



Wednesday May 16, 2018

Me. Geneviève Dugré
Secretary General, Lester B. Pearson School Board
Lester B. Pearson School Board
1925 Brookdale Avenue
Dorval, QC
H9P 2Y7

Subject: Consultation Response “Commitment to Success Plan, 2018-2022”

Dear Me. Geneviève Dugré,

On behalf of the Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC), please find below our comments and/or suggestions regarding the Commitment to Success Plan, 2018-2022.

SNAC recognizes the importance of the Commitment to Success Plan; specifically, for the future planning and success of our students with handicaps, social maladjustments, and learning disabilities. It is our hope that careful consideration is given to these students when finalizing the board’s first Commitment to Success Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation.

Respectfully,

Jennifer DiMarco
Chairperson, Special Needs Advisory Committee, 2017-2018

General Comments on LBPSB Commitment to Success Plan 2018-2022:

LBPSB has a graduation and qualification rate that it can be very proud of and a proven record of being able to graduate and qualify students, including those with handicaps, social maladjustments, and learning disabilities (HSMLD).

In reviewing the proposed Commitment to Success Plan, it is clear that the needs of students with different abilities have been taken into account and serious thought has gone into developing a plan that addresses the needs of all students. However, after careful review, there are a few areas that SNAC feels require some additional attention:

- 1) IEPs can play a significant role in the success of students with handicaps, social maladjustments, and learning disabilities. As such, specific mention of IEP development and tracking should be included in this plan.
- 2) Several statements in this plan encourage inclusiveness by specifically using the words "all students". To further foster inclusion, we recommend also specifically using the term "adapted sports" when referring to promoting sports and activities.
- 3) To combat all forms of racism and discrimination, as well as celebrate diversity, a specific objective should be included in this plan that demonstrates this is a top priority for LBPSB.
- 4) A parental survey should supplement the Tell Them From Me (TTFM) survey to allow for a clearer picture of student experiences; which can be very important for some students unable to independently complete the TTFM survey.

Specific Comments and Recommendations:

Direction 1: Improving Achievement

Comment: When planning for and monitoring academic achievement, it is important to have an accurate and clear picture of the levels of success for all our students; not simply the majority of students. Even when a subject is modified for a student, they receive a grade that should reflect their level of achievement. There are currently no measures or indicators listed in this plan that allows for the tracking of success for students on modified programs. Ensuring that quality Individualized Education Plans are set up for these students can play a significant role in both their level of success, as well as our ability to measure that success and progression.

Recommendation: add the following Objective and General Strategy to the Plan to account for the success of students on modified programs

Objective: To increase student success in elementary school Mathematics, English Language Arts and French for students on modified programs in those subjects.

*General Strategy: Support schools in developing quality IEPs for students with HSMLD, that contain appropriate objectives & allow for the progression of learning to be tracked and success rates quantified. *if necessary, add that the board will find a way to quantify the success rates of students with HSMLD by 2020 (or specific deadline), or that the board will come up with a specific plan to support schools inaccurately reporting on the success rates of the students on modified programs (perhaps through staff and parental feedback)*

Comment: The plan lists the following objective: “To improve success for students with special needs”. Other objectives set in the plan are specific; this one is very general.

Recommendation: SNAC recommends modifying the wording of the objective to be more specific and aligned with the wording of the other objectives set in the plan.

New/Replacement Objective: “Reduce the gap in success rates between students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning difficulties, and those without.”

DIRECTION 2: Ensuring Wellness, Objective A: To strengthening healthy lifestyles and positive mental health.

Comment: SNAC would like to stress the importance of ensuring that students with handicaps, social maladjustments, and learning disabilities are able to participate and are included in clubs and school teams. A sense of belonging is important for all students, and students with HSMLD, may be at a higher risk of having negative school experiences. For example, they may have increased anxiety due to bullying, feelings of isolation, social skill deficits, academic struggles, etc. Clubs and teams are especially important for those students who may otherwise not feel like they “fit in”.

Recommendation: modify the general strategy “Encourage participation in school clubs and teams”, to be more inclusive.

New/Replacement General Strategy: “Encourage participation of all students in school clubs and teams and commit to providing support for those students who may need it”.

Comment: An important part of helping students to build positive mental health is to help both them and their communities celebrate and appreciate all forms of diversity; including, but not limited to gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, personality and socioeconomic status. Ongoing and focused efforts need to be made to help ensure students are in an environment that not only encourages them to appreciate their own individuality but also teaches them to support and be sensitive to the individuality of others.

Recommendation: Add the following General Strategy to the plan to support mental health:

“Encourage diversity and inclusion training initiatives, that support and foster a more sensitive community that celebrates inclusion and diversity and builds social awareness of unconscious bias, social inequalities, and stereotypes.”

DIRECTION 2: Ensuring Wellness, Objective B: To encourage learners to adopt a healthy and physically active lifestyle

Comment: In order to encourage all students to adopt a healthy and physically active lifestyle, extracurricular sports and activities need to be inclusive, and options need to be made available for students who may require adapted sports.

Recommendation: change the wording in the General Strategy, “Promote extra curricular sports teams and activities”

New/Replacement General Strategy: “Promote extracurricular sports teams and activities, including sports and activities adapted to the needs of students with handicaps.”

DIRECTION 2: Ensuring Wellness, Objective C: To foster safe and caring relationships within the school, the community, and the digital environments.

Comment: If students are not able to complete the TTFM survey, then their level of feeling safe at school is not being measured. In addition, students with a handicap, social maladjustment or learning disability, may not be accurately completing the survey. Having parents participate in a Learning Bar, or another source survey can give some additional input and insight.

Recommendation: Include in the General Strategies, the use of a parent survey to gather input as part of the school’s safety portrait.