

INFO-NÉGO

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Fédération nationale
des enseignantes et
des enseignants
du Québec

FNEEQ–CSN CEGEP Teachers' Collective Agreement Signed

Significant gains

After consulting the forty-five unions of the Regroupement cégep, the Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ–CSN) confirmed the adoption of both the sectoral and central table agreements by double majority, i.e. a majority of unions and a majority of voting members, in accordance with its rules. This paved the way to the final phase of bargaining: writing and adapting clauses to integrate the negotiated provisions into the collective agreement. The new agreement was signed by the parties on Tuesday, March the 1st.

Let's be honest, this last phase has been exceptionally difficult. After several months of back and forth and delaying tactics on the part of the CPNC, we finally reached an agreement. Although this solution required some compromises from us, the FNEEQ–CSN remains determined to support its unions in the next steps.

Wage increases

The new agreement lasts for three years—from April 1st, 2020, to March 31st, 2023. Wage increases negotiated at the central table are 2% per year for most full-time and part-time teachers. There are also non-recurring lump sum payments for the 2019–2020 and 2020–2021 academic years.

Among the gains obtained at the sectoral table are new pay scales for Continuing Education recognizing the experience of hourly-paid teachers, who will benefit from a wage increase of up to 34% by the end of the new collective agreement's term.

We also obtained a significant wage catch-up for our colleagues at the Centre québécois de formation aéronautique (CQFA). Lastly, the first six steps of our pay scale were increased significantly as of April 1st, 2020.



More resources and recognition

Resources for students with disabilities (EESH) were integrated into the collective agreement, including a requirement to create permanent teaching positions (postes) with a portion of them. In addition, there will be new allocations for the next round of staffing plans, namely for program coordination as well as the coordination of internships and stages in health-related technical and nursing programs.

An appendix on academic freedom will at last be added to the collective agreement—a historic boost to our professional autonomy. Complementary and multidisciplinary courses will now generate permanent teaching positions, which should ease job insecurity. So should a new provision guaranteeing the right of non-permanent teachers to walk away from a previously accepted workload within a certain timeframe.

While the pandemic has had a notable impact on the bargaining process and its duration, we would like to acknowledge and commend both our resilience and our collective mobilization effort. We should celebrate the gains we managed to obtain. Soon enough, we'll be able to measure their effect on both working and wage conditions in our respective colleges.

Lump sums and retroactive payments

In accordance with the agreement reached by the negotiating parties, two lump-sum payments of \$602.68 per full-time equivalent will be made within thirty days of the collective agreement's signature. The amounts owed for wage increases should be disbursed within 120 days. However, all new rates apply as of the agreement's signature—as do any other negotiated provisions.

Hourly-paid teachers will have their experience recognized retroactively to

July 1st, 2021. Those who have worked exclusively as hourly-paid teachers will have thirty days to provide their employer with their teaching and professional experience documents, starting on the date their employer issues a notice to that effect. This notice should be published within ten days of the collective agreement's signature.

The next round of bargaining begins

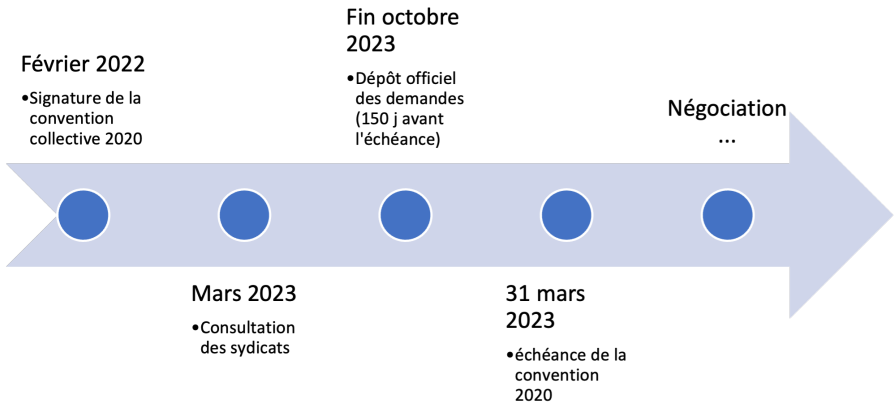
The new collective agreement is unique in that it will barely apply outside of the context of talks to renew it. This unusual situation is the result of a particularly long round of bargaining as well as the term of the new agreement, which is three years instead of the five that we have gotten used to in recent rounds. Our agreement will expire on March 31st, 2023, a little over a year after it was signed.

Since the Act respecting the process of negotiation of the collective agreements in the public and parapublic sectors obliges us to submit our demands no more than 150 days before the collective agreement expires, we need to start consulting on our demands as of now.

Preparing union demands is based on a broad exercise in democracy in which each union will have the opportunity, based on its local culture, to take stock of the issues concerning its working conditions and to suggest solutions worth including in our central and sectoral table demands. In March 2022, the members of the bargaining and mobilization committee want to hear from you. With this foundation, we will analyze and pool the various concerns expressed across the province to prepare our bargaining proposals. These will be presented to you in early fall 2022, as the first official submission at the bargaining table is due in late October—

A shared challenge for the entire public sector

The pandemic brought to light the full range of difficulties that public-sector workers face every day. Underfunding, compounded by the challenges of the pandemic, exacerbates a vicious cycle of work overload. Under conditions that have worsened over the past two years and with lagging compensation, it is no surprise that attracting and retaining workers has been so difficult.



With the upcoming provincial election in the fall and an ever-evolving pandemic, the future is very uncertain. However, some facts remain clear: structural reshuffling is not a viable solution. The solution lies in better recognition of public-sector workers.

Your 2023 bargaining committee is already hard at work in the hope that the next round of bargaining might lead to new gains for you, for CEGEP teaching—and for the entire public sector.



The solution? Education

Short-sighted solutions will not suffice for getting our heads above water. The CEGEPs are set to play a crucial role and will require the means to fulfill their ambitions, as educating and training public-sector workers takes place largely within their walls. But high-quality, accessible education requires good working conditions, among other things.

The government's decision to invest in the educational fields it deems essential reflects its utilitarian view that education should be subordinated to the needs of the market. One thing is clear: investment in higher education requires more than simply providing students with bursaries. It requires the improvement of teachers' working conditions.