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## Special Needs Advisory Committee Lester B. Pearson School Board

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING – JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2014.

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

**In attendance:** Sandra Buckingham (as of 7:32), Camelia Burlec, Marie-Eve Claude (SSD), Mary Ann Davis, Jennifer DiMarco, Cindy Finn (DG/SSD), Christopher Fuzessy (SSD), Robert Gilmartin (IASS), Brett Hillgartner, Maureen Hunt (PEP), Carollynn Jones (PTU), Franca Kesic (WIAIH), Diana Martire (PASA), Christine McLean, Kiley Philp, Donnalynn Rainey, and Barbara Schnider.

**Regrets:** Noel Burke, Maria Colavita, Romina Costantini, and Caroline LeBrun.

**Observers:** None

**Recording Secretary:** Laurie Kathleen Fox

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***Brett Hillgartner called the meeting to order at 7:10pm.***

#### **1.0 Special Presentation by Assistant Director General Carol Heffernan: "School Board Financing: A Guide to the LBPSB Budget."**

An informative presentation entitled, "School Board Financing: A Guide to the Lester B. Pearson School Board Budget" was presented by Assistant Director General Carol Heffernan. Ms. Heffernan spoke to SNAC about the School Board budgeting process, with particular emphasis on funding for students with special needs. Due to significant *Recurring Negative Adjustments*, coupled with the recent budget cuts from the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sports (MELS) there is a extensive challenge for the School Board to maintain the desired level of service and support to students in the classrooms.

#### **2.0 Confirmation of Quorum; establish voting rights to Alternate members as required.**

It was confirmed that quorum had been established, and all and the meeting was recalled to order by Brett Hillgartner at 7:58pm.

### **3.0 Additions to Agenda**

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

**Under section 8.3: Montreal Autism and Motion Conference**

**Under section 8.4: Email received Commissioner Daniel Olivenstein**

#### **3.1 Approval of Agenda**

**(SNAC1415-1.1)** A motion to approve the modified agenda with the above-mentioned additions was first received by Barbara Schnider, and seconded by Donnalynn Rainey. The motion was carried unanimously, and thus, approved.

### **4.0 Corrections to Minutes of November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

#### **4.1 Approval of Minutes of November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

**(SNAC1415-1.2)** A motion to approve minutes was put forth by Kiley Philp, seconded by Jennifer DiMarco, and unanimously approved.

### **5.0 Business Arising**

#### **5.1 SNAC IEP Workshop for Parents (Update)**

Brett Hillgartner expressed her profound thanks and gratitude to all SNAC members for their respective hard work and efforts in making the SNAC IEP Workshop a success. She also thanked Dr. Cindy Finn and Christopher Fuzessy for the set-up and logistics involved in the workshop. Special thanks were also bestowed to the presenters that evening, Celina Bérubé and Ruth Schwarcz, as well as to Jim Hendry for webcasting the event. A link to a video archive of the event including a PowerPoint Presentation will be made available immediately on the SNAC website.

Barbara Schnider extrapolated some statistics and feedback rendered from the workshop. Specifically, Barbara noted the following:

- ✚ 74 people attended.
- ✚ 15 Elementary schools were represented.
- ✚ 3 High Schools were represented.
- ✚ Individuals found out about the workshop through various sources, including: Different LBPSB Committees; emails sent out through schools; our SNAC website; Facebook, and even a pamphlet included with a child's IEP.
- ✚ Many notable future workshop suggestions included Bullying and Special Needs Children; Developing Friendships with Children with Special Needs; Home Support; Support Groups for Parents with Children of Special Needs, and one of the more prevalent topics suggested was the Transition from Elementary School to High School for children with special needs.
- ✚ The overall evaluation of the SNAC IEP Workshop for Parents was overwhelmingly positive and affirmative.
- ✚ The main topics of discussion during the Q&A session included: the differences between an Adapted versus a Modified IEP, whether parental approval is required for an IEP, and whether teachers are required to implement all of the items listed in an IEP.
- ✚ One suggestion for future workshops was that the Question and Answer Period was not lengthy enough.
- ✚ Barbara reiterated that a summary report will follow, and will be distributed to SNAC members.

- ✚ Due to personal reasons, Kiley Philp expressed her apologies for her absence at the workshop.

## 5.2 LBPSB Policy for Tutoring (Update)

It was brought to the committee's attention by the Central Parents' Committee at the last meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 that in particular schools, students who are having difficulty with particular have had tutors work with them during daycare hours after school, and on school premises. The Lester B. Pearson School Board has expressed some concern about this process. Inasmuch, the School Board would like to issue a request that school principals no longer allow this practice.

Since SNAC did not have an in-person meeting in December, SNAC members were called to carry on the discussion via email. This way, efforts to suggest impending solutions that may address the concerns of administration while at the same time enabling our most susceptible students to continue to have access to tutoring services on school grounds after school.

A document summarizing all of the committee member suggestions was drafted and presented to the committee. There was a lack of consensus regarding the approval of the document. Several members felt that that the document needed to be condensed prior to presentation to administration. It was decided that the document should be re-drafted and that the discussion should be tabled until the following SNAC meeting. A subcommittee consisting of Donnalynn Rainey, Maureen Hunt, and Sandra Buckingham has been initiated to formulate revision of the summary document.

## 6.0 New Business

### 6.1 2015 Budget Consultation (Response due March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015)

[http://lbpsb.qc.ca/content/consultations/budgetconsultation2013\\_2014/2013-2014%20Budget%20Consultation%20Short%20Form.pdf](http://lbpsb.qc.ca/content/consultations/budgetconsultation2013_2014/2013-2014%20Budget%20Consultation%20Short%20Form.pdf)

**SNAC's previous response for 2013-2014:**

[http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/extra/img/58SNACBudgetConsultationResponse2013-2014\\_Final.pdf](http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/extra/img/58SNACBudgetConsultationResponse2013-2014_Final.pdf)

The budget consultation is due on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. A copy of last year's consultation response was included in the kit for reference. Brett Hillgartner is requesting that all SNAC members provide input into the 2015-2016 LBPSB Budget Consultation. Brett Hillgartner will also be sending out to all members via email:

- ✚ Budget Consultation Resolution
- ✚ Budget Consultation Memo
- ✚ Short Form Budget Consultation
- ✚ Long Form Budget Consultation
- ✚ An example of a Consultation Response from CPC on the recent Enrollment Criteria to inform the Committee of an example of how other Parent groups respond to these types of consultations.

Brett Hillgartner is urging all members to take the necessary time to read over the all documentation and prepare any feedback they may have to the next meeting. This will enable the committee to establish a proposition on how to reply to the Consultation this year.

## **7.0 Standing Reports**

### **7.1 SNAC Report to CPC, Education, and Council (FYI)**

Reports were provided in the kit. Maureen Hunt raised concern about the specificity and detail outlined in this report, feeling it was unnecessary to have such a comprehensive report. Brett Hillgartner explained that external committee reports are at the discretion of the chair, and are sufficiently thorough to provide communication and transparency.

### **7.2 Administration**

A report was included in the kit. Cindy Finn reported that on February 6<sup>th</sup>, SSD and ESD would be providing professional development workshops to personnel groups such as teachers, aides, and technicians. Additionally, it was specified that the Google Initiative is in full-swing.

Dr. Finn also highlighted that it is an extremely busy time of year within the Student Services Department of the Director General's Division, as the SSD is quite occupied with cusp planning for next year. Professionals within the SSD have submitted the proper paperwork required by MELS to authorize the codes of newly identified students with special needs.

*At this point, the SNAC members introduced themselves to Mary-Ann Davis, newly elected Commissioner for Ward 1.*

### **7.3 Council of Commissioners**

Mary Ann Davis reported verbally that Budget Consultation is due on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. She also reiterated that The LBPSB Home Schooling Policy was to be tabled.

### **7.4 Parent Commissioner**

Sandra Buckingham provided three reports in the kit from the last three Council meetings. She also shared the topics of concern that had been brought to her attention via email and telephone by parents of students with special needs within the past month. These included the need for tutoring services for students with special needs during after-school daycare hours, and concern that a parent had not been advised that a student on a modified IEP is no longer on graduation track.

*Christine McLean left at 9:06 pm.*

### **7.5 Central Parents' Committee**

Sandra Buckingham provided a verbal report to the committee. CPC has established its priority items for the year. These include the following:

- ✦ The issue of declining enrollment in the school board.
- ✦ Communication to parents - Communication varies within schools, as it seems to be at the discretion of individual administrators whether or not parent representatives can have electronic messages sent to their respective populations.
- ✦ Governmental budget cuts.
- ✦ Financial Literacy should be incorporated into the curriculum of every student.
- ✦ Governing Board training must be administered to all Governing Boards in

the fall.

#### **7.6 Education Committee**

Barbara Schnider conveyed to SNAC that the first meeting of the newly formed Education Committee was held on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

It was highlighted that the committee members reviewed the LBPSB Education Committee mandate, summarizing the following: To study and oversee the development of policies, procedures and programs at all levels, to evaluate the implementation of policies, procedures and programs and make recommendations to Council, undertake tasks assigned to it by Council, to report to Council on a monthly basis during the school year.

In addition, discussions took place concerning the draft Home Schooling Policy. It was mentioned that the parents of Home Schooled students must agree to follow the program with their child and the student must take an exam. The proposed changes to the Policy were slight and the draft went out to the regular consultative partners. The board received some feedback from different groups. There were discussions surrounding whether or not Home Schooling parents were contacted. Some amendments were made to the draft policy and a motion was put forth to recommend it to be sent to Council for adoption.

#### **7.7 P.T.U.**

Carollynn Jones provided a verbal report to the committee as their respective meeting was being held today. Of note, Carollynn Jones announced that provincial contract negotiations are still in progress, and that the Pearson Teachers Union (P.T.U.) was meeting with the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT) on Monday January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Of major concern within the P.T.U. is the affect of classroom sizes on teachers.

#### **7.8 P.A.S.A.**

Diana Martire asserted that there was nothing formal to announce. Schools are currently busy with their respective Open Houses and Sibling Registrations.

#### **7.9 Professionals**

Maureen Hunt provided a verbal report to the committee that preparation for contract negotiations was prevalent within her association.

#### **7.10 I.A.S.S.**

Robert Gilmartin reported verbally that coding and budget cuts were being stretched. Moreover, Robert Gilmartin reiterated that there will be a workshop on Friday February 6<sup>th</sup> for teachers, aides, and technicians.

#### **7.11 Treasurer's Report**

Sandra Buckingham reviewed SNAC's current finances based on this year's budget allocation of \$1500, and listed additional expected expenses for the remainder of the year based on the committee's activities in previous years (e.g., ≈ \$200 for another workshop, ≈ \$150 for the printing of AGM posters for next September, and ≈ \$150 for coffee, snacks, and coffee pods). Based on Sandra

Buckingham's projections, the committee may have just enough funds left to print a limited number of IEP Resource Kits ( $\approx$  500 kits) that could be sent to all Resources Groups within the School Board. Moreover, additional kits could be distributed to families of children with Special Needs who are new to the School Board, and/or to children who are newly identified. The committee will further investigate the costs and feasibility of this project.

It was also suggested that the committee consider offering another workshop for parents in the spring. One popular topic that was discussed included the issue of *Transitioning to High School for Students with Special Needs*. Once more, SNAC will discuss this more at length as it will depend on both the availability of speakers and committee member volunteers.

### **7.12 Website Administrator's Report**

Brett Hillgartner shared with the Committee that there had been a change in who would be responsible for Webmaster duties. Jennifer DiMarco, the current Webmaster, explained that she had merely requested a temporary break from her duties during the organization of the IEP workshop, and not a desire to relinquish her role altogether. There had been a misunderstanding regarding Jennifer DiMarco's assumed resignation of the Webmaster position. After a contentious discussion, it was put forth by the Committee Members that that they would be more comfortable that this matter be resolved privately.

*Marie-Eve Claude left at 9:40 pm*

### **7.13 Workshops Attended Nil.**

## **8.0 Correspondence**

### **8.1 Inter Board Special Needs Advisory Committee Meeting**

The English Parents Committee Association (EPCA) has agreed to facilitate a meeting in February between the Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Parent Commissioners for Special Needs for all of the English School Boards in throughout Quebec. Thus far, the Lester B. Pearson School Board (LBPSB), the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board (SWLSB), the English Montreal School Board (EMSB), the Central Quebec and the Eastern Townships School Boards have all confirmed their attendance.

Brett Hillgartner, Barbara Schnider, and Sandra Buckingham will represent SNAC. Due to costs attributed to parking and meals, a vote was taken to approve expenses of \$100.00 (**SNAC 1415-1.4**).

### **8.2 Concordia University request for collaboration to promote their research**

[http://psychology.concordia.ca/family/currentstudies\\_new.html](http://psychology.concordia.ca/family/currentstudies_new.html)[http://psychology.concordia.ca/family/currentstudies\\_new.html](http://psychology.concordia.ca/family/currentstudies_new.html)

SNAC received information from Concordia University for a study aspiring to recruit mothers of adolescents with and without special needs to participate in a study about the transition from high school to adulthood.

More information on the study will be placed on the SNAC website under the "EVENTS" tab. The Remuneration is \$175. Should parents want additional information, they are asked to contact [parents.fwb@concordia.ca](mailto:parents.fwb@concordia.ca)

### 8.3: Montreal Autism and Motion Conference

<http://www.mtlautisminmotion.com/2015-conference-and-exhibit/>

The third edition of the Autism in Motion Conference and Exhibit promises to deliver the highest quality of speakers to welcome both parents and professionals alike. Moreover, the exhibitors will represent a variety of resources available to the Autism community. In this premier event, hosted in collaboration with the Giant Steps School and McGill University, some speakers include: John Elder Robison, author of *Raising Cubby*, *Look Me in the Eye*, *My Life with Asperger's*, and *Be Different – adventures of a free range Aspergian*; Randy Lewis, Senior Vice President of Walgreens, who has created thousands of full-time jobs for people with disabilities, Charles Lafortune, Host of *La Voix*, and Spokesperson for Giant Steps, and many more.

**WHEN:** Sunday, March 22, 2015

**WHERE:** Plaza Volare (Crowne Plaza Montréal Airport)

6600 Chemin de la Cote de Liesse, Saint-Laurent, QC H4T 1E3

514-735-5150

**TIME:** 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

**ADMISSION TO EXHIBIT HALL:** Free

**ADMISSION TO SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS:**

\$35 – Fee for adults

\$50 – Fee for professionals

Free for individuals with Autism

**(SNAC1415-1.4)** The committee approved expenses of \$105 to send Donnalynn Rainey, Camelia Burlec, and Barbara Schnider. This motion was put forth by Robert Gilmartin, seconded by Kiley Philp, and unanimously approved. A written report will be completed by these participants, and later shared by SNAC members.

### 8.4: Email received Commissioner Daniel Olivenstein

Sandra received an email by Commissioner Daniel Olivenstein (Ward 11) Buckingham, congratulating SNAC on the success of the Parent Workshop on IEPs: "Helping Students Achieve Success," held on January 15th, 2015, as discussed under 5.1.

**9.0 Varia** Nil.

**10.0 Questions from the Public** Nil.

### 11.0 Adjournment

**(SNAC1415-1.5)** Upon a motion by Robert Gilmartin, the meeting was adjourned at 9:52 pm. The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Wednesday February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in room 219/221 of 1925 Brookdale.