

Info-Nego

Stalemate

As we have already said, the promise of quick negotiations with the employer's representatives revealed instead that the employer was merely circling the issue with no political mandate from the Government.

A small ray of hope emerged on October 23 last, when the Government's negotiators announced that they were submitting a new offer. Unfortunately, they simply went back to the beginning, resurrecting most of their original proposals from December 17, 2019, without any significant improvements to the May proposals that had already been rejected by the FSE-CSQ and QPAT. The employer has instead simply eliminated, a few, mostly minor elements, and a handful of positive proposals were added, although they were clearly insufficient when compared to the promises made by the party in power.

Teachers were not even invited to the so-called "blitz" announced by the Government at the beginning of November. The discussions did not speed up, and no notable progress was made. Despite its rhetoric, the Government has obviously not placed the urgent problems of teachers at the top of its priority list.

The FSE-CSQ and QPAT are working on their basic demands, as refocused in June, in order to reach a satisfactory agreement that will result in real and significant improvements to the salaries and working conditions of teachers in schools and centres.

The biggest problem in the discussions is that, so far, the Government's representatives have shown no significant openness to the main – and valid – expectations of teachers, even though the needs are increasingly obvious. Both the FSE-CSQ and QPAT are dissatisfied with the lack of results so far. Clearly, there is no political mandate and the talks have struck a dead-end on the issues of fundamental importance for teachers, namely the heavy workload, unbalanced class composition and lack of services for students in difficulty, the high level of employment insecurity, and salaries, which are the lowest in Canada for teachers.

The following table sets out the FSE-CSQ/QPAT demands and shows their current status at the negotiating table, along with the employer's main proposals and demands. Roughly 40 other more minor employer demands are still on the table. The divergence is still abysmal.

**Comparative Table of FSE-CSQ and QPAT Demands and
the Employer's Demands or Proposals as of December 3, 2020**

Main FSE-CSQ and QPAT Demands	Main Employer Demands and Proposals
Class Composition and Services for Students with Special Needs	
Increase the number of special classes by adding an appendix providing for an annual amount of \$40 million (for the FSE-CSQ and QPAT: 165 classes more than in 2020-2021 or 300 more than in 2018-2019).	Employer refuses to consider any guarantee in the collective agreement concerning the maintenance of the new special classes from last year and this year, or on the opening of new classes.
For regular Grade 2 to 6 classes in elementary schools not in disadvantaged areas, establish a maximum number of students per group based on the percentage of students with individualized education plans.	Employer refuses any form of decreasing ratios.
In compliance with current maximums, establish a new common average of 25 students per group for secondary 1, 2 and 3.	
Reduce ratios for regular 4-year-old kindergarten classes (average of 8 and maximum of 10).	
Simplify the process of recognizing students with special needs and reduce the time required.	Make sure the teacher has implemented pedagogical or social intervention strategies before requesting services.
Make it compulsory for services to be provided for students with special needs and for an individualized education plan team to be set up at the teacher's request.	
For vocational training and adult education, improve support for students with special needs by adding an appendix in which the Government undertakes to include the 2020-2021 budgetary rules in the collective agreement in order to maintain the services provided.	Allocate a support budget for class composition for students with special needs in vocational training and adult education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost: \$1.8 million¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This is less than 0.5 FTE² on average per school board³ for the addition of non-teaching professionals!
Increase the amounts for support measures for teachers in multi-grade groups to \$4 million.	Add an amount for multi-grade groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost: \$300,000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This is not enough to organise (<i>déjumelage</i>)

¹ All cost estimates are for the FSE-CSQ and QPAT only.

² Number of people as full-time equivalents.

³ In 2018-2019, there were 1,231,078 students in the 72 school service centres or school boards in the public networks (French and English). An average-sized school service centre or school board therefore had roughly 17,098 students in all, including 13,124 students in the youth sector.

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Include the group formation rules from Appendix XXII in article 8-4.00.	Demand accepted ➤ Renewal of status quo, no cost.
Include, in the 2020-2023 provincial agreement, the June 2011 letter of agreement on services for students in difficulty, which was renewed in 2016.	Demand accepted ➤ Renewal of status quo, no cost.
Set up a committee for individualized teaching in vocational training and for distance teaching in vocational training and adult education.	Open to the creation of a committee, but the terms and conditions have not yet been discussed.
Workload	
In secondary schools, adult education and vocational training, convert one hour of complementary workload to work of a personal nature.	Decompartmentalize the workload with active participation by teachers in deciding when the “professional workload” (complementary workload and work of a personal nature) is carried out. ❖ There is a significant risk of increased control by school administrations. Specify, in the collective agreement, that the teachers’ salary scale is based on an average weekly workload of 40 hours ❖ This would give school administrations control over and above the 32 hours at school. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of teachers in the general principles and general duties ❖ This would add to the workload, instead of reducing it.
In elementary schools, ensure that the teaching of one hour per week in arts or ERC is assumed by a teacher other than the homeroom teacher, and replace that hour by one hour of work of a personal nature.	
In preschool, reduce developmental and cognitive learning activities by one hour and replace it by one hour of work of a personal nature. (N. B. Starting this year, half-an-hour of specialty teaching was added in preschool, but in the presence of the homeroom teacher. Therefore, only half-an-hour needs to be added, and the obligation for the homeroom teacher to be present should be removed).	
Remove one hour of supervision per week from the teachers’ workload, other than for student arrivals and movements, without changing the duration of the educational workload (elementary and secondary schools).	Decreased supervision in elementary schools only ➤ According to the employer, an average of between 30 and 40 minutes less supervision per week for elementary school teachers ➤ Cost: \$9 million ❖ This amounts to roughly \$210,000 per school service centre or school board.
For adult education, as part of the recognized 800 hours of educational workload, include 80 hours of pedagogical follow-up and increase the time set aside for professional development days to 40 hours.	In vocational training and adult education: - Add elements to the general workload (student activities, recognition evenings, promotional activities at the centre). - Provide for the possibility of full workload

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For vocational training, deem work of a personal nature to be completed as soon as the presentation of courses and lessons has ended during the year.	<p>annualization, so that the working year would be from July to June and educational services can also be offered on weekends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Seven days per week, twelve months per year!
Remuneration	
Beginning with the 141st workday of 2019-2020, apply a 5% increase to the salary scale for all teachers and eliminate the first four steps.	<p>Increase for the first six steps only, and increase of 6.72% to the supply teaching rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost: \$7 million for the first six steps and several additional million dollars to increase the supply-teaching rate. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not only is this not enough and insulting to all teachers, but it does not even fulfill the basic promise to eliminate the first six steps! ❖ Remember that, from the intersectorial standpoint, the offer is for only 1.75% for year 1, 1.75% for year 2 and 1.5% for year 3, with a lump-sum amount of \$1,600. ❖ We are the lowest paid teachers in Canada, and would remain so if we accepted the Government's offer. <p>Premiums for teachers in disadvantaged areas who stay at the same school for at least 3 years, increased after 5 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost: This adds up to several million dollars, but it is impossible to obtain an accurate estimate because of insecurity and difficult working conditions. We would have to know how many teachers have stayed at the same school, in a disadvantaged area, for 3 or 5 years, and also whether the school is still on the list of disadvantaged schools when the 5-yearly update takes place.
Obtain a substantial contribution from the employer to insurance premiums.	Employer is not open to this.
Precariousness in the Profession	
Establish a voluntary support (mentoring) mechanism by reducing the time spent on courses and lessons for mentors and new	In the youth sector only, create an emeritus teacher category with a salary increase of 5% (assistance or support for new teachers or

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teachers.	teachers with more complex groups, pedagogical innovation, assistance with the implementation and monitoring of individualized education plans) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cost: \$25 million ➤ Number of additional FTEs: 240 or 480 teachers working half-time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This is equivalent to an average of 5.5 FTE or 11 teachers working half-time, per school service centre or school board.
Remove the remunerated maximum by adding a rate for supply teaching of more than 270 minutes.	Employer is not open to this.
Provide for all contracts to continue to the end of the school year ending on the last day of the school timetable and not on the last day on which students are present.	Clarification to come on whether or not the employer is open to this <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This practice already exists in some school service centre or school boards.
In vocational training, allow time in the complementary workload to take courses in the vocational teaching bachelor's degree program.	Clarification to come on whether or not the employer is open to this.
Respect for Teachers' Rights	
Change the provisions concerning the arbitration process to make it more effective.	Clarification to come on whether or not the employer is open to this, and discussions underway.
Four demands to adjust to legislation governing public order and the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms</i> .	Clarification to come on whether or not the employer is open to this.

Over and above the fact that workload-related problems would remain unchanged for teachers, the total investment for the Government would be roughly \$43 million, perhaps up to \$50 million, but no more.⁴ For comparison purposes, in the worst years surrounding the 2015 agreement, in the midst of austerity and major cuts to public services, the agreement signed by the FSE-CSQ and QPAT was for roughly \$80 million per year.

The network's fragility and the tremendous needs of the people who carry its full weight on a daily basis existed well before the pandemic, and have been highlighted by what has been an unprecedented crisis. The short-sighted cuts and many hasty political decisions, taken individually, have significantly damaged working conditions in schools and centres by not considering the needs of schools. Staff shortages, the increasingly heavy and complex workload and the lack of services have become a burden for teachers, who are finding it increasingly

⁴ See premiums in disadvantaged areas and supply teaching rates.

difficult to manage. Action is urgently needed to reverse the situation, and we believe the Government has the means to do this.⁵ The FSE-CSQ and QPAT regard this not as an expense, but as an investment in our collective future. The negotiation, more than ever before, offers an opportunity for us to change direction, and it is time for us to move forward from the stalemate in which we currently find ourselves.

A Government that reneges on its commitments to education, retracts its statements and even goes back on resolutions adopted unanimously by the National Assembly can only be described as disappointing, cynical and insulting. We have had enough of the insults. In education, things have to change – now!

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⁵ CSQ file: lequebecalesmoyens.lacsq.org.