



COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Procès-verbal d'une séance extraordinaire du comité EXÉCUTIF de la Commission scolaire Riverside tenue au centre administratif situé au 7525, chemin de Chambly, Saint-Hubert, Québec le 2 février 2021.

Minutes of the proceedings of a special meeting of the EXECUTIVE of Riverside School Board held at the Administration Centre located at 7525, chemin de Chambly, St. Hubert, Québec on February 2, 2021.

Le secrétaire général a confirmé qu'il y avait quorum et le président, Dan Lamoureux, a déclaré la séance ouverte à 19 h 06.

The Secretary General established that quorum was met and Chairman Dan Lamoureux called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

MEMBRES PRÉSENTS / MEMBERS PRESENT:

Par appel conférence / By conference call:

C. Craig
D. Lamoureux
K. Ross
L. Llewelyn Cuffling
M. Mazur
T. Aguiar – Commissaire-parent / Parent Commissioner

Sylvie Racette – Directeur général / Director General
John McLaren – Secrétaire général / Secretary General

Ayant prévu leur absence : / Regrets :
None.

Aussi présents :

Des membres du public sont présents.

Presence Noted:

Members of the public are present.

DÉCLARATION DU CONSEIL DES COMMISSAIRES

Nous aimerions commencer par reconnaître que nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui sur le territoire traditionnel non cédé de la nation Mohawk.

STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF COMMISSIONERS

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional unceded territory of the Mohawk people.

ADOPTION DE L'ORDRE DU JOUR

IL EST PROPOSÉ par la commissaire Llewelyn Cuffling, appuyée par la commissaire Aguiar, que l'ordre du jour soit adopté et qu'une copie soit attachée au procès-verbal.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

IT IS MOVED by Commissioner Llewelyn Cuffling, seconded by Commissioner Aguiar that the agenda be adopted, and a copy be attached to these minutes.

ADOPTÉ À L'UNANIMITÉ

UNANIMOUS

QUESTIONS DES MEMBRES DU PUBLIC
(19 h 08)

Aucune

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:
(7:08 p.m.)

None

NOUVELLES AFFAIRES :**Résolution EX317-20210202
ÉLECTION DU'UN(E) VICE-PRÉSIDENT(E)
DU COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF**

IL EST PROPOSÉ par le commissaire Lamoureux, appuyé par la commissaire Llewelyn Cuffling, de procéder à l'ouverture des nominations et au scrutin, si nécessaire, afin d'élire le vice-président ou la vice-présidente du comité exécutif de la Commission scolaire Riverside.

NEW BUSINESS:**Resolution EX317-20210202
ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

IT IS MOVED by Commissioner Lamoureux, seconded by Commissioner Llewelyn Cuffling, that nominations be opened and that a ballot vote be taken, if necessary, to elect the Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee for Riverside School Board.

Proposé par/ Moved by	Candidat/ Nominee	Appuyé par/ Seconded by	Accepté/ Accepts
Commissioner Lamoureux	Commissioner Craig	Commissioner Llewelyn Cuffling	Yes

Le commissaire Lamoureux propose la fermeture des nominations et la commissaire Llewelyn Cuffling appuie la proposition.

IT IS MOVED by Commissioner Lamoureux and seconded by Commissioner Llewelyn Cuffling that nominations cease.

DÉCLARATION D'ÉLECTION

Le commissaire Craig est déclaré élu au poste de vice-président du comité exécutif de la Commission scolaire Riverside, à compter de cette date.

DECLARATION OF ELECTION

Commissioner Craig is hereby declared elected as Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee of Riverside School Board, effective immediately.

**Recommandations du rapport 2019-2020
du protecteur de l'élève**

Les recommandations ont été examinées par le comité exécutif. Le secrétaire général enverra une lettre de réponse au protecteur de l'élève à la suite de ses recommandations formulées dans son rapport 2019-2020.

**Student Ombudsman Report 2019-2020
Recommandations**

The recommendations were reviewed by the Executive Committee. The Secretary General will send a response letter to the Student Ombudsman further to his recommendations found in his 2019-2020 report.

QUESTIONS DIVERSES:

Aucune

OTHER BUSINESS:

None

QUESTIONS DU PUBLIC :

Aucune

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC:

None

**DATE DE LA PROCHAINE SÉANCE
ORDINAIRE:**

La prochaine réunion est sur convocation de la présidence.

DATE OF NEXT REGULAR MEETING:


The next meeting is scheduled at the call of the Chair.

LEVÉE DE LA SÉANCE :

IL EST PROPOSÉ par le commissaire Mazur, appuyé par la commissaire Aguiar, que clôture de la séance soit levée à 19 h 23.

CLOSING:

IT WAS MOVED by Commissioner Mazur seconded by Commissioner Aguiar at 7:23 p.m., that the meeting be closed.



Dan Lamoureux, président / Chair



John McLaren, Secrétaire général / Secretary General



COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is hereby given that a **special meeting** of the **Executive Committee** is convened as per the requirement of article 163 of the *Education Act*.

This special meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 7 p.m. at 7525, chemin de Chambly, Saint-Hubert, Québec.**

In accordance with the *Education Act*.

DRAFT AGENDA –SPECIAL MEETING

1. Call to Order and Quorum
2. Declaration of the Council of Commissioners
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Questions from the public – 15 minutes
5. New Business
 - 5.1. Election of the Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee
 - 5.2. Review of the Annual Report Submitted by the Student Ombudsman for the Year 2019-2020
6. Other Business
7. Questions from the public – 15 minutes
8. Closing
9. Date of Next Meeting: At the call of the Chair

Given at St. Hubert, Québec, on January 29, 2021

John McLaren, Secretary General



COMITÉ EXÉCUTIF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AVIS PUBLIC

Avis est, par la présente, donné qu'une séance **extraordinaire** du comité exécutif est convoquée, le tout, conformément à l'article 163 de la *Loi sur l'instruction publique*.

Cette séance extraordinaire aura lieu le **mardi 2 février 2021 à 19 h** au **7525 chemin de Chambly, Saint-Hubert, Québec**.

LE TOUT CONFORMÉMENT à la *Loi sur l'instruction publique*.

ORDRE DU JOUR – SÉANCE EXTRAORDINAIRE

1. Ouverture de la séance
2. Déclaration du Conseil des commissaires
3. Adoption de l'ordre du jour
4. Questions du public – (30 minutes)
5. Affaires nouvelles
 - 5.1 Élection d'un(e) vice-président(e) du comité exécutif
 - 5.2 Examen du rapport annuel soumis par le protecteur de l'élève pour l'année 2019-2020
6. Questions diverses
7. Questions du public – (20 minutes)
8. Clôture de la séance
9. Date de la prochaine session ordinaire du Conseil : Sur convocation de la présidence

Donné à Saint-Hubert (Québec) le 29 janvier 2021

John McLaren, secrétaire général

Student Ombudsman's Report 2019-2020

I respectfully submit the Student Ombudsman Report for the 2019-2020 school year. The cases covered in this report are from August 2019 to July of 2020. The report includes cases handled by Peter Woodruff (October 2019).

The Role of the Student Ombudsman

The Student Ombudsman falls under the responsibility of the Council of Commissioners but is neither a member of the Council of Commissioners nor a member of the personnel of the school board. He acts independently, as a neutral and confidential resource for students and parents.

Formal Role:

After having exhausted all the levels of complaint described in Riverside School Board's (RSB) By-Law 14, a student or the parents of the student who are dissatisfied with the way the complaint was handled, or with the outcome, may be referred to the Student Ombudsman by the Secretary General of the school board. The Student Ombudsman examines the merits of the complaint and then produces a report with recommendations to the Council of Commissioners.

Informal Assistance:

Contact information for the Student Ombudsman appears prominently on the Riverside School Board web site. Consequently, most of the requests for assistance that I received came before all the levels of complaint had been exhausted. This put me in the privileged position of being able to assist parents and students during the complaint process. I provided information, gave advice on what steps to take next, and directed students or parents towards the RSB personnel who could best help them.

Update on the implementation of 2018-19 recommendations

Special Needs Students

Several parents of children with special needs had expressed how they felt diminished and exhausted. Parents need easy access to information on resources available to them. Sensitivity is needed when communicating with parents of special needs children.

Measures addressing these issues:

- Schools can invite Complimentary Service team members to attend meetings with parents when needed, with the aim of facilitating better understanding of student needs, and to assist with strategic planning for students.
- The Advisory Committee for Services to Students with Special Needs will continue to update available community resources for students with special needs and their parents.
- Complimentary Services in collaboration with REACH and Adult Education will organize a yearly spring fair to promote resources available to students with special needs and their families.
- Parent conferences will be offered throughout the year via the Riverside Community Learning Centres network.

- Interactions between families and schools may stray off the core issues due to sustained frustrations and fatigue. Complimentary Services will research communication strategies for teachers and principals to help them navigate interactions back to what will help the student.

Communication with Parents

Timely communication with families is important, especially in situations involving accidents or health issues. A couple of parents reported issues with communication during 2018-19.

Measures implemented to encourage timely communication with families:

- Schools were reminded that they must communicate with parents in a timely manner when their child is involved in an accident or health related issue. The reminder was added to the RSB Administrators SharePoint site.
- A new process, being finalized after a meeting with the Ministry, will remind principals of the general steps to follow when incidents of bullying are reported to them. These steps should include communication with parents.

Violence and Bullying

Human Resources began to explore the development of a protocol for situations involving staff members accused of aggression towards a student. They have looked at what other school boards have in place in terms of best practices. They are also working with the eight other English school boards to address the topic in collaboration with the local principals' association (AAESQ) and the local teachers' union (RTU).

Data for 2019-2020

I received 25 requests for assistance this school year. The requests came from students or parents of students in elementary, secondary, and adult programs.

Break Down by Sector: 2019-20				
Sector	Elementary	Secondary	Adult	Total
Cases	12	12	1	25

Formal Interventions

Formal complaints

I received no formal complaint requiring a report with recommendations to the Executive Council of Commissioners. A formal complaint is one that has exhausted all the levels of complaint resolution described in RSB By-Law 14. Complaints brought to the Student Ombudsman were either resolved or dropped by the complainants. My interactions with students, parents, and staff, this year, led me to believe that complaints were taken seriously and that there was a general willingness to arrive at fair resolutions.

Formal intervention: Student Safety

I received two complaints requiring me to intervene officially due to concerns for student safety (EA-Regulation I 13.3, r.7.1, article 8).

The first case involved an incident where a staff member’s action resulted in minor injury to a student. The incident was investigated in a timely and efficient manner by the school administrator. The teacher, the parent, and the child were interviewed. The child was interviewed by a staff member he trusts and sees everyday at school. All versions of the incident were similar. The few discrepancies were not pertinent to the issue of safety. It seemed clear from all accounts that the injury was the result of an accident. Further, I saw no pattern of teacher behavior that could endanger students, thus no risk to student safety.

The second case, which also resulted in a student injury, underscored the need to reconsider how student supervision is organized for indoor recess at many elementary schools. The school board directorate received my concern unequivocally. They began addressing the concern by consulting Riverside school administrators, and by looking at how other school boards organize supervision during indoor recesses. The work was interrupted by the school closures in March. I was assured that the work would continue once operations normalize.

Informal Interventions-Requests for Assistance

The data in this report describes requests for assistance in resolving complaints from students or parents who had not exhausted all the levels described in the RSB Complaints Procedure. It includes parents or students who just wanted advice on how to proceed. Some cases involved more than one issue.

2019-20 Requests for Information or Assistance				
Category	Elementary	Secondary	Adult	Totals
Sanctions (code of conduct)	0	4	0	4
Assistance with the Appeals Process	0	0	0	0
Educational Services/Curriculum/Program	1	1	0	2
Services for Students with Special Needs	1	5	0	6
Fees	0	0	0	0
Transportation	1	2	0	3
Staff behavior	2	0	0	2
Administrative procedures (registration/eligibility/zoning)	1	1	1	3
Communication	4	0	0	4
Other	1	0	0	1
2019-20 Requests for Information or Assistance: Bullying/Harassment				
Violence /Bullying	Elementary	Secondary	Adult	Total
Student to student	6	0	0	6
Staff to student	1	0	0	1

Analysis

The types of requests for assistance were similar to past years. School closures however, significantly reduced the total number cases.

Recommendations

These recommendations specifically target the issues and people that I worked with as Student Ombudsman this year. I must caution that it would be unwise to draw conclusions about system-wide issues from these recommendations, given that they are based on a small number of cases and are biased by the people and issues I dealt with. At most, they should lead to deeper probing questions.

Communication with parents

Three of my cases this year involved parents that were not informed of their child's injury in a timely manner. Parents whose child is injured should be called promptly. They should be given a concise report of the events that led to the injury, and the nature of the injury. I suggest that school staff continue to be reminded of the importance of contacting parents directly when a child gets injured. I also suggest that each school develop a protocol determining who contacts the parents when a child gets injured, as well as mechanisms that will allow staff members to do so pragmatically.

One of my cases involved a parent who no longer qualified for a service that he had received in the past. He only learned of the change on the day he expected the service to resume. Parents should be made aware of changes in programs or services that affect them directly. This should be done even when such information is available publicly on the web page. I suggest an automated phone message, or a direct e-mail to be sent to inform parents that there will be a change in the services they are used to getting.

Indoor recess at elementary schools

The revision of supervision strategies for indoor recesses, started last year, needs to be continued once school operations normalize.

Violence and Bullying

I must caution that the number of requests for assistance in cases of violence and bullying cited in this report does not reflect the cases of bullying across the school board, but only those cases received by the Student Ombudsman. Given the confidential nature of my work, I do not share information with school board personnel unless the student or parent explicitly asks me to.

Analysis

Five of the 6 parents I assisted brought their concerns to their school principals. The sixth chose to transfer their child to another school. No complaint escalated to a level requiring my formal intervention. Three of the six instances of violence or bullying involved students with known behavioral issues.

Recommendations

Schools are tasked with ensuring that effective plans are in place to support students with behavioral needs using their available resources. Parents mostly understand the challenge schools face but want assurances that their children are safe while in school. Principals face the difficult challenge of balancing students' confidentiality with the importance of assuring parents that their children are safe while at school.

Parents should be made to feel welcome approaching school staff with their concerns and should have access to information on the school handles bullying and violence. To that end I recommend:

- Every school should be encouraged to implement transparent mechanisms for parents to easily share their concerns with school staff.
- Every school be encouraged to publish the steps that will be followed by the school whenever incidents of bullying are reported on the school web page. (Many schools already have this in place).
- Principals should be given an opportunity to discuss their needs in dealing with difficult behavioral situations, share best practices, and perhaps share communication strategies which reassure parents of their children's safety, while respecting student confidentiality.

Personal note

I would like to express my deep-felt gratitude to the RSB personnel who responded to my requests for assistance with unconditional cooperation. I would also like to thank Peter Woodruff for his wise counsel and for his diligence while replacing me during my absence.

I especially want to express my gratitude to the parents and students who put their trust in me as Student Ombudsman. Serving them continues to be an exceptional privilege.

Respectfully submitted,
October 1, 2020



Enzo Di Ioia
Student Ombudsman
for the Riverside School Board