École Merton School

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

Governing Board Meeting (held virtually) Tuesday, April 27, 2026
7:00 p.m.

Present: Christy Tannous, Steven Merling, Marissa Lydynia, Eddie Winkler, Josh Gonshor, Nathalie Guitta, Georgia Gotsis, Kimberley Davey, Carol Meindl, Gesell Dufeal, Sylvia Brandao, Frederic Elbaz

Absent: Evi Altman, Angeliki Eftaxias, Romain Goubel, Paola Samuel

Agenda

1. Welcome and Call to Order
The meeting was welcomed and called to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Adoption of the Agenda
Moved by Eddie and seconded by Josh. Unanimously approved.

3. Approval of Minutes Held on March 24, 2026
Moved by Eddie and seconded by Kimberly. Unanimously approved.

4. Election of Secretary for the Evening
Steven asked for volunteers among parents who had not yet taken minutes. As no volunteers came forward, Marissa agreed to act as secretary for the evening.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes
Ms. Tannous stated that the main item arising from the previous meeting was discussion around the use of funds received through school donations. She explained that other schools typically allocate donated funds based on their most pressing needs, such as schoolyard improvements or building beautification, of course considering funds available.

At Merton, the renovation of junior bathrooms was mentioned as a potential project to explore further. Ms. Tannous emphasized that continued fundraising would be important should the board wish to pursue such initiatives.

6. New Business

6.1 Hot Lunch Supplier for the 2026–2027 School Year

Ms. Tannous reported on her review of the hot lunch program offered by the current supplier, Merenda. She assessed participation rates, classroom observations, and feedback from staff regarding food consumption and complaints.

Participation is low, with approximately 20–30 students per day, and no significant complaints reported. The program offers regular and teen meals, with optional add-ons. A minor price increase of $0.15 is planned for the regular meal next year.

It was discussed that most Merton students bring lunch from home, possibly due to cost, picky eating habits, and parental preference to monitor food intake. It was also noted that uneaten hot lunches are discarded.

Alternatives such as Solly's, Taza & Pizza and Le Doral were discussed for future consideration.

Given the scale of change required and current lack of pressing concern, the board agreed to maintain the current supplier for one more year.

Motion to use Merenda as hot lunch supplier for 2026–2027, moved by Natalie and seconded by Ms. Gotsis. Unanimously approved.

6.2 School Fees for the 2026–2027 School Year

Proposed school fee adjustments were presented by grade level.

Changes reflect differences in printing costs, workbook usage, and materials included in fees, particularly in Grades 5 and 6, where more resources and notebooks are now included.

Motion to approve the proposed school fees for 2026–2027, moved by Josh and seconded by Ms. Gotsis. Unanimously approved.

6.3 Dress-Down Fundraisers

Approval was requested for Denim Day (May 12) and Scoliosis Awareness Day (May 29). A $2 donation per student is typically requested from students. Denim Day proceeds will support breast cancer initiatives through the Cure Foundation, and Scoliosis Day donations will go to Shriners Hospital.

Motion to approve the dress-down fundraisers moved by Natalie, seconded by Kimberly. Unanimously approved.

6.4 Transfer of Funds – Music Program

Ms. Tannous explained an outstanding music program invoice of just under $7,000 related to a Cycle One program that she was unaware of when she took the reigns at Merton. A shortfall of approximately $2,000 exists in Fund 5 to cover payment.

She proposed transferring funds from the Parent Fund (Fund 3), which currently holds approximately $14,000. Concerns were raised about program quality and future alternatives, but it was acknowledged that the contract must be honored.

Motion to transfer $2,000 from Fund 3 to Fund 5 moved by Josh and seconded by Eddie. Unanimously approved.

7. Reports

7.1 Governing Board Chair's Report

Steven thanked Marissa for acting as Chair last meeting in his absence and secretary tonight and in previous meetings.

He raised the topic of revitalizing large-scale fundraising, noting that Merton families have the capacity to contribute toward prioritized projects.

Ms. Tannous explained the upcoming CanadaHelps platform, which will allow easy, targeted donations to school-specific funds from families and community members. Further discussion will follow with a dedicated fundraising committee.

7.2 Principal's Report

Ms. Tannous reported on recent activities including a visit by Dr. Rosie, participation in a storytelling festival, Red Cross First Aid training for Grades 5 and 6, and the start of Grade 6 end-of-cycle exams.

7.3 Home and School Report

Evi was absent. Josh raised questions regarding parent volunteer availability for the end-of-year picnic. Lisa will assume the role of president next year, and Josh will reach out to offer support.

7.4 Teachers' Report

Field trips for Grade 5 (Biodome) and Kindergarten were noted. Storytelling festival successes, and a presentation by Holocaust survivor Georgette were highlighted as impactful learning experiences.

7.5 Facilities and Grounds Report

Carol noted satisfaction with the completed exterior renovation. Discussion followed on the condition of existing garden materials. Eddie offered to donate lumber for new raised beds, and volunteers offered support. Gesell noted landscaping needs to be completed before gardening can be organized.

7.6 Regional Delegates' Report

No report as Eddie and Marissa were both unable to attend last meeting. Minutes will be shared once received.

7.7 Commissioner's Report

Paula sent regrets due to work travel. No report was available.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 PM. Moved by Josh and seconded by Marissa. Unanimously approved.

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Steve Merling, GB chair Christy Tannous, Principal