

 <p>Special Needs Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Please visit our website: <a href="http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca">http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca</a></p> <p><b>NOTE</b> New Email address: <a href="mailto:snac@lbpearson.ca">snac@lbpearson.ca</a></p>	<p><b>SNAC Report to the Council of Commissioners, Parents' Committees and Education Committees</b></p> <p><b>From SNAC Meeting of November 18, 2015</b> <b>Page 1 of 2</b></p>
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### **Meeting Attendance:**

The SNAC meeting of November 18<sup>th</sup> was well attended by 16 SNAC members, and 1 member of the public. Members representing outside committees, unions and associations included: M.-E. Claude of S.S.D., C. Finn of S.S.D., R. Gilmartin of I.A.S.S., M. Hunt of P.E.P., D. Martire of P.A.S.A., and A. Tennant of P.T.U. Regrets were sent by the 3 Commissioners due to the MSC Public Hearings.

### **Special Presentation:**

Cindy Finn, Director of Student Services, presented “**Educating Students with Special Needs in Quebec**”, which discussed coding, funding and the organization of services for students with special needs at LBPSB. As of Sept 30, 2015, total enrollment at LBPSB was 20,613 students. Of these, 973 were identified with “handicaps” (coded with one of the 11 challenges accepted by MELS), and 1587 were identified “in difficulty” (with IEPs, but not specifically coded). Thus, the students with special needs currently constitute 12.4% of the total LBPSB population. It was also noted that the number of students “in difficulty” tends to increase over the school year, as additional students are identified, and is expected to reach 20% by year end, which is comparable to the rates being seen at other school boards. At 46% students with autism make up the highest percentage of students identified with “handicaps”, whereas 79% of students “in difficulty” are identified as having “learning difficulty”.

MEESR provides the school board with a basic allocation for every student, however, this allocation is higher for students with identified handicaps. Funding for students with identified handicaps depends on their code. Funding ranges between \$9,438 and \$14,701 for K students; between \$11,446 - \$17,863 for Elementary students; and between \$10,728 - \$16,744 for High School students. MEESR also provides funding based on a historical percentage of the student population, as well as funding in the form of grants to support specific special needs initiatives, such as adapted equipment/technology, support for professionals (occupational therapists, speech therapists, etc.), IEP release days (to replace classroom teachers with a substitute teacher so that they can have IEP meetings) and a general fund to “support inclusion” efforts within the school board. The complexity of cases is increasing, with more students exhibiting multiple codes. This is problematic, since MEESR only provides funding for one “dominant” code, even for more complex cases that require additional support.

To read more about MEESR policy for coding and special needs, please visit:

[http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site\\_web/documents/dpse/adaptation\\_serv\\_compl/19-7065-A.pdf](http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/site_web/documents/dpse/adaptation_serv_compl/19-7065-A.pdf)

To read more about LBPSB Policy for the Organization of Services for Students with Special Needs, please visit:

[http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/content/policies/Special\\_Needs\\_Policy\\_3\\_5\\_sept2013.pdf](http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/content/policies/Special_Needs_Policy_3_5_sept2013.pdf)

To view Cindy Finn’s presentation on this subject from October 2012, please visit the SNAC website:

<http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/webcasts/page.asp>

### **Major School Change Public Hearings:**

Three representatives from the committee participated at the November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, MSC Public Hearing in Verdun. The SNAC brief was well received by the Council of Commissioners. The focus of SNAC’s presentation was to highlight the following priorities for SNAC:

- That the school board commit to preparing a written plan of action, with input from parents and students concerned, to help with transitions for those students with special needs that are affected by the MSC process.
- That the school board continues to commit to use “inclusion” into regular classes as the primary model for the integration of students with special needs.
- That the support services that make the “inclusion” model effective, continues to be a funding priority for the school board.
- SNAC encourages the retention of bilingual community schools across the board, along with the immersion programs, since many students with special needs choose schools that offer more English than French instruction.

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- That the school board commit that the alternative models of education available for students with special needs (i.e. REACH, LIFE, WOTP) will remain untouched by the MSC process.

The committee was asked to follow-up its presentation by providing some recommendations for a written plan of action that would be implemented to help transition students with special needs as the result of a MSC decision.

**SNAC Parent-to-Parent IEP Workshop:**

SNAC has established a sub-committee to organize a parent-to-parent IEP workshop. The date for the workshop has been set of Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, from 7:00 to 9:00pm at the LBPSB head office located at 1925 Brookdale in Dorval.

**New LBPSB Parent Newsletter for CPC & SNAC:**

SNAC was invited by the chair of CPC to participate in a new Parent Newsletter that will be distributed electronically a few times a year via email. SNAC members were excited about the initiative since communications with the parent population has been a priority for the committee for many years.

**Special Needs Representative on Governing Board:**

A Q&A document to clarify the role of this position is under development. The document will be shared with CPC once it has been approved by SNAC. It is the hope of the committee that we can work together with CPC to endorse this proposed position in the future.

**QESEC:**

On November 15, the SNAC Vice-Chair and Special Needs Parent Commissioner attended a QESEC meeting bringing together Special Needs Parent Representatives from various English Quebec School Boards. The need to increase special needs parent representation throughout the school board structure was discussed and an initiative to share IEP best practices was initiated. For more information, please see the QESEC report:

<http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/extra/img/163QESECMeetingSummaryNov15-2015.pdf>

**Enrollment Criteria Policy Consultation:**

SNAC responded to the [Enrollment Criteria Consultation](#), reiterating the importance of Bilingual programs.

**Contract Negotiations:**

The PTU, IASS and PEP representatives to SNAC provided an update on recent votes to support a strike mandate. The committee was advised that negotiations are on-going. Of interest to SNAC is the discussion at the PTU negotiating table about possibly dropping the code of high-functioning Autism. Concerns about how this would be determined, and by whom, were raised.

**Questions from the Public:**

Following a discussion regarding the importance of confidentiality, SNAC would like to emphasize the importance of ongoing training for school Daycare, Lunch and Recess staff to provide the tools they need in order to care for all children with a variety of needs. The school board does in fact provide various training sessions for personnel, and it is our hope that over time all LBPSB staff members and teachers will attend.

**Next Meeting:**

Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 7pm at the school board, Room 219/221 upstairs.

The meeting will begin with a presentation by Carol Heffernan on the topic of “**LBPSB Budget with regard to Special Needs**”. All parents of students with IEPs are welcome to attend.

Respectfully submitted,

Brett Hillgartner, Chairperson, LBPSB Special Needs Advisory Committee 2015-2016

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