

# Appalachian Teachers' Association Newsletter

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## Links of Interest

QPAT

[www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca](http://www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca)

1-800-361-9870

Parental Insurance Plan

[www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.rqap.gouv.qc.ca)

1-888-610-7727

Quebec Pension Plan

[www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca)

1-800-463-5185

CARRA

[www.carra.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.carra.gouv.qc.ca)

1-800-463-5533

MELS

[www.meq.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.meq.gouv.qc.ca)

1-866-747-6626

Industrial Alliance

[www.inalco.com](http://www.inalco.com)

1-800-363-3540

Strathcona Credit Union

1-888-350-5111

## **NOISE FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK**

We're back at it, working within our means, making do with what we have. It's just what we do in the Quebec English Public School system. As a matter of fact, we are known for being pragmatic. Ben Huot, the recently retired Director of Labour Relations for the Quebec English School Boards Association and it's negotiating branch the CPNCA stated in a recent Gazette interview that the provincial government tends to use our sector as a kind of testing lab for incubating ideas before they are used on the rest of the public sector.

Point in case: the practice of the losing party paying for arbitration was originally an English Education Sector concept that is now applied to the whole education sector. In the interview, he says that we are the first to test Value Added Incentives; this does not exist for our colleagues in the French Boards. All who have had the good fortune to work with Mr. Huot will miss his compassion for Quebec English Education. Ben was considered one of the good guys.

At first glance, it would seem odd to look at the Value Added gift horse in the mouth. Why would you even question that the possibility for teachers to earn an extra non-pensionable 8% on our top of our regular salaries is a great incentive booster? If this was meant solely for our involvement in Extra Curricular Activities (ECA), that would be a real boost to our morale and of course, help in the paying down of student loans, car loans, and mortgages.

In reality, the money that was added to our collective agreement as part of the new Appendix XXVI is not just about helping out with ECA compensation. Honest to goodness real ECA compensation would be a wonderful improvement for the many teachers that have put in thousands of volunteered hours for so many years with little to no recognition. However, when presented with the complete title of the appendix, "Program Designed to Recognize Value Added and to assist in the Assignment, Recruitment and Retention of Teachers," it becomes a little more revealing what the Quebec English School Boards were after with the addition of this money to their coffers.

It's rather apparent that this is not meant exclusively for giving teachers a little boost, but more about giving certain school boards the possibility of favouring some teachers over others. Is it possible that when they asked for the infusion of this cash, some of our School Boards were stupefied by the glitz of the American merit-pay model? The flawed concept goes something like this. If you reward those super-teachers (read: those lucky enough to have a decent cohort this year) with a small monetary reward, all teachers will want to reap this reward, which in turn will supposedly fix all the woes of public education. Well, not so, according to Daniel Pink, author of "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us."

Pink maintains that motivation for tasks that require even rudimentary cognitive skills is not something that can be sparked by the dangling carrot or the big stick approach. Motivation is something that is intrinsic to professionalism and happens when individuals are given the autonomy to develop their self worth as a professional. The underlying tenet is that if you pay professionals their proper worth, you won't need merit-pay. Pink says that, "if you don't pay people enough they won't be motivated; you've got to pay them enough to take the issue of money off the table."

As teaching professionals, we wish to master our profession; we want to be self-directed and at the end of the day, have a sense of purpose. This flies in the face of a management style that wants some kind of demeaning compliance. In that kind of scenario, we can't help but find ourselves at odds with those administrators who choose to micro-manage rather than support us.

Make our day; recognize that we are professionals who want to teach. Support us and give us the tools we need to do a good job in our classrooms. Don't box us into what ever the latest educational craze is. Instead, work with us to develop a stimulating education curriculum, exciting extra curricular activities, and the collegiality that we all agree is needed to sustain an exceptional school community.

So in the end, call it what you want, "value added", incentive premiums or merit pay," they are all just another way to grind down our sense of purpose and our autonomy. Eventually, these so-called motivations have the denigrating effect of pressing us into cookie-cutting conformity. Can that really be what they want?

richard

## **ATA**

### **The little union that can - and does!**



# **HOMOPHOBIA IN QUEBEC SCHOOLS**

Schools are a primary social structure for youth and social relationships with peers are a central part of students' lives. Research shows that schools, and the social interactions that take place in them, can play a stabilizing or destructive role for young people, particularly if they are experiencing emotional stress. School environment and school connectedness can be determining factors in a young person's educational experience. When students believe that adults in the school care about them, have high expectations for their education, and will provide the support essential to their success, they thrive. A positive school environment is the result of a collective effort.

Unfortunately, a number of studies in the United States and more recently in Canada have raised the alarm about the prevalence of homophobic violence – be it verbal, physical or psychological – in schools, as well as the negative consequences that such violence can have on the youth who are its victims.

Five main conclusions can be drawn from these studies:

- 1) **Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning (LGBTQ) youth are more at risk** than their non-LGBTQ peers to experience intimidation, threats, harassment and physical aggression at school.
- 2) Although LGBTQ youth are commonly targeted for homophobic harassment, they are not the only ones suffering. **Non-LGBTQ youth are the victims of homophobic language and insults** as well. In fact, any student whose behaviour is perceived to be different in some way can be isolated and harassed using homophobic insults. In addition, youth who have LGBT family members will experience stress (even if they are not directly the target of homophobia), if homophobic discrimination and victimization are present in their school environment.
- 3) **Homophobia can manifest itself in a wide array of actions** including, name-calling, vandalism, labelling, cyber-bullying, rumours and social exclusion. Although physical bullying is often the most obvious form that is acknowledged and addressed in schools, verbal bullying and daily acts of covert discrimination are extremely prevalent and often ignored even though they have been found to be quite damaging to youth. Studies have shown that persistent verbal harassment can be as much, or even more, damaging than isolated incidents of physical violence.
- 4) According to a variety of studies (including large-scale surveys) **homophobia can have major consequences on the mental health and academic success** of its young victims. These youth are at higher risk for psychological problems (isolation, weaker integration with their peers, anxiety and emotional problems, low self esteem, suicide attempts) and high-risk behaviours (drug and alcohol abuse, risky sexual behaviours, etc). They are also more inclined than their peers to skip school,

do less well academically and have limited academic aspirations. Students' feelings of vulnerability and not belonging, and a difficulty to be able to imagine their future, have been identified as factors that can negatively influence academic success.

**5) Students lack confidence in adults' ability to solve the problem of homophobia.** Many feel that schools are not doing enough and thus feel unsafe at school. They also feel that they are not valued or included at school. Gradually, they learn to feel afraid and ashamed in school because homophobic and transphobic behaviours are tolerated and sometimes even perpetuated by school personnel.

A recent study of Québec schools reveals that

**62.9% of students heard comments like "That's so gay" each day at school;**  
**38.6% of students have been victims of at least one episode of homophobia;**  
**69% of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students have been victims of homophobia;**  
**35.4% of heterosexual students have been victims of homophobia simply because they didn't conform to gender stereotypes.**

The research clearly indicates that homophobia is one of the major motives behind bullying and harassment in schools. Homophobia is harmful for all students. Negative attitudes toward visible minority or physically disabled youth are no longer tolerated in classrooms or schoolyards. However, manifestations of homophobia still pass unnoticed by adults in authority.

Homophobia hurts all youth, including:

**Youth who identify as LGBT or who are questioning their sexual identity;**  
**Youth from families with gay or lesbian parents;**  
**Youth with other LGBT family members or friends;**  
**Youth with interests that don't conform to gender stereotypes;**  
**Youth who restrict their actions and their words because they are afraid of becoming the target of homophobia.**

When adults tolerate homophobia, it sends a message to children that mocking and harassing students who are different is justified. Within Quebec's socio-cultural diversity, schools have the mandate to teach children to respect all differences.

The LGBT Family Coalition now presents workshops in English to help educators deal with the problem of homophobia. This workshop is offered free of charge. For remote regions, the reimbursement of travel expenses may be requested.

**For more information or to register for a workshop, please contact:**

**The LGBT Family Coalition**

**Tel: 514-846-1543**

**[info@familleshomoparentales.org](mailto:info@familleshomoparentales.org)**

# **APPENDIX XXVI** **PROGRAM DESIGNED TO RECOGNIZE** **VALUE ADDED AND TO ASSIST IN THE** **ASSIGNMENT, RECRUITMENT AND** **RETENTION OF TEACHERS**

This program was agreed to as part of a package deal during provincial negotiations. It was part of the demand made by the Quebec English School Board Association. Basically, our negotiators were told that if they didn't accept it, then the whole negotiated Agreement would be out the window.

This program is a pilot project for the English School Boards for the duration of this collective agreement. The purpose of this is to give the boards the ability to recognize on the one-hand, value added activities such as Extra Curricular Activities, field trips etc., and on the other hand, use incentive premiums for assignment, recruitment and retention. This is not something that the union is pleased about, but we are bound by the agreement.

## **General Principles**

There will be 3 levels of committees; a Board Level Participating body, a School/Centre Level Participating body, and a Provincial Advisory Committee which oversees the whole program.

The decision between the ETSB and the ATA is that the school level body would be the School Council, avoiding the need to create a new body to deal with this appendix.

By now, all schools and centres should have begun to create a list of activities that they will recognize in their school/centre for teachers or groups of teachers' admissibility to the value-added money.

Refer to **Part III**, of the appendix for the rules and examples to follow when your school/centre creates the list. These lists then need to be sent to the Board Level participatory body. The money is to be paid to the teachers by no later than June 1<sup>st</sup> or another date agreed to by the Board and Union.

The amount allotted to the whole of the ETSB for the 2011/12 school year is only \$42,000. This amount increases substantially in 2012/13. One of the only good things to come from this program is that the Value- Added money is not meant to replace what we already have in place for Extra Curricular Activities (ECA)

compensation, but is in addition to any existing ECA compensation. The stipends paid to a teacher are limited to no more than a non-pensionable 8% per year. As the Value-Added dossier has evolved, so has our understanding. Sadly its now clear that the only activities that qualify for value-added monies are those, which directly involve extra-curricular activities. Activities such as participation on School Council, Governing Board, or Mentoring unfortunately, do not qualify for value-added monies. Yet again another reason why this program just isn't the right tool to inspire professional motivation.

## **ATA WEBSITE**

**NEW LOOK!**



[www.ataunion.org](http://www.ataunion.org)

## **ETABLISSEMENT VERT BRUNDTLAND**

Large quantity of trees available through the 4-H Clubs of Quebec.



For more information contact  
[selinem@ped.etsb.qc.ca](mailto:selinem@ped.etsb.qc.ca)

## **DID YOU KNOW ...**

Your pension contributions are part of the family patrimony upon divorce.



## **ALSO ...**

Upon divorce or separation ...

### **Health Insurance**

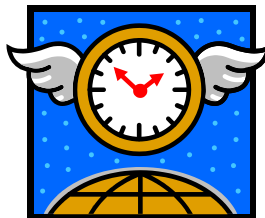
Your spouse's coverage, if any, ends. You may want to change your category of coverage. If you had opted out because you were covered under your spouse's plan, you must enroll in QPAT's Health Plan. You must also enroll your dependent children unless they remain covered under your spouse's plan.

### **Life Insurance Plans and Accident Insurance Plan**

Your spouse's coverage, if any, ends. You may wish to change your beneficiary under the Life Insurance Plans, subject to the provisions of the law, and under the Accident Insurance Plan.

## **FYI ... Provisional Teaching Authorizations (PTA)**

**It is the responsibility of teachers to renew their PTA on time.**



# **PROTECTING OUR PLANET**

## **e-waste**

The ATA has taken the initiative with the support of the ETSB and TRUSS to implement a service that re-cycles e-waste.

A black and green Recycle box has been placed in the central office of most schools and centers. If anyone has:

- Inkjet cartridges
- Laser cartridges
- Cell phones
- MP3 players, iPods
- Digital cameras
- Laptops

they want to dispose of please put them in the box and they will be picked up periodically and sent to the ATA office where they will be picked up by a service called JustRecycleIt.



## **HEADS UP ... your January pay**



**You will again start paying deductions for QPP, QPIP and EI if you had previously reached the maximum. Your net pay therefore will be less.**

## **Hey Union Guy,**

Come on! You've got to explain to me why in this day and age I still have to pay union dues to ATA and QPAT! I don't want to be part of your crummy union anyways. This seems to me to be an abuse of my human rights. As a Canadian citizen, I should be allowed to choose whether or not I want to pay dues to a body that I do not feel warrants all this money.

### **The Lennoxville Libertarian**

## **Hey Lenn Libber,**

You actually have a couple of interesting questions here. First one is, do I have to be member and second is, do I have to pay dues? Whether it's an abuse of your rights or not is a matter of point of view.

Let's start by answering your questions. To do that, we need a little bit of labour history. Bear with me as I take you back to Ottawa in early 1944, when the ruling Liberal party passed an emergency Order in Council titled, PC 1003. That Order in Council effectively protected workers' rights to organize, and at the same time forced employers to recognize the union chosen by a majority of the workers.

Then, on January 29, 1946, Canadian Supreme Court Judge Ivan Rand ruled in a landmark legal decision that has come to be known as the "check off" or the Rand formula. It goes something like this: all the workers in a bargaining unit (for our purposes that means ATA/QPAT) share in the benefits of their union-negotiated contracts. He reasoned, therefore, that they must pay union dues, but he did let workers retain their individual right not to join the union. This decision coupled with the PC1003 meant a degree of financial and organizational stability for unions that they had previously not enjoyed in Canada. The union movement grew during the prosperous 50's and 60's. They became a serious force to be reckoned with.

Workers were now starting to benefit from such radical "lefty" notions as pensions, a shorter workweek, better pay, security of employment, and safety on the job site. More recently and more specifically for Quebec teachers, this meant smaller class sizes along with much better maternity rights and better pensions. Yes, we are the lowest paid teachers in Canada, and this is something that we all agree needs improvement; the ATA/QPAT and the FSE need to consider a better starting pay and fewer steps in attaining the top of the salary scale. The other part that we undoubtedly have to work on is to eventually bring our salaries in line with the other provinces, but remember this will not be easy as Quebec Liberals are really big "C" Conservatives in little "l" liberal suits.

Now let's take a look at your assumption that belonging to the ATA somehow takes away your basic individual rights. Much of our work at the ATA office is spent protecting individual rights, sometimes so much so, that it is to the detriment of the greater good of our whole membership. There are days when it feels like we have raised those precious individual liberties to a level that put the precarious balance between individualism and the common good on a slippery slope to anti-union attitudes.

In closing, I'll bring you back to 2004 when the Quebec Young Liberals passed a motion to do away with the Rand Formula. So take heart, you may very well yet get to see your deepest desire to abandon empathy and solidarity with your fellow teachers.

Hugs and Kisses

## **Union Guy**

Much of the historical information used by Union Guy came from that socialist hotspot the Canadian Museum of Civilization's website.



**If you have a question you would like answered by the UNION GUY, send it to the ATA.**

### **DID YOU KNOW ...**



**In the new Provincial Agreement, after 40 consecutive workdays of absence of a full-time teacher, the board shall offer a part-time contract to the casual supply teacher who replaced the teacher during the entire absence. The contract shall be retroactive to the first workday of the supply teacher.**

## **THIS IS AN INVITATION**

The ATA and ETSB are hosting a Governing Board Workshop on the Evening of Wednesday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at Princess Elizabeth Elementary School from 7:00p.m. to 9:00p.m.

**Are you now or have ever wanted to be a member of your school's Governing Board? Do you sometimes feel a just little lost on all the different rules of what a member can or cannot do at a GB meeting?**

The ATA and the ETSB will be hosting an evening workshop for all who are involved in Governing Boards including, Teachers, School Staff, Parents and Community Representatives. The plan is to help all GB members be more informed on the role of Governing Boards in our schools.

Please RSVP Michele Desmarais at [desmaraism@etsb.qc.ca](mailto:desmaraism@etsb.qc.ca) before Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>.

