

**Minutes of
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting
March 8, 2016 at Connect Charter School**

Board members present: Denise Kitagawa (C), Dave Robinson (VC), Wendy Baillie, Mark Blake, Joni Carroll, Tim Edwards, Susan Gaetz, David McKenzie, Jeff Turner, Jennifer Hittel, Gavin Peat and Dr. Norm Vaughan.

Board members absent: Harold Lemieux (PC), Luana Comin-Sartor, Chas Filipski, and Mackenzie Regent.

Staff present: Susan Chomistek (Superintendent), Darrell Lonsberry (Principal), Dr. Phil Butterfield (Assistant Principal) and Myra Penberthy (Secretary Treasurer).

Connect Charter School teachers, Ms. Heather Melville and Ms. Brittney Glinsbockel along with Ms. Lawrence, student teacher, and two students Alyssa and Sophie presented a preview of "Camp Sweet – The Musical". The Board was very impressed and enjoyed the student performances immensely.

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm.

Motion 43.15 by Norm Vaughan

THAT the March 8, 2016, Board agenda be approved.

Carried

Motion 44.15 by Tim Edwards,

THAT the Board approves the February 9, 2016, Board of Directors meeting minutes as amended.

Carried

Motion 45.14 by Tim Edwards,

THAT the Board approves the Connect Charter School capital plan submission to Alberta Infrastructure.

Carried

Motion 46.15 by Jeff Turner,

THAT Policy 5.01 Student Transportation be approved as presented and amended.

Carried

Motion 47.15 by Susan Gaetz,

THAT Policy 6.04 Student Health and Safety be approved as presented and amended.

Carried

Motion 48.15 by

THAT Policy 6.08 Student Conduct be approved as presented and amended.

Carried

Motion 49.15 by Tim Edwards,

THAT the Board approves the Strategic Plan for the 2016/17 year.

Carried

Health and Safety Report, Darrell Lonsberry

- An Occupational Health & Safety Officer visited Connect Charter School. He reviewed our school role hazard assessments. WHMIS training will be attended by our caretaking staff. The Officer was very helpful and knowledgeable.

Leadership Team Report, Susan Chomistek, Darrell Lonsberry & Phil Butterfield

- Ms. Susan Chomistek presented the leadership team report in Appendix "A".

Second campus, Mark Blake

- Draft letter for a cap increase and second campus is complete. The committee will determine the best time to send the letter.
- A tour of the The Renert School is being organized by Gavin Peat on April 6, 7 or 8th.

School Council, Mark Blake

- March 1, 2016, was the last School Council meeting.
- The Grade 9 students gave a presentation on “There to Where: Representing the Transformation of the Relationship Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadians” led by Ms. Ivy Waite, teacher at Connect Charter School.
- The Grade 9 celebration has been organized and will be held at the River’s Edge Camp and Retreat Centre, June 6-7th, with a formal ceremony on a later date at the school, for parents, teachers and students.

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- Ms. Anam Kazim M.L.A. for Calgary Glenmore, will be invited to the parent summit at Connect Charter School.

Motion 50.15 by Joni Carroll,

THAT the Board authorizes the School Operations Committee to review all currently approved policies and recommend changes to amend any instances of the phrase “the Board will ensure” as appropriate.

Carried

Research & Innovation, Dr. Norm Vaughan

- Dr. Phil Butterfield will be presenting at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. The Congress represents a unique showcase of scholarly excellence, creativity, and leadership. Congress 2016 will be hosted by the University of Calgary.

Communications, Wendy Baillie

Elevator Speech Update

- Research has been completed on what comprises a strong elevator speech, critical elements, suitable length, key messages to communicate
- Susan surveyed parents and teachers to learn their thoughts on what makes Connect unique
- Three draft versions of a speech have been developed. They are currently under review by the Communications Committee.
- Committee’s suggestions will be shared at the April Board Meeting

Secretary Treasurer Report, Myra Penberthy

- Secretary Treasurer’s Report in Appendix “B”.

School Operations, Denise Kitagawa

- School Operations meeting minutes in Appendix “C”.
- The first Draft of the Risk Management Policy was presented for discussion.

Facilities, Tim Edwards,

- There was a meeting on March 3, 2016, where most of the discussion focused on the capital plan.
- Feedback and appreciation from stakeholders, for the facility enhancements, has been received. It is a priority of the committee to advocate for funding for more enhancements.

The meeting terminated at 7:58 p.m.

Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

Appendix “A”

Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report

Board of Directors Meeting – March 8, 2016

1. Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership in Connect Charter School

Engagement in Learning, Collaboration, and Communication are descriptors within the Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks. As a culminating activity for an inquiry into the relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada, the grade nine students showcased their work and engaged in critical, academic conversations with pre-service teachers from the University of Calgary, who had their class session at Connect and learned about the challenges of assessing inquiry. Throughout this inquiry unit, students were able to consider and articulate multiple perspectives. They were able to hear from multiple experts, and considered a variety of texts to try and access both the facts and the themes that run throughout our history.

Two of the descriptors in our Exemplary Teaching, Learning and Leadership Frameworks are **Collaboration** and **Leadership** and fostering positive working relationships with our university partners. Part of the **Board’s Strategic Plan** focus this year involves positive working relationships with our universities. Susan and Phil attended a Field Experience Working Meeting at the University of Calgary on February 25, 2016, to work on some of the pressing issues facing a critical component of teacher education – that of field experience. This one-day meeting brought together post-secondary institutions, school division partners, and the Alberta Teachers’ Association to discuss crucial aspects of field experience. Additionally, Phil attended a Partner Schools Research executive meeting to further explore the potential for research collaboration between schools and universities, potentially with the support of grants that may be available from Alberta Education.

February was a very busy month at Connect Charter as we hosted over 100 visitors to the school. The descriptors in our Exemplary Teaching, Learning and Leadership Frameworks of **Leadership** and **Collaboration** as well as our charter school mandate for outreach, are taken very seriously. Thirty pre-service teachers from the University of Calgary and experts representing specific professions helped to judge our science fair. For some independent science projects, and as a celebration of learning, twenty-one other experts came to discuss with our grade eight students what they had learned through their science inquiry projects. In the area of technology, we had a principal from a high school in British Columbia, two professionals from Red River, a community in northern Alberta, and three teachers from the Calgary French and International School, focusing on how we are integrating technology in our school. In the areas of school culture and effective pedagogy in the area of inquiry, we had twelve teachers from two different schools in Rocky View visit our school. Fourteen pre-service teachers from Hokkaido, Japan, visited our school and observed in different classrooms. As referenced earlier in the report, twenty-five pre-service teachers from the University of Calgary attended our school with the grade nine humanities class. We are committed to sharing our practices to make our learning and teaching visible and to involving students in real-life learning experiences with experts in their fields.

2. Parent Summit and Student Wellness Summit 2016

The 6th annual Connect Parent Summit event is taking place on Saturday, April 16th featuring seven local parenting experts. Event participants will have the opportunity to attend two speaker workshops. Each session is designed to blend the latest professional insights with practical advice followed by a question and answer period. The afternoon is dedicated to a keynote address by Gail Smillie (M.Ed), Director of Child Development with Carya who will unravel the mysteries of teenagers in her keynote presentation “Crazy by Design: Exploring the Adolescent Brain”. Board members are welcome to attend the summit.

In order to encourage dialogue on the topics being addressed at the Parent Summit, a Student Wellness Summit will take place on Friday April 15th and will feature topics that align with those being discussed at the parent conference, including nutrition for learning, anxiety and resilience, teen brain development, and mindfulness.

3. Staff Retreat 2016

A very successful staff retreat was held at Kamp Kiwanis on February 11 and 12. Mr. John Cadman, Ms. Shashi Shergill, and Mr. Rick Fawcett, our Portfolio Leaders, Mr. Jared McKenzie, our Inclusive Practices Coach, and our administration team did an excellent job in planning a very full two days of professional development. The focus this year was on Zones of Regulation, Mindfulness, and refocusing on two of the pillars within our charter: our outdoor education program and inquiry-based learning. The feedback from staff was very positive and we are grateful to everyone for their leadership and active participation.

4. Superintendent Interviews of Parents 2015

Over the next few weeks, parents will be invited by the superintendent to provide an informal response to two basic questions, "What causes you to believe that Connect Charter School is a very good school and what suggestions for improvement would you offer?" A total of 50 parents will be interviewed. As well, in the next few weeks, staff members will be interviewed and both the superintendent and Mr. Lonsberry will interview students as class groups. The feedback gathered through this process will be summarized in the seventh annual report on parent, staff, and student feedback prepared by the superintendent.

5. Pink Shirt Day

Teachers and students were involved in **Pink Shirt Day** on February 22. The *Mini Me to We* and *Agents of Change* electives, along with Mrs. Leane Riley, Mrs. Heather Fawcett, Ms. Brittney Glinsbockel, Mr. Chris Dittman, and Ms. Shashi Shergill organized the activities and the assembly. The guest speaker this year was Pace Anhorn, a youth leader at Hillhurst United Church, who spoke of equality, celebrating diversity, and creating a safe space for everyone.

6. Pre-service Teachers

Connect is widely recognized among teacher preparation programs as a site of exemplary mentorship for pre-service teachers. In addition to the six MRU teacher candidates who began a 16-week integrated practicum in January, we have a further six student teachers from the U of C who are completing their final practicum experience as well as one second year student from the U of L who is engaged in a music practicum with Andrew Bolen. On a related note, Phil is currently conducting research into the effects of the mentor teacher / pre-service teacher relationship on mentor teachers' practices. The preliminary results of this study will be available for sharing in April.

7. The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS)

May 5 and 6 – TAAPCS Regular Meeting – Sherwood Park

April 8 – TAAPCS School Leadership Learning - Calgary

Apr. 8, June 10 – Executive Advisory Council – Red Deer

Appendix “B”

Connect Charter School Society Board Meeting March 8, 2016 Secretary Treasurer’s Report

Draft Financial Statements

The financial statements for February 29, 2016 are in progress and will be shared with the Audit and Finance committee. The year-to-date results show a surplus. Although there are timing differences increasing revenue, there are also offsetting timing differences increasing expenses. We are projecting to be at zero net revenue by year end.

Budget 2016/17

We are starting to prepare the budget template for the 2016/17 school year and in conjunction with our process we are examining our school fees. We are currently considering an increase in enrichment, a decrease in transportation and consistency in lunchroom fees and laptop maintenance fees.

Type of fee	2016/17 School year tentative	2015/16 School year
Enrichment	\$525	\$475
Transportation	\$750	\$785 (\$50 refund)
Lunchroom	\$50	\$50
Laptop maintenance	\$60	\$60

In the 2014/15 school year we had a deficit between enrichment fees and enrichment expenses of \$40,000 and this year we anticipate higher costs for laptops and iPads due to the lower Canadian dollar.

Alberta Education will be announcing its budget April 1, 2016 so we are anticipating that we will be seeking approval for 2016/17 school fees at the April 12, 2016 Board meeting. In discussions with Alberta Education they do not anticipate any change in the way that schools will be allowed to charge fees. However our leadership team has thought it wise to defer a decision on fees until our April 12th Board meeting. Our next two Audit & Finance committee meetings are March 17th and April 19th where we will be discussing budget 2016/17.

In an email from Beverly Barca, Education Manager, Metro Services Branch, Alberta Education Ms. Chomistek received the following comment:

“With regards to school fees, the message for Alberta Education is we respect the right of local school boards to develop their own school fee policy to reflect the unique needs and priorities for their students. Knowing how thoughtful your board’s approach is, I am confident that the recovery fees being included in Connect’s registration package are appropriate.”

Respectfully submitted,
Myra Penberthy

Appendix “C”

Connect Charter School Operations Committee Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Date: February 29, 2016

Location: Collabrium

Attendees: Denise Kitagawa (chair), Jeff Turner, Susan Gaetz, Susan Chomistek, Darrell Lonsberry, Myra Penberthy, Deirdre Bailey, Cynthia Nilsson, Phil Butterfield

- The meeting commenced at 10:35 am.
- We reviewed and approved the agenda.
- We approved the minutes of the December 2, 2015 School Operations Committee (SOC).
- Darrell provided an updated on the work being done in response to the Safe Side Consulting report’s recommendations relative to hazard identification and control. Templates related to work done by caretakers and cleaning staff, educational assistants and teachers are in progress. Denise observed that the templates and associated procedures for identifying, assessing and responding to risks will be helpful as we continue to work on our new risk policy.
- We undertook a final review of potential changes to policies 6.08 Student Conduct and 6.04 Student Health and Safety (and associated Appendix 3). Susan C. expressed appreciation for David McKenzie’s legal review of these documents to ensure alignment with the applicable sections of the School Act and the Alberta Human Rights Act. Susan C. confirmed that the potential changes have been reviewed by our liaison at Alberta Education. Following Board review and approval (as necessary) of the proposed changes, in her capacity as Board Chair, Denise will forward the updated policies and procedures under cover letter to Education Minister Eggen, so as to comply with the Minister’s request to review “policy and regulations or procedures that address the board’s responsibility to ensure that each student...and staff member...is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging...[and] specifically address[es] the board’s responsibility as it relates to the LGBTQ community.” The deadline to respond to the Minister is March 31, 2016.
- Denise acknowledged the hard work of Jeff, Deirdre and Cynthia in preparing the first draft of a new Social Media policy. Following extensive discussion of the policy rationale, an updated draft will be prepared for review at the next SOC meeting. In preparing the next draft, the working group will gather input from a few other teachers at Connect (those most active on social media).
- Denise expressed appreciation to Susan C. and Susan G. for the significant work they contributed to the first draft of a new Risk policy. Following discussion of the draft policy, the committee decided to seek Board feedback regarding the overall policy approach and direction before moving forward with the next draft.
- We reviewed potential changes to policy 5.01 Student Transportation. Denise expressed appreciation for the work done by Darrell and Transportation Analyst Margaret Mills for their work in recommending changes to the policy. The revised policy will go to the Board for review and approval at the next Board meeting.

- We reviewed potential changes to policy 6.01 Student Records. Since the potential changes are to ensure alignment with the new Education Act and associated Regulations, the revised policy will not go to the Board until we have confirmation of a new proclamation date for the Education Act. Based on conversations with staff at Alberta Education, Susan C. advised that her most recent assessment is that the proclamation date will be deferred to September 1, 2017.
- In consideration of the significant amount of work associated with hazard identification and control, Darrell requested any update of policy 7.03 Volunteers be deferred to the 2016/17 school year.
- The meeting terminated at 2:45 pm.

Minutes prepared by Denise Kitagawa