

## **Report to the Annual General Meeting 2021-2022**

**Matt Wilson, PTU President**

To quote Yogi Berra, “it feels like déjà vu all over again.”

This has been yet another challenging year. Although the reopening of schools and centres in the fall led to a hope that things were returning to normal, the Omicron wave this past winter showed that the pandemic was far from over. As the number of cases exploded, staffing of schools and centres became a daily concern in many schools and centres. As we were forced to transition to “living with the virus,” we saw a withdrawal of Public Health in contact tracing, adding additional strain on you and your colleagues. As we enter the late spring and early summer, we are adjusting to a world with less direct intervention from government agencies and the withdrawal of most sanitary measures. In the midst of all of this, I salute your strength and resilience but also appreciate the great burden that teachers have borne throughout the pandemic. Society owes each of you a tremendous debt for the work you have done in educating students in the midst of great uncertainty.

Our work with the school board continued to be impacted by the pandemic. The school board continued to extend our monthly Health and Safety meetings into a weekly sharing of information amongst unions and associations. This provided us with regular opportunities to inform the directors of the school board about the true realities in your classrooms. Although these weekly meetings are now ending, and returning to their pre-pandemic forum, a focus on health and safety remains a key part of our interventions. The other dozen or so committees, that PTU is part of, were also impacted by the effect of the pandemic, but we are seeing a transition back to their regular functioning.

Provincial negotiations came to a formal conclusion with the signature of the 2020-2023 provincial entente in November 2021. At PTU, we began asking questions about the various new provisions and appendices even before teachers returned to work in August. However, the implementation of many of these changes has been quite slow and frustrating. Citing the timing of the signature of the agreement, the school board has been unable to implement many of the new components of our collective agreement. Nevertheless, we continue to advocate with the various departments of the school board to move these dossiers forward and hope that the school board will have everything in place for the start of the next academic year.

Because of the short length of this provincial entente, the process for negotiating the 2023 agreement is already underway. Thank you to all those who participated in QPAT’s recent consultation as the next set of demands are being discussed and formulated. There will be more to come as we move towards the deposit of our next set of demands at the end of next autumn.

Knowing that the signature of the provincial entente was coming, we saw an opportunity in the fall to accelerate our local negotiations for the 2015-2020 local agreement. Following dozens of meetings with

both the negotiating team at PTU and with representatives from the school board, we successfully reached an agreement-in-principle in January 2022. This was ratified in general assembly at the end of January in order to implement the new changes for this year's staffing process, where possible. The work has now shifted to finalizing the language of the text, which I hope to successfully complete in the coming weeks. This process, although sometimes tedious, is essential to ensure that no ambiguities exist that will lead to problems down the road.

As always, I owe a debt of gratitude to the people I work with at the PTU Office. Our professional staff of Ann Granger and Pasquale Machado continue to work tirelessly to answer your technical questions, and the team dynamic that we share is greatly appreciated. I also want to thank our support staff of Sonia Dumont, Beverly Kennedy and Melissa Noel for their work in helping to keep the office running behind the scenes. I also owe a special thank you to Marie-Pier Michaud, who replaced me as President during my paternity leave in the early spring. Her organization made my return in April practically seamless!

The work at PTU could not be done without the hard work of in-service teachers. I want to thank the eight members of the Executive Committee for their help in managing the affairs of the union, and for providing a teacher lens on the reality in schools and centres. Thank you also to all of the PTU delegates for your hard work in supporting your colleagues. Above all else, a huge thank you to all teachers for your dedication and hard work both this year and since the start of the pandemic.

I hope that you and your families are safe and comfortable, and I hope that the summer months ahead provide you with some time to rest and enjoy some well-deserved sunshine.

All the best!

Matt Wilson  
PTU President