

February 12, 2021

Geneviève Dugré
Secretary General
Lester B. Pearson School Board
1925 Brookdale Avenue
Dorval, QC
H9P 2Y7

Dear Mme Dugré,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Budget for the 2021 – 2022 school year. Please accept the following response and recommendations from the Clearpoint Elementary Governing Board.

Question 1 – What is your relationship to the Lester B Pearson School Board:

Members of the Governing Board for Clearpoint Elementary.

Question 2 – Do you have any suggestions regarding objectives, principles or criteria used to govern the allocation of funds?

We support the objective of establishing criteria for the **equitable allocation of resources among institutions** understanding that in doing so, a redistribution of central resources may be required to ensure that communities with fewer resources are served in a manner which meets their needs.

We believe that principle support should be provided to projects and initiatives that allow for an equitable distribution of resources understanding that this may require redistribution of centralized funding to correct for local socio-economic disparities that exist in some school communities. This is also reflected in the criteria that decentralized operating budgets be determined by allocations that take into account socio-economic indicators (such as the IMSE decile rank).

We highly support the general principle that the budgetary process will be guided by objectives, principles, criteria and orientations will be **evolving** (especially demonstrated by current financial realities faced by schools due to the global health crisis). Financial planning and distribution of resources must reflect the fact that schools are facing a rapidly changing set of demands for both materials and services.

Question 3: Which resources and programs are essential to supporting high levels of student achievement?

-Of the answer options given we would prioritize:

1). Integration of Technology

Schools in general, and Clearpoint in particular, are well equipped in terms of computer hardware. The current need is around the necessity to increase the hiring of more staff in the IT department to better service this hardware, maintain up-to-date inventories and future planning in this area. In addition, training of the staff is required to provide a level of comfort for online teaching platforms and software programs as was demonstrated during the frequent school closures throughout the pandemic. A more frequent on-site tech support could also help considerably with this need.

2). Early Literacy Intervention

At Clearpoint we have begun to establish an Early Literacy program which has shown substantive gains particularly for children in early elementary who show signs of struggling as readers. Our resources have only permitted this program to run only in Cycle 1 and only for 8 weeks of the year. Given its value and benefit, it would make pedagogical sense to have the means to offer such a program over the long term and at more grade levels.

3). French Programming

Particularly at Clearpoint, we frequently welcome students who come from other countries (often as international students) or from other parts of Canada. These students typically have had little or no exposure to the French language. Although the 'Francisation' program does offer some support for such students, it is still inadequate to support these students and families. We would like to see additional funds allocated to this need.

4). Special Education Programming

The Lester B Pearson School Board has directed a large amount of financial resources to hire a greater number of staff members to support students with special needs, and this is appreciated. However, the relative number of students with special learning requirements continues to grow and therefore, so does the need to support them. We would like to see an increase in Board-level support services (psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) and reallocate these support services to the schools. We feel that much more needs to be offered for students with special needs since as noted, this constituency continues to grow within our schools.

Question 4: If there are surplus funds available please choose the school and centre building component that you believe requires the most service, maintenance or replacement.

We support the Lester B Pearson School Board's focus on the five-year-plan and the identified building maintenance priorities set out in this plan. Additionally, and more specifically regarding Clearpoint:

1. Grounds maintenance and exterior work:

- Large sections of original perimeter fencing around the school yard need to be replaced
- Access to the roof after hours by local teens has been problematic; this is potentially a liability concern and needs to be addressed

2. Flooring, painting, lighting:

- Rubberized treads on interior stairway in the older section of the building require replacement

Question 5: In light of upcoming budget compressions, do you have suggestions for cost savings throughout the school board?

A more cost-effective process for recruiting presenters for professional development events could be explored (using local experts who may charge a lower fee for their services).

Some material costs could be recouped during periods of on-line teaching.

Question 6: Other Comments or Suggestions:

The Lester B Pearson School Board should continue to prioritize concerns related to mental health and wellness; the issue of mental health of students - already a matter of increasing apprehension - has proliferated during the pandemic. The mental health of staff working in schools is an ever-growing problem.

The Lester B Pearson School Board should continue to promote and create opportunities for students, staff and parents to celebrate diversity in our communities, ensuring that the fundamental values of equality, respect, universal human dignity, and cultural pluralism, have renewed focus.

Despite the restrictions that our society has been faced with during the pandemic, the Lester B Pearson School Board should actively encourage and facilitate opportunities for all members of our educational community to share ideas and make new connections as individuals and / or groups.

Respectfully submitted,

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Governing Board Chairperson

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