

CSQ

MAGAZINE

FEAR THE NOISE

Uniting forces
.....

Three union rookies



Centrale des syndicats
du Québec

Spring 2018

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Does anyone still doubt the arduous working conditions in education and health and social services? Has anyone not heard the cries for help? Overwork, precarity, burnout...

Yet, the government denies these problems and defends its track record as necessary, even right and proper, while managers continue to support these inhumane policies...

Suffering in the workplace has a thousand faces, and when we hear the disturbing testimonies of those experiencing it, it's impossible not to feel outraged. You might say this phenomenon is nothing new, but it continues to grow and transform into a form of accepted normality.

Contrary to what we are led to believe, this outcome is not the result of workers who are unable to better organize their duties. Rather, it is the result of management practices and recurring budget cuts in education and health and social services.

It is therefore for this reason that we must shift our attention from what we can do *individually* to what we can do *collectively* to change things. Only then will the power of action take on its full meaning!

Giving the power back to the workers has become so critical that it will be at the core of our Congress this June, and of our actions in the coming months. The current electoral context will also allow us to assert our demands for better working conditions and more decent living conditions, in addition to urging candidates to champion for stronger public services and increased recognition of public sector workers.

JUST BETWEEN US, MY FINAL MESSAGE

Earlier this spring, I announced that I would not be renewing, during our Congress, my mandate as president of our Centrale. Representing you has been a tremendous source of pride for me. I wish you great courage and determination in upcoming battles for the rightful advancement of your rights and working conditions.

I chose and have always believed in a unionism of ideas, demands and actions. More than ever, I believe in its relevance and rightfulness, particularly in the current neoliberal context.

This unionism will endure as long as we continue to draw our strength from collective action to change our working conditions and improve society as a whole. Moreover, this union vision is – and will always be – a guarantee of our continued pursuit of the mission of our beautiful and big centrale.

In solidarity,

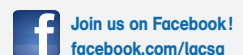

Louise Chabot | PRESIDENT

Photo Caroline Grégoire



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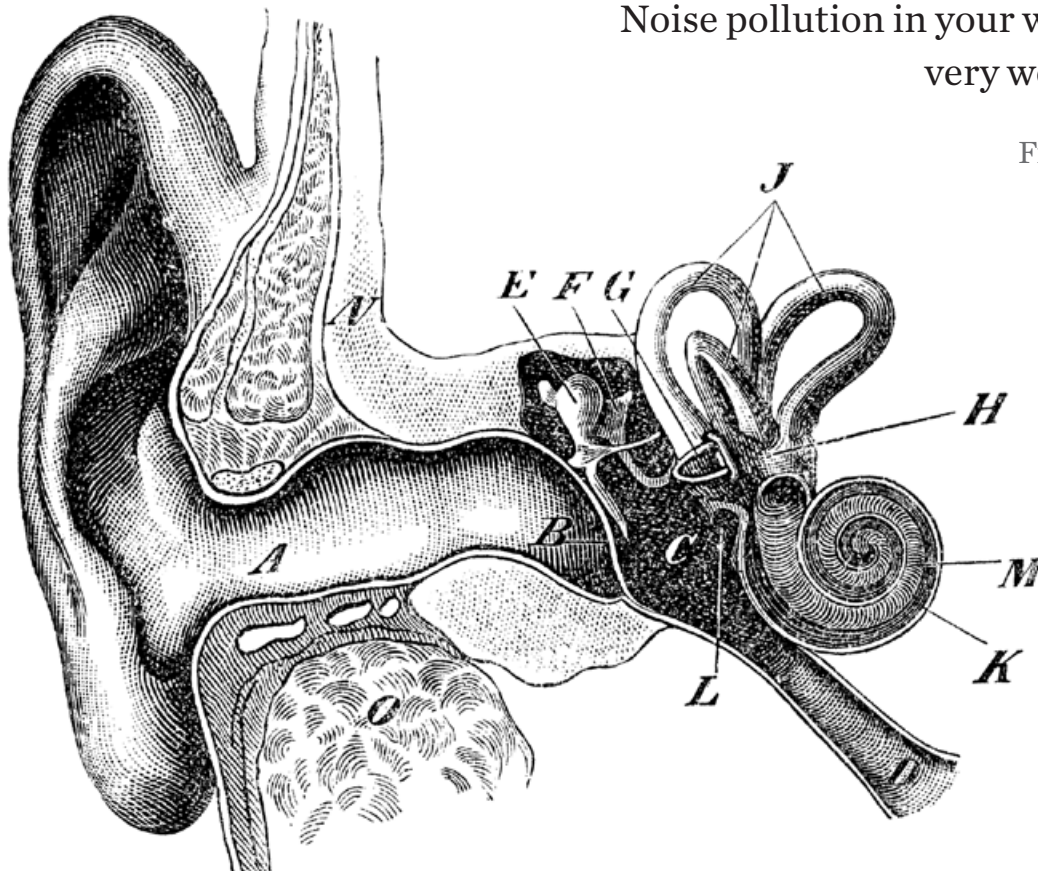
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NOISE: MORE THAN JUST A NUISANCE

Do you suffer from headaches, extreme fatigue,
voice loss, irritability or hearing impairments?
Noise pollution in your workplace could
very well be the cause.

François Beauregard
COLLABORATION



In education and early childcare, workplaces are noisy. It's no surprise that personnel are more vulnerable to hearing loss than workers in other professions. Since the effects of noise pollution are cumulative and hearing loss can become irreversible, it's best to address it before it's too late.

THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PHENOMENON IS UNDERESTIMATED

According to Health Canada, the extent of the phenomenon is generally underestimated even though it is one of the most common hazards in the workplace. In Québec, the Institut national de santé publique (INSPQ) is troubled by increasing occupational deafness when means exist to prevent it.

SOUND OR NOISE: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Just like sound, noise is an auditory sensation created by acoustic waves of varying frequencies (high or low), intensities (loud or weak), and length. What's the difference? Ingrid Verduyckt¹ explains: "Noise is any kind of unwanted sound that interferes with our auditory perception of what we want to hear. Therefore, noise depends on our own subjective perception, which changes with age, gender or personal experience."

BEWARE OF EXCESS NOISE

The risks to auditory health therefore depend on noise levels, and the duration and accumulation of exposure to noise. In fact, Health Canada recommends taking into account all of the noise we're exposed to daily. If it regularly exceeds the limit, the amount of noise we experience every day may represent a danger to our hearing.

Besides auditory fatigue (a temporary decrease in hearing), prolonged overexposure to noise levels that exceed recommended limits may cause progressive hearing loss, tinnitus, and hyperacusis (intolerance for normal sounds), and more.

And that's not all: noise can also have negative effects on heart rate, stress, and sleep, in addition to causing headaches, increased fatigue, irritability and impatience, voice disorders, decreased concentration, and job dissatisfaction.

OUTDATED REGULATIONS

In Québec, the Regulation respecting occupational health and safety has set to 90 dB and 8 hours the maximum values for exposure to continuous noise to prevent occupational deafness, compared to 85 dB in most other provinces.



Ingrid Verduyckt

"It should be noted that this standard has not changed since 1979. Yet, it has been generally accepted by both science and the Québec courts that the risk of impairment is possible when exposed for extended periods of time to noise levels lower than the standards set in Québec," warns Mélanie Baril.²

¹ Ingrid Verduyckt is a speech-language pathologist and professor at École d'orthophonie et d'audiologie in Université de Montréal's faculty of medicine. She was the invited guest lecturer at the Réseau SST of the CSQ in April 2018.

² Mélanie Baril is a OHS advisor at the CSQ.

She adds that the CNESST³, which has reported an increase in the number of cases of occupational deafness since 2004, is currently working on the regulatory aspects of this issue. "Workplaces must address the issue of noise, even if it is below the standards. Occupational health and safety committees should address it in order to find solutions that will allow to reduce its significant impact on workers' health," she says.

THE DANCE OF THE DECIBELS

Studies in Québec and elsewhere have shown that the noise level in childcare centres and home childcare centres ranges between 56 and 71 dB, peaking as high as 80 to 95 dB.

In schools, the intensity of noise observed in classrooms ranges from 57 to 70 dB, peaking at 97 dB. In music rooms, gymnasiums, cafeterias, and schoolyards, the intensity varies between 80 and 90 dB, peaking at over 100 dB. Worse still, overpopulation in some schools, combined with dilapidated buildings, accentuate this serious yet still grossly underestimated problem.

³ Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST).

⁴ Annick Béland is a member of the Syndicat lavallois des employés de soutien scolaire (SLESS-CSQ).

EDUCATION WORKERS AT RISK

European studies on the effects of noise on teachers are very revealing. It has been shown that 82% are exposed to noise for approximately one quarter of their work time. They must speak louder and repeat instructions, which in the long term affect their voice capacity.

Other studies suggest that more experienced teachers tolerate noise less than they did earlier in their careers. Many also complain of hearing impairments. In addition, a significant proportion is more tired at the end of the day and has trouble sleeping.

SIMILAR SITUATION IN EARLY CHILDCARE

Noisy early childcare environments (home-based and in centres) also increase the stress felt by workers. In addition to vocal fatigue, educators are more vulnerable to extreme fatigue, find it more difficult to tolerate noise at home, and develop sleep problems.

CHILDCARE CENTRES IN TURMOIL

In schools, noise levels vary with activities. Annick Béland⁴ knows something about it. She is an educator in the



Annick Béland

Photo François Beaugard

childcare centre at École primaire Val-des-Ruisseaux in Laval.

We interviewed her in the school cafeteria at lunchtime. In no time, we had to raise our voices to be heard. A few times, she had to yell to calm the enthusiasm of noisier students. Games, sports, and the movements and meetings of her group are all part of her daily routine.

"My colleagues and I constantly wear walkie-talkies. In one day, I can make 160 calls on this device. It can very quickly become a source of irritation since we can't rid ourselves of it. We need it for communication and safety reasons," she says.

At night, she enjoys the silence just like her colleagues who regularly lose their voices. During the interview, we crossed a physical education teacher who has lost more than 20% hearing in one ear. As for the brand new gymnasium, it wasn't built with acoustic panels...

In another school, a childcare educator, whose name cannot be mentioned due to actions underway, has lost 80% of her hearing. Is the issue of noise pollution taken seriously enough? Doubtful.

GYMNASIUMS: EXCEPTIONALLY NOISY ENVIRONMENTS

Alain Vachon⁵ has been teaching physical education for 20 years at École Sainte-Cécile in Jonquière. He suffers from sig-



Photo Gratien Tremblay

nificant hearing loss. It's not surprising when we know that noise levels often exceed 100 dB in gymnasiums.

After sharing his problem during a meeting, his union suggested that he and three other teachers participate in a special OHS pilot project that aims to evaluate the effectiveness of molded ear protectors (earplugs) with acoustic filters.

"The experience was very illuminating. At the beginning, I was surprised because

the sound of the whistle and other background noises were significantly reduced, but I could still hear voices well and communicate easily with the students," he said with satisfaction.

These molded earplugs are perfectly fitted to individual ears and can be removed and reinserted quickly. As a means of prevention, Alain Vachon wholeheartedly recommends their use to his teachers in training.

⁵ Alain Vachon is a member of the Syndicat de l'Enseignement de la Jonquière (CSQ).



Photo Archives FSE-CSQ

A PROACTIVE UNION

Claude Bradet⁶ rejoices at the school board's attentiveness to this issue. He explains that the pilot project was a success: "The project will be expanded to teachers who work in other high-risk noisy areas, such as music rooms, wood-working shops, and some vocational training programs."

"These molded earplugs with acoustic filters prevent damage to hearing without being too inconvenient for the users. Acoustic panels have also been installed in some gymnasiums to reduce the reverberation effect. It's a good way to reduce noise and protect the workers," he says.

NEGLECTED ACOUSTIC QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

To promote comprehension in the classroom, Ingrid Verduyck is categorical: ideal noise levels should not exceed 65 dB. Yet this limit is often exceeded.

"There is a lot of focus on energy conservation when building or renovating schools. It's good, but the acoustic quality of the environment also needs to be considered as it affects the auditory and vocal health of workers, as well as the quality of learning for students."

The researcher also reminds us that beyond the words, the tone in which they are spoken have an effect on the listen-

er's perception. For example, a teacher speaking loudly in a noisy environment may unwillingly provoke the students to shut down, which is the opposite of their intention. "Understandably, teachers are preoccupied with the pedagogical content they're teaching. However, the sound landscape is neglected in pedagogical planning and left out of teacher training. Why? The reason is simple: the impact of noise on the quality of teaching is greatly underestimated," she deplores.

Yet, studies have shown that the louder the noise, the less the teacher's voice is understood. Add to this other effects, notably on student concentration, psychomotor agitation, aggressiveness, and performance.

⁶ Claude Bradet is a union advisor and member of the OHS joint committee of the Syndicat de l'Enseignement de la Jonquière (CSQ).

IMPACT ON LEARNING

Ingrid Verduyck recalls the results of a study⁷ performed with three groups of same-level students. The first group was in a quiet environment, the second group was exposed to noise from movement, and the last group was exposed to noise from voices. Identical instructions were given by computer.

"When the students were asked if the noise had bothered them, every group answered no. Yet, when the results of the tasks of varying levels of difficulty were compared, the group exposed to voices scored 30% lower on their tasks. It's a significant difference which indicates that we need to address noise management in education!" she says.

She adds that when asked about it, many persons exposed to noise in the workplace assume it's just one of the inconveniences of the job. "The problem with overexposure to noise is that it's largely underestimated, by both the public authorities and the victims themselves," worries the speech-language pathologist.

WORK TO RAISE AWARENESS IS NEEDED

A simple online search about noise and learning on the Ministère de l'Éducation

du Québec website and the Fédération des commissions scolaires website yields the following response: no results found.

We also spoke with a school board building engineer who was unable to find any guidelines from the Ministère regarding specific acoustic standards for schools.

It's not surprising that within this context we end up with renovated or brand-new music rooms, gymnasiums, and meeting rooms with no soundproofing or noise-reducing devices. It's shameful!

And yet, the Act respecting occupational health and safety is clear: the employer must control the risks to the safety or health of the workers. "When the standards set by the OHS regulation are not met, the employer must work to reduce the source of the noise, isolate the work station, or soundproof the installations. If these are impossible, the employer must provide ear protectors," specifies Mélanie Baril.

A PUBLIC HEALTH RISK

Putting tennis balls under desks is useful, but creating healthy school environments that are conducive to learning is needed. Raising awareness with public authorities is perhaps the first step. But it's also important to keep in mind that overexposure to noise is not inevitable, there are things that can be done to reduce it and prevent eventual hearing damage.

In fact, this issue is affecting a growing proportion of the population. For this reason, in a notice from the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the INSPQ recommends that Québec adopt a public policy to reduce the effects of environmental noise. This new position inspired by the work of the World Health Organization confirms that exposure to noise pollution is without a doubt a significant public health issue that can no longer be ignored.



Photo Archives FSE-CSQ

⁷ Klatte, M., Lachmann, T., & Meis, M. (2010). "Effects of noise and reverberation on speech perception and listening comprehension of children and adults in a classroom-like setting", *Noise and Health*, 12(49), 270.

10 WAYS TO PAMPER YOUR EARS

When it comes to noise, prevention is key. Audiologist Annelies Bockstael¹ shares her recommendations.

Catherine Gauthier | EDITOR IN CHIEF

1. Limit time spent on very loud activities. If you have to raise your voice loudly to make yourself heard by someone one metre away from you, the ambient noise is dangerous for your hearing.
2. Take breaks without noise to allow your ears to recuperate. For example, after a noisy evening, leave the car radio off, especially if you feel some temporary hearing loss.
3. Wear well-fitted ear protectors and consult an audiologist as needed. To clarify:
 - a. Earplugs should not be visible when you look in the mirror. To make sure they fit properly, place your hands over your ears while wearing them: the sound level should not change.
 - b. Do not reuse disposable earplugs. They can be purchased over the counter in drugstores, but the label must indicate the level of noise reduction in decibels.
 - c. Soundproof earmuffs and reusable earplugs must be in good condition and perfectly adjusted to your ears.
4. Set your volume to a reasonable level: car, home, mobile phone. Tip: You should still be able to easily hear ambient sounds.
5. See a doctor if you're concerned about your hearing, especially if: you have the feeling others are mumbling, you have trouble following a conversation when there is ambient noise, or if you develop tinnitus.
6. Pay attention to early and temporarily signs of hearing damage. If you've lost hearing after exposure to noise – with or without ear protection –, if you experience ringing (tinnitus) or if you feel pressure in your ear, you have been overexposed to noise. If the symptoms disappear very fast, you don't necessarily need to consult a physician or audiologist. Make sure, however, that it doesn't happen again: temporary damage can make the ear more vulnerable.
7. Learn how to prevent auditory damage, for example, by installing acoustic panels or tiles on walls and ceilings.
8. Organize activities to raise awareness with young children and students, for example, listening to the silence and describing the sounds heard, organizing a zero-noise challenge, etc.
9. Install a noise indicator in the classroom or room. This type of device indicates sound levels with colours or numbers, increasing awareness in students.
10. Finally, before taking steps to obtain ear protectors, consult your OHS committee or your union.

¹ Annelies Bockstael is an audiologist and professor at École d'orthophonie et d'audiologie in Université de Montréal's faculty of medicine.

GOING GREEN

The decision is both a courageous and reasoned one. By withdrawing from the coal energy sector, the Fonds de solidarité FTQ is taking concrete action for our planet. And it's just the beginning of a significant shift.

Catherine Gauthier
CHIEF EDITOR

Over the next few years, the Fonds de solidarité FTQ will be making an important transition toward more ecologically responsible choices. A few months ago, the Fonds announced the decision to shareholders, focusing on one fundamental aspect: respect for workers with regard to the creation and maintenance of jobs, as well as the performance of their savings for retirement.

In addition to withdrawing from one of the most polluting energy sectors, the Fonds has added ten coal companies to its list of excluded holdings. The David Suzuki Foundation and Greenpeace commended the announcement, which was also heartily applauded by shareholders.

TRANSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE

Why this shift? Mario Tremblay¹ explains: "The Fonds de solidarité is a socially responsible investment fund with more



Mario Tremblay

Photo Yves Lacombe

than 645,000 shareholders – workers from across Québec – and an increasing number were demanding a transition plan for the future. We also want to do our part to help Québec and Canada reach the objectives set in the Paris climate agreement."

He adds that the Fonds has joined the CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project), an independent non-profit organization, which acts as an intermediary between some 800 institutional investors and businesses worldwide. "These businesses are committed to itemizing and reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. They also disclose their levels of risk and their action plans," he explains.

A BROAD VISION

Furthermore, the Fonds has set up a committee that will focus on greenhouse gas reduction targets, as well as investment sectors to prioritize and sectors to drop from their portfolio during the next few years.

"These are in addition to other Fonds investments that support the energy transition, such as Enerkem – a producer of biofuel made from waste – and Lion electric school buses. A growing number of SMBs want to be accompanied in this shift, as the challenge is far greater for them," he concludes.

¹ Mario Tremblay is vice-president of corporate and public affairs at the Fonds de solidarité FTQ.

“WE’RE LIKE A FAMILY”

Being a home childcare provider in a region comes with its own share of peculiarities... and anecdotes!

Mathieu Morin | FIPEQ-CSQ ADVISOR

Going outside in winter when four of six children have forgotten their mitts is the type of challenge Monique Cloutier¹ has to deal with. Forward-thinking, she is always ready with alternative solutions.

“In Chandler, everyone knows everyone. Before entrusting their child to a home childcare provider (HCP), parents ask around. A centre’s reputation is very important in their decision,” she says.

SUPPORTING PARENTS

Although they might be conscientious in choosing their childcare centre, Monique Cloutier realizes that some parents also shirk some of their responsibilities.

“A few years ago, if a child arrived without proper winter clothing, we asked the parents to return home to get it. Today, we try to accommodate them. If a child doesn’t have their mitts, I go through my old boxes to find a pair and we head outside,” she says with a smile.

Monique Cloutier is aware of the reality of parents. “The pace of modern life can be tough for working parents,” she says. “Recently, I had a parent who’d had a bad day. Well, I invited them for supper! It the perfect example of the spirit of solidarity that exists in our region.”

This closeness can also lead to unexpected situations. “I have a mother who works in a hospital. She asked me to keep her child for the night because she had to work mandatory overtime. I’m not sure it’s something that happens very often in the city!” she says.

THE CHILDREN, A MOTIVATING FACTOR

After 20 years, Monique Cloutier acknowledges the demands of her career. However, for her, making the children happy is what keeps her motivated.

“We’re like a family! Being a HCP allows me to live in the region and community I love. In fact, there’s shortage of workers at the moment, so if a HCP wants to set up in our area, it’s the right time!” she says.

¹ Monique Cloutier is a member of the Alliance des intervenantes en milieu familial Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madeleine (CSQ).



Photo Roger St-Laurent

“CHILDCARE CENTRES ARE DESIGNED FOR PLAY”

Helping children develop their autonomy

Mathieu Morin
FIPEQ-CSQ ADVISOR

One of the original childcare educators, Gitane Lemay¹ has seen an evolution in her field. Working in a childcare centre since 1988, she is well positioned to describe the changes.

Over the last five years, the idea of free play has grown. “My role is to enrich the activities of the children, not to impose strict standards. It’s an important change compared with how things were done ten years or so ago,” she says.

One of the main triggers for her occurred on a day when the children took all of the toys out. They were laughing and inventing their own games. At the time, Gitane Lemay intervened and ended the activity.

“When I arrived home that evening, I questioned my actions. Why did I stop the activity when they were having so much fun? The next day, I let them take all of the toys out again, as long as they put them all away after,” she says.

Despite technological advances, electronic devices are rarely used at the CPE Ribambelle. “Sometimes we use them for sciences, but that’s all. They have plenty at home. Childcare centres are designed for play.”

Over the years, electronic feedback tools for parents have been developed. However, she feels it’s never as effective as direct contact.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

The profession of childcare worker is extremely demanding, both physically and emotionally. For Gitane Lemay, it’s a true vocation.

“It’s important that young women coming out of school understand what they’re getting themselves into. There are a lot of controls and many of our pedagogical resources have been cut in recent years.”

Gitane Lemay will be retiring in June. She remembers a time when educators were in charge of the educational service.

“Back then, we would sit together and review the profits. We would then look at the possibility of increasing our salaries. We built childcare centres from the bottom up, completely on our own. Today, we work in a contract environment. It’s very different,” she says.

¹ Gitane Lemay is a member of the Syndicat des intervenantes en petite enfance de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue (CSQ).

UNITING FORCES

Frustration has generalized across public services. Everywhere, the suffering is the same. But the next few months could very well mark a turning point.

Jean-François Piché | CSQ ADVISOR

It's all over the media. There's no escaping it. Whether in education, higher education, early childhood or health, workers are distressed and burning out. They feel isolated and powerless. This observation may seem harsh, but it's the sad truth.

So how did we get here? This monumental mess is the direct result of our successive governments' vision of public services for more than 30 years. One after the other, they've treated public services as an expense rather than an investment.

A VISION THAT HURTS

Treating public services and workers as expenses that need to be decreased at any cost has led to a variety of consequences that have severely undermined daily working conditions and eroded the quality of services.





Consider the lack of resources and means to offer quality services, bureaucratic and authoritarian management practices, accounting requirements, threats of sanctions, lack of professional autonomy, the lack of respect for professional judgement and knowhow, etc.

All of this leads to a significant loss of meaning in the workplace, in addition to affecting the physical and emotional health of workers. It's therefore not surprising that a large number of workers isolate themselves and try to cope on their own.

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR CHANGE

It goes without saying that the situation cannot continue this way. If we really want to change things, we need to intervene at the source of the problem by fighting against this inhumane vision of public services. And to do so, we need to act collectively, not on our own.

It's in this spirit that the CSQ has chosen the theme of collective action for its next Congress this coming June. Delegates will debate proposals that aim to inform workers of toxic management practices and increase awareness of the fact that they are not the cause of the problem.

Educating children or adults, caring for patients, helping students with difficulties, and even advising professionals are all duties that don't fit in standardized work processes, no matter what politicians believe.

In short, our Congress will be the opportunity to prepare a union strategy focused on collective action for achieving lasting change in our work environments and bringing humanity back into public services. We have the power to act, and together we will make things happen.



WATCHING OVER AND CARING FOR STUDENTS

Tact, diplomacy, and being a good listener are necessary qualities when it comes to intervening with students to enforce the rules in high school.

Martin Cayouette
FPSS-CSQ ADVISOR

Monique Gilbert¹ is a student supervisor. She likes all of the aspects of a support relationship. "I'm responsible for sowing the seeds, but not for the outcome," she says about the advice she gives students who attempt to break the rules.

CULTIVATING AWARENESS

A quality relationship with students is essential to obtain their cooperation. "During

discussions, we try to cultivate awareness of the impact of their actions and words."

"I encourage them to think. Sometimes we have several philosophical discussions. They're a work in progress. They question themselves. They need to form their own opinions. It's what I'm passionate about!"

MANAGING ABSENCES

One of the lesser known duties of student supervisors is the administrative work of updating student files, which takes up a significant portion of their days.

"I follow up when students are absent without justification. I need to know the reason they aren't in school. On the last school day, in December, I received 500 calls. I usually get 100 calls a day, more or less, plus the 60 to 70 emails I send and receive every day."

Even though telephone communications are decreasing, they remain an important link. "The contact with the parents allows me to better understand students going through their parents' separation or other difficult times. It gives me the opportunity to tell the parents about the services available at school for their child."

WHERE THE ACTION IS

When she walks the hallways during breaks, Monique Gilbert is in the thick of the action, keenly aware of everything that's going on.

"We need to listen to our young people and remain as fair as possible, while also remaining calm during every one of our interventions. We need an iron fist in a velvet glove," she concludes philosophically.



Monique Gilbert

Photo Stéphane Lemire

¹ Monique Gilbert is a member of the Syndicat du personnel technique et administratif de la Commission scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke (CSQ).

HELPING CÉGEPS SHINE BRIGHTER EVERY DAY

Communication is at the core of everything. It's true everywhere, even in the college network.

Simon Lavigne | CSQ ADVISOR

Véronique Vaudrin¹, communications counsellor at Collège de Valleyfield, astounds when questioned about her duties. She is the consummate portrait of a committed professional with multiple attributes.

KNOWING HOW TO JUGGLE PRIORITIES

"Communications are the heart of a cégep," she says. From public relations to advisory roles with cégep stakeholders, as well as event logistics, webmaster duties, and communications tools: these are just a few of the experienced advisor's responsibilities.

"The organization of work varies from one institution to another throughout the network, as do the number of resources. In a small cégep, it's important to be well equipped. And we also need to remember to take one bite at a time!" she explains with humour.

WEATHERING THE STORM

The Collège de Valleyfield hasn't escaped the wave of cutbacks in recent years. These have led to difficult choices, prioritizing, and tightening budgets.

"During this time, we've reminded the cégeps' various bodies of the value of the communications team, as well as identified our needs and asserted their importance," explains Véronique Vaudrin, who has occupied this job for 9 years.

The union has supported these efforts, and although there's still work to do, it has led to concrete results, notably with the rein-



Photo Pierre Langevin

statement of an information technician position, which had been abolished through attrition, and the opening, in the summer of 2017, of a communications advisor position (three days a week).

A SOURCE OF PRIDE

A cégep's reach and visibility within its community are part of its core mission. And this unseen work extends far beyond simple press releases.

"I am very proud of the work I do when conducting college information tours with my colleagues. It's one of the parts of my job I am most passionate about. Being able to communicate directly with high school students at a critical time for their futures and to see the sparkle in their eyes when they discover new fields of study... these are special moments," she concludes.

¹ Véronique Vaudrin is a member of the Fédération du personnel professionnel des collèges (FPPC-CSQ).

THREE UNION ROOKIES

Many are daring to dive into the union universe. In fact, the future is more vibrant than ever. With a contagious excitement, the following militants are embarking on this adventure together.

Simon Lavigne | CSQ ADVISOR

David Jutras, Josée Ratelle
and Janis Myre



Photo Pascal Ratthé

Every morning at 5 a.m., Josée Ratelle¹ starts to carefully prepare nearly 1000 pastries. For 21 years, she's worked as a kitchen general helper at Collège Ahuntsic. "I value punctuality and efficiency in what I do. And this extends beyond my own work," she says.

Her work plan is located in the busiest corner of the kitchens. "Everyone comes to see me and talk to me. It's important that I be there for them. I'm very sensitive towards others," she adds.

It's no surprise that Josée Ratelle was unanimously elected as the representative for cafeteria workers. This being said, she admits that her recent involvement in the union is an important step in her personal growth.

"I couldn't have accepted this role a few years ago. I used to talk before listening. Although I had the drive back then, today I also have the wisdom to intervene more effectively."

DISCOVERING A PASSION

David Jutras¹ has been a prevention and security officer at Collège Ahuntsic for 9 years. "He has a very calm personality," says his colleague, Janis Myre. His welcoming and unprejudiced approach is appreciated by his co-workers and sought after in cégep. "I've stood up for numerous groups, notably the general association of students, who I often collaborate with," he says.

Supported by deeply held values, this ability to build trust is not unrelated to his recent union involvement. "I'm proud

¹ Josée Ratelle, David Jutras and Janis Myre are members of the Syndicat du personnel de soutien du Collège Ahuntsic (CSQ). Last April, they counted among 80 or so participants attending the CSQ's Camp de la relève syndical. Militant persons present belonged to unions in the education, higher education, early childhood, and health and community sectors.

to be unionized. I'm disappointed by some of the criticism I hear. Through my involvement, I'm trying to correct some of these misperceptions," he says.

Elected as advisor for the local executive committee, he hopes to deepen and develop his union engagement, notably through the university studies he's recently begun. "I love it! You'll be seeing more of me!" he says enthusiastically.

QUICKLY RISING IN THE RANKS

Janis Myre¹ has been an administrative support agent at Collège Ahuntsic for 7 years. Her accounting and payroll

duties mean that she interacts regularly with external providers and many cégep stakeholders.

"The service I provide to users is my main source of pride and motivation. When a problem arises, I jump into solution mode. I want to settle everything quickly and well," she says.

Her ability to identify problems and her determination to resolve them fast are just a few of the qualities that explain how Janis has so rapidly risen in the ranks of her union to her current position as vice-president. But it hasn't always been easy. Newly-elected, she had to temporarily take over the responsibilities of the presidency.

"Thankfully, I had some knowledge of the collective agreement because of my work in human resources. Slowly, I learned to understand my mandate and find my bearings. I especially like being able to inform members, set the record straight," she explains.

DRIVING FORCES

In addition to their growing experiences, Josée Ratelle, David Jutras and Janis Myre belong to a new generation of driving forces investing in the unions, revitalizing local approaches, and opening new ways of engaging with their centrale, the CSQ.

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