

Special Needs Advisory Committee
Lester B. Pearson School Board

MINUTES OF THE MEETING – MAY 29TH, 2013

Held at the Lester B. Pearson School Board, 1925 Brookdale, Dorval Room 219/221

In Attendance: Shauna Beauchamp, Sandra Buckingham, Marie-Eve Claude, Carmela di Iorio, Cindy Finn, Christopher Fuzessy, Jane Fullerton-Kelly, Daniel Olivenstein, Kerry Payette, Kiley Philp, Allison Provost, Donnalynn Rainey, Barbara Schnider.

Guests: Robin Mehlenbacher, Sharon Rallens

Regrets: Jennifer DiMarco, Hirut Eyob, Laurie Fox, Linton Garner, Franca Kesic, Jonathan Zimmerman

Recording Secretary: Marie-Eve Claude

Sandra Buckingham called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.

1.0 Confirmation of Quorum: Pamela and Donnalynn will have voting rights tonight.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

2.1 Motion moved by Kiley, seconded by Barbara Schnider and unanimously resolved.

3.0 Corrections to Minutes of March 27th, 2013

Corrections will have to be done via email.

4.0 Corrections to Minutes of April 24th, 2013

Corrections will have to be done via email.

*****Special presentation on Alternative Programs within LBPSB by Christopher Fuzessy, PhD, Assistant Director of Student Services**

See copy of PPT attached

5.0 Business Arising

5.1 IEP Resource Kit Folder: Project Update.

Sandra Buckingham proudly presented the completed IEP Resource Kit to the group. 3750 kits were collated by the three Life Skills group students supervised by Andrea Bertalan, Work-skill Consultant for SSD.

Special thanks to all who made it possible to assemble the kits so they can be sent to the schools.

Sandra prepared personalized Certificates of Appreciation to be given to the students at Lindsay Place, BHS and St. Thomas HS who participated in the task.

Distribution of kits: It was decided that the kits were not to be sent to parents at the end of the current school year. Several members expressed their concerns that the IEP Folder might be misplaced or lost during the summer months. It is preferable to wait until the first week of school next year to distribute the kits. The documents are available on the SNAC website now for parents who would like to review them over the summer.

5.2 SNAC Advertising & Awareness Project Update: SNAC Chat newsletter
Methods to increase awareness about the role of SNAC, and to let the parents know the IEP Resource Folders are available.

Pearson News: Cindy contacted Dan Mullins, who confirmed that there will be a June edition, and asked him to add this information to the Pearson Newsletter.

LBPSB Web site

Alyssia, the LBPSB website manager, will be happy to post information about the IEP Resource Kit online at the LBPSB website. She might want to interview Sandra and the students involved in collating the IEP kits to share the good news.

SNAC Chat newsletter

Thanks to Pamela and Laurie for working on this first edition with Sandra. The first part of the Newsletter describes what SNAC is, and the second part explains the IEP Folder. Cindy will bring this item to Admin in June 2013, to request that school Administrators provide the newsletter to the parents at the schools, either via email, newsletter or school website. It was suggested that the decision be left with the Principals of each school.

5.3 SNAC Communications projects (Pamphlet; AGM Posters):

2500 more SNAC pamphlets will be printed. There are only a few very minor updates and corrections to be made. Approval of final edits will be done via email.

5.4 Letter to the MELS re: Budgetary concerns: Update

A copy of the letter dated April 24, 2013 to Madame Marie Malavoy, Ministre de l'éducation, was provided to the members. SNAC thanks LBPSB Administration for translating the letter into French.

Motion to approve the letter was moved by Barbara, seconded by Kiley. There was one abstention, motion carried.

5.5 LBPSB "Safe and Caring" Consultation: Ratification of email vote

It was moved by Allison to ratify the email vote. The motion was seconded by Kiley and unanimously resolved.

5.6 LBPSB “Students with Special Needs” Consultation (due May 31: extension?)

It was recommended that this item be deferred to the end of the meeting.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Administration

Cindy Finn provided a written report in the kit. A word was missing in #3. It should read “for new in-coming school *administrators*”.

6.2 Council of Commissioners

No report was available for the kit as the Council of Commissioners only met 2 days ago. It was noted that SNAC has yet to receive an official response from Council of Commissioners to the letter that was sent on April 25, 2013 concerning SNAC and CPC’s request for an extension to the Consultation phase of the LBPSB Special Needs Policy. Danny will request a formal written response to the letter from the Chairman of the Council of Commissioners.

6.3 Central Parents’ Committee

The report was included in the kit.

6.4 Education Committee

The Education Committee report was included in the kit.

6.5 P.T.U.

The PTU report was not available in the kit. A verbal report was shared with the members. Highlights from the report included the collective agreement not yet finalized, staffing and teacher replacement, consultation on budgetary issues, and partnership with SWLSB. Kiley wanted to know if arbitration for Pearson Union on oversized classes had occurred. Shauna’s answer was positive, but she added that there were some ongoing discussions around this issue.

6.6 P.A.S.A.

A report from Carmela di Iorio was included in the kit. Highlights included the tribute to Jane Kelly-Fullerton for her 36 years of service and dedication to the LBPSB students.

6.7 Professionals

A report was included in the kit. It was suggested to go to the SSD website to read the most recent edition of FSSTT Newsletter on Bullying.

6.8 I.A.S.S.

Allison Provost provided a verbal report to the committee. She mentioned that Integration Aides are getting ready for the end of the year. She expressed a concern on Daycare personnel not having access to training given on Pedagogical Days.

6.9 Website Administrator's Report: New Tab "Newsletter"

In the absence of Jennifer DiMarco, Sandra gave a verbal report. In the past month, there were 826 hits on the page. Six e-mails were received and there were 44 who accessed Cindy's webcast. There was one correspondence from a parent.

IEP Resource Kit information has been posted on the SNAC website, and the SNAC Chat Newsletter will be posted soon, in a new Tab that was created. The site is well maintained by Bobby Seelan, one of LBPSB IS technicians. Sandra will send a thank you letter to François Dupuis, Director of Information Services to acknowledge the extraordinary work done by Bobby.

7.0 New Business

7.1 Annual Report: Discussion of points to include; email vote to approve in June;

Sandra asked the members to e-mail her should they want something to be included the Annual Report.

7.2 Special Announcement: SNAC IDOL

Several certificate/awards were handed out to valued members of the SNAC Committee thanks to Sandra. These were awarded to show gratitude to everyone for their individual contribution to all that was accomplished during the past months. It was mentioned that all of this would not have been possible without the dedication and leadership of Sandra.

7.3 Treasurer's Report

A report was included in the kit. There is \$8.17 remaining for this year. Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was moved by Kiley, seconded by Pamela and unanimously resolved.

7.4 AGM 2013-2014: Review of available parent positions

Jonathan had to resign from his position due to health issues. Donnalynn has graciously accepted to replace Jonathan for next year only (12 month mandate). There will be three positions (2-year mandate) open for next year.

8.0 Correspondence

8.1 Request for letter of support: CAS

Childhood apraxia of speech (CAS) is a disorder that affects a person's ability to organize the movements of the muscles used in speech. A parent of a child with CAS is asking SNAC to support his lobbying effort to get the MELS to recognize this condition as a "coded" handicap. Sandra will send the letter to members via email, however the committee discussed that it not have sufficient time to address this issue this year.

8.2 Special Needs legal case in Quebec settled out of court:

A recent settlement for a student with SN was published in the Montreal Gazette. Internet link was provided by Sandra (see Agenda).

Cindy distributed the most recent edition of “Inspirations” and ASD Network Newsletter featuring art work by students with special needs.

9.0 LBPSB “Students with Special Needs” Consultation (due May 31: extension?)

9.1 CPC Response to SN Consultation

Document was received by Sandra; she will send it via email to SNAC members.

9.2 SNAC: Response to Consultation Draft response

The School Board has provided SNAC with a one week extension for this Response, until Thursday, June 6, 2013.

The members reviewed the contents of a first draft outline response, dated May 29, 2013, which was compiled from feedback from members.

There is an ongoing discussion around the terms and conditions for grouping of Students with SN. It was discussed that in some cases, grouping decisions are made to create conditions such that a child can succeed. In some cases, there are limits to what the school can change and what changes to be done to the environment. It was noted that the words “exceptional circumstances” and “community school” had been removed from the “Guiding Principles” portion of the Policy, and recommended that those terms be put back in. Daniel mentioned that parents sometimes have the tendency to look at a situation from a very personal point of view. He added that a policy is written in general terms to apply to a variety of situations and cases. A lot of these considerations are good, but too specific. Carmela explained that parents should be consulted through all the steps of the grouping process. Jane suggested that staffing can’t be put in the hands of the parents, since the school has to consider all students. It was suggested that the Student Services Department should play a more active role in advising and approving grouping decisions at the school level. Parents have suggested that the wording of the Policy should be improved to help clarify some information regarding the direction that the school board is planning to take with respect to their policy of integration of students as a first-step consideration. Misunderstanding leads to angst. Cindy confirmed that the school board’s commitment to integration has not changed, and remains as before.

Further consultation on the document will be done electronically, and due to time constraints, approval will take place via email.

10.0 Varia

10.1 IEP Folders

Kits have been sent to the Chairman of the Council of Commissioners, DG, two ADGs, and three Regional Directors. It was discussed whether copies should be provided to all Commissioners, but it was decided that kits should be kept for future students on IEPs. It was then suggested that the PDF file be sent electronically to school principals, so that they may make additional copies as required.

11.0 Questions from the Public

A visiting parent asked for input on how to best approach a specific situation at her school. Members provided suggestions.

12.0 Adjournment

Upon a motion by Allison and seconded by Kiley, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45pm, and then followed by a very nice end-of-year celebration.