 <p>The logo for the Special Needs Advisory Committee (SNAC) features a group of colorful human figures in various colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple) standing in a line. Above them, the acronym 'SNAC' is written in large, bold, black letters. Below the figures, the text 'Special Needs Advisory Committee' is written in a smaller, black font. To the left of the figures, there is a small circular logo with the text 'United in Purpose' and 'Special Needs' around it, and 'Committee of the School Board' and 'Lester B. Pearson' below it.</p>	<p>SNAC Report to CPC and Education Committees From SNAC meeting April 24, 2013 Page 1 of 2</p>
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CPC Parent Conference: SNAC was pleased to participate in the CPC Parent Conference via a kiosk where SNAC parent members responded to questions, and distributed approximately 100 SNAC pamphlets. The feedback on the quality of the Special Needs related workshops was very favorable. So much so that it was suggested SNAC consider offering parent evenings next year to allow for longer discussions of the workshops “Kids that Jiggle and Wiggle: Strategies for Students with Challenging Behaviours”, “Coping with School Anxiety and Stress” and “iPads Creating Social Stories for Special Needs”.

SNAC IEP Resource Kit: A final proof of the IEP Resource Kit was provided by the printer, and the 3750 kits will be ready within 2 weeks. Students from the “life skills” programs at two high schools will participate in collating the 3750 kits, and SNAC is grateful for their help. The Student Services Department will advise all school Administrators to expect receipt of the kits within approximately one month, for distribution to all families of children with Special Needs within their schools before the end of this school year. In addition, it will be suggested that Administrators distribute the kits to new families of children with identified needs who will be starting K next year.


SNAC AGM 2013 Posters: SNAC’s Annual General Meeting, where parent members are elected by popular vote, will take place on Wednesday, September 18, 2013, at 7pm, at the School Board Boardroom. SNAC has printed posters to advertise the event, and 2 posters will be sent to every school.

SNAC Advertising and Awareness Campaign: With the objective of increasing awareness amongst parents of children with Special Needs about the role of SNAC and the resources that we offer, a new advertising campaign was discussed. A SNAC member volunteered to write a short article to announce the new SNAC IEP Resource Kit, and announce the SNAC AGM date. Once approved, the article will be sent to Pearson News and Administrators will be asked to consider including the information in their school’s monthly newsletter.

SNAC letter to MELS: SNAC has prepared a draft letter to lobby the government and raise awareness regarding specific problems with the recently announced budget compressions and budgeting process as it applies to students with special needs, and suggest priorities for budget allocations. SNAC will work with LBPSB school board administration to review and complete the letter, which will then be provided to MELS along with the School Board’s annual budget response. Specific suggestions include: increased funding to support Inclusive Education; increased funding to hire more professionals and paraprofessionals; increased funding for professional development of paraprofessionals and teachers; increased funding to support parent groups; and a reduction in the bureaucracy/paperwork required to obtain funding.

SPECIAL NOTE: Alternative Placement Programs: The Assistant Director of the Student Services Department, Christopher Fuzessy, who previously held the position of Principal of Alternative Schools, has kindly agreed to speak at SNAC’s May 29th meeting on the subject of Alternative placement programs within LBPSB. All are welcome to attend.

LBPSB “Safe and Caring Schools” Consultation: SNAC members expressed concern that students with special needs have an increased risk for bullying. Specific concerns within the school setting, within the context of the new guidelines, were discussed, and will be summarized in the group’s consultation response. SNAC members discussed including two sections in the response. The first section will provide recommendations for adjustments to the policy. The second section will include a more general discussion of concerns that may not fit into the context of a broad school board policy, but could be recommendations for schools/GB/administrators to consider at the school level.

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LBPSB “Students with Special Needs” Consultation: As discussed last month, SNAC members once again expressed concern about the timeline for response of two very important policies [Safe and Caring, and Special Needs] that are both taking place within the same time frame. It is understood that the Policy for Safe and Caring Schools must be put into place in order to meet with requirements of the law, but the short timeline for response of the “Students with Special Needs” consultation was put into question. Furthermore, it was noted that the SNAC open invitation to encourage all parents to provide feedback on this important consultation was never sent to the entire parent community, as had been previously requested. SNAC stressed the importance that the almost 3000 families of students with special needs throughout our territory be advised that this consultation is taking place, and that all parents, with and without special needs, be invited and encouraged to provide their input into this important policy that will impact all of our children.

In addition, it has been brought to our attention that due to other pressing demands this year, the majority of parents committees and governing boards under the umbrella of the Central Parents’ Committee (CPC) have not yet had the opportunity for discussion and debate of this very important policy, and do not feel that sufficient time remains in the current school year to provide this policy with the attention that it warrants.

Providing sufficient time for careful review and formulation of input during the Consultation stage is particularly important since SNAC was not permitted to include a SNAC parent member on the subcommittee who developed the proposed policy, and SNAC was not permitted to review and comment on draft versions of the policy prior to general consultation.

As an additional consideration, SNAC advises that it is important for this policy to be accompanied from the outset by supporting documentation developed by the Special Needs Advisory Committee, such as a Questions and Answers document, to clarify policy changes and proactively address areas of potential concern to parents.

As time does not permit for these consultations, discussions and work to take place this year, SNAC advises delaying the timeline for this important project until the next school year, in order to ensure that this policy will be the best that it can be, with the input and support of all stakeholders, including parents, staff and administration.

SNAC members therefore voted and approved sending a letter, in conjunction with the Central Parents’ Committee, to the LBPSB Council of Commissioners to respectfully request that the Consultation “**Students with Special Needs: Policy on the Organization of Services**” be delayed into the next school year. It is understood that this would effectively delay the implementation of the new policy beyond the start of the next school year, however SNAC did not feel the urgency in implementing the proposed policy in the short term, and advises that a more lengthy consultation process is warranted.

This letter [attached] was provided on April 26, 2013, prior to the April 29th Council meeting.

SNAC: Open Invitation for Feedback from Parents: As discussed above, SNAC would like to invite all parents, whether they have a child with special needs or not, to send SNAC their comments, concerns and/or suggestions regarding the LBPSB proposed policy update for students with special needs. Comments may be sent to SNAC via email at: snac@lbpearson.qc.ca. To learn more about the proposed LBPSB policy, please visit the LBPSB website: <http://lbpsb.qc.ca/eng/Consultations/Consultations.asp>: “**Students with Special Needs: Policy on the Organization of Services**”

Last SNAC Meeting of the year: May 29, 2013 at 7pm, at the School Board, Room 219/221. All are welcome.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Buckingham,
Chairperson, Special Needs Advisory Committee, LBPSB