

**Minutes of
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting
February 9, 2016 at Connect Charter School**

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

Board members absent: Harold Lemieux (PC), Luana Comin-Sartor, Tim Edwards, Chas Filipski, David McKenzie, Jeff Turner and Mackenzie Regent.

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

The School Council Parent Summit organizing committee of Ms. Jennifer Spencer, Ms. Lisa Caton and Ms. Rose Baker presented their plan for the 2016 Parent summit. The plan and presentation were very well received by the Board.

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:17 pm.

Motion 38.15 by Mark Blake

THAT the February 9, 2016, Board agenda be approved as amended.

Carried

Motion 39.15 Wendy Baillie,

THAT the December 15, 2015, Board of Directors meeting minutes be approved as amended.

Carried

Motion 40.14 by Dave Robinson,

THAT the January 23, 2016, Board of Directors meeting minutes be approved.

Motion 41.15 by Susan Gaetz,

THAT the Board approves a refund of \$55.00 per rider currently registered and who has paid busing fees for the 2015-16 school year and a prorated amount for those riders who have paid less than the full fee.

Carried

Motion 42.15 by Dave Robinson,

THAT Chas Filipski is granted permission to be absent due to work commitments, for 3 or more consecutive Board meetings recognizing that he will fill his role as a member of the communications committee.

Carried

Health and Safety Report, Darrell Lonsberry

- A parent of an alumni student within our public charter school community is meeting with administration to develop hazard assessments. The Board expressed their appreciation to him for lending his expertise to the task.
- A substitute teacher fell from a student colliding with her and was injured. She is recovering well.
- Shoe clamps are available for all teachers on supervision.

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

- Ms. Susan Chomistek presented the leadership team report in Appendix "A"
- Ms. Chomistek and Dr. Phil Butterfield spoke about Connects' crisis response manual in response to the student accident in the news.

Second campus, Mark Blake

- Did not meet in January.

School Council, Mark Blake

- Tuesday February 2, 2016 there was a School Council meeting.
- Parent council is funding the parent summit and using up its surplus.
- Susan Chomistek was at the School Council meeting to share the results of the parent survey.
- The band committee has now evolved into all performing arts and is now known as the performing and visual arts (PVA) committee.
- Use of fundraised money was discussed and a list was approved.

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- All committees should review their terms of reference at their first meetings of the year.

Research & Innovation, Dr. Norm Vaughan

- A discussion revolved around research at other charter schools that are working with teachers to become teacher researchers.

External Collaboration, Dave Robinson

- No meeting

Communications, Wendy Baillie

- Since the “Strategic Advance”, the committee is working on the elevator speech, 20-30 seconds, 80-90 words, what makes us unique?

Secretary Treasurer Report, Myra Penberthy

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

School Operations, Denise Kitagawa

- There was a working group committee meeting regarding details about policy revisions in regards to best practices.
- 6.04 student health and safety and 6.08 student conduct procedures are being revised and the process for parent consultation is being considered.

Facilities, Joni Carroll

- No meeting this month.

The discussion around the strategic plan ensued and the key strategies will be amended for the 4 new strategic priorities for the year.

The meeting terminated at 7:55 p.m.

Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

Appendix “A”
Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report
Board of Directors Meeting – February 9, 2016

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

One of the descriptors in our Exemplary Teaching, Learning and Leadership Frameworks is **Research Focus**. We were approached by the Alberta Assessment Consortium to participate in a cohort study focusing on current and developing assessment practices. Dr. Jim Parsons from the University of Alberta will be heading up this research and will be assisted by AAC facilitators. The study is supported by a grant from Alberta Education. Connect has two cohorts of teachers participating, which include 11 staff members. The first meeting took place on January 19, 2016, and will be followed by 60-75 minute meetings every 3-4 weeks thereafter. We are also hopeful that a leadership cohort will start up soon. This is an excellent opportunity for our school, and we were very honoured to be chosen to participate.

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. On January 18, 2016, Susan Chomistek attended a Professional & Community Engagement Advisory Committee at the Werklund School of Education as the community representative for the university. Susan has also been invited to attend 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 will bring together post-secondary institutions, school division partners, and the Alberta Teachers’ Association to discuss crucial aspects of field experience.

Relationships and **Leadership** are descriptors within our Frameworks that are a continuous focus at Connect. We often have Connect alumni return to the school in the role of experts. On January 27 and 28, the grades 8 and 9 students had a wonderful opportunity to work with eight of our alumni who volunteered their time and expertise during the exam break. For our alumni, it is an excellent opportunity to further develop leadership skills, and for our present students, the small group instruction was excellent.

2. Science Fair

Science Fair 2016 was a great success again this year. We were fortunate to have approximately 30 excellent judges for the projects from our community. About 2/3 of those were teacher candidates or student teachers from the University of Calgary and Mount Royal University; the rest were parent volunteers who have a keen interest in science. Their positive and constructive feedback to the students’ work was much appreciated. Thank you to the teachers and parents for supporting the students. 17 of the 75 projects from this year’s Connect Science Fair have been selected to enter the Calgary Youth Science Fair at the University of Calgary on April 15 and 16th.

3. Swim to Survive Program

This is the second opportunity that the grades 4 and 5 students have had to participate in the Swim to Survive program. This program was created by the Lifesaving Society and delivered in the City of Calgary by their NLS instructors. The program was a response to statistics showing an increase in accidental drownings across Canada. A description of the program is copied from the NLS website below: <https://lifesaving.org/default.php>

Swim to Survive® is different than swimming lessons - and not a replacement for them. Swim to Survive® teaches just the essentials needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water - an important first step to being safe around water. Basic swimming ability is a requirement of any meaningful attempt to eliminate drowning in Canada. Swim to Survive® defines the minimum swim skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. Because most drowning occurs close to safety and most victims had no intention of going into the water, Swim to Survive® focuses on basic survival skills performed as a sequence of three skills – orientation at the surface after an unexpected entry, treading water, and swimming to safety.

The theme for physical education field trips this year is “On the Water, In the Water”, and this fits very well into that theme. We are grateful for the efforts of our teachers to provide our students with such a worthwhile program.

4. Registration for the 2016/17 school year

We held an information session for prospective Connect parents at the end of January, which was well received. The information session was well attended – we have close to 50 siblings on the list for grade four again this year. In order to help parents make an informed decision and to allow those grade three students who may be joining us next year to see what we do and how we do it, we held two open house sessions on February 3rd. Families who are in the top 200 on our wait list were invited to sign up for the open houses, where they were toured around the school during the school day by our students. We had 31 grade 8 and 9 students come forward to act as tour guides; we were so pleased with the number of students who volunteered and with how well they represented our school. We will begin offering spots to families by the beginning of March in order to have filled all of the open spots for the 2016-2017 school year by the time we open registration in mid April.

5. Self-Regulation Information Session

On February 2nd, parents were invited to participate in a self-regulation information session. This mini-workshop followed on the preliminary session held in early November and focused on strategies that reflect the interconnectedness of biological, emotional, cognitive, social, and prosocial domains. Approximately 30 parents took advantage of this opportunity and the information has been posted to the school website as well as class blogs for wider distribution. The importance of a parent-student-teacher feedback loop in sharing self-regulation strategies as life-long skills was reinforced as a significant element of having our parents as partners in their child’s education.

6. Camp Sweet - The Musical

Camp Sweet – The Musical rehearsals are in full swing during elective time. Everyone involved is very excited to share their skills and talents in preparation for the shows in March. Planning for the show began months ago as stories were submitted, the script was written, auditions were held and the casting was finalized. The music being used for the show involves well-known campfire songs as well some original music by Scott Henderson. (Canada Sings! vocal coach, Souls in Rhythm, Earthtones and former Musical Director of the Young Canadians). Scott has been in several times to work with the actors on breathing techniques, proper warm ups and to teach the songs he wrote. This has offered our students great experience to work directly with the songwriter. The shows will be held on

Tuesday, March 15, at 7:00 and Wednesday, March 16, at 1:00 and 7:00. Board members are welcome and encouraged to attend any of the performances.

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

January 14 and 15 - TAAPCS Regular Meeting – Red Deer Sheraton

May 5 and 6 – TAAPCS Regular Meeting – Edmonton

Feb. 26, Apr. 8, June 10 – Executive Advisory Council – Red Deer

Appendix “B”

Connect Charter School Society Board Meeting February 9, 2016 Secretary Treasurer’s Report

Draft Financial Statements

The financial statements for January 31, 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.

ASBOA (Association of School Business Officials of Alberta)

Information Reporting Committee Update

Monthly financial reporting

- Effective April 1, 2016, Alberta Education will be requiring school boards to submit monthly financial reports as per a directive from Treasury Board.
- Many details are still uncertain at this time.
- Both Alberta Education and ASBOA expressed concerns about the increased manpower that this change will require as well as the monthly deadlines.
- Possibilities regarding using school boards quarterly reports and/or fall budget updates were discussed to manage this challenge.
- No decisions were made at this time Further details will be distributed when more information is available.

On this item – the Executive will be meeting with the Deputy Minister on Friday, February 5th to share concerns from the membership. I provided the following input: *“We are supportive of transparency and accountability. However monthly financial reporting does not take into account seasonal fluctuations, whereas quarterly reporting would allow for some of those timing differences to be spread out over the appropriate time periods. I also support the elimination of the administration funding reduction to allow for the increased administration costs.”*

I will keep you posted in regards to the evolution of this directive.

Respectfully submitted,
Myra Penberthy