



March 12, 2012

Claude Lallemand
Director, Financial Services
Lester B. Pearson School Board
1925 Brookdale Avenue
Dorval, QC
H9P 2Y7

Subject: 2012/2013 Budget Consultation

Dear Ms. Lallemand,

On behalf of the Special Needs Advisory Committee please find below our comments and/or suggestions regarding the 2012/2013 Budget Consultation.

Question 1: Please list additional services or orientations you would like to see offered by the school board

- a) Communication with parents of special needs students during the registration process regarding the services available to them, to help them learn how to navigate the system; [pamphlet, information sessions].
- b) Provide services to identify and support special needs students earlier in the process: at the pre-K level.
- c) Create partnerships with the appropriate unions (teachers, support staff) and governmental agencies to express the importance of the following:
 - Allocation of integration aides earlier in the year, once enrollment is known in the Spring, so that they are already in place when the school starts in the Fall;
 - Schedule meetings between parents/student/resource team in the late Summer, before school begins in the Fall, to ensure that the support staff is informed of the student's development over the summer.
 - Ensure continuity of services for students by minimizing changes in the support staff who are working with the student.
 - Create a mechanism to ensure continuity of services for students as they migrate from preschool to elementary to secondary to Cegep. Ensure that information regarding all aspects of the student's condition be forwarded, including transfer of medical information (with consent form), IEP and complementary service requirements.
- d) Increase the number of special needs professionals and para-professionals: Integration Aides, Special Ed Technicians, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, etc...to meet the ever growing needs.

- e) Providing additional opportunities for specialized training for both teachers and support staff who work with Special Needs students to keep up to date with the latest methods and practices.
- f) Create partnerships with Special Ed University Programs – students in their final year to do field work in the schools to gain more experience and help to implement new programs.
- g) Implement a Peer Mentoring Program or Buddy System whereby students with Special Needs are paired up with a senior student who can provide guidance.
- h) Provide schools with funding specifically for homework support for students with learning disabilities and special needs.

Question 2: Do you have any suggestions to reallocate resources, increase revenues or decrease expenses or services?

- a) As per the provincial budget of March 17, 2011: “\$240 million would be invested as of the start of the 2011 school year to equip schools with new digital teaching tools, such as touch screens, educational software and laptop computers.... teachers will be trained so that they can take full advantage of the possibilities afforded by these tools.” Can we re-allocate board/school finances originally earmarked for that purpose to digital teaching tools and teacher training specific to special needs students?
- b) As per the provincial budget of March 17, 2011: “The government will allocate \$13 million over three years to a new program to support sports teams in Québec’s public secondary schools.” Can we use a portion of these new funds to adapt sports programs and extracurricular activities to promote inclusion between special needs and mainstream students?
- c) Provide additional funding to help students who are struggling but who may not yet have a diagnosis.
- d) Share best practices and programs throughout the board, and with other school boards: communicate successful special needs programs implemented in one school with all schools, to reduce overlaps in spending and make the most use of the finances in play.
- e) Allow SNAC to carry forward any unused funds to next year, and/or provide additional funds to SNAC to fund new activities and initiatives such as a Sensory Breaks Program.
- f) Fund the redesigning of Individual Education Plans and support MELS interactive electronic version of a province-wide framework for developing Individualized Education Plans.

Question 3: Do you have any suggestions regarding objectives, principles or criteria used to govern the allocation of funds?

- a) Increase the priority of the integration of the growing number of special needs students throughout the board, and allocate more funds accordingly.

Question 4: With regard to communication and presentation of financial results, do you have any suggestions?

- a) More clearly communicate how the funding for special needs students flows from MELS to the board level to individual schools and programs.
- b) Update SNAC as to any changes with regards to allocation of special needs resources.

Thank-you for the opportunity to participate in this consultation.

Respectfully,

Sandra Buckingham
Chairperson, Special Needs Advisory Committee, LBPSB

CC: Special Needs Advisory Committee, LBPSB
C. Heffernan, S. Balleine – Assistant Directors General, LBPSB
Suanne Stein Day – Chairman, Council of Commissioners