



Special Needs Advisory Committee

Lester B. Pearson School Board

website: <http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca>

email: snac@lbpearson.ca [NEW!]

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2015

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

In Attendance: Angela Berryman, Sandra Buckingham, Marie-Eve Claude (S.S.D.), Mary Ann Davis (Commissioner), Jennifer DiMarco, Laurie Kathleen Fox, Robert Gilmartin (I.A.S.S.), Brett Hillgartner, Maureen Hunt (P.E.P.), Samantha Marco (from 7:16), Diana Martire (P.A.S.A.), Christine McLean, Daniel Olivenstein (Commissioner), Kiley Philp, Donnalynn Rainey, Barbara Schnider, and Arlene Tennant (P.T.U.).

Regrets: Maria Colavita, Cindy Finn (DG/SSD), and Franca Kesic (WIAIH).

Recording Secretary: Laurie Kathleen Fox

Observers: Shannon Bird-Robinson

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

1.0 Call for Nominations and Election of SNAC Parent Member Positions

1.1 Executive Member Positions (Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer)

(SNAC1516-9.1) It was moved by Jennifer DiMarco and seconded by Sandra Buckingham that Angela Berryman be nominated as Vice-Chair to SNAC. There being no other nominations, Angela Berryman accepted the nomination, and was acclaimed as SNAC Vice-Chair.

(SNAC1516-9.2) It was moved by Kiley Philp and seconded by Jennifer DiMarco that Christine McLean be nominated as Secretary for SNAC. There being no other nominations, Christine accepted the nomination, and was acclaimed as Secretary to SNAC.

(SNAC1516-9.3) It was moved by Sandra Buckingham and seconded by Brett Hillgartner that Donnalynn Rainey be nominated as Treasurer to SNAC. There being no other nominations, Donnalynn Rainey accepted, was acclaimed as SNAC Treasurer.

1.2 Webmaster (and any Communications Assistants)

(SNAC1516-9.4) It was moved by Kiley Philp and seconded by Brett Hillgartner that Jennifer DiMarco resume her duties as webmaster to SNAC. Jennifer accepted, and being no other nominations, Jennifer DiMarco was acclaimed as SNAC Webmaster/Email Administrator. Maria Colavita will continue to assist Jennifer in responding to emails addressed to the committee. Kiley Philp offered to assist as well.

1.3 Recording Secretary

(SNAC1516-9.5) It was moved by Brett Hillgartner and seconded by Kiley Philp that Laurie Fox be nominated as Recording Secretary to SNAC. Laurie accepted, and being no other nominations, Laurie Fox was acclaimed as Recording Secretary to SNAC.

1.4 SNAC Representatives to External Committees (Council, Education, CPC) Sandra Buckingham's term as Special Needs Parent Commissioner at Council is of a duration of 2 years, and she is currently in her second year of this role. (SNAC1516-9.6) Sandra was also nominated by Brett Hillgartner to sit as SNAC's representative to Council. There being no other nominations, Sandra Buckingham was acclaimed as SNAC representative at Council.

(SNAC1516-9.7) Jennifer DiMarco nominated herself to be the SNAC representative at the CPC, with Donnalynn Rainey serving as Alternate. There being no other nominations, Jennifer DiMarco was acclaimed as SNAC representative at CPC with Donnalynn Rainey as Alternate.

(SNAC1516-9.8) Barbara Schnider nominated herself to remain as the SNAC representative at the Education Committee. There being no other nominations, Barbara Schnider was acclaimed as SNAC representative at the Education Committee.

As part of their roles as Special Needs Parent Commissioner, SNAC Chair and SNAC Vice-Chair, Sandra Buckingham, Brett Hillgartner and Angela Berryman are automatic representatives to QESEC, as per the rules of QESEC Membership.

2.0 Confirmation of Quorum: establish voting rights to Alternate members as required

(SNAC1516-9.9) It was confirmed that quorum had been established as all voting members were present.

3.0 Additions to Agenda

3.1 Approval of Agenda

(SNAC1516-9.10) There was a request for the following changes to the Agenda: (1) It was suggested by Brett Hillgartner to have two "Questions from

the Public” sections in this and future SNAC Agendas; one at the beginning of the meeting and another at the end; and (2) a “Parent commissioner Report” would be added to future Agendas in the Reports section.

(SNAC1516-9.11) A motion to approve the modified agenda with the above-mentioned changes was put forth by Sandra Buckingham, and seconded by Jennifer DiMarco. The motion was carried unanimously, and approved.

MOTION CARRIED by unanimous vote.

4.0 Corrections to the Minutes of June 2nd, 2015

4.1 Approval of the Minutes of June 2nd, 2015

(SNAC1516-9.12) The minutes were included in the kit. The email address indicated on the minutes is the old version, i.e., snac@lbpearson.qc.ca. The correct email should be changed to the following: **snac@lbpearson.ca**.

Sandra Buckingham moved to approve the minutes with the abovementioned change, seconded by Brett Hillgartner, and was consequently unanimously approved.

MOTION CARRIED by unanimous vote.

Approval of Minutes of September 16th, 2015

(SNAC1415-9.13) The minutes were included in the kit. The first change is to eliminate Point #6 (i.e., Questions from the Public) and proceed to make it Point #11. It was moved by Samantha Marco to approve the minutes with the proposed change. The motion was seconded by Angela Berryman and unanimously resolved.

MOTION CARRIED by unanimous vote.

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 SNAC Constitution

It was highlighted by Brett Hillgartner that the SNAC Constitution has no section which explains our members’ roles in External Committees and our Website duties. It was discussed by the committee that the Constitution be updated to reflect the full role of the committee. Moreover, due to the large turnout at this year's AGM, including the large number of parents who put forth their nominations to be elected as members of the committee, Sandra Buckingham explained the possibility of increasing the parent membership by one additional voting member (i.e., from 7 to 8), as well as one additional alternate member (i.e., from 4 to 5). By increasing the composition of the members, the committee would benefit from more parental voices and input.

(SNAC1516-9.14) It was therefore moved by Sandra Buckingham to increase the number of voting parent members by 1, and increase the number of alternate positions by 1. This motion was seconded by Samantha Marco, and unanimously approved.

MOTION CARRIED by unanimous vote.

As a result, the Constitution will be updated to reflect the above mentioned changes, and will be sent to members for approval by email.

As for the current year, following a tie in the vote for a two-year term, a run-off election resulted in the Samantha Marco being elected. It was therefore proposed that Kiley Philp be moved from an Alternate position to a 2-year position due to the proposed changes in the constitution. The 5 parents that put their names forward for alternate positions and were not selected will be contacted to determine if they are still interested in an “alternate” position, and the two new alternate seats will be filled from this group of individuals. An election will take place by current SNAC parent members, if there are more than 2 parents interested in the positions. It was then considered that a “thank-you” email be sent to those who attended the AGM, encouraging these individuals to continue and participate in future SNAC meetings.

5.2 SNAC Annual Report: Recommendations to 2015-16 Committee

Brett Hillgartner delivered and explained the main priorities from the 2014-2015 SNAC Annual Report. She emphasized to the committee that she would wait for Dr. Cindy Finn's return in order to further discuss on the recommendations related to workshops. It was highlighted that SNAC had a great deal of success with the IEP workshop that the committee presented last year. For this coming year, members will examine the possibility of hosting another IEP workshop that would focus in on some of the questions raised by last year's workshop. Another possible workshop would be on the transitions from elementary to high-school for students with special needs.

The creation of focus groups was discussed as a possible task to be carried out this year so that SNAC could gain a better understanding from parents of students with special needs of what their concerns and interests are. A Question and Answer Team (made up of Kiley Philp, Jennifer Di Marco, and Maureen Hunt) was created in order to help answer frequently asked questions on IEPs. This information could be helpful in preparing for another IEP workshop and could potentially be made available on the SNAC website. Finally, Brett Hillgartner encouraged all SNAC members to email her any additional ideas on items that the new committee might focus on for this school year.

At this point of the meeting, Arlene Tennant, PTU Representative, was introduced to the Committee. SNAC members introduced themselves to the committee and related their experiences.

5.3 SNAC's June MSC Brief

In June 2015, the 2014-2015 SNAC Committee provided a brief to the Major School Change (MSC) Consultation that was launched by the school board. The purpose of the brief was to highlight priority issues that SNAC recommends should be considered carefully by the school board and the Council of Commissioners when making decisions during the MSC process about school buildings and programs. Moreover, in the event that the MSC process leads to the mergers or closures of some of our schools and/or changes to



programs that effect students, SNAC recommended that additional support be provided by the school board in order to help students with special needs with any transition issues. The complete SNAC MSC brief is available at the following link: <http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/extra/img/SNAC-MS2015-Brief.pdf>

For the 2015-2016 Committee, it was discussed that SNAC could still provide supplementary brief (separate from the 2014-2015 brief), touching upon any additional information that might have been overlooked in last year's brief. No additional suggestions were provided that would thus merit that another brief be composed. Members were asked to consider whether they have any additional ideas to offer prior to the next SNAC meeting on October 21st, since the deadline for submission of briefs is October 31st.

5.4 Update: Special Needs Representative on Governing Board

Last June, SNAC and the Central Parents Committee (CPC) approved that a new position be proposed: a Special Needs Parent Representative on Governing Board (GB). This Fall, every school could decide whether they would like to establish this position on their Governing Board. The role of this parent representative will be to make decisions in the best interests of all students at their school; serve as a contact for parents of students with special needs at their school, and interface with the Special Needs Advisory Committee at the school board level. All GB Chairs were sent an AGM Kit in June, and they requested to propose this position at every school's Annual General Assembly in September. It requires approval by the majority of parents in attendance.

A discussion took place to follow-up on the recommendation that SNAC had made wherein each Governing Board consider having the optional position of parent representative for special needs. SNAC has not been informed of how many schools adopted this idea. Through Cindy Finn and Administrations' access to school Principals, SNAC would like to compile a list of all schools which accepted this proposition, including who the Special Needs Representative contacts are. It was recommended that SNAC revisit this idea in tandem with CPC to ensure that we are all on the same page with regard to the idea and to come up with better strategies to raise awareness of the optional position at the Governing Board level.

Diana Martire left at 8:58

It was suggested by Jennifer DiMarco that Governing Boards throughout the school board be thanked for their collaboration in this project. She also suggested that a simplified document explaining the Special Needs Representatives to Governing Boards be clarified.

MaryAnn Davis left at 9:07

It was then discussed that Donnalynn Rainey create a simplified document of the benefits of this position, as well as Frequently Asked Questions to the CPC with its main goal of beginning the process of explaining the inclusion of this representative.



Samantha Marco left at 9:12. With Samantha's departure, voting rights were then accorded to Kiley Philp.

5.5 Update: Change of SNAC email address

The SNAC email address was changed over the summer, unbeknownst to the committee. We have now begun distributing the new email address (*i.e.*, snac@lbpearson.ca). Nevertheless, with the change of the SNAC email address, several documents need to be modified. Both the pamphlets, as well as the newly ordered 500 IEP kits require corrections. Sandra Buckingham looked into the costs involved in printing labels to cover the old addresses on these documents. It was decided that one (1) large, noticeable sticker be stuck on the outside of the IEP Kit. These would lower costs and save time. Jennifer DiMarco has volunteered to print these labels. Once again, the Life Program could assist in helping to stick the labels. Additionally, Sandra Buckingham will also be changing the addresses on the SNAC Website.

Maureen Hunt left at 9:15.

(SNAC1516-9.15) At this point, Brett Hillgartner set a motion to approve that \$100.00 be allocated towards the purchase of new labels in order to reference the new email. This motion was seconded by Christine McLean, and unanimously approved by all.

***MOTION CARRIED** by unanimous vote.*

6.0 Standing Reports

Brett Hillgartner explained to the members what exactly Standing Reports were, while reminding members that all reports are submitted in advance (*i.e.*, Monday noon before the Wednesday SNAC meeting). In addition, external committees that have members on SNAC (PASA, PTU, IASS, and Professionals) were requested to submit written reports by the Monday deadline. Brett reiterated the importance of reading all reports prior to the meetings, in order to focus discussions on main points, and reduce the length of meetings.

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

6.2 Administration

In Dr. Cindy Finn's absence, Marie-Eve Claude reported the following:

- The FSSST Team was awarded with the YMCA Peace Medal at the Peace Gala. This is an award highlighting 20 years of helping and assisting LBPSB students.
- Approximately 6 briefs for the MSC have been submitted and read.
- September 30th was the School Board Enrollment Day whereby the total numbers of students were officially counted, necessary for the determination of funding.

6.3 Council of Commissioners

Danny Olivenstein reported several items from the last the Council of Commissioners meeting, including:

- SNAC's annual budget was increased from 1500\$ to 2000\$ to equal the actual amount that was required for last year's activities.
- France Daoust was appointed as Director of Finance.
- The appointment of Marie-Eve Claude as Assistant Director of Student Services.
- Tom Rhymes, director of ESD, gave a power point presentation on Summer School statistics. There were 1259 students that attended summer school, whereby 2/3 of these students were from Secondary 4 (primarily for Math, Science and History).
- This year's Career Fair will be cancelled due to contract negotiations.
- Due to a provincial decree, Daycare Fees will be rising to \$10.00 from \$8.00.
- The LBPSB Food program for impoverished areas of the Island of Montreal requires \$50,000. \$32,300 is contributed by the Ministry, and the remaining \$17,700 is contributed from our school board, as the Ministry does not consider certain areas of LBPSB territory to be impoverished enough.
- As for the LBPSB Milk Program, the cost is \$95,100, with the LBPSB contributing \$ 26,391.
- Suanne Stein Day will be running for Vice-president in the QESC elections in October.
- The 1st annual LBPSB Family Day with the Montreal Alouettes will be held Sunday October 18th at 1:00. The tickets are priced at \$14.00, whereby \$2.00 will be allocated to the Pearson Education Fund. Tickets orders end on October 2nd. More information can be found at www.pef.lbpsb.ca/alouettes.com.

6.4 Central Parents' Committee (C.P.C.)

The CPC (*Hereinafter, The Central Parents Committee*) Annual General Assembly will take place on Thursday October 1st, 2015. This year, Region and Alternative representatives are being invited to a dinner at the school board. Additionally, representatives will be elected to the CPC, followed by Regional meetings.

6.5 Education Committee

Two reports were included in the kit, including one from the meeting held on June 1st, 2015, and the second, on September 8th, 2015. Some of the more prominent points from the June 1st meeting include the following:

- The Dorset School Community expressed interest in switching from a Bilingual school program to an Immersion Program. Any proposed changes would only take place in 2016-2017 academic years, beginning by implementing at the Kindergarten level. The Education Committee must first approve a school to switch such programs.
- The Continuing Education calendar for 2016-17 was presented. Courses run over a twelve month period, with nine Pedagogical days being planned and approved.
- Some of the educational services that were discussed included the distribution of exams; planning for the upcoming school year; Google training for administrative assistants and integration aides; the creation of a blog from ESD for Twitter, as well as a service fair for teachers, planned for August 28th, 2015.

- It was reported that transition plans are underway to offer support to those students entering our school board, those moving from elementary to high school, as well as those moving from high school to Adult/Vocational Education Programs.
- Technology grants for students with special needs to purchase tablets, laptops, scanners, applications and computer program licenses have been put to good use.

The September 8th 2015 meeting highlighted the following issues:

- It was reported that the school boards' exam results have remained fairly consistent over the past four years in terms of success rates.
- The Continuing Education website has been updated and is ready. Over the summer, there were some glitches related to a computer virus. A majority of the issues have been resolved, yet accessibility using mobile devices remains an issue. Moreover, an online registration application was launched, proving to be very successful.
- It was reported that most Governing Boards sent a letter to their local MNA denouncing budget cuts.

6.6. Pearson Teachers Union (P.T.U.).

Arlene Tennant provided a verbal report of the Pearson Teachers Union (*Hereinafter*, PTU) meeting. She mentioned that there have been no changes in the current Teacher negotiations. It was also specified that there would be a strong possibility of a one day strike in late October, and not October 2nd as reported by the local media.

6.7 Pearson Association of School Administrators (P.A.S.A.)

In Diana Martire's absence, Marie-Eve Claude reported that the Pearson Association of School Administrators (*Hereinafter*, P.A.S.A.) was concentrating on the start-up of the new academic year. All plans regarding special needs were being put into place. Moreover, Administrators are working together with the teachers (as they are assuming pressure tactics) in ensuring a safe and enriching environments for students. Finally, it was discussed that both Governing Boards, as well as Home & School Associations were underway.

6.8 Professionals

No report was given.

6.9 Independent Association of Support Staff (I.A.S.S.)

Robert Gilmartin gave a verbal report about the last meeting at the Independent Association of Support Staff (I.A.S.S.). A meeting date for I.A.S.S. members has been set for October 13th to discuss and vote on the possibility of an upcoming strike. Robert also mentioned that the number of Integration Aides' positions was not cut as much as was initially anticipated. Moreover, some of the school board librarians which were laid off last May have returned to work, but in fewer numbers and with reduced hours.

6.10 Treasurer's Report

Sandra Buckingham provided a report for the 2014-2015 year, included in the kit. The report shows that last year, SNAC submitted a request via the Budget Consultation for additional funding which was approved. This increased SNAC's budget to \$1500 for last year. Due to parent members providing snacks and drinks and very little spending on SNAC's part, by the end of the year the budget sat at \$1299. A vote was taken to use these funds to print 500 more of our IEP kits for distribution. This, plus the printing of AGM posters put us over budget to a sum of \$568.76. A request was made to LBPSB Administration for the extra funding to be able to complete the printing which was approved.

6.11 Website Administrator's Report

The SNAC Website was visited rather frequently over the summer. Jennifer DiMarco reported that since June 2nd, 2015, there were **2307** hits to the SNAC website, and **125** viewings of Dr. Cindy Finn's webcast. SNAC members discussed the possibility of creating a SNAC Facebook page. This idea has been tabled for the October 21st meeting.

6.12 Workshops Attended

None.

Arlene Tennant left at 9:53.

7.0 Correspondence

Carolynn Jones sent SNAC an email indicating that she could not return to SNAC and assume her role as P.T.U. Representative. It was decided by the committee that a thank you card will be sent to her.

Likewise, another Thank You card will be sent on behalf of SNAC to the LIFE program coordinators to thank them for their continuous help and assistance in assembling kits. Jennifer Di Marco agreed to prepare the cards and bring them to our next meeting.

8.0 Varia

Nil.

9.0 Questions from the Public

Nil.

10.0 Adjournment

(SNAC1516-9.16) Upon a motion set by Jennifer DiMarco, then seconded by Robert Gilmartin, the meeting was adjourned at 9:57pm.

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Wednesday October 21st, 2015 in room 219/221, 1925 Brookdale, Dorval.