

NEGOTIATION SECTOR

Employer Intersectoral Offers on December 12, 2019

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REGROUPEMENT
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QUÉBEC GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL
represented by
THE SECRETARIAT OF THE CONSEIL DU TRÉSOR
FOR
THE LABOUR UNIONS CONCERNED

Quebec City, December 12, 2019

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FOREWORD

Major changes are taking place in society with significant impacts on the work world, such as:

- The issues of the existing workforce's availability in several sectors and regions;
- The growing needs of an ageing population for health care and social services;
- The arrival of new employees on the job market and a major number of retirements.

A collective agreement is not a static frame of reference, it must adapt to the changes in society and work world.

The public and parapublic sectors' collective agreements expiring on March 31, 2020 and negotiating their renewal is an opportunity to adapt them to today's realities. In this context, the government is filing its proposals or orientations on the intersectoral matters for the previously mentioned renewal¹.

The filing includes three sections:

- Section 1: The government's major challenges are listed as well as the objectives related to these issues;
- Section 2: Presentation of the government's proposals concerning the duration of the collective agreements and matters of government interest negotiated directly with the Secretariat of the Conseil du trésor at the intersectoral tables;
- Section 3: Proposes the setting up of three discussion forums on the government's priorities.

The Conseil du trésor is responsible for coordinating and following up on the negotiation of all the provisions negotiated at the provincial level. For the sake of consistency between the intersectoral and sectoral tables, the employer representatives at the various sectoral tables share the related challenges and objectives set out in this filing. This, without limiting the possibility for these employer representatives to identify other issues or objectives related to the matters negotiated at the sectoral level.

It is also important to point out that the government is undertaking these negotiations aware of its responsibility to citizens to manage public finances soundly. In this context, the growth of remuneration expenditures must remain compatible with the growth of the government's revenue.

Lastly, the government commits to undertaking constructive discussions with the union party, jointly seeking solutions to the problems raised, and taking into account both parties interests, so the population receives the highest quality services possible, in particular in education services and health care and social services.

¹ This filing is for all employees represented by the labour unions concerned, insofar that the content applies to them.

Section 1

THE GOVERNMENT'S CHALLENGES AND RELATED OBJECTIVES

Some specific issues cannot be ignored and deserve the attention of all stakeholders during negotiations. Therefore, the major challenges and objectives mentioned in this filing must be taken into account at the different intersectoral and sectoral bargaining tables in their respective actions throughout negotiations.

A) The issue of labour force availability and maintaining delivery of quality services for the population

The labour market picture has changed quickly in a few short years in Québec and the public and parapublic sectors must address labour force availability issues in order to ensure maintaining quality services for the population.

Faced with this issue, the government aims to ensure fair, equitable and adapted to the various stages of their career working conditions for the employees.

The government, also wanting to optimize the workforce and foster the transfer of expertise, wants to review certain working conditions, to adapt them to today's reality, with a view to greater flexibility and in the spirit of openness towards the members of the community thus contributing to public services of the highest quality.

B) The issue of the employees' overall health

Aware of the importance of rewarding work and employees' physical and mental well-being, the government intends to analyze the issue of overall health properly with its union partners. It wants to take the opportunity of negotiations to look at this issue differently.

The employees' overall health is worrisome as shown by the frequency and length of disabilities in the different sectors.

Therefore, the government wants to set up measures likely to reduce the number of absences due to disability as well as their length, while ensuring a satisfactory return to work that lasts. This, not only to increase work attendance, but mainly to improve employees' well-being in a work setting or environment that is enriching and motivating.

C) The issue of educational success

The significant amounts of money allotted to the education sector clearly show that the government is committed to improving the school success rate and reducing dropout rates. To attain these objectives, support from all stakeholders, especially that of the teachers is essential. Hence, teachers' working conditions will be the focus of particular attention during these negotiations notably that of teachers in their early careers working in youth, professional training and adult education sectors.

The government, aware that teachers have a leading role in relation to educational success, want, together with the union party, to find the means to enhance the value of this profession, help and support the teachers more.

More specifically, the objective of more educational success requires deeper reflection on certain provisions in the collective agreements, particularly those for special needs students and those related to the teaching role.

D) The issue of access to health care and social services

Access to health care and social services of the highest quality remains a constant concern, particularly in a context of an ageing population and the many actions taken over the last few years show this.

With this in mind, the government is considering reviewing certain working conditions, with the goal of improving access to quality health care and services particularly for the most vulnerable users, and resolving certain problems linked to organization of work. The government intends to pay special attention to employees, particularly health and social services' beneficiary attendants and auxiliary staff, working with clientele in long-term accommodation and those receiving home care.

Section 2

PROPOSALS REGARDING THE DURATION OF THE COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS AND MATTERS NEGOTIATED UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE CONSEIL DU TRÉSOR

The proposals in this section on matters negotiated under the aegis of the Conseil du trésor are not comprehensive. Therefore, new proposals on the matters negotiated at the intersectoral tables could be tabled during the negotiations, taking into account the work performed by the parties' representatives in the various discussion forums set out in Section 3 of this filing.

As for the financial resources allotted to the negotiations, all levels combined, the government intends to consider the known or expected inflation.

A) The duration of the collective agreements

A round of public and parapublic sector negotiations requires considerable human and financial resources for all parties involved. Once the new collective agreements are in effect, it is important that they be of sufficient duration to ensure stability of the working conditions and an "industrial peace" fostering good labour relations.

1. It is proposed that the next collective agreements are for five years, subject to making the required legislative amendments.

B) Salary plan

2. It is proposed to grant the following general salary increase parameters:

April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

Each salary rate and scale² in effect on March 31, 2020 is increased by 1.75% on April 1, 2020³.

April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Each salary rate and scale² in effect on March 31, 2021 is increased by 1.75% on April 1, 2021³.

April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

Each salary rate and scale² in effect on March 31, 2022 is increased by 1.50% on April 1, 2022³.

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Each salary rate and scale² in effect on March 31, 2023 is increased by 1.00% on April 1, 2023³.

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025

Each salary rate and scale² in effect on March 31, 2024 is increased by 1.00% on April 1, 2024³.

² The increase in the salary rate and scales is calculated based on the hourly rate.

³ For teachers in school boards, the salary increases are applied on the 141st workday of the school year. For college teachers, salary increases are applied on April 1.

3. It is proposed to pay a lump sum of \$1,000 to every employee who has reached the maximum in her salary scale on that date⁴.
4. It is proposed that every premium, except the premiums mentioned in the appendix and premiums expressed as percentages, and every allowance are increased on the same date and same percentage as set out in proposal No. 2.

C) Follow-up of the 2015-2020 working committees

5. After the exercise conducted by the working committee on the 10% premium paid to certain skilled workers' job titles, it is proposed to undertake discussions on this premium taking into account the work performed.
6. It is proposed to undertake discussions about school board pedagogical advisors, taking into account the focus group's work, within the framework of the educational success forum set out in proposal No. 14.

D) Pension plans

The proposals on the pension plans listed below fall within the context where the government sees fit to undertake discussions with the stakeholders concerned to ensure proper identification of structural problems that can plague the public and parapublic sector pension plans.

The proposals show the importance the government gives to the sustainability and stability of the employees' pension plans as a means to improve workforce retention.

7. The coexistence of two pension plans with similar provisions inevitably causes certain problems. The government feels it is appropriate to undertake discussions with the stakeholders on the links between these plans.
8. It is proposed to review the pension plan provisions related to the salary used to calculate the pension annuity in order to resolve a problem of equity between the participants with different career paths.
9. The world of retirement, where the plan is a component, evolves and requires a comprehensive view. It is proposed to review some of its parameters and make amendments, if applicable, to ensure that a modern pension plan adequately meets the objective of maintaining financial security at retirement and promoting experienced employees remaining at work.
10. It is proposed to undertake discussions in order to review some of the pension plan provisions, particularly those related to the terms and conditions for financing benefits by the participants to reduce certain risk factors, if applicable, such as those linked to their maturity, financial markets performance and evolution of life expectancy.

⁴ According to the terms agreed between the parties.

E) Parental rights plan

- 11.** In principle, the provisions of the collective agreements related to parental rights should not give an employee a benefit she would not have if she had stayed at work. However, it appears that, in some cases, the allowances an employee receives give her a higher income than what she normally earns.

Hence, it is proposed to review the pertinent provisions in the collective agreements, in such a way as the employee absent from work receives an income replacement indemnity equal to what she normally earns, but no more than this amount.

- 12.** It is proposed to amend the parental rights plan to obtain a better link with the various government plans and other laws that can affect parental rights and facilitate the application of the terms related to benefits.

Section 3

DISCUSSION FORUMS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES

Without lessening the importance of other priorities, some of them need specific attention within the framework of negotiations. This is the case with the priorities related to the employees' overall health, educational success and access to health care listed in Section 1 of this filing.

Hence, it is proposed to set up a discussion forum for each priority, as soon as possible, according to agreed terms.

These discussion forums, under the aegis of the Secretariat of the Conseil du trésor, will be composed of representatives from the various labour associations concerned and employer representatives from the intersectoral and sectoral levels.

A) Discussion forums mandates

13. The mandate of the forum dealing with employees' overall health would be:

- To study this issue with specific attention to problems linked to disabilities, particularly the frequency and length of disabilities, their causes, whether physical or mental, and conditions for a return to work;
- To identify the problems in this respect;
- To make recommendations, with the purpose of fostering employees' well-being at work and work attendance.

14. The mandate of the forum dealing with educational success in the youth sector, professional training and adult education in line with the intersectoral matters would be:

- To analyze the basic issues linked to teachers taking into account interactions with the pedagogical advisor;
- To target the related problems;
- To make recommendations fostering educational success.

This forum will give rise to monetary measures rolled out during the duration of the collective agreements.

15. The mandate of the forum dealing with access to care for clientele in long-term accommodations or receiving home care in line with the intersectoral matters would be:

- To analyze the affects on the delivery of services of some of the working conditions of attendants and beneficiary attendants and health and social services auxiliary staff who give direct care to the clientele concerned, while considering the nursing team's work;
- To make recommendations to improve access to care for the clientele in long-term accommodations or receiving home care.

This forum will give rise to monetary measures rolled out during the duration of the collective agreements.

B) Follow-up of the work

The work of the above-mentioned forums should begin as quickly as possible after the employer's filing to help in the negotiations' success. In this context, the members of these forums must submit a report on their activities, including their recommendations, if applicable, by April 30, 2020. The bargaining parties will take into account the discussion forums work for the remainder of the negotiations.

CONCLUSION

The government repeats its intention to pursue the negotiations with its union counterparts in as constructive a manner as possible in order to reach an agreement that is satisfactory for all parties.

Negotiating the renewal of the collective agreements is an opportunity to tackle the issue of improving the offer of public services by the essential contribution of all employees combined with that of the members of the community.

In conclusion, the government wants to point out that with the many labour relations actions having major financial impacts, efforts will be made during the negotiations to settle these disputes. The government is asking for cooperation from its counterparts in this respect.

Appendix

FIXED PREMIUMS

Health and social services

1. Seniority

School boards

1. Custodian in charge of a school with a steam heating system
(English Montreal School Board)
2. Day custodian usually in charge of a second school
(Montreal English School Board)
3. Kettle pipe cleaning (English Montreal School Board)