

Special Needs Advisory Committee Lester B. Pearson School Board

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting – April 22, 2020 Held at Lester B. Pearson School Board 1925 Brookdale, Dorval

In Attendance: Laurence Assouline, Angela Berryman,, Lauren Broad, Jennifer DiMarco, Dyana Gampel, Christina George, Robert Gilmartin, Evelyne Hornblower, Maureen Hunt, Franca Kesic, Marwa Khattab, Susana Lazaro, Lisa Mancini, Sheila Moody, Danny Olivenstein, Kathy Robinson, Nora Salvaggio, Randi Spanier, Stéphanie Stever, Michelle Wilson

Regrets: Tracy Bieszcz, Kiley Philp, Lindsay Weisbloom

No Reply: none

Recording Secretary: Evelyne Hornblower

Observers: **closed virtual meeting** 0 members of the public were in attendance

Jennifer DiMarco called the virtual meeting to order at 7:02 pm

1.0 Welcome to the Virtual Meeting

Meeting was held on google meet and recorded. Google meet is one of the google apps for education (GAPE) and is connected to the lbpearson accounts.

2.0 Confirmation of Quorum: Quorum was reached

(quorum is considered 9 or half the voting members as per the internal rules)

3.0 Approval of Agenda:

Combine 5.6 and 5.7 as they are one consultation this year, then bump 5.8 to 5.7, 5.9 to 5.8 and 5.10 to 5.9

MOTION to approve agenda with changes listed above by Kathy, seconded by Lisa
MOTION carried by unanimous vote

4.0 Minutes Approvals:

4.1 Corrections to the Minutes of February 19 , 2020

6.3 corrections place the following at the end of the sentence in order to *ascertain the publics' opinion on the new course.*

4.2 Approval of Minutes of February 19, 2020

MOTION to approve with the edit above by Rob, seconded by Michelle.
MOTION carried by unanimous vote.

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 Covid-19 & LBPSB Update (Stephanie)

This is the new normal, and we are adapting and keeping agile. No one could have predicted this and initially was a 2 week close, and currently Santé publique are the main directions that we are following and redirecting. At this point we can not predict the next steps and the actual opening date. Applaud the ministry to get resources together to build the platform for additional help. The team is continuing to come together virtually as quickly as possible. The extended closure till March 31st pushed the professionals to connect to the different parties to support different parties. The prolonged shut down will be determined by the health minister. Premier Legault stated that there will be 2 weeks notice prior to schools coming back together. He intends on giving a plan for the 2 weeks prior for the schools to prepare to meet the needs of our students. To meet the needs of the kids the goal was to connect to the different parties. The goal was to attempt to work with the LBPSB community to meet the needs of the families. Targeting priorities as much as possible in order to help the people as much as possible. There was a need to change the ways they are working and collaborating. The resource teams were activated right away to strategise availability and support in order to reach out the communities per the realities of the staff. Guidance counsellors were mobilised with online resources as quickly as possible to help the students. The current challenge will be to assess how to grade and implement the final grades.

The SSD team has created and is updating a website with resources

<https://sites.google.com/lbpearson.ca/ssdresources/home>

Similarly, the ESD team is doing the same

<https://sites.google.com/lbpearson.ca/esdresources/home>

Q: One of the items mentioned at this point would have been that each student/family should have been reached out to at this point by a staff member, has this been followed up on?

R: Yes, if that hasn't happened the parents are welcome to contact the school directly. If there are specific concerns to deal with please contact the principal directly in order to ensure that the children have been contacted by a staff member.

Q: For families where you have 2 kids working from home with special needs, it is quite difficult to get the resources. Is there anything being worked on to engage with the children remotely?

R: A lot of items are being assessed in order to figure out how to get the services possible. Trying to figure out how to organise the services for parents as the need comes.

Q: Was not sure how to access the computers that are at schools.

R: Make the request and the schools will try the best they can to accommodate this all while abiding to the ministry of health recommendations.

Q: Are any customized kits being sent out via mail? Are other staff members (support staff) at the school level being asked to help reach out to students?

R: The kits are sent to teachers who adapted or modified them according to the need of the students.

Q: Who is mobilised?

R: Everyone is mobilised at this point. Limited amounts of people can come together all while following the health minister guidelines.

Q: Talking about provincial exams this year? How will they deal with it next year?

R: All schools will have to deal with this for the years to come.

There are 5 daycares opened in order to accommodate the children for the essential workers. Agility is required to meet the different needs. These are hidden gems coming together to make special daycares work. They are currently asking that anyone at risk (60 and up), different domains are being looked at in the era of social distancing for the gradual return within the guidelines to be followed. The questions that are being addressed are how to gradually integrate the children back into the schools.

5.2 Update: Salon Info - Transitions 2020 (Stephanie)

This is postponed.

ASD conference is also postponed until April 2021.

5.3 Follow up: parents support group (Stephanie/Lisa)

Parent support group is postponed at the time being. This is a school initiative, this would be an interesting pilot project. Excited for this to happen in the coming years.

Q: Given the current situation, has there been a conversation about making this happen online.

R: Does not think that this should be initiated at this time, the social tree is an online resource already established and providing free therapy sessions online on Fridays at the moment due to the pandemic. WIAIH, our community partner, has increased the number of virtual meetings it is offering also.

5.4 Follow up / Vote: Letter for Minister re: 20 minute recess seasonal issues (Jen)

SNAC draft letter was created by SNAC Chair and put in the kit, however sending the letter to the minister is currently on hold considering the current COVID-19 pandemic. We do not want our important message to be missed. SNAC Chair to make note for next year's committee to review it for the fall meetings.

5.5 Vote: Budget Consultation Response Due May 15 (Jen)

Integrate the following sentence as the first point in question 2:

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.

MOTION to approve by Angela, seconded by Rob.

MOTION carried by unanimous vote.

5.6 Consultation: By-law 1 & 1E (2020) To fix the day/time/place of council of commissioners and executive committee meetings

MOTION to approve by Kathy, seconded by Michelle.

MOTION carried by unanimous vote.

5.7 Consultation: 3 year plan of allocation and destination of immovables

SNAC Chair has asked members to read through the consultation and email anything they would like inputted in the response, we will have a draft for the May meeting to vote on. SNAC Chair reached out to a parent whose child is in the CFER program in the old Riverdale school for feedback on how it is going since the school is now part of the french school board. This parent is a past SNAC member and has agreed to allow us to share her results. .

“The teachers are worried how this will impact the students. Already there are many restrictions put in place: the gymnasium can only be used on certain days; they need permission to use the bathrooms as the only bathroom in CFER is the wheelchair accessible one; they have a specific time frame to use the cafeteria, if the student misses it... Sonya has to provide some sort of food.

The use of the elevator is another issue as it is a CFER student that needs it and not one of their students; so when it breaks down they do not seem to be in a hurry to fix it. The CFER student missed several phys ed classes because of a broken elevator.

Next school year, there will be more students in the French school so the restrictions will be greater.

When questions are asked to the administration about the future of CFER, no direct answer is given.

“We are working on it.”... is the usual answer.

They just cannot find the space big enough to house the program.

The teachers are becoming very demoralized.

Response : We were told that we are definitely staying there for one more year. There is no answer as to where the planification is going right now.

It is important to incorporate this into our consultation response.

5.8 End of Year Dinner (Jen)

I have spoken with Tracy and unfortunately due to the current situation we will be cancelling our End of Year dinner at PCHS. Even if schools do reopen at that time, it isn't appropriate to have students stay late to prepare and serve us. She would like it on record that she is more than happy to extend the offer for next May 2021 with next year's committee.

Discussion was had to postpone the dinner ... can we save funds for September - preparing for AGA dinner? This is something to be asked in order to understand the clear directions for the current budgets. Danny to get back to us.

5.9 Vote: Date for September Annual General Assembly & Posters (Jen)

Jen prepared the SNAC poster for our September AGA. She had reached out to the PC Chair to see if they had picked a date yet for their AGA as we have to hold ours before theirs. They haven't yet. Jen proposed Wednesday September 23rd at 7pm as the proposed date. Vote was carried out with a mention that we need to anticipate if a virtual meeting is a possibility. We will finalize poster wording / ordering next month.

MOTION to approve date of SNAC AGA by Rob, seconded by Dyana.

MOTION carried by unanimous vote.

6.0 Reports/Questions for the following committees

6.1 SNAC meeting Summary Report to Parents' Committee and Council (Jen)

The summary report was sent in the kit and is available on our website under external reports <http://snac.lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/ExternalReports/page.asp>

Posted on the website and sent to SNAC Members when it is ready. Reps on the parents committee also share on basecamp for PC.

6.2 Administration (Stéphanie)

please see opening COVID 19 info.

6.3 Council of Commissioners (Danny)

report found in the kit

LBPSB, was named by Forbes as one of the top school boards in Canada.

Open Houses for elementary schools that took place in January were well attended.

- St. Anthony is in the process of becoming IB certified.
- K4, K5 and sibling registration in our elementary schools is taking place in February. There is a lot of interest in the K4 program.
- The Lester B. Pearson School Board is granted 15 additional 4-year-old kindergarten classes in 2020-2021, for a total of 30 classes of K-4 for the next school year.
- Work has begun on the St. Thomas/Lindsay Place transition committee. The next meeting is in March.

Bill 40

- The Lester B. Pearson School Board will disperse the reserve fund of \$100,000, in accordance with the strategy proposed by the Quebec English School Boards Association to challenge the constitutionality of the Act to amend mainly the Education Act with regard to school organization and governance.
- The Director General of the School Board will be authorized to sign any required document to give effect to this resolution for, and on behalf of, the Lester B. Pearson School Board.
- This resolution will be forwarded to the QESBA's Board of Directors and the Association of Directors General of English School Boards of Quebec

Past longtime commissioner and special needs advocate Joseph Zemanovich sadly passed away recently due to COVID-19. Our condolences go out to his family.

6.4 Parent Commissioner - Special Needs (Angela)

Council will hold the first zoom meeting, see how it goes for the public. Need to figure out a way to reach out for parents. Need to figure out how to reconnect and find out what is going on...without the connection it will be hard to do this.

6.5 Parent's Committee (Lisa / Nora)

PC February meeting summary report in kit

Jen attended the virtual meeting last week on April 16

They discussed covid-19 & lbpsb (Tom Rhymes the assistant DG)

Bill 40 - where it currently stands

EPCA - who is currently speaking directly with the minister of education 1-2x per week. if there is anything SNAC would like brought forward to the minister we are welcome to do it through the pc EPCA rep.

6.6 Treasurer's report (Lauren)

Due to Covid-19 all conferences have been cancelled and refunds are being arranged. Other than Jen for the MCLD conference, did any other members pay for a conference and get reimbursed for it by SNAC already?

Since we have the conference money saved (\$450), we should vote to spend some on our IEP resource kits and our pamphlets etc.

Vote to spend on reprinting of IEP Resource Kits and SNAC Pamphlets. Need to go over all of the material - due to the bill 40 change - school boards no longer exist. It will take several hours to make changes.

We are going to see if we could save some of it to next year.

Danny will bring it up.

6.7 Programs & Services Committee (Kathy)

There is nothing to report.

6.8 Pearson Teachers Union PTU (Christina)

Had at the end of February some demos at different Metro stations, and since the pandemic, all actions are on hold. Negotiations are still going. Teachers are doing a lot of zooming. They are sending kits to the different students and students with special needs that need more support. Yesterday kids were able to pick up technology tools at the schools for laptop and special equipment. A lot of adaptations are being made for the different kids and their needs. Colleagues are doing different things to work together.

Teachers are being creative to engage with the students and trying to reach out with as many as possible. What is important is to connect with them as much as possible.

Main concerns are about the future and the new reality to come. Teachers are worried about how to manage the new realities. Unions and ministers do not know yet what the realities will be. The health and well being of students and teachers are the priority.

Strong concern about the re-entry into the school system. Parents would also have the options to send kids to school or not.

6.9 Pearson Association of School Administrators PASA (Laurence)

As principals, they are waiting for the directions meeting once or twice a week, and to figure out how to engage with their staff. Teachers are being very creative in adapting the needs as this situation evolves.

6.10 Professionals PEP (Maureen)

Transparency from the school boards and the staff are there. Post strategy papers are being developed. The transparency is there, and a lot of people are trying to keep an overview of all involved.

Maureen announced that this is going to be her last year on SNAC as she is retiring. It is wonderful news for Maureen, but certainly a big loss for SNAC and LBPSB as she is a wealth of information, compassion and caring. We wish her all the best and hope to honour her retirement in some way next month.

6.11 Independent Association of Support Staff (Rob)

No executive meeting has been held. A lot of support staff are still working and a lot of the employees are volunteering. Are meeting with the staff once a week, and Rob is still connecting with students from previous schools.

6.12 Communication Liaison Report (Jen/Sheila)

Since the February meeting, there have been 372 hits to the main page and 85 hits to the webcast page.

Emails coming in now are mostly spam.

6.13 Social Media Subcommittee (Jen)

Please see report in the kit

Social media subcommittee, people are going, 202 followers and 169 postings. Jen showed most engaging posts, 33 posts in the last 28 days.

Social stories and the largest hit has reached 2.9K people.

If any of the people not on the pilot project, is it okay to keep going right now. Thoughts are that the pilot project is very positive.

Discussion: It is possible to remove the comments per posts. Members of the subcommittee are following very closely and get alerts the moment a comment is made. Though there haven't been many comments, they all have been respectful.

7.0 Correspondence

See per above.

8.0 Varia

nothing to state.

9.0 Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn the meeting by Rob, seconded by Christina

MOTION carried by unanimous vote

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 PM

Next Meeting:

Next Virtual Meeting: Wednesday May 27th at 7pm, 2020 .