

Faced with strikes in daycares, Quebec boosts salaries for early childhood educators ^[1]

Treasury and family ministers say pay bump will cost \$11M a month, address urgent labour shortage

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EXCERPTS

Quebec is giving early childhood educators in public daycares a raise, starting in mid-November, as daycare staff continue to strike and protest across the province amidst negotiations of a new contract.

"We have to admit, the current salary isn't attracting new educators into the system," said Treasury Board President Sonia LeBel, "and it's not contributing to retaining them either."

Educators who work over 40 hours a week will benefit the most, with qualified workers — those holding a college diploma in childhood studies or a recognized equivalent — receiving a 17 per cent boost while non-qualified employees will see an increase of 14 per cent.

The salary boost will cost the province \$132 million a year, or \$11 million a month.

Most educators in the public system work 32 hours a week and will see a 12 per cent bump for qualified workers and a 9 per cent jump for non-qualified staff.

Public daycare workers in Quebec have been without a government contract for over a year and a half and voted to start rolling strikes in September. Today's pay hike is a temporary measure until a new contract can be agreed upon.

LeBel says a growing staff shortage was compromising access to child care and preventing the public network from expanding. But she says contract negotiations are still ongoing and Quebec will present a new offer in the coming days.

"We can't wait until the end of the negotiations...to offer better wages," said Family Minister Mathieu Lacombe. "That's why we decided to act quickly."

LeBel says the pay increase is Quebec's "first concrete gesture" to recognize the contributions of daycare workers and show "good faith" at the bargaining table. She said the province is fully aware that improvements to working conditions are equally important to union members.

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: child care workforce ^[4]

strike ^[5]

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