



December 2022

Phenomenal mobilization: the battle of education workers in Ontario

The CSQ General Council welcomed at the outset of the meeting the Francophone Vice President of the Conseil des syndicats des conseils scolaires de l'Ontario (CSCSO), Christine Couture.

In her speech, the union leader warmly thanked the Centrale and members for showing their support and solidarity for the negotiations of Ontario education workers. "This act of solidarity was greatly appreciated. I think that our challenges are similar to those you are facing and I think we can learn from one another," she said.

Christine Couture recollected the battle of Ontario education workers and their phenomenal mobilization in the context of renewing their collective agreement. "We were asking for job security and the increases our colleagues desperately needed," she said. "What we didn't know, however, was that we were negotiating in the shadow of Bill 124,"¹ which caps wage increases for public sector employees.

At the last strike vote held in the fall of 2022, over 80% of the 55,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees voted and 96.5% voted in favour of the strike. The government responded to their determination to mobilize by issuing an ultimatum, imposing a collective agreement and tabling Bill 28 to make job actions illegal for the employees of Ontario schools.

Parents joined workers on the picket lines. "The union movement also demonstrated unprecedented momentum," recalled Christine Couture. "We received messages of solidarity from all across the country. We witnessed an exceptional demonstration of union solidarity in opposing Bill 28."

Following vociferous criticism, Bill 28, passed by the Ford government, was repealed. "We saw our government bow to pressure [...]. The members and leaders of our unions left their mark on the history of the Ontario union



Christine Couture

movement. Over the next four years we will continue to mobilize and we will continue to establish more connections with other provincial unions," said Christine Couture, who concluded by adding that "transparency, mobilization and discussion are key to ongoing and active mobilization."

¹ The Bill enacts the *Protecting Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019*.

Domestic violence everybody's business!

The CSQ has produced a kit to provide unions with the tools they require to support persons experiencing spousal violence and to act in union solidarity: **AGIR ENSEMBLE – la violence conjugale est aussi notre affaire!**

Available online on the CSQ website (lacsq.org/violence-conjugale), the kit provides comprehensive information for understanding the issues and deconstructing the myths surrounding domestic violence, raising awareness in workplaces, intervening with victims and aggressors, learning about the available resources, and learning about the responsibilities of employers.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ Domestic violence affects one in three women.

- ✓ For more than half of these women, the violence follows them to their workplace.
- ✓ Domestic violence has repercussions for victims and their colleagues as well as for aggressors.
- ✓ The kit provides eight booklets that deal with a range of issues and contain examples of policies and measures to be implemented in workplaces, examples of safety and support plans and lists of resources.



TO LEARN MORE

Visit lacsq.org/violence-conjugale and get all the necessary information at no cost. You can also download all the booklets (in French).

Child labour: issues and synopsis

Child labour is an issue that has resurfaced in the news in recent months. The Centrale took a position on the topic in 1998. It informed the General Council of its previous positions and the current issues, which have changed over the past thirty years.

High inflation, households finding it hard to make ends meet, rising interest rates and significant labour shortages have paved the way for hiring young people, even children under 14 years old.

The Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity, Jean Boulet, asked the Comité consultatif du travail et de la main-d'œuvre (CCTM), which includes the CSQ, to provide advice.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The CCTM has made the following recommendations.

1. The age of eligibility for employment should be set at 14 years old (except in situations that could be addressed through regulations).
2. Work hours should be set at a maximum of 17 hours per week, and a maximum of 10 hours between 6:00 a.m. Monday and 11:00 p.m. Friday during the school year for children who are obligated to attend school.
3. Better targeted information and awareness campaigns should be implemented.
4. Current CNESST regulations should better reflect the statistical profile of injuries, by sector, sustained by young workers.

5. The importance attached to the protection of working children should be highlighted in the *Act respecting Labour Standards*.
6. The statistical profile of child labour should be better documented.

NEXT STEPS

The advice of the CCTM has been sent to the Ministère du Travail. The tabling of a bill is anticipated in February 2023. At that time, the Centrale will submit a brief and defend its positions.

Semaine de la relève syndicale

Uplifting the movement

The sixth edition of the *Semaine de la relève syndicale* will take place April 17 – 21, 2023. The CSQ is encouraging affiliates to organize activities (happy hours, luncheon discussions, conferences, etc.) to welcome and celebrate new union activists.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

About the *Semaine de la relève*:

- ✓ The CSQ education team, in collaboration with other Centrale departments, is proposing conferences and workshops on a variety of topics, which can be organized locally and regionally.
- ✓ Financial support of up to \$1000 can be provided for regional activities.

About the *Camp de la relève*:

- ✓ The Camp will take place April 19 – 21, 2023 and targets members who have been holding union responsibilities for up to three years.

- ✓ The event will provide two days of practical, training and involvement workshops.
- ✓ Pre-registration will be held from March 13 – 24, 2023.

TO LEARN MORE

The releve.lacsq.org website provides abundant information in connection with the *Semaine de la relève syndicale* and the Camp. If you have any questions, you can contact the CSQ education team: formationsyndicale@lacsq.org.



Support for Iranian women

The General Council adopted a motion to support Iranian women and to condemn the repressive actions and abuses committed by the Iranian regime against the people, and especially, against women and girls.

Recall that Iran has been a theatre of demonstrations since the death, on September 16, 2023, of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, an Iranian Kurd, arrested three days earlier by the morality police for allegedly having violated the strict dress code of the Islamic Republic of Iran, because she was wearing her hijab improperly.

The General Council of the CSQ has joined the voices of many international organizations and condemns the repressive actions and the abuse, affirms its solidarity with the Iranian people and with Iranian women and calls on the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop all violence committed against women and girls and to collaborate with the international fact-finding investigation into human rights abuses following the protests.

Let's talk about education

Upcoming citizen forums

Initiated by citizen organizations, the *Parlons éducation* citizen forums project, to which the CSQ contributes in many ways, will be launched in 2023. Many of the issues to be discussed at the forums are related to the preschool, elementary and secondary sectors.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ The citizen forums project originates with the desire of different citizen groups to hold a wide-ranging public consultation on the future of education in Québec. It is mainly supported by the *Debout pour l'école!* collective.
- ✓ The objective of the forums is to foster collective reflection through citizen consultation.
- ✓ In total, 19 forums will be held in 18 different cities, from March 10 to May 27, 2023.
- ✓ All citizens are invited to attend. They can register on the website for the event starting in January 2023.

- ✓ Unions and their members can take part, as citizens, and province-wide organizations can share their views on the consultation themes with those responsible for the project.

THE CSQ IN ACTION

- ✓ The CSQ is a project partner and contributes along with the school network federations (FSE-CSQ, FPPE-CSQ, FPSS-CSQ and FPEP-CSQ) as well as AREQ-CSQ.
- ✓ The Centrale participates in the communications committee and contributes to the communications plan in order to promote the initiative, encourage registration and persuade political parties to support the process.
- ✓ Five unions affiliated with the CSQ² have agreed to support the local organization of the forums.

TO LEARN MORE

The official launch of the project will take place in January 2023 during a press conference. Participation documents and the website will be available at that time. Stay tuned.

² The Syndicat de Champlain, the Syndicat de l'enseignement des Deux-rives, the Syndicat de l'enseignement de la région de Drummondville, the Syndicat des travailleurs de l'éducation de l'est du Québec and the Syndicat de l'enseignement du Fer.

Virtual and hybrid meetings

Presentation of the progress report

The working committee on the use of virtual and hybrid decision-making meetings at the Centrale, whose mandate is to define the issues related to these ways of working and to determine whether they contribute added value to political life at the CSQ, presented its first progress report.

So far, the work of the committee has dealt with the first two phases of the project: ownership of the project and analysis of the information. The committee is currently in the midst of the first phase of analysis, that is, gathering information.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ✓ The consultation was launched in fall 2022.

- ✓ Rounds of decision-making bodies, the federations, the Regroupement des unités catégorielles (RUC, or categorial units group), AREQ-CSQ and the networks will be completed by February 24, 2023.
- ✓ The groups were asked questions about the barriers that undermine the activities of the CSQ both in virtual and hybrid modes and about the conditions that would foster the success of each of these modes.

AND NOW?

The last step in phase 2 of the work plan is to analyze and interpret the information gathered. The findings of the analysis will be presented to the General Council meeting of March 2023.

Internal cohesion

A work in progress

The steering committee on internal cohesion presented the results of the consultation it held in October about members' sense of belonging to the CSQ.

Answering the question *Pourquoi votre syndicat est-il affilié à la Centrale des syndicats du Québec?* was the main goal of the consultation that took the form of a brief, open questionnaire during the General Council meeting of October 2022.

The consultation resulted in a clear prioritization of the most important factors of union cohesion:

- ✓ Local autonomy
- ✓ Democracy and the values of the Centrale
- ✓ The sectoral negotiating tables of each federation

Political involvement

Feedback on the *Je vote en couleurs!* campaign

The political involvement campaign *Je vote en couleurs!*, led by the CSQ during the last election campaign in order to promote the participation of members in the democratic process, was a huge success.

The Centrale produced content and organized activities to provide food for thought for members:

- ✓ A colourful website including a comparison of the political promises of the different political parties, sheets on the issues impacting CSQ members, and video interviews with party leaders
- ✓ Posters and banners
- ✓ Television and Internet publicity

- ✓ A special issue of *CSQ Le Magazine*
- In the digital media, the publicity campaign outperformed the usual fare.

AND NOW?

The Centrale now plans to take political and legal leadership to seek the review of the *Election Act* and to organize a day of political lobbying day the National Assembly in March or April in 2023.

