

Special Needs Advisory Committee
Minutes of the meeting held October 26, 2011
1925 Brookdale, Dorval, Room 219/221

Cindy Finn called meeting to order at 7:06 pm and held election for the executive committee.

In attendance: Angela Berryman, Sandra Buckingham, Jennifer DiMarco, Margo Edwards, Cindy Finn, Christopher Fuzessy, Jane Fullerton-Kelly, Aisha Ghauri, Michelle Harper, Conny Held, Ester Maturi, Pam Normandin, Daniel Olivenstein, Kiley Philp, Chantal Robichaud, Barbara Schnider, Joanne Simoneau-Polenz

Regrets: Irene Bilaj, Myriam Boffice, Cherry Marshall

ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Positions Filled:

Chair: Sandra Buckingham

-Nominations: Sandra Buckingham nominated by Barbara Schnider and Ester Maturi nominated by Aisha Ghauri

-First vote resulted in a tie with both nominees receiving the same number of votes. A decision was taken to allow the other “non-parent” members of SNAC to be included in the voting process. Second vote resulted in Sandra being elected as chair of the SNAC committee.

Vice chair : Barbara Schnider (acclaimed)

Secretary: Angela Berryman

Treasurer: Aisha Ghauri

-Nominations: Irene Bilaj and Aisha Ghauri; Vote taken and Aisha Ghauri elected as treasurer

Presentation given by Cindy Finn: Special Needs Education in Quebec

- A very informative presentation providing an overview of Special Needs services at LBPSB, including coding, funding, partnership programs, special grants, Centers of Excellence and more.

- An overview on Special Needs Funding from MELs was provided:

A) Base funding from MELs a priori based on historical percentage of student population having special needs (10-12%)

B) Per Capita Funding from MELs, based on number of students who have been identified, diagnosed with validated by MELs as having a particular special need, and assigned a specific numerical code. Requires a medical diagnosis and proof that child has specific limitations that affect learning and/or socializing.

- Some very interesting statistics were presented (based on the 2011 school year), including:

- 3.7% of the LBPSB population has a numerical code;
- 12% of the total population have special needs [2710 students]. There are students with S.N in every school; the number varies greatly by school, and does not include the Adult/VOC sector.
- 2 main categories of Special Needs students:
 - A) Students in Difficulty (1845); Largest categories: Learning Difficulties, behavioural disorders, Mild Intellectual delays
 - B) Students with Handicaps (865): Largest categories: Autism, psychopathological disorders (depression, anxiety); moderate intellectual impairments
- Split between elementary/secondary:
 - A) Students in Difficulty (1845);
 - 35% elementary
 - 65% secondary
 - B) Students with Handicaps (865):
 - 51% elementary
 - 49% secondary

1.0. Additions to Agenda:

- item 3.2 Appoint a web administrator
- item 3.3 Confirm rep for sub committee for consultation of Special Needs Policy
- item 5.1 Project brainstorming
- item 6.2. Correspondence training package

2.0 Approval of Agenda: It was moved by Jennifer Dimarco and seconded by Kiley Philp and unanimously resolved that the agenda of October 26th, 2011 be approved.

2.0 Correction to minutes of June 1st, 2011.

-no corrections

2.1. Approval of minutes of June 1st, 2011.

It was moved by Jennifer Dimarco and seconded by Barbara Schnider and unanimously resolved that the Minutes of June 1st, 2011 be adopted.

2.2 Correction to the Minutes of October 12, 2011

- under section 7, change “October 26th, 2012” to “October 26th, 2011”
- under section 7, remove Chantal as Alternate to CPC
- under section 7, add Barbara as Alternate Rep to Council
- under section 7, change ‘Rep to Adult/Voc Ed ‘ to ‘Alternate to Ed Committee ‘

2.3. Approval of Minutes of October 12, 2011

It was moved by Jennifer Dimarco and seconded by Kiley Philp and unanimously resolved that the Minutes of October 12, 2011 be approved.

3.0 Business Arising

3.1. Process and timeline for allocation support services to students with special needs (item deferred from June 1st meeting)

-remarks from Cindy Finn and Joanne Simoneau-Polenz explained the budget and union parameters that make this difficult. Ideally, special needs funding information would be sent to schools in mid-May, with adjustments in June and final adjustments in August. However last year funding from MELS was received in June rather than in April. And the new teacher's collective agreement which reduced classroom sizes due to "weighting" of certain S.N. codes complicated the planning process. Furthermore, the 10% carryover limit of budget surplus prevents the board from allocating services based on early estimates and correcting later. As a result, a cautious approach is taken and services are officially allocated only when incoming funding and number of S.N. students is confirmed.

3.2. Web Administrator:

-Jennifer Dimarco volunteered to be the SNAC website administrator

4.0 Reports:

4.1. Administration; reported by Cindy Finn

- schools now need to have success plan and partnership agreements done; they will look at the data and then the next step will be meeting with the school administrators; data needs to be given to MELS in November/December
- initial budget information has been sent out; more IEP money for teachers to receive/gather information; IEP money refers to IEP meetings, training, and anything that allows better collaboration of staff
- Cindy and Joanne attended "Raconte Nationale" the topic was "Levers for Success for Special Needs Students"; conference was done through video conference and was very interesting as it was able to reach all of Québec; a major focus of discussion was on IEP changes, there will be two more conferences this year to discuss English in French schools and the use of technology in schools

4.2 Council of Commissioners... reported by Daniel Olivenstein

- council meetings are held the last Monday of every month and are webcast so that the public can ask questions live; replay of the webcast is available on the LBPSB site any time (LBPSB was the first to go live with their web casts); SNAC report takes place at the beginning of the webcast
- balanced budget, cutbacks have minimal impact on success; 5% of our money goes to administration
- board provides funding to all committees: \$1000 for SNAC; reminder given that it is very important that each committee use all of the funds that they are allocated each year.
- announcement of the retirement of Vivienne Croubalian and the appointment of Steve Balleine and Carol Heffermen as her replacements
- Reorganization and change in administration will result in a \$50-60,000 year savings;

4.3 Central Parents Committee

- written report provided by Sandra was distributed and questions answered
- region 1 missing 2 members
- next meeting Nov 3rd

4.4 Education and Adult Vocational Committee

- Commissioner Daniel Olivenstein explained that contrary to what was previously discussed, there would be no SNAC parent representative on the Education Subcommittee that has been established to review and update the LBPSB Special Needs Policy. Feedback would be provided via the Commissioner, and Consultations. No date has been set for the first meeting of the Subcommittee. The next meeting of the Ed Committee will be November 7, 2011, and Barbara Schneider will attend as SNAC parent rep.

4.5 P.T.U.: Myriam Boffice absent

4.6. P.A.S.A. – report by Jane Fullerton-Kelly, principal of St.Lawrence Academy Sr.
-schools are finished /finalizing special needs plans
-expressed that they were very appreciative of the increase in the IEP fund
-resource teachers attending “Net Meetings” on a monthly basis

4.7 Professionals-report by Pamela Normandin, LBPSB Special Needs Consultant
-orientation sessions for new resource teachers and new integration aids both elementary and high school
-consultants have a list of workshops for all the schools, 6 or 7 done in schools already
-2 professional development per year for consultants; November 24th is the first one with 4 different topics for presentations [Autism, Mental Health, Death&Grieving, Anxiety], information will go out next week
-Elementary consultants have been in the schools changing IEP to match up with the new report card
-clarification that the IEP is done at the school level
-autism lecture series handout given; November 3rd and November 15th

4.8. IASS-Report by Margo Edwards

-Margo advised the group that there was no news regarding the request by Special Ed Techs to increase in their working hours from 25 to 30 hours per week.

4.9 Treasurer report: Carry-over funding and costs for Recording Secretary to be discussed at the next meeting.

5.0. New Business:

5.1 Enrollment Criteria

-Enrollment Criteria Policy Consultation; deadline is November 25th for submitting a response

-issue of new criteria being too vague with regards to the change in enrolment policy that references that it is based on “services available”; when special needs policy is rewritten, the alternative referral program will be clarified

-decision made to not submit a formal response from SNAC on “Enrollment Criteria Policy”

5.2 New Project Brainstorming and Prioritizing:

-tabled until next meeting November 30th, 2011

6.0. Correspondence:

6.1 ASD, FSSTT and CROM Newsletters were distributed.

6.2. Correspondance received by Jennifer Dimarco was shared with the group; services were offered to hold a parent information night concerning financial advice for the families of children with special needs. Jennifer will send a response to advice that a similar information session is already being offered by CROM at the Montreal Children’s Hospital Jan 18, 2012.

7.0 Varia

-request made by Kiley to have SNAC pay for 2 day conference on the “Alert Program”; cost is \$200, November 18th and 19th; will do presentation to SNAC to share what was learned; vote was deffered until next meeting once issue concerning carry-over funding is resolved.

8.0 Adjournment

It was moved by Jennifer seconded by Aisha and unanimously resolved to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09.

Date of next meeting: November 30th, 2011 at 7:00pm at the School Board in room 219/221