



École Merton School
5554 Robinson Avenue, Côte-Saint-Luc, QC H4V 2P8

Minutes of the Governing Board Meeting (held virtually)
Tuesday December 16, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Present: David Lee, Romain Goubel, Angie Eftaxias, Kimberley Davey, Gesell Duféal, Nathalie Guitta, Steve Merling, Joshua Gonshor, Eddie Winkler, Marissa Lydynia, Frederick Elbaz (alternate member), Carol Meindl, Evi Altman (H&S)

Regrets: Georgia Gotsis, Paola Samuel (commissioner)

1. Welcome and Call to Order

- a. Call to order – 7:04 pm

2. Approval of agenda

Approved by Nathalie, seconded by Josh
All in favour

3. Approval of minutes from meeting of November 18, 2025

- Correction: conversation with family about donation – was handled by Josh rather than Eddie
- Approved by Josh & seconded by Eddie
All in favour

4. Business arising from minutes

None

5. New Business

- a. New confirmed outings overview covered by Mr. Lee

- Biodome/insectarium: Cycle 1 – February 3
- Biodome: Grade 5 – April 16

- b. Role of Governing Board

- Preamble (Steve Merling): While always happy to talk to parents, clarification required as to what is a Governing Board item to address vs. those to be addressed by the principal, examples such as class gifts, behavioral issues etc. should not be directed to the GB.
- Mr. Lee clarified the role of Governing Board which is documented on the EMSB website.
- Some specific items such as the educational project are voted on by the GB, code of conduct, annual report etc., GB is consulted on these for direct input.
- Some items are informational only, example such as the school trips, instructional materials, standards & procedures etc.
- Questions can always be floated to either Mr. Lee or the GB Chair where they fall into the purview of the GB
- Questions about individuals, school policies, chat groups etc. should not be directed to the GB Chair

- c. Opportunities for swag fundraising (SM)

Josh summarized the topic:

- Significant fundraising opportunity found in another school
- Used as a great fundraising tool which in the school in question is done as part of Grad fundraising
- Should be looked at in conjunction with School Uniforms item
- Example program: <https://roslynhands.myshopify.com/>

H&S Details:

- Has always been through a supplier with a small commission back to H&S via Mini Polo
- Uniform shop concept is a demanding process with minimum order quantities
- Need to ensure we can be able to supply to students as needs arise, e.g. if a child doesn't have white t-shirts left, how do we help that child
- Eg Topmarks: it's a size try out, couple days later you get your order.
- To be cost effective, you need to be able to order in bulk

Considerations:

- Would be less interested in purchasing if it's not uniform approved and can't wear it on school grounds
- Josh clarified, it was logo differences or other emblems, the items were ok for use in school
- Mr. Lee advised swag doesn't have to focus or align with uniform policies/purchasing, could be other items like toques, water bottles etc. Was done with another supplier.

d. School discipline processes & procedures (DL)

- Preamble (Steve Merling): calls to Steve have been coming through increasingly since Mr. Lee sent out the emails about code of conduct. Types of discipline, working during recesses, extra homework, in school or part day suspensions. Clarifying that this doesn't fall within the purview of GB
- Students have 3 recesses of 20 mins per day
- Sometimes students must be removed from environments where issues are taking place.
- Aim is to not take away from instructional time
- Recess is a privilege, not a right. Sometimes when a student needs to catch up on work, a volunteer may be able to stay behind to monitor
- Things like this are not recorded in a student's record. Suspensions are and are reserved for serious infractions.
- It is at the school and teacher's discretion on discipline to be applied. Some parents disagree with various discipline measures taken but this is not up to the parent and repeat behaviours need to be addressed in the manner which the school deems necessary.
- Improvements are being seen with the measures being taken in number and degree of incidents with the tools currently in place.
- Josh proposed that the parent body be provided with information on what steps are taken prior to a given disciplinary step mentioned
- Ms. Eftaxias responded advising starting with positive reinforcement and other such methods. This year however there has been an increased amount of talk back, rough physical behaviours, etc. Consequences have been increasing over time to align with the degree of improvements or lack thereof as applicable.
- Mr. Lee advised this could be a good idea for *Meet the Teacher* night
- Marissa asked if changes have been seen. Mr. Lee advised it's not an overnight fix but we have seen positive changes, new posters have been put up about the pledge we all make at Merton to reinforce the direction and culture.
- Steve asked if we need to revisit the Code of Conduct in an upcoming meeting, considering changes in online access, screentime, etc. and seeing real experience of behaviours shifting in the wrong direction. Mr. Lee advised this is an annual process and will be addressed later this year.
- Ask that we read through it together in session or find a way to review it more thoroughly
- Steve asked if it would be reasonable to have Mr. Lee email the parent body asking for any inputs
- Nathalie suggested training for the lunch monitors, clarify their roles & responsibilities and implementing incident reports.
- Steve advised it is worth considering that these things are happening potentially because it's a less structured period of the day
- Ms. Eftaxias also advised that behaviour consultants at the board have been consulted, and improvements have been seen
- BASE Daycare staff who would be involved in lunch monitoring as well have formal training as educators

e. Information/Discussion: Respectful relationships amongst parents (Steve Merling)

- Many of the calls to Steve recently have been "passionate" in nature. While this means people care, it quickly gets to a point where it goes beyond being productive dialogue.
- Merton culture is more than teaching math, verbs etc., we teach culture and create a sense of belonging.
- This is a community built around being collaborative & engaged while always remaining respectful despite differences of opinion.

- There is an increase of incidents of parents going beyond debate and into situations where some people are being made uncomfortable being present and affecting the overall culture of the school.
- Eddie asked if any specific action could be taken such as a letter to the parent body from the GB or the school.
- Mr. Lee seconded everything as described by Steve and has been seeing it as well. Proposed proceeding with a co-authored letter of sorts to address this aiming to get in front of this before it snowballs.
- Nathalie spoke about another local school that held a hockey tournament amongst the children and parents. It was a great community event; we could do with more of these types of events.
- Parent community events whether sporting or other types of activities are an excellent idea to bring people together.
- Nathalie volunteered to look deeper into a plan to host a hockey tournament and share back with GB
- Suggested that these events would ideally not cost money
- Mr. Lee volunteered to put together proposal for first event hosted at Merton

6. Reports

- GB Chair's Report (S. Merling)
 - Nothing additional to add
- Principal's Report (D. Lee)
 - Theme for the month was creativity; Star Students of the month will be honored with their certificates when returning in January
 - Fundraising activity went well, covered field trips & holiday events
 - K5 classes have their concerts showcasing what they've learned so far this year
 - Closing of H&S Daycare to be replaced with BASE. Met with EMSB BASE coordinator this week.
- Home and School Report (Evi):
 - Dissolving Daycare & ASA as no longer financially sustainable
 - New sessions for 2nd half coming out
 - Merch being finalized, hats etc.
 - Babka bake to be raised as a new fundraising activity
- Teacher's Reports:
 - Preparing to say goodbye to Ms Tania & Ms Debbie. Kids writing letters, a little bittersweet.
 - Suggestion raised to write a letter from the board thanking her for everything she has done for the school, parents and children. Josh volunteered to do this.
- PC Report
 - Summary provided, report summary attached to these minutes
- School Commissioner's Report (P. Samuel)
 - None (absent)

7. Question Period:

- First question: question around increasing security around the school following worldwide incidents, potentially full time security guards, bolstered fencing etc.
 - Fences cannot be raised based on municipal regulations
 - Full time security guards would not be approved by school board due to budget cuts
 - Doors always locked during the day, supervision is ongoing/continuous
 - Office staff know the parents faces, anyone not known is always questioned as to their purpose at the school
 - Lockdown procedures to begin being taught to all starting in January
 - CSL Public Security has increased it's coverage around schools including public schools
- Email about closing of ASA/Daycare
 - Does it include after school activities: in a sense yes, however they are separate in nature. They will continue via external partners via the BASE daycare engagements with external vendors. May even use same suppliers. This will no longer be run by Home & School
 - Will staff be the same under BASE Daycare?

Likely not as BASE is staffed by unionized daycare educators who are placed based on seniority on their preferred work location. Board must hire a Daycare Technician and educators.

- Can parents pull together to add funds?
Unfortunately, we're past this point, it is not a sustainable program
- c. Mitch addressed proposed change in procedures: Parents will be encouraged to continue to submit questions in advance to allow for preparation of responses in advance, however 2-minute allotment for questions from the public will remain.
- d. Michaela raised school climate:
 - Addressed that office staff go way beyond the call of duty, asking that they be recognized. Suggested that while there is no formal
 - Losing 2 amazing teachers, Ms Tania & Ms Debbie: asked that Merton/EMSB keep track of their contact info to share with Students in the future to engage with these teachers over the coming decades. Suggested perhaps using social media as an alternative as EMSB emails will be deactivated.

Additional business:

Uniforms

- Mini Polo is closing shop, will need to find a new supplier. Will no longer work on commission structure.
- Contract will be between the school and vendor, H&S will not be involved following new proposed vendors sourced.
- Thank you to **Heidi Cheung** who put in the work and time to contact different uniform suppliers to get their quotes and samples.
 - 12 vendors engaged, 3 quotes received
 - Samples requested from all 3, 2 have sent in already
 - Potential proposal of adding a Navy t-shirt – would need to be voted on
 - Free shipping raised as a topic of consideration
 - Open to the public for trying on clothes
 - Top Mark/Goltex both submitted, the 3rd will be meeting in January
 - 3rd company cannot make red sweatpants, suggested they be removed from contention

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Eddie seconded, by Nathalie @ 9:18 pm

Happy/healthy/meaningful holiday season to everyone!

Action items (agenda item 5e):

- Steve/Mr. Lee to coauthor a letter to the parent body on respectful communication & sense of Merton community
- Nathalie volunteered to look deeper into a plan to host a hockey tournament and share back with GB
- Mr. Lee volunteered to put together proposal for first event hosted at Merton
- Jan 13 meeting – to include vote on final uniform vendor & potential inclusion of blue t-shirt

Next meeting: January 13 at 7:00 pm on TEAMS.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Eddie Winkler

Steve Merling, GB Chair

David Lee, Principal

December 4, 2025

English Montreal School Board Parents Committee

Highlights to bring back to your GB

- **Expansion of Vocational Carpentry Program:** Adult Education and Vocational Services Regional Director Angela Spagnolo presented a plan for the expansion of the Rosemount Technology Centre's vocational carpentry program at Lester B. Pearson High School, covering the rationale, logistics, space allocation, and the impact on existing programs. The Quebec government launched initiative attempts address labour shortages in the construction industry, leading to the Ministry of Education allowing school boards to offer construction training programs without the usual authorizations. AEVS received provisional authorization to run the carpentry program, with the goal of increasing workforce participation and revenue, and is seeking permanent authorization contingent on successful program delivery.

The EMSB PC committee resolved to accept the proposal and recommended that:

- 1) any expansion or changes to vocational programs should not impede the programming of educational project at Lester B. Pearson High School. The safeguarding and provisioning for potential future expansion of Pearson's Sport-Etude Program must be considered.
 - 2) youth be allowed access to the facilities where possible in conjunction with educational programming, without overlapping with adult cohorts.
- **Concerns Over Reduction in classes at Pearson's Sport-études program:** Participants discussed concerns about the reduction in Sport-Etude Sport-études program classes at Lester B. Pearson, questioning the rationale for decreasing next year's secondary one class from three to two classes and the potential impact on student access, with plans to seek clarification from administration via a letter to administration.
 - **Budget Cuts and Parent Committee Involvement:** Delegates discussed recent budget cuts, the parent committee's historical involvement in budget discussions, communication challenges with the school board, and strategies for increasing parent engagement and advocacy. Participants described difficulties in obtaining timely and detailed budget information from the school board, noting that only summary documents were provided after decisions were made. The lack of direct communication and involvement was identified as a barrier to effective advocacy. Plans were made to request a presentation on the budget to be held in January 2026 and to seek clarification on how cuts are affecting students and services. PC members can watch the November 14, 2025 Council of Commissioner's meeting for the response regarding the cut to the PC budget from \$19,000 to \$3,500 as well as other questions from the community:
<https://vimeo.com/1137004179?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci>

- **Parent Engagement Initiatives:** Ideas were proposed for increasing parent engagement, including hosting open forums or town halls to gather input and discuss concerns, with the aim of fostering greater collaboration and representation. Motion put forward that the executive brainstorm what this type of event could look like.
- **Governing Board Communication Channels:** The committee reviewed and approved a letter to the Ministry of Education requesting clarification on the authority of governing boards to maintain official communication channels, such as dedicated email accounts, to improve accessibility, accountability, and continuity.
- **Policy on Equipment Safety:** The committee discussed the rescinding of the equipment safety policy, the need for clear guidelines and timelines for maintenance. Members raised concerns about the absence of a formal policy for equipment safety inspections following the rescinding of the previous policy. The administration confirmed that material resources and educational services are collaborating to ensure equipment safety, and that principals are responsible for maintenance, but a timeline for new guidelines is still pending. Motion to inquire when the guidelines would be published moved forward by the group.
- **Fundraising Rules:** It was clarified that fundraising for large scale initiatives (like school trips) at the high school level must be conducted for groups rather than individuals. Students may fundraise independently outside of school, but school-organized fundraising must benefit the entire group or team.
- **Petition for Crossing Guards:** A petition at the National Assembly to make high schools eligible for crossing guards, encouraging members to share the [QR code/link](#) and gather signatures before the February deadline.
- **Food Insecurity and Federal Funding:** Concerns were raised about the Quebec government's refusal to accept federal funding for a national food program, despite ongoing food insecurity among students. The committee discussed possible advocacy actions, including writing letters and engaging the media.
- **Advisory Committee on Special Education Services:** The advisory committee reported on efforts to obtain and consolidate data regarding special education services, waitlists, and student placements, aiming to identify gaps and improve information sharing. The committee received a detailed presentation on the number of students with special needs, program offerings, and school-level data, with the goal of identifying information gaps and improving service delivery. A question was raised about the number of students zoned for EMSB who are placed in resources outside the board, with plans to obtain and share this information for further analysis.

- **Marketing & Communications Subcommittee:** The committee discussed strategies for improving communication with parents and among members. An updated informational pamphlet for parents was prepared, outlining the role of the Parents Committee, complaint procedures, and key contacts, with plans to distribute it via the website and directly to parents. The subcommittee put a call out to experts in the group to identify a free online platform to facilitate communication and document sharing among governing boards, with the aim of building community and improving collaboration.
- Chair to contact Michael Cohen at the EMSB to see if a section of the IN FOCUS newsletter can be dedicated to EMSB-PC related news/content.
- **Climate Readiness Subcommittee:** The subcommittee reported on the development of guidelines for extreme cold and heat, as well as improved communication with municipal authorities regarding snow removal and school access. The subcommittee is working on recommendations for managing extreme heat in schools, such as allowing students to use nearby parks and improving building ventilation, with input from parents and other stakeholders. This type of document does not currently exist at the EMSB.
- **English Parent Committee Association Report:** EPCA will be presenting a brief at the National Assembly regarding Bill One, which could impact minority rights and school funding, and invited parent participation in advocacy efforts. Bill One / Quebec Constitution proposes changes that would prioritize majority rights over minority rights and restrict the use of certain funds for legal challenges, raising concerns about civil rights and school governance. Sign-up to receive information and tools for parents
<https://epcaquebec.org/contact-us/>

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT These notes were taking by an individual committee member and might reflect their perspective. They may contain inherent bias and should not be considered a comprehensive or impartial representation of the meeting.