

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE DES SYNDICATS DES PROFESSEURES ET PROFESSEURS DE CÉGEPS (ASPPC)

Public sector negotiations are one of the largest synchronized collective bargaining processes in the world! In a process where over 420,000 workers have joined forces to negotiate their collective agreements and talks with the government at the “central” or “intersectoral” tables and management organizations from every sector at the “sectoral” tables are happening at the same time, it’s hard to keep track! You will find below answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) to help you communicate with students and the general public during the different actions that you will be participating in at work.

Don’t hesitate to consult the websites of [Front commun](#) and our union federations ([FEC-CSQ](#) and [FNEEQ-CSN](#)) for more information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who are the “Teachers United”?

The Alliance des syndicats de professeures et professeurs de cégep (ASPPC, or the Alliance of CÉGEP teachers’ unions) regroups **all 61 unions representing teachers from the public college network** affiliated to the **Fédération de l’enseignement collégial (FEC-CSQ)** and the **Fédération nationale des enseignantes et enseignants du Québec (FNEEQ-CSN)**, representing over 20,000 people from all over Quebec.

What are the CÉGEP teachers’ main demands (at the sectoral table)?

We are defending a set of demands related to both our working conditions and wages, which have been regrouped under different themes and are based on needs clearly identified in our workplaces by teachers, who went on to discuss them at a general assembly to adopt a position on them collectively. These demands seek mainly to:

- **Reduce precariousness** because 40% of college teachers, in both the regular and continuing education sectors, are employed on a temporary basis. This means that from one semester to the next, they do not know if they will teach again, nor what kind of teaching load they will have. Reducing job insecurity will give teachers a better chance of ensuring that both the college and the students benefit fully from their commitment over time.

- **Obtain better recognition for certain invisible aspects of the teaching load** so that teachers have more time to support students during and after class.
- Protect and promote the **college network's mission** to guarantee access to quality higher education in all regions of the province.
- **Set guidelines for distance learning (DL)** because there is no substitute for in-class teaching!
- Obtain **fair working conditions** for continuing education teachers because we don't want two-tier colleges – neither for the teachers, nor the students.
- Protect, promote, and recognize **teaching expertise** through courses and programs that value teachers' knowledge and skills.
- Promote **social change** during the bargaining process because we want CÉGEPs that are committed to the environment and family-work-life balance.
- Support **team work** and collegiality because it is by working as a team that teachers develop stimulating projects for our workplaces.
- Improve **overall pay** to attract more people to our profession and so that one day, you too will want to be a teacher!

What is the Front commun?

More than fifty (50) years after the first common front was formed in 1972, the current Front commun unites **420,000 workers from four (4) large union organizations**: the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN), the Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ) and the Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique (APTS). This temporary alliance formed for the current bargaining process allows us to speak with one voice and in solidarity to defend the demands of public services employees from different job categories.

What are the main demands of the Front commun (at the central or intersectoral table)?

- In relation to **salaries**, we demand a permanent indexation mechanism to maintain our purchasing power, wage catch-up measures to close the gap that has grown between us and other job sectors over time, and salary increases to reduce the inequalities in our salary scales and improve entry-level wages.
- We have demands regarding certain provisions of our **pension** plan and concerning **parental rights** to encourage people who want to continue working to do so and to improve the family-work-life balance.
- We also have demands for improvements to measures designed to address **regional disparities** and complementary ones on specific subjects (group insurance, whistle-blowers, specialized workers, etc.).

How do the CÉGEP teachers' negotiations affect students?

Teachers' working conditions have a direct impact on study conditions:

- Recognition of various tasks performed by teachers would help free up time for preparing and updating courses, internships, and other teaching activities and for assisting students in class.
- Recognition of the work carried out by teachers would also give them more time to **get involved in extracurricular activities or student projects**.
- Improving pay and working conditions would **make our sector more attractive** to people who want to work in it and make people already in the sector want to make long-term commitments.
- We also negotiate based on the assumption that **many of our graduates will work in the public sector in the future**. We have their future in mind as much as our own.
- We stand in **solidarity with other sectors involved in negotiations** because the working conditions of other CÉGEP workers also have a major impact on student success due to their role in ensuring access to various services offered and keeping our facilities running smoothly (adapted services, library, orientation, IT support, building maintenance, cultural and sports services, administration, etc.).

How do public sector negotiations affect the general public?

We agree with the government that our public services are experiencing a **severe labour shortage, combined with an exodus of workers toward other sectors**. Several key sectors (schools, CÉGEPs, hospitals, social services...) are struggling to recruit the staff they need. The pandemic brought this situation to light and revealed the **vital importance of our public services and our collective attachment to them**. In the eyes of public service workers, to make these job sectors attractive, they must offer good working conditions, which, in turn, has a **direct impact on the quality of the services offered to the public**. The demands made in this negotiating process are rooted in the desire to **sustain in the long term the services that are at the heart of the society we want**.

What pressure tactics will be used?

Since the launch of the negotiations in October 2022, **a number of pressure tactics have been used**. We have made our demands known and given visibility to the negotiations by showing our colours and that we are united in this process. We questioned CÉGEP administrators and members of the organizations with which we negotiate (the Fédération des cégeps, le ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur, the Conseil du trésor and other members of government...). We have realized that if we want to be heard in these negotiations, we need to turn up the pressure, and to do so, we now plan to resort to more disturbing actions, namely a strike which a very large majority of members of the Front commun voted in favour of!

But how can teachers go on strike knowing that it will affect the students?

Contrary to what Sonia LeBel has claimed in the media, the unions have been taking the negotiations seriously since the fall of 2022! Management was the one who first refused to schedule enough bargaining sessions (one day a week is not enough time to make progress) and to give their negotiating teams mandates to engage in talks...

The government has everything it needs to avoid the strike and bears a large share of the responsibility for the strike action. Its refusal to make offers that would adequately meet the needs identified by workers is what has created the current deadlock at the bargaining tables.

Strike action is, therefore, a **pressure tactic of last resort** – one to which we turn when we feel we have **no other choice**. Strikes help strengthen our bargaining position with the government, but they also have shorter-term impacts due to the pay deductions involved for workers and how it affects the semester. We believe, however, that the medium and long-term benefits of a strike are worth it, as our aim is to protect gains already won and improve our public services sustainably.

What can students and the public do to support public sector negotiations?

- **Stay informed about the state of the negotiations and union demands** by following the news and visiting the websites of the organizations involved.
- **Take a stand collectively** by adopting a resolution in support of the Front commun at a student general assembly or another deliberative body.
- **Wear a sign of support**, such as a Front commun sticker or button: whether you're at a CÉGEP, a school, a hospital, or a government office, the staff will recognize this symbol of solidarity!
- **Come out and support us in person**, during union actions and especially on strike days.