

Minutes of the second (2nd) meeting of the 2014-2015 Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) held on Monday, November 10, 2014 in the Directorate Board Room at the SWLSB Administrative Centre, 235 Montée Lesage, Rosemère, Québec J7A 4Y6

Members present: Evan Caminis, Pamala Cripton, Maria Garliaris, Audrey Kannon, Mario Lisio, Jennifer Maccarone, Janet Sallie, Jennifer Perry, Rose Renzo, Patricia Sasso, Marianne Sassen, Yolanta Wiktorczyk, Parents; Brian Benoit, Elaine Sassen, Teachers; Peter McLaurin, Commissioner; Sébastien Joly, LTU President, Jack Fitch SEP577 President

Also present were: Fred Greschner, Assistant Director General; Silvia Patella, Assistant Director of Complementary Services
Regrets:

The Vice-Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

1. Additions and Approval of the Agenda

Add: 4.8 Internal Financial Policy

Elaine Sassen MOVED THAT the agenda is approved with the above addition. Seconded by Jennifer Perry

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

2. Approval of Minutes of meeting held October 7, 2014

5.1 Patricia Sasso – not Sassen

Brian Benoit MOVED THAT the minutes of October 7, 2014 are approved with correction. Seconded by Elaine Sassen.

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

3. New Business

3.1. Nomination and Election of Chairperson

With the departure of Jennifer Maccarone, a new Chairperson of SEAC should be elected.

Pamala Cripton nominates herself as Chairperson. Seconded by Brian Benoit. - Congratulations

The new Chairperson thanks the outgoing Chairperson and wishes her well.

Yolanta Wiktorczyk nominated herself as Vice-Chairperson. Seconded by Pamala Cripton. Congratulations

3.2. New Members/Alternates

With the departure of Jennifer Maccarone, there leaves one delegate position open. Evan Caminis, as the first alternate on the list will become a SEAC delegate. Congratulations.

There is now place for 8 alternate members.

In the past, new members to SEAC received a welcome package with

- A copy of their application
- Internal Rules & Procedures Document
- Internal Financial Policy
- Our Brochure(s)
- A SEAC membership Term & Responsibilities document
- A Calendar of SEAC meeting dates
- Statement of expenses document

Does this package still exist? If not, it would be a good idea to create another one for our members. Pamala will take care of having these new packages prepared for the new members.

3.3. I.E.P. Standardization/Template in Schools

The primary vehicle outlining goals and strategies and the delivery of services and accommodations for Special Needs Students is the I.E.P. Schools approach it in different ways and in the end there seems to have been lacking a base line of consistency among all players.

There does exist however, an improved I.E.P. template and some schools have already been using it as part of a test. The difference between the MELS IEP format and that of the one currently being used in most schools was explained. The primary benefits of the MELS IEP included its ability to move/transition with the student between cycles, elementary to high school and even between school boards (French or English) within the Province. It may also alleviate the frustration voiced by many parents since this format tracks past goals and accommodations etc...and has the ability to be transmitted by email.

Janet Sallie MOVED THAT as an advisory body, the SEAC requests the Council of Commissioners of the Sir Wilfrid Laurier School Board adopt this MELS IEP template across all schools by June 2015. Seconded by Yolanta Wiktorczyk.

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

Silvia Patella went on to say that the Complementary Services Department is supporting the new MELS IEP template.

3.4. SEAC Branding

Many people in our community are unaware of who we are, where we are and what we do. Just as recently as the last PC meeting, new members at the table were unclear as to our role or unable to obtain information such as minutes or meeting dates etc.

Part of this can be seen as a branding issue. Looking at the SEAC logo even when compared to the LBPSB Snac logo we look a bit washed out instead of presenting an image of empowerment.

Jennifer Maccarone spoke to Maxeen Jolin from Communications Department about working on a new logo for us. Maxeen responded that she would be happy to take on this project, however all new projects need to be approved by the Director General.

In case Communications isn't able to accomplish this for us it was asked if we could we set aside about \$300-\$400 to cover design costs, unless there is someone who can do it for free.

Jennifer Perry has offered to do it for free if communications cannot do it.

Jennifer Perry MOVED THAT the SEAC will have a new logo prepared and if ready, will be launched at the conference in April. Seconded by Brian Benoit

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

3.5. PC Website / SWLSB Website

Parents who do want to find out more about us have a hard time doing so. The SWLSB website has SEAC listed under Governance. Many parents wouldn't think of looking under governance

More current information about SEAC does exist if you go through the new PC website. SEAC believes that it is important to have its own identity. It should be a priority to have visible accessible updated information on the SWLSB homepage.

The SWLSB website has no button available on home page. The board also does not have the minutes on their site. The Board will be asked to put a dedicated tab to SEAC on the home page with a link redirected to the SEAC page on the PC website that has all of the information on it. The words Special Needs should be prominent on this tab as well as SEAC is not a term new parents would look for.

4. Business Arising

4.1. Date & Times of Meetings

Rose Renzo MOVED THAT the date and times of meetings are Monday December 1, 2014, February 2, March 30, May 4, and June 1, 2015. Seconded by Jennifer Perry.

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

4.2. Internal Rules of Procedure

- 4.3.1 Quorum: Reduce the number of parents from 5 to 4
- 10.2.8 End the meetings by 10:00 p.m.

Rose Renzo MOVED THAT the Internal Rules of Procedure will be updated to reflect the change to quorum as voted on last year and to end the regular meetings by 10:00 p.m. Seconded by Jennifer Perry.

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

4.3. Nomination of Special Needs Parents Commissioner

Pamala Cripton nominates herself as Special Needs Parent Commissioner. Seconded by Jennifer Maccarone.
Evan Caminis nominates himself for Special Needs Parent Commissioner. Seconded by Yolanta Wiktorczyk.

The Parents Committee will make the decision as to who will sit on the Council as Special Needs Parent Commissioner. Both candidates should present themselves at the PC meeting

4.4 Allocation of Special Needs Services per School.

Mrs. Tina Korb, Director of Educational Services spoke about the allocation of services per school.

Mr. Fitch requested that the Behavior Technician term be changed to Special Education Technician as there is no such classification in the collective agreement.

Right now there are on average, an allocation of 5 hours per week of Behavior Technician time per elementary school not including Crestview which has a higher special needs population for children in primary schools who have behavior needs or need help socializing. It is a support to the teacher. The teachers believe that 5 hours of special education technician time is insignificant. These employees cannot provide all of the services needed in 5 hours per week.

It was stated that the Attendants are there to meet the personal needs of the child not to act as Special Education Technicians which is what is currently being asked of them.

4.5. I.E.P. Documentation and Revisions

This documentation will be sent to members

IEP revisions and new content to the information will be submitted to parents. Jennifer Maccarone will send this to the Chair who will distribute to members. Following member approval it will be sent to CSD and LTU for content approval.

4.6. Special Needs Policy Review

Normally Policy Revision takes place primarily to reflect any changes that may have occurred to either to the Education Act or the Teacher Collective Agreements since its last revision, and then of course to improve the document as a whole.

For this meeting members were asked to be looking specifically at section 3.0 **Identification**.

A comparison was made to the equivalent section in the EMSB & LBPSB Special Ed Policies and a discussion ensued.

The EMSB refers to this as Evaluation and goes into greater detail.

The LBPSB document refers to it as identification and their entire document is easier to read and less legalese.

The SWLSB document appears to be a lot shorter than the others.

Both Jennifer and Pamala had an opportunity to go over the policy with Sebastian Joly and Pasqual Machado from the Laurier Teachers Union. At the same time, they provided them with the School Level Special needs Committee Workshop Binder which is a detailed and informative document that could be referred to during this process. They have a complete section on Identification.

The chairperson will send out the pages pertaining to Identification so that members can see the wording as well as a full description of the procedures for identification.

Discussion

In the policy it states that the teacher is the one who initiates the flag. Parents feel it is taking too long to have their children assessed. CSD responded that there are years that there is a shortfall of psychologists in our system. Parents are given the impression that the schools will take care of everything. In reality they should work with external services in order to get their children assessed quicker. The school board does not have enough professionals in the system to service all of the needs.

There is a priority list established by the school. Silvia Patella explained that SWLSB has to sit on three different tables because of the large territory we have. Rather than telling parents to wait, they should be informed of their right to get help elsewhere. The school board should have a list of resources to give to parents. The school board can help the parent look for someone outside the board – can guide them, but cannot provide names. The school board has liaisons with social services CSSS that they work with.

On page 9 in the Lester B Pearson special needs policy, it reads that should a parent/guardian refuse consent, every effort will be made to convince the parent/guardian that it is in the students best interest.....in the event that this consent is withheld, the evaluation consent form can be signed by the Director General of the School Board so that the assessment may proceed. It was remarked by CSD that SEAC should advise to have this included in the policy.

In general, timelines need to be identified in the policy.

On Page 7 of the LBPSB Policy, New Registrants with Special Needs-it reads that the parent indicates that there is a known special need upon registering and that an IEP process begins once child is enrolled.. Members would also like to start the IEP right away while waiting for the screening. The LBPSB indicates that the screening process is then by-passed when there has been a prior diagnosis and the child's name goes straight on to the identification process.

Pamala will identify the pages from the school level needs binder. Members are asked to read and prepare. She will specify the goals for the next meeting and identify the sections that members should be reading in order to compare and make suggestions.

4.7. Parent Conference/Workshop

In the past, SEAC-partnered with CSD for the conferences. Parents Committee is considering joining with SEAC to create an exceptional conference for all parents.

A survey for the conference was sent out to parents last year enquiring what kind of topics they would like to have at a workshop. Four topics were identified. SEAC agreed that they would like the survey to be sent out again and explain what the brain training is.

The northern parents would like the conference to be held further north, not in Laval.

Rose Renzo MOVE THAT if offered, SEAC resend the survey and partner with Parents Committee to put on a conference for all parents. Seconded by Patricia Sasso.

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

Jack Fitch will bring names of professionals who could be available to hold workshops. Conferences can be webcasted.

The centre of excellence has professionals that are paid by MELS. They are hard to book however because there is a waiting list. CSD would contact them.

In order to promote the event, e-pushes can be sent, Facebook, notices will be sent home to parents. Parent's committee members can bring it back to their Governing Boards in order to put it on schools individual websites.

4.8 Internal Financial Policy

The Parents Committee passed a resolution to keep their financial policy in line with school board policy. It is suggested that SEAC do the same and in this spirit should be change paying 47 cents to 48 cents per kilometer to be aligned with board.

Jack Fitch MOVED THAT the Internal Financial Policy is approved with the change to the per kilometer reimbursement from 47 cents to 48 cents. Seconded by Janet Sallie

Carried UNANIMOUSLY

5. Reports

5.1. Chairperson

Jennifer Maccarone thanked everyone who went out to vote.

5.2. Parents' Committee

As passed out to members.

5.3. Director Complementary Services

Tina Korb, Interim Director of Complementary Services and Director of Educational Services reported.

- CSD is working to have code requests submitted by December.
- Due to the closure of regional offices, submissions are sent directly to the MELS. Student's names have been submitted. Professionals are focused on completing reports and ensuring proper details to maximize approval possibility.
- There will be a workshop on special needs for teachers in February. It will be a full day workshop. Assisted technology, IEP process and many things that will help school teams. The professionals within the school board will be looked at in order to do the workshops.
- There has been a call out to people who are interested in presenting and they have been asked to submit their ideas. A review committee will choose who will give workshops. All workshops have to tie into the partnership agreement.
- Fewer codes are being submitted this year. The parameters are much stricter. There is no longer a regional person who CSD can sit with to defend the code.

5.4. Financial Report/Budget Update

Copy of budget update.

It seems the school board clawed back the surplus from last year. Members were not aware that the board would take it back if it was not spent. This money was being put aside for the conference. Tina Korb will verify this and give members the information. Pamala Crompton will attempt to obtain clarification as well.

6. Question Period

Parents from Pierre E Trudeau Elementary School are not aware that SEAC exists.

In response to a question from a parent in the audience, the school level special needs committee decides how many hours are given for their needs.

7. Adjournment

Jack Fitch MOVED THAT the meeting is closed at 9:45. Seconded by Marianne Sassen.

Carried UNANIMOUSLY