

Parent Commissioner Report to SNAC – April 2018

Respectfully submitted by Angela Berryman – Parent Commissioner, Special Needs

Highlights from March Council Meeting

Special Presentation: Students of Westwood Sr. High School Band should be very proud of their outstanding live performance.

Report from Student Commissioners: The March Student Voice Question for the month was: “Are you aware of the supports available at the school for bullying? Are you aware of your schools anti-violence & anti-bullying policies? What are other ways the school & student body can do to prevent bullying?”

Students Speak up on Bullying & Mental Illness: 2 incredibly brave & inspiring LBPSB students spoke during public question period to share their experiences & ideas on how to better support students. I highly recommend listening to what they had to say. It can be viewed at http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/content/webcasting/20180326_brd.html (starting at 1:17).

Here are a few highlights of what I personally took away from what was shared:

Recommendations/Comments from Student: Bullying

- Students may not report instances of harassment (“slut shaming”, verbal harassment, unwanted touching in hallways): “I did not recognize these attacks on my integrity and psychological well-being, as bullying”
- Make bullying and conflict resolution workshops mandatory for lunch and after school personnel
- At the beginning and midway through the year, designate a staff member at each level, for students to report instances of bullying to
- Create and teach a curriculum that opens a discussion on how sexism, homophobia, classism and ableism are linked to bullying and violence

Recommendations/Comments from Student: Mental Illness

- Creating a “safe place or safe room” in each school for students who need to get away from crowds.
- Provide alternatives for students with mental illness whom, at times, may struggle with leaving their home and attending school
- Students with high levels of anxiety can face many challenges just trying to cope in a “busy” environment; never mind participating in class discussions
- Students who suffer from a mental illness that prevents them from participating in class, should not be penalized academically for not being able to do so
- Kids in crisis need to have access to counselors when they are in crisis, not in a few days; wait times for guidance counselors in the schools can lead to students finding alternate ways of coping, such as self-harm

2016-2017 Lester B. Pearson School Board Annual Report : Approved and available on the board's website. Some excerpts: LBPSB had an 88.5% qualification rate, 100% of students with special needs aged 18-21 exited the youth sector with a Transition école vie active (TEVA) plan and the Student Ombudsman noted that they received 4 contacts regarding "Disability, Temporary or Permanent, Reasonable Accommodation" and that none resulted in an investigation.

LBPSB First Commitment-to-Success Plan 2018-2022: Consultation launch. Responses due May 20, 2018. The objectives set are based on the objectives set by the Ministry of Education.

All standing committee reports can be viewed on our website at the following link:

<http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/council/CommitteeReports.asp>

Next Council meeting - Monday, April 30th at 7:30 p.m.

Webcast of the meeting:

http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/main_videoV3.asp

Extra Curricular Activities & Field Trip Policy Update....

Field Trip and EA Policy Consultation Responses: Many very impressive responses were received, with a good number of responses making specific mention of students with special needs. To view responses visit:

http://www.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/admin/Consultations/extra/img/53Extra_Curricular_Activities_Field_Trip_Consultation_Responses.pdf

Correspondences Received from LBPSB Parents

IEP & Support Concerns: Some parents may not feel that they have the necessary emotional support & mental wellness to effectively work with their child's school to resolve issues; especially when their child is struggling and does not seem to be progressing despite the IEP. The stress of dealing with their child's diagnosis is exacerbated by feelings of hopelessness when it comes to working collaboratively with the school to find effective solutions. They may experience further frustration when they contact the board for guidance and then are redirected back to their principal, with whom they have already been dealing with unsuccessfully.