



April 23, 2014

Me France Goyette
Director of Secretariat and Legal Services
Lester B. Pearson School Board
1925 Brookdale Avenue
Dorval, QC
H9P 2Y7

Subject: Consultation Response: "Student Transportation Policy"

Dear Me. Goyette,

In regard to this proposed Policy, the LBPSB Special Needs Advisory Committee has noted that the current proposed Student Transportation Policy makes no mention of the transportation services that are currently provided to students with Special Needs throughout the Lester B. Pearson School Board.

While it is recognized that the LBPSB School Board does currently provide Transportation Services to some of its students with Special Needs, the specific criteria for eligibility and options for accommodation are not listed, such as smaller buses, door service or access to the "purple=parent" program, etc.

In addition, it has been brought to the attention of the Special Needs Advisory Committee that certain parents of children with Special Needs may be confused by the intent of article 4.1.5 which currently reads: "Students with physical or sensory disabilities as well as those with cognitive impairments having submitted a medical certificate satisfactory to the Board are eligible for transportation, notwithstanding the distance between their home and the designated school." It is unclear whether this clause is intended to include all students who have been identified by the Board with Special Needs.

Therefore, the LBPSB Special Needs Advisory Committee would like to make the following suggestions:

- 1) Add to Section 4 "Transportation Organization Standards" on Pages 4 and 5: "Section 4.1.12: Students identified by the School Administrator in conjunction with the Student Services Department as having Special Needs, including but not limited to physical disabilities, cognitive impairments and severe behavioral challenges, are eligible for transportation, notwithstanding the distance between their home and the student's school."



- 2) Add to Section 4.4 “Additional Transportation Services” on Pages 6 and 7: “Section 4.4.2: Special Busing Provisions for Students with Special Needs: Students identified by the School Administrator in conjunction with the Student Services Department as having Special Needs including but not limited to physical disabilities, cognitive impairments and severe behavioral challenges, are eligible for one of a number of transportation options, including wheelchair-accessible buses, smaller buses with less students, or an individual minivan, depending on the need of the student. This service is provided at no cost.”
- 3) Add to Addendum B: “Student Transportation Organizational Plan”: add one additional point #5 to the list of “types of transportation services to be provided during the (date) school year”: #5) Special Busing Provisions for Students with Special Needs (at no cost)

In addition, it is noted that as per the School Board’s Strategic Direction #1, Objective #2 “To increase the qualification rate of students at risk and students with special needs”, and as referenced in the School Board’s Annual Report 2012-2013, wherein it is stated that the goal is to “increase to 1% in the contribution to the overall graduation and qualification rate through WOTP by 2015” and that the “Placement of targeted students in specific WOTP (work-oriented training pathway) programs continues to provide students with increased opportunity to achieve a qualification.”

It is also noted that WOTP options are not available at all schools, and that students with Special Needs will often have to commute longer distances to attend a school that offers the program. Therefore, the Special Needs Advisory Committee would also like to suggest:

- 4) Add to Section 4.4 “Additional Transportation Services” on Pages 6 and 7: “Section 4.4.3: Special Busing Provisions for Students with Special Needs attending a WOTP program: “In the case where a student with Special Needs is referred to and attends a WOTP program, that student will be provided with transportation, notwithstanding the distance between their home and the closest school offering the program.”

Furthermore, as per the recently proposed LBPSB “Arts and Culture in Education Policy”, the School Board “believes that its role in providing educational services includes the provision and promotion of artistic and cultural enrichment to all of our students”, which includes students with Special Needs.

However, in many cases, students with Special Needs may require special busing arrangements in order to enable them to attend and participate in outings. Therefore, the Special Needs Advisory Committee would also like to suggest:



- 5) Add to Section 4.4 “Additional Transportation Services” on Pages 6 and 7: “Section 4.4.4: Special Busing Provisions for Students with Special Needs attending an Arts and Culture excursion: Students identified by the School Administrator in conjunction with the Student Services Department as having Special Needs including but not limited to physical disabilities, cognitive impairments and severe behavioral challenges, are eligible for one of a number of transportation options, including wheelchair-accessible buses, smaller buses with less students, or an individual minivan, depending on the need of the student, in order to enable the student to attend and participate in Arts and Culture excursions, field trips and extra-curricular activities. This service is provided at no cost.”

And finally, it was noted that the School Board has a separate “Procedures” document relating to Transportation that is not included in this Policy. Just as the “Student Transportation Organizational Plan” is included as an Addendum because it may change on a yearly basis, the Special Needs Advisory Committee would like to suggest that the Procedures document also be included as an Addendum, so that all stakeholders are made aware of these procedures.

Thank-you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation.

Respectfully,

Sandra Buckingham
Chairperson, Special Needs Advisory Committee, LBPSB 2013-2014

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