

 <p><b>Special Needs Advisory Committee</b></p> <p><a href="http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/">http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/</a></p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:snac@lbpearson.qc.ca">snac@lbpearson.qc.ca</a></p>	<p><b>SNAC Report to the Council of Commissioners, Central Parents' and Education Committees</b></p> <p><b>From SNAC Meeting November 19, 2014</b></p> <p>Page 1 of 2</p>
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**Parent Workshop on IEPs: Jan 15, 2015, 7-9pm:** In line with the committee's established priorities for this school year, SNAC is pleased to announce that it will host a presentation for parents on January 15, 2014, to discuss the **IEP Process at LBPSB**. The event is free, and will take place at the School Board, from 7pm-9pm. Following the event, SNAC Parent Representatives will be on hand to respond to questions from attendees. **Parents are encouraged to register for the event by email at: [snac@lbpearson.qc.ca](mailto:snac@lbpearson.qc.ca)**

**Finance Presentation: Jan 21, 2015, 7pm:** In light of the growing concern regarding MELS Budget Cuts, LBPSB Assistant Director General Carol Heffernan will attend the January SNAC meeting to provide a presentation regarding the details of the budget cuts and their effect on the LBPSB budget, with particular emphasis on services to students with special needs. The committee members will prepare a list of questions for Ms. Heffernan, and will submit them for her consideration in advance.

**Consultation Response: Enrollment Criteria:** The committee ratified a response suggesting that an additional clause be added to the Question & Answer document of the Policy to address the potential concern that special consideration be given to a student with Special Needs if a school with a Bilingual program has reached capacity, since that program may be more conducive to the student's success versus an Immersion program.

**IEP Meeting Dates:** The committee discussed that in some schools, there is a significant time delay between the receipt of the IEP at the beginning of the term, and the meeting between the parents and the in-school resource team to discuss/adjust the IEP. In some cases, IEP meetings only took place during the first week of November, which was very close to the end of the term. Parents are encouraged to contact their classroom teacher or Resource team if they have any concerns about the timeline for the IEP meeting, and if they have any concerns about their child's progress at school.

**Teacher Training:** The committee discussed the various means by which teachers receive specialized training pertaining to understanding and dealing with the challenges of students with special needs in a classroom setting. It was explained by the Director of Student Services that training provided to students in the teaching programs varies between the various Universities, and between the English and French programs. However, in general, only one course on special needs is typically offered at the University level. It was suggested that the SNAC consider writing a letter to MELS to request that this be increased to a minimum of 2 courses, perhaps as a joint effort with other school boards and/or EPCA. It was also noted that the SSD department offers a wide variety of workshops to new teachers and experienced teachers. It was noted that workshops typically take place during the day time, and attendance is optional for teachers.

**LBPSB Entente with "Private Schools in the Public Interest":** In response to a question from a parent via email, the Director of Student Services explained the process whereby students at LBPSB may be referred to external specialised schools in the event that LBPSB feels that they are unable to provide services to meet the needs of a specific student. LBPSB currently has an "Entente in Principle" with Summit, Peter Hall and MOSD; however ententes are not in place with Vanguard or Giant Steps. If a parent chooses to send their child to any external school, transportation services must be discussed with that school, and is not the responsibility of LBPSB.

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**Tutoring of Students on School Premises after School Hours:** It was brought to the committee's attention that in some schools, students who are struggling with various subjects have had tutors work with them during daycare hours after school, on school premises. LBPSB Administration is concerned about this practice, and would like to issue a request that school principals no longer allow this practice. A lively discussion ensued about the benefits of tutoring for students in need, versus potential conflicts of interest and/or security/insurance concerns.

**SNAC Awareness Campaign: Letter to Parents via the IEP Envelopes:** At the October 1 and October 22 SNAC meetings, the PASA representative was asked to discuss with Administrators whether SNAC may be permitted to include a letter with the IEP documents that are distributed to parents 3 times per year. The aim of the letters would be to advise parents of upcoming workshops, the availability of the IEP Resource Kits that can help parents prepare for IEP meetings, and more. It was noted that the IEP envelopes often include a letter from the school Resource Teacher and/or Administrator already, so the committee was hopeful that adding the letter from SNAC would not require too much additional work at the school level. Other ideas to communicate with parents of students with special needs were discussed, including providing SNAC with occasional access to the ERMS email communication system at the school board, which has been refused in the past. Another idea was to provide letters to Resource Teachers for distribution to parents during parent-teacher interviews, but as many parents meet only with the classroom teacher, it was felt that this might not be effective.

An update to the committee was provided by the PASA representative, indicating that the 3 Regional Directors of Schools have included a reference to SNAC in their newsletter to in-school Administrators, and have encouraged the distribution of the SNAC Chat Newsletter to the parents within their schools. The method by which the Principals choose to distribute the information is at their discretion, and may be via the school website, Facebook page or email. The committee was advised that it is unlikely that the SNAC Chat Newsletter will be distributed via the IEP Envelopes. To date, none of the SNAC parent members, who represent 9 different schools have received the SNAC Chat Newsletter via their schools.

**Correspondence:** The LBPSB Autism Spectrum Disorder Center of Excellence has a new issue of its newsletter, <http://coeasd.lbpsb.qc.ca/newsletters/2014-10.pdf>

**Next Meeting:** The next SNAC meeting will take place on Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 7pm at the school board. The meeting will begin with a **Special Presentation on the LBPSB Budget Process** and discussion of the recent Budget Cuts. **All parents of children with special needs are invited to attend as guests, and may ask questions during the Q&A period.**

Respectfully submitted,

Brett Hillgartner, Chairperson, LBPSB Special Needs Advisory Committee 2014-2015

Sandra Buckingham, LBPSB Parent Commissioner for Special Needs 2014-2016