



<http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/>
Email: snac@lbpearson.qc.ca

Special Needs Advisory Committee Lester B. Pearson School Board

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – March 18th, 2015.

Held at the Lester B. Pearson School Board, 1925 Brookdale, Dorval, Room 219/221

In attendance: Marie-Eve Claude, Maria Colavita, Romina Costantini, Jennifer DiMarco (from 7:39), Christopher Fuzessy (Student Services), Robert Gilmartin (I.A.S.S.), Brett Hillgartner, Carollynn Jones (P.T.U.), Caroline LeBrun, Christine McLean, Kiley Philp, Donnalynn Rainey (from 7:21-7:39), and Barbara Schnider.

Regrets: Sandra Buckingham, Noel Burke, Camelia Burlec, Mary Ann Davis, Cindy Finn (DG/SSD) Maureen Hunt (P.E.P.), Franca Kesic (WIAIH), and Diana Martire (P.A.S.A).

Observers: Charlie Rushworth, Shannon Bird-Robertson

Recording Secretary: Laurie Kathleen Fox

Brett Hillgartner called the meeting to order at 7:05.

1.0 Confirmation of Quorum; establish voting rights to Alternate members as required.

Voting rights were given to Romina Costantini and Caroline LeBrun due to the absence of several members.

2.0 Additions to Agenda

There was a request for the following additions to the Agenda:

Under Section 4.4: IEP Workshop: Feedback Summary, January 15, 2015.

2.1 Approval of Agenda

(SNAC1415-3.1) A motion to approve the modified agenda with the above-mentioned addition was first received by Kiley Philp, and seconded by Robert Gilmartin. The motion was carried unanimously, and approved.

3.0 Corrections to Minutes of January 21st, 2015

3.1 Approval of Minutes of January 21st, 2015

(SNAC1415-3.2) A motion to approve minutes was put forth by Barbara Schnider, seconded by Christine McLean, and unanimously approved.

4.0 Business Arising

4.1 2015 Budget Consultation

(<http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/Consultations/Consultationsv2.asp>)

As of the meeting time, Donnalynn Rainey had yet to receive any feedback for the 2015 Budget Consultation Report. In the past, SNAC has provided feedback to the school board. Brett Hillgartner suggested that Donnalynn Rainey draft a cover letter based on previous years' responses. Subsequently, once it is available, an email vote will take place to approve the content of Donnalynn's letter.

4.2 Update: Inter Board SNAC Meeting from February 22nd, 2015

Sandra Buckingham provided a written report in the kit to summarize the meeting. Due to Sandra Buckingham's absence, this topic may be discussed at the next April 15th meeting.

The summary noted that The English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) facilitated a meeting between the Special Needs Parent Commissioners and the Executives of the Special Needs Advisory Committees of the Quebec English School Boards on February 22nd, 2015. There was representation from six English School Boards. The purpose of this all-day, 7-hour meeting was to share ideas and best practices. The LBPSB representatives provided a walk-through of the LBPSB SNAC website, and of the IEP Resource Kit. Both were extremely well received. EPCA has requested that LBPSB share some of the content from the SNAC website, such as the videos of parent workshops, for the soon to be created Special Needs section of the EPCA website. In addition, the other school board special needs representatives have requested permission to use the LBPSB IEP Resource Kit to create and distribute similar kits to their special needs communities.

It was also specified that during the Minister of Education's recent meeting with EPCA, the Minister indicated that he values parental input, and has requested feedback regarding school board governance issues. To that end, the Special Needs Parent Commissioners formed a new group called the "*Quebec English Special Education Commissioners*", QESEC, in order to provide a common united voice to MELS. The group discussed various suggestions, and prepared a letter of response [which is attached to the kit], which was presented to the EPCA Directors during their meeting on February 28th, 2015. The QESEC recommendations were subsequently approved and endorsed by the EPCA Board of Directors, and translated into French at EPCA's cost.

4.3 Update: Printing of Additional IEP Resource Kits

Barbara Schnider and Camelia Burlec have taken on this task. Barbara Schnider suggested a reprint of 500–1000 additional IEP kits for the upcoming 2015-2016 academic year be completed. The initial and previous printer that was used seems to be the ideal choice, as no additional charges would be incurred for set-up, and the printed color-quality was excellent. This item will be discussed at length at the next meeting.

4.4 IEP Workshop: Feedback Summary, January 15th, 2015.

Barbara Schnider provided written report summarizing the feedback received from the January IEP Workshop. Barbara stated that the overall evaluation of the IEP Workshop from parents was overwhelmingly positive. Many parents appreciated the clarification, and section on Adapted vs. Modified IEPs. Moreover, the seemingly popular choice of topic for the next workshop appears to be the transition from elementary school to high school for students with special needs. One negative

comment that was echoed was the length of the Question and Answer Period. Many attendees felt that the question period should have been longer.

Several members suggested that it would be beneficial for SNAC to begin to explore ideas for workshops for the 2015-2016 school year. It was decided that this would be put on the agenda for the April 15th SNAC meeting.

Donnalynn Rainey arrived at 7:21.

At this point of the meeting, the agenda leaped to Section: 6.5 Central Parents' Committee Report (discussion below)

Jennifer DiMarco arrived at 7:39.

Donnalynn Rainey departed at 7:39.

5.0 New Business

5.1 EPCA Website

EPCA has requested that LBPSB share some of the content from the SNAC website, such as the videos of parent workshops for the soon to be created Special Needs section of the EPCA website. Sandra Buckingham has been asked to help EPCA in this effort. In addition, the other school board special needs representatives have requested permission to use the LBPSB IEP Resource Kit to create and distribute similar kits to their special needs communities. EPCA was inquiring as to whether or not workshop videos and the content of the IEP that appears on our website could be incorporated and copied onto their respective website. It was suggested by a few members that a link back to the content on the SNAC website be used. By doing so, SNAC is sharing its information with EPCA and the EPCA community, and it keeps people on the SNAC website. Moreover, it was suggested that a disclaimer, specific to our school board be included. As a courtesy piece to those who are featured in SNAC webcasts (*i.e.*, Dr. Cindy Finn, Ruth Schwartz, and Celina Bérubé), an email will be sent to these individuals to ascertain if they are comfortable with the idea of sharing their respective webcasts in which they appeared. A proposal to table this item until the next SNAC meeting scheduled for April 15th.

5.2 Sharing IEP Resource Kit

Again, EPCA sought out help from SNAC in regards to the IEP Kit, created by our committee 2 years ago. It was discussed that SNAC: (1) provide a Word version of the IEP kit; (2) remove the SNAC logo, (3) that the Lester B. Pearson School Board SNAC be credited with the kit, similar to the process that was executed when SNAC borrowed parts of its kit from the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board.

(SNAC1415-3.3) A motion to approve sharing of the IEP kit and its contents first received by Kiley Philp, seconded by Jennifer DiMarco. The motion was carried unanimously, and approved.

6.0 Standing Reports

6.1 SNAC Report to CPC, Education, and Council (FYI)

A written report was provided in the kit.

6.2 Administration

A written report was provided in the kit. Christopher Fuzessy reported (in Cindy Finn's absence) that during the week of February 16th, SSD consultants offered 3 morning workshops to LBPSB daycare staff. Over 315 daycare educator and coordinators attended these sessions, which were geared to responding to behavioral issues. The feedback was very positive.

Student Services will be organizing once again the Partners in Prevention evening this year, with 3 sessions taking place in the months of March and April at PCHS, Westwood Jr, and LCCHS. These sessions are intended for Cycle 3 students and their parents to begin a discussion around preventing alcohol, drug use and other high-risk behaviors as students look ahead to the transition to high school.

Thirdly, it was noted that the ASD team is organizing a lecture the evening of April 14th. *Debunking Common Myths about Parenting Children with Special Needs* and is the primary topic, given by Lucyna M. Lach, Sacha Bailey, Aline Bogossian and Gina Glidden.

The MELS has launched a new curriculum for students aged 6-15 with moderate-severe intellectual delays. The program is known as CASP: A Competency-based approach to social participation. Many of the consultants for Special Needs attended an information session in February. More details will follow later.

Finally, the administration staffing process for 2015-2016 is currently underway in search for candidates interested in school/centre positions.

6.3 Council of Commissioners

With both Commissioners absent attending their own respective Commissioners Meeting, no report was provided.

6.4 Parent Commissioner

A written report was provided in the kit. Sandra Buckingham was also attending the Commissioners Meeting this evening, so no verbal report was given.

6.5 Central Parents' Committee

Donnalynn Rainey and Brett Hillgartner reported on the last CPC meeting that took place on March 12, 2015. The role of Parents of students with Special Needs was discussed at length during the last meeting of the CPC. Brett reiterated that contrary to common misconception, SNAC is not a parents' committee *per se*, nor is SNAC a subcommittee of the CPC. Brett clarified the composition of all SNAC members. She mentioned that SNAC is a matrix group that represents various stakeholders' points of view, just as if a Governing Board does not represent only the parents' views at the school. Since it is CPC's mandate and responsibility to represent all parents within the school board, two Special Needs parents, and a Parent Commissioner for Special Needs, are mandated by the Education Act to be members of CPC and to represent the Special Needs parents' point of view.

This presentation by the SNAC Chair was made in response to concerns expressed by Bobbi Brown, Chair of the CPC, that recommendations were not coming from SNAC parent members and the SNAC chair. Brett spoke specifically of a suggestion that was made to CPC on the topic of School Board Governance: that the composition of Governing Boards should be changed to add an additional parent of a student with special needs. By doing so, parental input specific to the special needs community could be increased at the Governing Board of every school.. However, when this suggestion was presented to CPC by Donnalynn and Sandra, and suggested to be included in a letter being prepared by CPC to be presented to EPCA,

the CPC Chair was concerned that the parents of special needs had been “bypassed” as the suggestion did not come from Brett herself, SNAC Chair. The CPC Chair had requested that the SNAC parents should hold parent-only caucus meetings prior to providing input to CPC. However, Brett explained that it would be inappropriate for SNAC parents to engage in parent-only meetings, without the other SNAC members present. Donnalynn further clarified that both she and Sandra are in fact elected representatives of SNAC to CPC, and as such, represent the SNAC parents: “...[t]he voice of SNAC so as such you are not bypassing SNAC parents. We are right here.” This issue will be discussed further at the next CPC meeting.

6.6 Education Committee

Barbara Schnider provided and reported on two reports to the Committee. At the February 2nd meeting, topics of discussion included: GOOGLE Apps for Education (GAPE), the Draft Policy regarding Home Schooling, Summer School plans, a Google Workshop planned for teachers on February 6th, and a workshop dealing with building strategies for integration aides and technicians.

During the March 9th meeting, it was discussed that since the last Education Committee meeting, all Home Schooling families have been contacted by email and were given a deadline to send in a response to the Home Schooling Policy Consultation by February 24th, 2015. Moreover, it was decided that for the 2014-15 school year, summer school will be held at 2 schools: St. Thomas and LCCHS.

A new History program will be piloted next year in English and French at Westwood Senior High School. Two teachers will be part of this project and will simultaneously teach the old and the new programs for comparison purposes. Concerns about the pilot project were expressed, with respect to possible content, and translation of materials. Committee members were reassured that the program has the backing of teachers and that the message has been heard at the Ministry.

At the February 6th Pedagogical Day, it was reported that 550 teachers attended the Google in Classrooms Workshop, and there continues to be ongoing Google training for teachers.

6.7 P.T.U.

Carollynn Jones provided both a written and a verbal report to the committee. It was reported that negotiations are ongoing. There is little movement thus far and the government has answered questions with very non-specific and “*we will get back to you*” style of responses. It was also indicated that teachers are concerned about the proposals to increase class size, to change the weighting and coding of special needs children and the proposed increase in teachers’ workload. Finally, Carollynn reiterated that there would be a demonstration of teachers on March 25th at the Valois train station after school hours.

6.8 P.A.S.A.

No report was provided.

6.9 Professionals

Maureen Hunt was attending the FSSTT lecture at the same time as the SNAC meeting. No report was provided.

6.10 I.A.S.S.

Robert Gilmartin reiterated what Carollynn Jones mentioned, *i.e.*, ongoing negotiations, concerns vis-a-vis the possibility of class size increases, and the upcoming demonstration of teachers on March 25th.

6.11 Treasurer's Report

Brett Hillgartner provided a verbal report on SNAC finances in Sandra Buckingham's absence. The expenditure from last month was expenses incurred by Barbara Schnider, and Sandra Buckingham who represented SNAC at the EPCA Inter Board Special Needs Advisory Committee Meeting. Very little money was spent from the approved \$100. Sandra Buckingham will provide a more detailed report next month.

6.12 Website Administrator's Report

Due to a misunderstanding at the SNAC meeting of January 21, 2015, Brett Hillgartner clarified the website administrator position. Jennifer DiMarco continues her responsibilities as Webmaster for SNAC. Maria Colavita will assist Jennifer in responding to SNAC emails.

Jennifer reported that since last month, there were 965 hits to the SNAC website. There were 114 viewings of the webcasts. Maria will be sending out a message to the SNAC opt-in emailing list members to promote the Lester B. Pearson Centre of Excellence for Autism Spectrum Disorder's April 14th seminar, as well as thanks for all for attending the IEP Workshop.

6.13 Workshops Attended

Nil.

7.0 Correspondence

7.1 LBPSB ASD Seminar: *Debunking Common Myths about Parenting Children with Special Needs* – April 14th (<http://coeasd.lbpsb.qc.ca/documents1415/2015-04-14.pdf>)

Maria Colavita will be sending out an email promoting this upcoming seminar. At the same time, the email will thank all those individuals who attended the IEP workshop in January. Moreover, a link of the webcast will be mentioned in this promotional email. As well, Maria will emphasize that SNAC meetings are held once a month.

7.2 Mtl Centre for Learning Disabilities Parent Conference – April 26
<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07ea9sz4j083e81c19&llr=hlz9vblab>

7.3 CRISPESH Symposium on Self-Determination: *Improving Engagement and Success for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities* – April 15th
<https://sites.google.com/site/symposium2015autodetermination/>

8.0 Varia

Caroline LeBrun discussed a wonderful program in which her daughter participates in entitled, ***Beyond Me***. A non-profit student organization established at McGill, ***Beyond Me*** is a one-on-one mentoring program for children and teenagers with disabilities.

The volunteers work closely with the school and/or family of their “buddy” in order to provide the best form of mentoring. The volunteers work with children and teens aged 3-21 years in activities from tutoring, to play stimulation, to language development and more. Kids are usually allocated with 8 hours per month of this service. More information can be found at [www. http://montrealbeyondme.com](http://montrealbeyondme.com)

9.0 Questions from the Public

Nil.

10.0 Adjournment

(SNAC1415-3.4) Upon a motion by Robert Gilmartin and seconded by Jennifer DiMarco, the meeting was adjourned at 8:33pm. The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Wednesday April 15th, 2015 in room 219/221 of 1925 Brookdale.