



Wednesday March 22, 2020

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

Subject: Budget Consultation 2020

Dear Me. Dugré,

In regard to the Budget Consultation, the Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) is pleased to have the opportunity to provide input.

Question 1: What is your relationship to the Lester B. Pearson School Board?

School Board Committee - Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC)

Question 2:

Do you have any suggestions regarding objectives, principles or criteria used to govern the allocation of funds?

- Given our current reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, SNAC would recommend that an allocation of funds be made available in order to meet both the physical and emotional well being of school staff, students and their families.
- Increase the priority of inclusion of the growing number of students with special needs throughout the school board and allocate more funds accordingly
- Ensure that funds are made available to allow for the inclusion of students with special needs in extra-curricular activities and field trips
- Considering a student with special needs will be in every school, continue to put funds towards sensitivity training of all students and staff so successful inclusion and acceptance can take place
- In the event of school closures / mergers ensure that there are enough funds allocated to fully support the students with special needs in this transition. Change is difficult for all children, but especially so for those with special needs



Question 3:

To help us further support our students' success, in your opinion, which of the following resources and programs are essential to supporting high levels of student achievement? Please select all that apply

Answers in order of importance for SNAC:

1. Staff Training:

Invest in the professional development of the people who are working directly with our students. Give staff the tools and the training that they need to be able to manage the classrooms. Our goal with inclusion should be a quality education for all. It is not necessarily specialized programs that are going to make that happen. It is the people on the front lines, our teachers and staff, that with the right support and training, have the power to make a difference in student achievement. What is most important is ensuring that staff, at all levels, are prepared to support the philosophy of a quality education for all.

2. Integration of Technology: for differentiated learning

Ensure that students have access to technology and that staff are trained and willing to use it in their classrooms. Technology can be used to level the playing field for students with special needs and should be considered an invaluable tool for helping students reach their potential. Invest in online interactive software that will support students not just through practice but through remedial intervention and make it available to all students not just those who are deemed in need for all subjects. Continue to invest in e-learning classes for secondary school students for credit.

3. Early Literacy Intervention

The earlier, the better. Provide students with intervention that is motivating, enjoyable, and will eventually help to build their self-esteem as a learner.

The Orton-Gillingham approach is a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, diagnostic, and prescriptive way to teach literacy when reading, writing, and spelling does not come easily to students. Given its recognized effectiveness, we would like cycle 1 staff in an increasing number of schools to be trained in this method and be ready and able to implement it when teaching their students. We believe that if they are given access to this more inclusive literacy intervention fewer students will fall behind, thus fewer students will require additional literacy resource support down the line.



4. Special Education programming: more inclusive programming

Create more inclusive classrooms, where students of all needs and abilities are able to learn from one another. Promote collaboration and diversity in classrooms.

5. Experiential Learning

Learning through “doing” has the potential to reach a greater number of students than traditional “rote” learning.

6. Renewed Math Strategy

Incorporate more technology as needed and find new ways to get students engaged in math.

7. French programming

Provide opportunities to help students gain the confidence to use the skills that they acquire in the French language in a real world setting.

Question 4:

The school board's priority is to maintain buildings in the best condition that is possible within the budgets provided by the Ministry of Education. If there are surplus funds available please choose the school and centre building component that you believe requires the most service, maintenance or replacement.

Answer in order of importance for SNAC:

1. **Classroom furniture:** with alternative seating options for all types of students and learners. For example standing tables, wobble chairs, exercise balls, bouncy bands, tennis balls on chairs etc.
2. **Other:** sensory friendly spaces or a dedicated sensory friendly rooms
3. **Interior upgrade:** wheelchair accessibility, unisex bathrooms for transgender students
4. **Flooring, Painting, Lighting:** sensory friendly lighting in classrooms



5. **Grounds maintenance, exterior work:** adapted playground equipment options for students with special needs

May we recommend that you look at this award winning book:

<https://www.routledge.com/Designing-for-Autism-Spectrum-Disorders-1st-Edition/Gaines-Bourne-Pearson-Kleibrink/p/book/9780415725279>

Question 6: Other Comments or Suggestions

Provide teachers with the flexibility to truly evaluate student learning through a vast array of means/tools.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation.

Respectfully,

Jennifer DiMarco - Chair
Special Needs Advisory Committee, 2019-2020
snac.lbpsb.qc.ca