

	<p>SNAC Report to CPC and Education Committees From SNAC Meeting October 2, 2013 Page 1 of 2</p>
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Introduction

There are a number of new members on SNAC this year, so introductions were made. An overview of committee procedures was provided, as well as explanations about the roles of the various groups represented on SNAC.

IEP Resource Kit Project: 3750 kits were distributed, or are about to be distributed, to the family of every student with special needs throughout the entire LBPSB school board. The objective of the kits is to help parents prepare for effective and collaborative IEP meetings. SNAC looks forward to feedback from the parent community as well as Resource teams, as to the effectiveness of this kit, and whether it has been helpful during the autumn IEP meetings. Thanks were expressed to Cindy Finn and Alycia Ambroziak for writing an article introducing the kits, which was printed in the August edition of LBPSB Pearson News, and also appeared in two media outlets:

the Chronicle Sept 18 <http://goo.gl/4OwpCf> and l'Etoile Sept 3 <http://goo.gl/lmFqMY>

Treasurer's Report: SNAC used almost all funds from last year to finance its activities and projects, with a balance of \$8.17. SNAC's spending was extremely frugal, with parent members donating a coffee machine, coffee pods and snacks for every meeting. SNAC members expressed their disappointment that the committee was only allocated \$1000 in funding for this year, versus \$2000 for Central Students and \$5000 for Central/Regional Parents. Recurring costs and an important workshop will already deplete most of this budget [\$360 recording secretary; \$275 Temple Grandin Autism workshop; \$140 AGM posters]. Concern was expressed that this may limit the committee's ability to attend other workshops offered throughout the year.

SNAC Projects and Priorities for the Year: The members participated in a brainstorming session, where several new ideas were proposed, including parent workshops/seminars, SNAC Chat Newsletter, and more. Discussion is ongoing.

Administration Report: Cindy Finn informed the group that with the Sept 30 deadline past, the Student Services Department is verifying that students with S.N who are eligible for MELS codes are so declared to the Ministry. The validation process for these codes will take place later this year. Schools have begun the IEP process, with Sept 20th as IEP writing day for Elementary and Oct 4 for High School. The New Teacher Induction Program, a joint initiative between PTU and LBPSB, is in place again this year, and on Sept 27 Dr Mendler addressed approximately 70 new teachers on the topic of classroom management and behavioural strategies.

Council Report: Commissioner Daniel Olivenstein provided a report from the Council meeting September 30, 2013, noting that the "Students with Special Needs: Policy on the Organization of Services" was adopted unanimously. SNAC will be advised when the policy has been posted on the LBPSB website, so that members can read the final version and associated Q&A document. SNAC has requested the Consultation Schedule for the year, in order to help plan the committee's activities for the year.

CPC Report: A written report was provided by the SNAC representative to CPC summarizing the CPC September 17th meeting and October 1st AGM. A summary of the new CPC Executive and membership was provided, and an explanation of the new Region/breakout meeting structure was explained. It was noted that CPC does not intend to offer a Parent Conference this year, so SNAC should consider whether the committee would like to offer Workshops on its own.

	<p>SNAC Report to CPC and Education Committees From SNAC Meeting October 2, 2013 Page 2 of 2</p>
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Education Report: A written report was provided by the SNAC representative to Education Committee summarizing the meeting held on September 9th. It was noted that there was an improvement in the 2013 Secondary exam results. The “Points of Transition” program was discussed, in which students with special needs who are between the ages of 18-21 are helped with life skills and may be placed in work programs. It was suggested that parents of these children become engaged in this process well in advance.

PTU Report: Carolynn Jones, LBPSB Resource Teacher, reported that the new agreement with LBPSB is in place.

Professionals Report: Ruth Schwarcz, LBPSB Special Needs Consultant, informed the group that orientation sessions have taken place for new Resource Teachers. Professional Development sessions will be taking place on Visuals and Boardmaker. The first NET (Elementary School Resource Networking) meeting took place on Sept 19, on the topics of “Neuroscience, learning and the Brain” and “Role of Independence for S.N. Students”. Technology representatives have been assigned within the Student Services Department, to review technology [software and hardware] requests for S.N students from all schools. Initial orders have been placed, and the committee meets every 6 weeks to review new requests. As per MELS, 70% of the budget must be spent on students with codes, and the remainder may be allocated to students who are “At Risk”.

IASS Report: Allison Provost advised the group that there are currently 334 filled posts for Integration Aides. 76 were filled at Priority Pool, and additional posts are open now.

Website Administrators Report: It was noted that the SNAC website received a tremendous amount of traffic over the summer months, with 2796 hits!

Correspondence:

- Changing the Course of Autism-WEBCAST: Oct 24+25, 2013:
<http://autismcanada.ca/>
- Current Trends in Autism, Conference, Nov 5+6, 2013; Temple Grandin and others:
<http://www.goldlearningcentre.com/Current-Trends-in-Autism-Conference-e202/>
- “Light A Dream” Program Fundraiser: Casino&Auction Night: Nov 15
- “Dreaming in Autism”, a play presented at Selwyn House, Oct 22

Next Meeting: The next SNAC meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 at 7pm at the school board.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Buckingham
Chairperson, Special Needs Advisory Committee 2013-2014