

Special Needs Advisory Committee
Lester B. Pearson School Board

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – NOVEMBER 30TH, 2011

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

In Attendance: Angela Berryman, Irene Bilaj, 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

Recording Secretary: A. Graham

Sandra Buckingham called the meeting to order at 7:09.

1.0 Additions to Agenda

1.1 Approval of Agenda

(SNAC1112-11.1) It was moved by Jennifer DiMarco that the agenda be accepted with the addition of 3.4 5 minute intro to workshops - by Kiley Philp. The motion was seconded by Chantal Robichaud and unanimously resolved.

2.0 Corrections to Minutes of October 26th, 2011

2.1 Approval of Minutes of October 26th, 2011

(SNAC1112-11.2) It was moved by Barbara Schnider that the minutes of October 26, 2011 be accepted with the following corrections:

- Item 2.1 should read “English in French schools” rather than “English and French Schools” on the last line of the text.
- Item 4.2 should not have an extra ‘t’ in Steve Balleine’s name.
- Item 4.2 changes apply to administrative changes, not commissioner position changes.

The motion was seconded by Aisha Ghauri and carried unanimously.

3.0 Business Arising

3.1 SNAC Budget Review 2011-2012

The SNAC will be allocated one thousand dollars for the 2011-2012 school year. The SNAC will also have access to the 6295\$ carryover from previous years to fund various projects.

3.2 Appointment/Approval of Recording Secretary

Sandra Buckingham introduced Andrew Graham as a potential recording secretary for the 2011-2012 school year at a rate of fifty dollars per meeting for a total of 300\$ for the remainder of the year. **(SNAC1112-11.3)** It was moved by Chantal Robichaud to approve the proposed expenditure. The motion was seconded by Aisha Ghauri and carried unanimously.

3.3 Appointment/Approval of Alternate parent to fill 1 year vacancy

Due to the recent departure of a SNAC member, there is currently a 1 year vacancy, which would normally be filled by the ordered alternates. The first alternate, Chantal Robichaud has expressed an interest in becoming a regular member of the SNAC. It was moved by Barbara Kiley, and unanimously resolved that the vacant position would be filled by Chantal Robichaud.

3.4 Intro to workshops - by Kiley Philp

Thanks were given to the parents who attended the workshops and provided the written reports. Kiley Phelp then spoke about the *How Does Your Engine Run: The ALERT Program for Self-Regulation*. Kiley Phelp explained the theory that children may appear to be in high gear when they are really in low gear, and use distracters like fidgeting to keep alert. Two schools in the ETSB have embraced the approach and have "engine rooms" which are similar to an OT room. It was noted that specific pages of the documentation may be copied, however, copies of the entire document may not be made, due to copyright regulations.

4.0 Reports

It was requested that all reports be sent to Maureen several days before the meeting to allow time for copying, distribution and meeting preparation.

4.1 Administration

Joanne Simoneau-Polenz gave a verbal report to the committee. The following items were given particular attention in her report:

- The new assistant director, Christopher Fuzessy, will be taking over as of January 16th, 2012.
- The LBPSB has taken possession of the new school off-island, and is currently moving in equipment so that they may open December 7, 2011.
- Coordinating with Student Services about health issues, including the measles vaccination program that will commence off-island.
- Looking at partnership agreements, specifically as they relate to graduation rates and success for special needs students
- Report cards have been issued for the first term, ending November 20th, 2011. As they were provincially standardized, there was a lot more work with administration involved.

It was noted that children with a moderate/severe intellectual delay still received percentages on their report cards. Joanne Simoneau-Polenz then responded to questions from the committee regarding the topics discussed in her report.

4.2 Council of Commissioners

Conny Held and Daniel Olivenstein gave a verbal report to the committee. The following items were covered in their report:

- A presentation from St. Paul's who won the *Majesta Trees of Knowledge* contest.
- The swearing in of parent commissioners Nan Beaton and Dominic Pavone.
- Enrolment levels being down only slightly.
- Random radon testing to be performed by MELS.
- The linguistic policy which is ready for consultation.

- The recent gala fundraiser by the Pearson Educational Foundation and the current holiday card fundraising
- Welcoming Christopher Fuzessy as the new assistant director
- The swearing in at Central Student's as well as preparations for TOPS
- A complaints flowchart not available online under complaints.
- A group to review the emergency preparedness policies
- The growth of the international group, including an agreement with India
- The Education Committee subcommittee for the SN policy and the need for SNAC input.

Conny Held and Danny Olivenstein then responded to questions from the committee regarding the topics discussed in their report.

4.3 Central Parents' Committee

The notes from the meeting held November 3rd were included in the kit. The subsequent meeting was to be held at the same time as the current SNAC meeting, therefore Sandra Buckingham no SNAC member will be able to attend. It was noted that the lack of SNAC representation on the Education Committee's subcommittee was raised as a concern.

4.4 Education Committee

Barbara Schnider attended the meeting held November 7th, 2011. Several topics were covered, including a presentation of the alternative centre, an info session for daycare, the digital citizenship project, an upcoming government project requesting the advice of the LBPSB and the Special Needs Policy review.

4.4.1 Ed. Subcommittee: Special Needs Policy Review

The subcommittee is currently reviewing policy and the supporting documentation prior to meeting the first week of December. It was noted that there will be several presentations at the subcommittee. Members discussed options for establishing a means of obtaining regular reports from the Subcommittee and the opportunity to provide feedback, perhaps on a quarterly basis – Cindy Finn will inquire. Unfortunately, the subcommittee does not provide regular minutes of its meetings.

4.5 P.T.U.

No report was available for the meeting.

4.6 P.A.S.A.

Jane Fullerton-Kelly provided a verbal report to the committee. Her report focused on the report card glitches, the measles campaign, the school success plans and the transition activities.

4.7 Professionals

Pam Normandin provided a verbal report to the committee. Her report focused on high school resource teachers talking about girl bullies, integration aids having held an activity on November 24th, and a presentation by Don Crochet about dealing with loss.

4.8 I.A.S.S.

Margo Edwards provided a verbal report to the committee. Her report focused on the AGM that was held November 24th at PCHS and had Linda Edgecombe as a guest speaker. The short film *The Collector of Bedford Street* was also shown, prompting a discussion of where special needs students go after high school. Joanne Simoneau-Polenz then spoke about current resources such as engagement jeunesse. Margo Edwards advised the group that the union has begun to survey Integration/Tech Aides for feedback regarding their job description. An update will be provided when results are available.

4.9 Treasurer's Report

Funds are now available for the SNAC to use. A request was received from Kiley Philp to reimburse 200\$ in expenditures for the workshop attended. **(SNAC1112-11.4)** It was moved by Margo Edwards and seconded by Jennifer Fullerton-Kelly to allocate 200\$ for the expenses incurred. The motion passed unanimously, with an abstention from Kiley Philp.

4.10 Website Administrator's Report

A hit counter has been put on the main page of the website and has yielded 306 hits in November. The counter will be reset each month. Counters on individual pages will be added, as well as a link to the complaint flowchart. A total of twenty-four emails were received, including two test emails and a request for information about special needs accommodations. As the request is very broad, more information will be necessary to respond to the request. It was noted that the Navigating the System flowchart has not been updated since 2006.

4.11 Workshops attended

Sandra Buckingham again thanked the parents who attended the workshops and provided written reports. Chantal Robichaud then spoke to the committee about the Child Psychopharmacology workshop. The workshop spoke about a lack of drug trials and testing on children. It also dealt with personal issues due to the small nature of the workshop.

Jennifer DiMarco then spoke about the *Social Thinking: Exploring the Spectrum of Perspective Taking and Teaching with Social Thinking Vocabulary* workshop as presented by Michelle Garcia Winner. Jennifer DiMarcos' copies of the books were available at the meeting, and many links to additional resources were provided. A link to the booklist will also be made available. It was noted that the funds for that workshop came from the 2010-2011 budget.

5.0 New Business

5.1 Discussion of Supervisor/S.N Student Ratio at large outings

Feedback is being requested about an incident which occurred in late October at a field trip wherein a special needs student wandered away from the group and was later found by their parent. A discussion about field trip regulations, student-adult ratios and special needs ensued. A reminder will be sent to administrators to consider the requirements for special needs students when a field trip proposal is being approved at the governing board level.

The SNAC meeting then took a 5 minute break from 8:42 to 8:47. Sandra Buckingham presented Joanne Simoneau-Polenz with a gift and thanked her for her efforts. Cindy Finn then toasted Joanne Simoneau-Polenz's contributions over the years. Joanne

Simoneau-Polenz then spoke briefly about her upcoming series of goodbyes and the importance of committees such as the SNAC.

5.2 Brainstorming: Potential Projects for the year

An open discussion of potential projects for the year was held with Aisha Ghauri marking the ideas on a flipchart. The ideas proposed included:

- A review of the handbook/pamphlet for special needs
- Participating in the CPC parent conference to be held March 31st, 2012
- Developing information for parents to help prepare for IEP meetings, including 'About Me' and 'What Johnny did this summer'
- Initiating a 'brain gain' program to incorporate exercise and education via treadmills, ergonomic balls, stationary bikes or other means.
- Sensory processing as a 'whole class' approach
- Hosting a parent seminar
- Providing an information pamphlet or booth at kindergarten open houses
- Establishing a parent resource centre where parents could access information
- Including a SNAC page in the school agendas
- Reference tips on the SNAC website
- Developing a directory for post-secondary services and plans, specifically as they apply to special needs students
- A seminar by Cindy Finn for aids, regions and the CPC.

It was noted that additional ideas can be sent via e-mail, and that from this list, a list of priorities will be extracted and ranked to be developed as projects for the coming year.

6.0 Correspondence

A request for e-mail addresses was received from Joe Zemanovich. The request was declined as any request can be forwarded through the SNAC email. A request for Cindy Finn's presentation was received from Region 2. As the presentation requires context, it is recommended that they extend a formal invitation to Cindy Finn to give her presentation, or that this may be considered for the CPC Parent Conference.

7.0 Varia

Nil.

8.0 Questions from the Public

Nil.

9.0 Announcement of Departure of Joanne Simoneau-Polenz, and Best Wishes from all SNAC Members

Once again, the SNAC thanked Joanne Simoneau-Polenz for her efforts and sent her their best wishes.

10.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Sandra Buckingham at 9:45pm. A reminder was given that potential projects may still be submitted via e-mail during the holidays.

Next Meeting: Wednesday January 25, 2012 (7:00 pm)
Happy Holiday Season to you and your family!