



Montreal, September 23, 2020

BY E-MAIL

Mr. Jean-François Roberge
Minister of Education
Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
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Subject: Proposal: Differentiated pay for retired supply teachers

Dear Minister,

This letter follows on from the meeting held last Friday, September 18, at which you proposed potential solutions to the three federations of teachers' unions to help meet the need for supply teachers in Québec's schools. As you asked us to do, we are writing to inform you of our thoughts and recommendations on this subject. As has been the case since the beginning of the pandemic, we are always available to explore potential solutions and play our role as union organizations in addressing the many challenges facing our public education system in these unprecedented times. We also believe the solutions that are explored and adopted must be fair and respectful towards all the staff members who work in the system every day.

What was proposed

- Teachers who took retirement in the last five years may receive differentiated pay if they decide to become supply teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Instead of the hourly and daily rates set out in the provincial agreement, they would receive the pay provided for in the agreement, i.e. the grade established by the school service centre or school board at 1/200, from the first day of supply teaching; in other words, they would not have to complete 20 consecutive working days of replacement teaching in cases where the teacher's absence extends beyond that time.

Considerations

- Like the Ministère de l'Éducation, we acknowledge that there is a shortage of teachers which, although it existed before the pandemic, has certainly been exacerbated since then. As a result of this, the members we represent need reinforcements to help them address the many challenges they encounter on a daily basis since the beginning of this very unusual new school year.
- The pandemic has created an unpredictable context that makes it difficult to estimate the number of additional staff members needed to ensure that our schools can function properly in the weeks and months to come.
- We have serious reservations about the idea of limiting the increased pay solely to teachers who took retirement in the last five years, for reasons of fairness and consistency in the application of the collective agreement.
- We are concerned that the adoption of a measure such as this, which would automatically create two classes of supply teachers, would generate tension within schools and discourage those who do not receive it. It is important to avoid a situation where the measure would encourage people to abandon ship when we clearly need every available pair of hands in the coming weeks and months.
- Significant amounts of money have been transferred to the provinces by the federal government, to cover some of the costs of the pandemic.

Recommendations

- We propose that all supply teachers be paid at the hourly or daily rate for the grade established by the school service centre or school board, pursuant to the provincial agreement, beginning on the first day.
- This exceptional pandemic measure would attract not only retired teachers but also other people with teaching qualifications who may have left the profession before becoming eligible for retirement. It would also avoid any sense of discrimination.
- In addition, as mentioned at the meeting, and beyond this specific issue, directives should be issued to ensure that school service centres and school boards adopt practices that will, as far as possible, avoid movements of staff members from one school to another, for example by assigning one or more supply teachers to each school, according to size and need. This measure would help create stability within the school and would prevent the supply teachers from becoming vectors of transmission for COVID-19 within the system.

We hope these recommendations will be received favourably.

Yours sincerely,

Josée Scalabrini, President
Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement (FSE-CSQ)

Heidi Yetman, President
Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT)

c.c. Eric Blackburn, Deputy Minister, Education
Éric Bergeron, Associate Deputy Minister
Pascal Poulin, Manager, Labour Relations