



August 24, 2020

Dear teachers,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! I hope that you had a restful summer and are excited to be back in the classroom. This year will certainly have some bumps in the road but by working together, we will surely be able to overcome the challenges that come our way. As you may be aware there are many important changes for you to be aware of as we start the new year, I have outline most of the key things in this letter but look for more detailed information to be coming out in the next week or two.

Masks:

It is mandatory for all staff and students, from Grade 5 and up to wear masks, while in common areas. While in the classroom staff may remove their masks, only if they can maintain a distance of 2 meters from others. The school board has the obligation to provide masks to it's employees, students are to provide their own. In the case of Preschool teachers, additional PPE will also be provided. While in common areas of the school, masks may only be removed while eating or drinking and if you are sitting in an area where you can maintain a distance of 2 meters.

Current information and contact:

There are many sources available to answer your questions! Please stay informed by using either the QPAT app or website for all the latest provincial news. For information specific to our school board follow the ESTA Facebook page or website. It is also important that ESTA has your email address so that you can receive important updates as they happen. If you are not on our email list please let your school/center delegate know right away.

Medical Exemptions:

The rules have become more strict for medical exemptions. All exemptions granted last year have to be reapproved. If you fall into one of the following categories you may be eligible: you are over 70, you have a suppressed immune system, you have certain chronic conditions or you are pregnant. Speak with your doctor or visit the inspq website for more information. You will be required to have a form completed by your doctor to request an exemption. If you are exempt, you will be assigned work to be done from home.

Negotiations:

Negotiations are ongoing. There is little to report at this time, when I have more details I will pass them along. We will be continuing to wear our black t-shirts on Thursdays or at times where your staff are more visible to parents or other adults who don't work in your

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school/center. New teachers to the school board should give their t-shirt size to their union delegate, the shirts will be sent to you as soon as possible. Don't forget Thursday, August 27 is an excellent day to get back into your t-shirt routine!

Value Added:

Due to numerous problems with the Value Added Program in the past few years, there are some very important changes to note for this year. More information will be sent out later this week. For the time being though it is essential to note the following, ALL activities MUST be approved by a body of teachers in the school (see appendix XXVI of Provincial Agreement for details.). In other words, the activity must be approved at a staff meeting or a school council meeting. **If activities are not preapproved, teachers will not be paid for them at the end of the year.**

Timetables:

Please keep in mind it is your responsibility to choose when you wish to have your WPN(work of a personal nature) on your timetable. Full-time teachers have 5 hours per week. I recommend doing your best to keep the number of minutes on your timetable as equal as possible, the optimal number is 384 minutes per day. Due to certain COVID-19 restrictions schools may need teachers to supervise more often. Please keep in mind that principals might need to adjust numbers of students in certain areas at recess and lunchtimes in the first few weeks of class. Try to be as patient and flexible as you can. As long as your principal is respecting the maximum number of minutes on your timetable, they can increase what you are used to doing in the past. Changes that are made, will be done to protect the safety of staff and students. Be flexible!

Keep in mind that everyone is a little unsure about the school year and how it will work. Be patient, tolerant and understanding of those around you. ESTA's first and foremost concern is the Health and Safety of our members and ensuring that your rights are protected, we are here to support you. Beginning Monday, August 24 our office hours are 12:30-4:00PM Monday to Friday. Please remember that I teach 50% of the time and am unavailable in the mornings.

Have a great year,

Gillian O'Rourke-Garrett