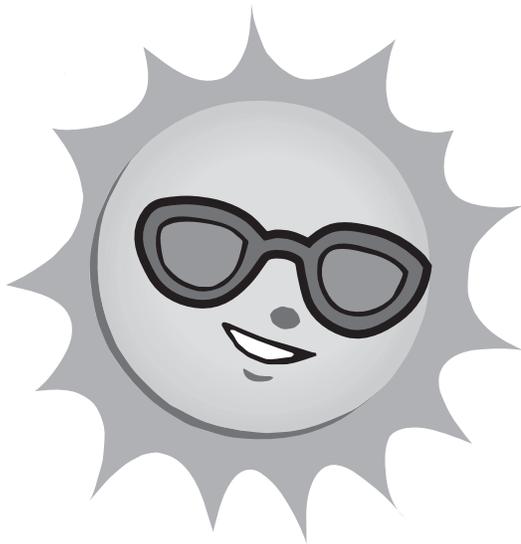




Liaison

L'ASSOCIATION PROVINCIALE DES ENSEIGNANTES ET ENSEIGNANTS DU QUÉBEC

www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca



Have a great summer!

From the President's Desk



Maureen Morris

Dear Colleagues,

Every year QPAT holds a Provincial Council where teacher delegates representing their various local unions meet to do the business of QPAT. A presentation on violence was delivered by Alan Lombard and Ron Hughes of the QPAT staff at this annual meeting. Following the presentation, many of the teachers in attendance spoke about the increasing level of violence in our schools and the nature of that violence. Of particular concern is the emergence of cyber-violence and cyber-bullying and the impact it can have on teachers and students.

Consequently, the following motion was adopted:

That QPAT form an ad hoc committee on school violence and cyber-bullying with a mandate to research the gravity of the problem and to recommend a plan of action.

(continued on page 2)

Contents

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- 1** What's this Deduction on my Pay Stub for?
Part 4: Union Dues
(page 2)
- 2** International Body Rules in Favour of Quebec Teachers
(page 3)
- 3** A QPAT Member's Project Overseas Experience
(page 4)

(continued from cover page)

The results of this research will be important for teachers and their students and will give QPAT an orientation to act on this very important issue that has an impact on our daily work.

QPAT, in partnership with the *Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement* (FSE), has launched a campaign to "Reform the Reform!" We are targeting the Ministry of Education, Leisure and Sports as well as the general public with this campaign as we continue to work to effect change where it is needed. We will focus on more learning and less evaluation, clear report cards, program validation, teacher training, educational materials and the value of cross-curricular competencies. On this last topic, several weeks ago, 2,000 of our members signed a petition regarding their concerns about these competencies and their evaluation. The fact that so many teachers signed the petition in such a short time period underscores our profound concerns and we can be proud of our efforts. Our signatures, along with 14,000 collected by the FSE, have been presented to the new Minister of Education, Leisure and Sports, Michelle Courchesne.

We all remember the abrupt ending of the last round of negotiations when the government imposed Bill 142 (often called the "decree") and took away many of our rights. QPAT, along with many other unions in Quebec, petitioned the International Labour Organization (ILO) for an opinion on

the actions of the Quebec government during negotiations. The ILO is a branch of the United Nations.

I will highlight some of the ILO recommendations. However, you will find more in depth information in this edition of the *Liaison*.

- The ILO urges the government not to legislate in the future and not to impose work conditions "without full and frank consultations with the parties concerned."
- Given the length of time for which salaries cannot be negotiated, the ILO requests the government to review the restrictions on negotiations that have been imposed.
- The ILO requests the government to establish a bargaining procedure that allows differences to be settled in ways other than legislation, such as mediation and arbitration.

This is not the first time that the Quebec government has been severely criticized by the ILO. We can only hope that this time the Quebec government will take heed of the recommendations put forward by the ILO and act upon their proposals.

Within a few short weeks we will be on a well earned summer vacation. Despite the fact that we love our profession, there is no doubt that it can be stressful and demanding in so many ways.

I wish you a wonderful summer and I look forward to working with you in the new school year.

Yours in solidarity,

Maureen Morris

What's this Deduction on my Pay Stub for?

Part 4: Union Dues

On your pay stub, one of the deductions is for union dues. This is the money needed to pay for the activities the union undertakes on your behalf. It pays for the salaries of union employees, printing, postage, business travel, committee meetings, and all the other expenses incurred to represent and inform teachers. The amount on your pay stub is sent to two different places: QPAT, your provincial association which represents teachers in all the English public schools in Quebec, and your local union, which represents you with your school board. At the May 2007 Provincial Council (QPAT's annual general meeting), the following fees for 2007-2008 were set:

- \$345 for teachers with a 100% teaching load (\$8.40 increase)
- \$10 publicity fee (\$10 decrease)
- If a teacher is teaching less than 100%, the percentage of the workload will be used to calculate the percentage of

the dues paid. For example, if a teacher has an 80% contract, he/she will pay \$276 (\$345 X 80%)

- Substitutes and hourly paid teachers pay 0.5% of their earnings, up to the maximum of \$345

For a 100% teacher, the total QPAT fee will be \$13.65 per pay for the 2007-2008 year.

The remainder of your deduction is collected and used by your local union. Local union dues are determined at the local level, and they vary from local union to local union across the province. These fees vary due to a range of factors. For example, some locals have a fixed fee of a certain amount of dollars for a full-time teacher, whereas other locals establish the fee as a percentage of salary. If you wish to better understand this fee, you should contact your local union.



International Body Rules *in Favour of Quebec Teachers*

On December 15, 2005, the Charest government passed Bill 142 which legislated working conditions and salary adjustments. This decree put a stop to the negotiations process. Further, it imposed severe penalties on anyone who defied the legislation, especially for further strike action. The government claimed at the time that it had to ensure that services were provided to the public and that it respected its budgetary constraints.

QPAT was able to negotiate some terms in the collective agreement which were better for teachers than what would have been imposed by Bill 142. However, these elements were negotiated under the threat of the decree.

In March 2007, the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is a branch of the United Nations, presented its findings in the matter of the most recent round of negotiations. It found that the government of Quebec had not negotiated in good faith with its public and para-public sector workers, including teachers.

The ILO had the following specific findings and recommendations:

- It was concerned by how quickly the legislation was adopted, and that there was a lack of consultation with the worker groups as to the need for a legislated settlement.
- The length of the collective agreement was unacceptable, given that it was legislated.
- It questioned the government's assessment that the standard of living for its employees had been maintained. It recommended that an independent study be carried out.
- It questioned the degree to which the government provided information about financial and budgetary information to the unions.

- It found that the government's decision to remove the right to strike without offering other possible avenues for a settlement, such as mediation or arbitration, violates the principle of freedom of association.
- It stated that the financial sanctions for violating Bill 142 were excessive. In particular the proposed fines for unions are far in excess of fines that other organizations who infringe a similar law would be required to pay.
- It recommended that the government not use legislation in the future, as this was not conducive to good labour relations.
- It recommended that the government review the restrictions on negotiations as well as the excessive sanctions.
- It asked the government to establish a bargaining procedure which allows the parties to settle their differences without needing a decree. Suggestions included mediation and arbitration.

QPAT hopes that the Charest government will pay close heed to the findings of the ILO and seek to rectify the situation. QPAT believes that only open and fair negotiations will lead to a climate of positive labour relations and positive employee morale.

For the full text of the ILO's findings, you may go to the following site:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb298/pdf/gb-7-1.pdf>



A QPAT Member's Project Overseas Experience



Audrey Lafond (First person from left, kneeling) with a group of Burkinabe teachers

4 | Liaison

A number of professionals from union organisations associated with the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) will be spending their summer vacation providing aid to teachers in developing countries. As part of Project Overseas, members of the teaching profession from across Canada travel to Asia, Africa and the Caribbean to lend a hand to their colleagues abroad.

I had the opportunity to participate in a continuing education project in Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. Teachers there face a multiplicity of challenges: the absence of formal teacher training; huge class sizes; scarcity of teaching materials; high absenteeism of students required to do agricultural work; and a lack of schools in rural areas.

This was our first experience of the African continent for the two members of the Canadian team. Meeting the Burkinabe gave us the chance to experience the real Africa. Burkina Faso, which means land of the upright in Moore, is a country where teachers are trying to improve learning through continuing education. We were very well received in Ouagadougou by the members of the *Syndicat national des enseignants du secondaire et du supérieur* and the *Syndicat national des enseignants africains au Burkina Faso*, who were proud to be participating in this training. In two weeks, we provided training in general pedagogy, French and mathematics to over 80 teachers. We also devised lesson plans on HIV-AIDS for both elementary and secondary students. Our discussions with teachers and organisers

regarding our vision of teaching were extremely rewarding. We went to Burkina Faso to teach; we returned feeling that we had received far more than we had given! This project represented a true sharing between two cultures, and we sincerely hope that the partnership between these organisations and CTF will continue for the benefit of all.

Audrey Lafond, team leader, Project Burkina Faso 2006

The editor wishes to thank Audrey Lafond for her contribution to this edition of the *Liaison*. Readers who wish to learn more about Project Overseas may visit the following link:

<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Projects/intl/EngPOBrochure.pdf>