greatly missed. The selfish side of me wishes to keep him around. It seems easier to remember to be my best when I am surrounded by the best. Despite this, I am very happy for Ron and I will carry with me all that he has inspired me to be in the years to come.

We will be publishing some of your mentorship experiences in future editions of the Liaison. Whether you are a mentor or a mentee, you are invited to send your stories to julie_montpetit@qpatapeq.qc.ca.



New Teacher Profile

Marcy Clark



Marcy Clark

Name: Marcy Clark

School: Alexander Galt Regional High School

School Board: Eastern Townships School Board

Local Union: Appalachian Teachers Association (ATA)

What cycle do you teach?

This year I'm teaching Level 3 English and I'm also the Literacy Co-ordinator at my School. I love teaching Drama more than any other subject, though!

How many years have you been teaching?

Four years.

How many different schools have you taught in?

I have only taught at my current school, other than my two stages and a handful of supply days at various schools in Halifax before I moved to Quebec.

Where did you study Education?

Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

What's the best part of being a teacher?

The "bounce" I get from the kids. I really enjoy being around young people.

What's the hardest part of being a teacher?

Marking. Hands down.

What accomplishment are you most proud of so far in your career?

I'd have to say the development of a literacy intervention program for my school. A pretty close second though was having my Rugby team win their league championship twice in a row, and undefeated too!

What extra-curricular activities, committees, etc... are you involved with?

I am the Assistant Director for our annual Galt Drama stage production, I coach the Senior Girl's Rugby Squad, I take students to the Stratford Shakespeare Theatre festival each fall and I am on my local union executive.

How did you become involved with your local union? QPAT?

The last round of negotiations was my first year teaching in Quebec. In spite of the fact that my position wasn't secure at the time, I felt strongly that in order to protect my professional interests as well as safeguard the quality of education I was able to deliver to my students it was very important to support QPAT and the ATA's efforts to draw the attention of the public and the government to the mounting problems within our education system. I feel that teachers unions have a huge responsibility not only to their members and their members' interests, but to the wider public as well because of how enormously important our

jobs are. I don't think there is any other profession that stands to have as great an impact on society as education. Protecting the integrity of our profession was and is still very important to me; it wasn't long before I became active in my local union and was introduced to QPAT through the ATA.

What would be your dream item for your classroom?

A marking elf.

Share a quote that inspires you:

"It is not the same to talk of bulls as to be in the bullring"
Spanish Proverb

or

"Rather than working within the problem, BE the solution."
L.LeBlanc

Advice for new teachers:

You can avoid a lot of potential problems and stress by being a proactive communicator with parents, administrators, and colleagues. Call home with something good to report before something negative has to be dealt with, then the parents know you have their son/daughter's best interests at heart. Try to keep things in perspective; don't take things too personally (especially from students!) Remember, if this job were easy, everyone would be doing it!

If you are a new teacher and would like to be portrayed in a future edition of Liaison, contact Julie Montpetit at julie_montpetit@qpat-apeq.qc.ca.



Reforming the Reform

Over the last few months, QPAT has made a set of demands regarding curriculum reform, many of which have been made in concert with our colleagues in the *Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement* (FSE). This is a summary of these demands and the response received.

What we have demanded

In examining the reform, major concerns have been observed and must be addressed. We stated that the MELS must:

1. Review programs to define the essential knowledge a student needs to learn. The MELS also needs to recognize the evaluation of this knowledge.
2. Establish guidelines for the integration of students with special needs into regular classes.
3. Study the relevance and feasibility of implementing the Reform in the adult general education sector.
4. Take charge of the implementation of the curriculum and not allow the degree of decentralization which has occurred.
5. Provide the same resources for English schools as were announced for the Francophone sector to improve the learning of French.
6. Ensure the availability of approved English textbooks and materials at the same time as these are made available in French.

Where do things stand now?

Since these demands were presented to the MELS, there has been progress on several of these points:

1. The Minister has announced that committees will be formed to determine which knowledge is essential in each course and what sequence should be followed for learning this knowledge. The work will be completed by June 2009. This should help clarify what specific content needs to be learned in each subject.

2. The MELS has agreed to provide the same proportionate resources to English school boards to improve the learning of French as were given to French school boards.
3. The Minister has tabled Bill 88. Some concerns about this bill exist, but it may provide for greater consistency among school boards in implementing certain MELS policies.
4. While English textbooks for secondary IV will not be available at the same time as the French ones for the fall of 2008, the MELS has acknowledged that a problem exists and has formed a committee to develop short and long term solutions to this problem. The short term solutions are varied, but there has been some progress, particularly for secondary IV math, where there will be materials of a textbook-like nature available for all students and teachers for the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year.

What's next?

We will continue to work to ensure that the progress which has been made is finalized and we will lobby the MELS to address the other issues which have not yet been dealt with in a satisfactory manner. QPAT will keep you informed of future developments.