

PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES

FNEEQ participates in defining the major challenges that affect the world of education at the international as well as the national levels.

Its School and Society Committee brings together members elected at the FNEEQ congress. It is made up of two members from the *cegeps*, one from private schools, one from the universities, and one member of the FNEEQ Executive. It works closely with each *regroupement*.

FNEEQ is affiliated with the Education International (EI) and participates in its meetings and work. EI represents nearly 30 million teachers and education workers from 401 organizations in 172 countries and territories.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

The School and Society Committee prepares social and political analyses of the major issues that affect the development of the educational system. It also provides texts that support the reflection of FNEEQ's members and their debates at federal councils and congress meetings, particularly with regard to the major orientations of FNEEQ on various issues. Each month, the committee distributes an article on a different subject, which unions can use for their local publications. These include articles on tuition fees, the reform at the primary and secondary levels, the financing of education, institutional governance, the drop-out rate, competency-based education, school segregation, the marketing of education, and many others. Those are also available on FNEEQ's website.

The committee also works together with the *regroupement cégep* on FNEEQ's interventions concerning changes to the laws and regulations that affect the working conditions of teachers.

WORKING CONDITIONS, INSEPARABLE FROM THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

In addition to the major threads of reflection on social and political issues, the *regroupement cégep* is firmly convinced that the quality of education is inseparable from the working conditions of teachers.

This is why studies in support of our negotiation demands are built on an integrated vision of defending the quality of teaching and the improvement of teachers' working conditions. Among the major issues that affect the quality of teaching, we can name too many course preparations and groups with too many students, which prevent proper support. The *regroupement cégep* is convinced that improving student success must be based on ameliorating the teacher-student relationship.

This undeniable fact is even more overwhelming in colleges where many programs are under funded. That is why a committee on programs with small numbers of students has been set up. It submitted its report in October 2008: *Quel avenir pour les petites cohortes? État de la situation et revendications* (What is the future that lies ahead for programs with small numbers of students? State of affairs and demands). Following this, each union met its college administration to convince it of the relevance of setting up a tripartite committee (Federation of cegeps, MELS and FNEEQ) in order to find short- and middle-term solutions to the under funding problem. Despite the Federation of Cegeps' reservations, the Minister of Education has said that it was interested in working rapidly on this issue. There will be a meeting with the Ministry of Education right at the beginning of the semester.

In short, for FNEEQ, talking about pedagogy first and foremost means talking about improving the conditions under which our work is carried out. It is also proposing to our members issues to reflect on and debate, that should be shared in each of our local unions as well as in decision-making bodies. Moreover, it is participating directly in the work of the Education International, because many stakes are without boundaries. Finally, talking about pedagogy also means taking teachers' working conditions into account and demanding from management representatives the means to guarantee the quality of teaching in the entire cegep system.