



**Communication
October 9, 2020**

Dear Colleagues,

We wanted to take this opportunity to update you on a number of changes from the Ministry of Education that took place this week, as well as a few important details at the local level.

First and foremost, though, we want to continue to acknowledge the incredible stress, anxiety, and frustration that you are working under as schools and centres operate in the context of the pandemic. Please do not hesitate to continue to reach out to Ann Granger, Pasquale Machado or Matt Wilson and we will do everything we can to support you and to find the answers that you deserve.

Many of you have expressed concerns about the memo sent last week from Human Resources detailing how absences are being processed based on the recommendations of the CNESST and *Santé Publique*. We understand your concern that these recommendations are an added stress and we continue to inform our provincial partners at QPAT of your concerns. The frustration about how asymptomatic teachers are being told to return to work, or that teachers awaiting a test result that was not recommended by *Santé Publique* must do so using personal leave days is a great concern. This affects not just PTU and the LBPSB, or even just teachers and school boards, but will affect all levels of workers and industry across the province. We hope that the government responds in a tangible way to the concerns expressed by all citizens on this issue.

Here are the updates for the week of October 5, 2020:

Workloads: Youth and Continuing Education

Your workloads are due on October 15, 2020. You should not be signing any workload that does not respect the regular terms of our collective agreement. Please contact Ann Granger (Youth Sector) or Pasquale Machado (Continuing Education) if you have any questions or concerns.

Provincial Negotiations and Mobilization

We are about to enter a critical phase of our provincial negotiations. To that effect, QPAT and our negotiating partners at the FSE have updated their mobilization plan with a series of different actions and possible strike scenarios. To choose actions that best reflect the desire of all teachers, QPAT will be hosting a virtual information session for all PTU teachers on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. In this meeting, QPAT will discuss an overview of the negotiations since our initial deposit last October and answer questions about both negotiations and mobilization. We will also be giving QPAT President Heidi Yetman direction on how to vote at the *conseil fédéral* of the FSE to best reflect the wishes of the membership. Information about pre-registration for the meeting will be sent to you next week.

New Measures in Red Zones: Youth Sector

On Monday, October 5, 2020, Minister Roberge announced a series of measures that would apply to elementary and high schools in regions designated as red zones. These new measures take effect as of Thursday, October 8, 2020 and are in effect until at least October 28, 2020. These measures include:

- Students must remain in a single stable class group. Physical distancing is still not required between students within that group, while the teacher should maintain a physical distancing of at least two metres as much as possible.
 - The only exception is for students taking option classes required for CEGEP programmes. In this case, face coverings and physical distancing must be maintained.
- Professional services (such as resource support) can continue for students on an individual basis, or in groups no larger than six. If these students come from different class groups, the students must maintain a two metre distance from each other.
- All extra-curricular activities and field trips are suspended.
- Secondary students must wear a face covering as soon as they arrive on the school grounds, including in the classroom. Students may remove their face covering only in the following circumstances:
 - When a student is seated while eating or drinking.
 - When a student is in Physical Education class and maintains a two metre distance from others.
 - When a student has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a face covering.
 - When receiving care, obtaining a service or performing a physical activity that requires them to remove their face covering.
- Secondary IV and V classes must follow a hybrid model, where students attend school in person every second day. In conversation with the LBPSB, high schools that began the year with a hybrid model will be allowed to keep the same schedule.
- Teachers must wear procedural masks in all common areas, including in staffrooms and in the school yard.
 - The same rule as before still applies: if a physical distance of two metres can be maintained in the classroom, the procedural mask is not obligatory. If physical distancing is not possible for a cumulative total of 15 minutes, the procedural mask and ocular protection are obligatory.
- It is recommended by the Ministry that teachers work remotely as much as possible. Technological tools should be promoted where appropriate, including for staff meetings. It is also recommended that teachers work remotely to perform “other duties” that do not require the presence of students, including complimentary tasks and work of a personal nature. This arrangement is still subject to approval by administration.
 - Please discuss this with your administrator and ask for specific reasons if a request to work remotely is denied. Do not hesitate to contact the PTU office as needed.

QPAT Convention

In the context of the pandemic, our regular QPAT Convention was cancelled. However, a virtual Convention has been organised. Pre-Convention workshops will take place on October 15, 2020 and a

series of virtual webinars will be hosted on October 16, 2020. You have received two memos from QPAT with details on how to register, and you may also find the same information [here](#).

We informed QPAT that not having any webinars for our francophone teachers was a concern. They are looking to run the webinar on online teaching in both English and French. A revised webinar list should be posted on QPAT's website shortly.

Evaluation: Youth Sector

Following formal intervention from both QPAT and the FSE, the Ministry of Education has made modifications to the reporting periods during these exceptional times. These modifications include:

- The withdrawal of the regular first term report card.
- There will be two reporting periods instead of the usual three.
- The first report card must be sent to parents no later than January 22, 2021 and the second report card must be sent to parents by July 10, 2021.
- Modification to the dates by which each of the terms must end.
- Each of the two reporting periods will be weighted at 50%.

In light of these modifications, written communication will need to be made with parents by November 20, 2020 but no details about the form this will take have been shared by either the MEQ or by the LBPSB.

The MEQ is encouraging that parent-teacher interviews take place after the November communication and again sometime in April. As was the case with the many Curriculum Nights in September, these meetings will almost certainly take place remotely. Further details will follow from your administrator.

Finally, the MEQ has already acknowledged concerns from the education network (including our intervention through QPAT) that formal examinations in elementary schools and in the first cycle of the secondary need to be adjusted, modified or shortened. Logically, similar consideration would also be made for all ministerial examinations. Further communication from the MEQ has been promised. The Ministry is also asking school boards to consider lightening the evaluation requirements in local school-board examinations as well.

BOLD Training: Youth Sector

The purpose of the BOLD training is to ensure that all teachers are ready in the event of a class or school-wide closure, given that teachers are expected to start teaching virtually very quickly. Thank you to all teachers who provided feedback in last week's survey on BOLD training: we received 543 responses! Although the majority of teachers gave favourable feedback on the training, a number of concerns were noted. In particular, the lack of time devoted to this training is a significant concern. We have expressed these concerns to a variety of departments at the school board. We hope to find an acceptable solution with the LBPSB. In the meantime, we strongly encourage you to discuss this item at School Council and to work with your administrator to find a local solution for when the training can be credited within the workday. Possible solutions we suggest include cancelling a future staff meeting or crediting time on a future pedagogical day to compensate for the time spent on the BOLD training. Thank you for your

feedback in this matter: hearing from so many of you gave significant weight to our interventions with the school board.

Pension Workshops

QPAT will be holding a series of workshops for teachers who are considering retirement by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year. You may find more information on QPAT's website [here](#).

Parental Rights Workshops

PTU will also be hosting a parental rights workshop in collaboration with QPAT on Thursday, October 22 at 4:00 PM via the Zoom platform. If you are interested in attending, please email Melissa Noel at the PTU Office at ptusep@lbpearson.ca

We hope that you are able to take some time over the long weekend to rest and recharge. The burden being placed on your shoulders is great and can be overwhelming: please take your mental health into consideration! As teachers, we always put the needs and concerns of our students above all else. In this current pandemic context, your needs are just as important and deserve to be recognized.

As always, do not hesitate to reach out to us in the PTU Office with any issues and concerns, and we wish you a well-deserved Thanksgiving weekend.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Matt Wilson
President