

**Minutes of  
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting  
Sept 13, 2016 at Connect Charter School**

**Board members present:** Denise Kitagawa (C), Harold Lemieux (PC), Dave Robinson (VC), Mark Blake, Joni Carroll, Tim Edwards, , Susan Gaetz, Jennifer Hittel, David McKenzie, Gavin Peat, Mackenzie Regent and Jeff Turner.

**Board members absent:** Luana Comin-Sartor

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

**Guests:** Mr. Ron Koper and Mr. Roman Lohin

Ms. Heather Melville presented on the Broadway Teachers' workshop she attended in New York. She shared her experiences during the workshops, expanded on some of the shows she watched, and then on how she plans to implement her learnings into the drama program at Connect. Ms. Melville expressed her gratitude to the Board for their support for professional learning experiences for teachers.

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Motion 1.16 by Dave Robinson,  
THAT the September 13, 2016, Board agenda be approved.  
Carried

Motion 2.16 by Mark Blake,  
THAT the June 14, 2016, Board of Directors' meeting minutes be approved.  
Carried

Motion 3.16 by Susan Gaetz,  
THAT the Board approves Mr. Jeff Turner to be absent for more than three consecutive board meetings due to work related commitments.  
Carried

Ms. Chomistek presented two documents, *Key Accomplishments for 2015/16 and Priorities for Action for 2016/17* and *Superintendent Action Plan September 2016* for the Board's information and consideration. See Appendices "A" and "B".

Ms. Penberthy presented the Green for Life new waste / recycling contract which has been through the RFP process and was the selection of the Calgary charter schools group.

Motion 4.16 by Harold Lemieux,  
THAT the Board approves the waste and recycling contract to be awarded to Green for Life, October 1, 2016, for full recycling and February 1, 2017, for waste disposal per the Request for Proposal process.  
Carried

Motion 5.16 by Jeff Turner  
THAT the Board ratifies the following contracts:  
1. A part-time continuing contract effective September 1, 2016, for Ms. Krista Brenner as payroll/accounting specialist;  
2. A temporary full time teaching contract effective Oct 17, 2016, for Ms. Heidi Swinamer, to the end of the maternity leave; and  
3. A caretaker contract for Mr. Amanpreet Singh Sandhu from September 20, 2016, to July 31, 2017.  
Carried

Motion 6.16 by David Mckenzie  
THAT the Board approves professional improvement assistance for Mr. Greg Neil up to a maximum of \$5,000 in accordance with Policy 4.01 Employee Relations.

Carried

Health and Safety Report, Phil Butterfield

- Dr. Butterfield updated the Board on the progress of the hazard assessments for each employee at Connect Charter School, the certification for custodial staff, and the ongoing work with Occupational Health and Safety at Connect School
- During the summer there were no reported incidents of injury.

Leadership Team Report, Susan Chomistek, Dr. Phil Butterfield and Scott Petronech

- Ms. Susan Chomistek presented the Leadership Team Report in Appendix "C".

Ms. Chomistek informed the Board of the generous donation from the Baillie family to set up a scholarship for alumni from Connect Charter School who enrol in a pre-service teacher program. The Board expressed heartfelt appreciation to the Baillie Family for the donation.

Ms. Chomistek also reviewed the survey results of students, staff and parents, highlighting the key changes between the years. There was also input from Mr. Petronech on elective choices and Dr. Butterfield on the importance of the student voice and focus groups which promote that student voice.

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- The Governance committee has not met.
- The committee will be reviewing the TAAPCS bylaws to provide feedback.
- Two potential new Board members are visiting. The Governance committee is recruiting for two more members, one with financial expertise and one with legal expertise.

Communications

- No meeting has been held.

Facilities, Tim Edwards,

- No meeting has been held although the Facilities Committee met with administration in June.

Research & Innovation, David McKenzie

- No meeting has been held.

External Collaboration, Dave Robinson

- No report.

Second Campus Committee, Mark Blake

- No meeting has been held.

Secretary Treasurer & Audit & Finance Committee Report, Myra Penberthy

- Secretary Treasurer's Report in Appendix "D".
- The committee suggested making a working committee on sustainable funding.

School Council, Jennifer Hittel

- Welcome back start-up coffee event.
- Volunteer event with pizza.
- Barbeque for parents and students
- There are some workshops planned for parent council.
- October 6, 2016, gear swap on the night of parent / teacher interviews.

School Operations, Denise Kitagawa

- There will be a meeting on September 27, 2016.

General Discussion:

1. Ms. Carroll shared that [spacefinder.alberta.org](http://spacefinder.alberta.org) is an online tool to find available space for meetings and conferences. Free to find space and free to make space available. It will be rolling out in Calgary in September of 2016.
2. Discussion around the communication. What makes us unique as a public charter school? There is interest in a second language component for the school. How do we proceed? Collaborative planning, exemplary learning, teaching and leading as well as our outdoor education program are great successes we can be proud of. How do we continue to expand innovation within our school?

The meeting terminated at 8:30 pm

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Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

## Appendix “A”

**Connect Charter School**  
**Reflecting on Key Accomplishments in the Past School Year and Outlining Priorities for Action for the 2016-2017**  
**School Year**  
**Susan Chomistek - September 1, 2016**

As superintendent of Connect Charter School, I will make reference to the action plan from the 2015/16 year, provide observations and reflections on what has been accomplished thus far, and identify areas for continued focus. The past school year was one of great change for our school community. Our principal, Mr. Darrell Lonsberry, after many years of exemplary service and leadership at Calgary Science School and then Connect Charter School, left to assume a leadership position in Rocky View Schools. I was very pleased when we hired Dr. Phil Butterfield as the new principal of Connect Charter School, because of his strong educational leadership background, his connection to and understanding of our community, and because of his reputation for excellence in education at the K to 12 and university levels. In addition to this appointment, I was also very pleased when Ms. Shashi Shergill was appointed as Assistant Principal. Ms. Shergill won the 2015 Governor General’s History Award for Excellence in Teaching. She, too, has a lengthy history of excellence in leadership and is a very respected educator with strong teaching, counseling, and presentation skills.

In collecting evidence for this report, several major themes and areas of accomplishment became clear. One of the most striking areas of accomplishment I noted was in the success of Connect Charter School students as learners as reflected in a wide range of measures and indicators, including interviews of students and staff, conversations with current students and alumni, during formal and informal observations, and on provincial exams. The students embrace the goals of the school and are very involved in their learning. During the student interviews, they expressed an overwhelming appreciation for the staff at Connect Charter School in providing an exemplary learning environment. Additionally, the commitment and ongoing support from the parents is very evident and clearly contributes to the success of the students and allows for diverse opportunities. The dedication and exemplary leadership of the administrative team as well as the strong support and leadership from the Board of Directors are further key elements in ensuring success for all students. A true measure of the effectiveness of the various initiatives as a school community is the degree to which they foster the success of our students and support the work of the staff.

**Major accomplishments over the past school year include the following:**

**1. Worked Collaboratively with Alberta Education and Other Partners in Education in Serving as a Crucible for Change and Promoting the Successful Implementation of the Inspiring Education Agenda**

There were a number of exemplary initiatives facilitated by the Portfolio Leaders, the administration, as well as by members of the Connect Charter School staff to promote the active involvement of the school staff in hosting visits to the school, participating in visits to other schools and to universities, as well as an incredible number of additional professional development activities. Over the 2015/2016 school year, there were over 350 visitors to the school. The school also hosted two networking days. One focused on Physical Education, with 18 participants, including elementary teachers through to university professors, attending the networking day. The second networking opportunity focused on Outdoor Education and took place at Mosquito Creek over a two period with 25 participants from charter schools and universities.

In addition to this, several staff presented at universities or at conferences or were referenced in publications:

- Ms. Shergill and Mrs. Bailey presented at the IDEAS Conference, sponsored by the University of Calgary and Galileo. The goal of the conference was to create opportunities for research to inform practice **and** for practice to inform research in the area of assessment, in particular designing for innovation. The audience for the conference was comprised of researchers, administrators, and teachers. Ms. Shergill and Mrs. Bailey presented *An Exploration of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Relationships*, which fell under the conference theme of Indigenous Education. The session was extremely well attended and many positive comments were received after the session
- Ms. Shergill presented at *Ignite Your Passion for Discovery*. Calgary Discovery Education hosts a variety of community driven events that support ongoing professional learning. This is an innovative way to connect educators within our city and throughout Canada.
- Dr. Phil Butterfield and Ms. Brittney Glinsbockel represented our school at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) conference at the University of Calgary. Dr. Butterfield had an opportunity to present the findings of his research exploring the impact of the mentor teacher/pre-service teacher relationships on experienced teachers.  
Ms. Brittney Glinsbockel, two other teachers, and Dr. Norm Vaughn presented “The Journey of transition: Teacher candidate to first year teacher” at the CSSE conference. During the presentation, Ms. Glinsbockel focused on how the Mount Royal University program prepared her for her first year of teaching and drew upon personal experiences at Connect Charter School while addressing ideas around community, co-curricular involvement, placement and practicums, assessment, and professional learning plans. She was able to contribute to recommendations for the MRU Bachelor of Education Program as well as to the discussion of conditions that lead to success for new teachers.
- Ms. Shashi Shergill, Mrs. Ivy Waite, and Ms. Jaime Groeller presented at The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools’ conference. Giving an overview and then facilitating discussion on assessment practices in schools, Mrs. Waite and Ms. Groeller guided a lively discussion where there was much sharing of current practices in many of our charter schools. Ms. Groeller and Ms. Shergill hosted a session on citizenship education and what it looks like in schools, as well as an exploration on what the possibilities for citizenship education might be.
- Dr. Phil Butterfield addressed an on line class of graduate students in the Master of Education interdisciplinary cohort, facilitated by Jeff Reading, on the importance of certification and competency in building outdoor education capacity.
- Susan Chomistek was a guest lecturer for Dr. Amy Burns in her class, *Education 430 – Pragmatics of Teaching and Learning*.
- Our school had an article published in the Fall 2015 magazine, **The CASS Connection**. This edition of the publication, which is sponsored by the College of Alberta School Superintendents, focused on the Ministerial Order on Student Learning. Dr. Butterfield submitted an article that chronicled the journey within Connect Charter School: *Developing Exemplary Practices in Support of the Ministerial Order on Student Learning*.

The External Collaboration Committee suggested a strategy for developing our students as leaders and impacting education in the province with our university partners. With the assistance of our Directors who are affiliated with universities, many of our students participated in activities with university practicum students or presented to classes:

- Working with Gavin Peat and first year education students at the University of Calgary, one hundred of our grade six students participated in activities which were organized through the U of C. Through large group activities and in separate stations, ten U of C students worked using the

principles of physical literacy and the foundations of Canada Sport for Life to plan and facilitate the lessons.

- Another opportunity for collaboration occurred with Mount Royal University. Elementary Generalists from MRU teaching students at Connect Charter on Tuesdays and Thursdays for several months. They focused on developing physical education based lessons within the Program of Studies. Lesson planning, classroom management, and physical literacy were key components of their experience.
- Gavin Peat and Jeff Turner were instrumental in connecting with our teachers and giving the teachers and our students opportunities to collaborate at the University of Calgary. Four of our teachers and their students presented to and interacted with pre-service teachers at the U of C.
- Dr. Norm Vaughn facilitated having two classes of pre-service students attend Connect Charter School for tours and conversations with students and teachers. Scott Petronech led the tours. Dr. Vaughn also connected two professors from Mount Royal University with our physical education team. Astrid Heidenreich was a sessional instructor, and Dr. Stephen Price's program areas were *Physical Literacy* and *Sport and Recreation Management*.
- Dr. Kevin O'Connor from MRU led all one hundred four of our grade 4 students in traveling to Tim Horton's Children's Ranch in Kananaskis on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> to engage in inquiry projects with seventy 3rd year teacher candidates. The focus of their inquiry was 'waste in our world', and they explored innovative ways of addressing waste management and recycling in an environmentally sensitive region. In all of these endeavours, our school was used as a centre for collaborating in learning, teaching and leadership.
- As a culminating activity for an inquiry into the relationship between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada, 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 consider a variety of texts to try and access both the facts and the themes that run throughout our history.

## **2. Developed Long Term Scenarios and a Working Plan for Connect Charter School Related to a Second Campus**

The 15 year charter enables Connect Charter School to pursue opportunities to expand our realm of influence and to increase opportunities for better serving our students, to facilitate the professional growth of our staff, and to work collaboratively within the school community and beyond in promoting exemplary learning, teaching, and leadership. As part of our Board's Strategic Plan, a Second Campus Committee was developed. The committee, including the superintendent and principal, has been very active in a purposeful manner, developing options and strategies in researching options for a second facility to accommodate a middle school (grades 4 to 9) student population.

## **3. Used the Connect Charter School Descriptors of Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership as Living Documents and Frameworks for Action in Promoting Student Growth as Learners and the Professional Growth of Teachers and Administrators.**

The Connect Charter School Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership documents were developed with the active involvement of students, staff, parents, and members of the Board of Directors to reflect the charter goals, guiding principles and the unique characteristics of Connect Charter School as a public charter school. These documents have served the students and staff well, but there is much more that can be accomplished in making them living documents.

- Created an environment through teacher led professional learning networks that modeled engaged learning, ethical citizenship, and the entrepreneurial spirit.
- Continued to develop the leadership capacity among all Connect Charter School students and staff through the development of meaningful leadership activities
- Continued to develop the Connect Charter School learner growth plans based on the exemplary learning framework to document areas of strength, areas for further growth, and a distinctive plan for each student to experience success.
- Further enhanced the student survey instrument to provide feedback to teachers based on the exemplary learning and teaching frameworks and ensured that teachers used this throughout the school year to solicit feedback from their students to further refine and improve their practice. In addition to this, we explored other approaches for hearing the student voice. Of note, this was one of the areas on the Superintendent survey that scored very high during the student interviews.
- Used a distributed leadership model based on areas for growth and support as identified by teachers. Three portfolio leadership positions, Environmental and Outdoor Education, Citizenship/ School Leadership/ Staff Wellness, and Curriculum and Assessment supported the professional development of teachers and teacher and student leadership.

#### **4. Promoted and Enhanced the Work of the School through Research Initiatives and Active Partnerships with Key Stakeholder Groups**

Connect Charter School has a history of a strong presence and active, effective involvement with many and varied stakeholder groups. We continued to build on the relationships that had been developed thus far, as well as expanded our scope of influence. Specifically we worked with the following groups:

##### **1) Alberta Education-**

- Dr. Charmaine Brooks, Learning and Technology Sector, Alberta Education, invited me to serve on the School Technology Advisory Committee (STAC) which provided a forum for K-12 stakeholders to provide pedagogical and technical advice to Alberta Education about technology initiatives, opportunities, and issues related to technology implementation in the learning system. Three meetings occurred during the year, and I was asked to promote the framework at an additional meeting.
- Randy Clark, Director of Leadership Excellence, Alberta Education, asked that I serve as a member of the Writing Sub-committee to undertake the process of drafting a revised Teaching Quality Standard (TQS). The TQS plays an important role in teacher preparation programming, in decision-making related to teacher certification, in relation to career-long professional development for teachers, and in matters related to teacher supervision and evaluation. This group also made suggestions for modification to the School Leadership Standard, which will be forwarded to the Minister of Education to become two of three Standards for the Province of Alberta. Further to this work, administrators and teachers at Connect Charter School were asked to be the first to review and provide recommendations to the documents before they were taken throughout the province for consideration. I was very honoured to be invited to serve on this committee. This leadership role in the province is very positive and helps us fulfill our mandate of contributing to the advancement of education for students and teachers in our province.
- We continued to be involved in the Tell Them For Me learner engagement surveys.

## **2) University of Calgary-**

- Continued to be actively involved with the University of Calgary as a Partner Research School.
- Continued to be very actively involved in serving as a partner school for the teacher preparation programs. We added Augustana University to our partner schools.
- I was invited to be a part of the Professional Advisory & Community Engagement (PACE) Committee at the Werklund School of Education as the community representative for the university. Dr. Sharon Friesen, Vice Dean for the Werklund School of Education and President of Galileo Educational Network presides over the committee.
- Dr. Butterfield and I attended a Field Experience Working Meeting at the University of Calgary 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.

## **3) Mount Royal University-**

- Continued to involve Mount Royal University faculty in projects to enrich learning and teaching.
- Twenty-nine educational assistant candidates from MRU visited our school to gain insight on our inclusive practices program and the role of the EA in supporting teaching and learning. Our three EAs made themselves available to meet with the group at the beginning and end of their tour to share their knowledge, experience, and wisdom.
- Continued to serve as a partner school for the Teacher Preparation Program.

## **4) Calgary Regional Consortium-**

- Continued to explore opportunities for joint ventures with the Calgary Regional Consortium in providing professional development programs.

## **5) Alberta School Jurisdictions-**

- Continued to build on the positive work that has been done with other charter schools in Alberta through the TAAPCS organization and continued the active involvement with the School Leadership Learning Initiative.
- Worked with different school jurisdictions to share best practices through school visits and professional associations.

## **6) Werklund Foundation –**

- Continued to build on existing programs and initiatives to promote student leadership development in Connect Charter School through experiences supported by the Werklund Foundation.
- Expanded the Empowering Minds program to include it as an integral part of the grade nine curriculum.

## **7) Partnerships with Corporations, Community Agencies, and Experts-**

- Actively pursued opportunities to enhance learning and teaching in Connect Charter School through the authentic involvement of "outside experts" and through partnerships and joint ventures.



- We were very fortunate, once again this year, to have the expertise of Mr. Dave Robinson in a geological field study undertaken by one hundred of our grade seven students. The students traveled to the Bow Valley stopping at the base of Mt. Yamnuska and finished with a hike to Grassi Lakes. Mr. Robinson guided the entire trip sharing invaluable geological insight into our local environment. The students were incredibly engaged and developed a much deeper understanding of geological thinking as a result of the authenticity of the experience.

## **5. Research and Innovation Projects**

Continued the Research and Innovation projects utilizing part of the \$20,000 that had been allocated for the current school year. Specifically we:

- Encouraged teachers to maintain a research focus in their teaching and to encourage students to develop the disposition of researchers.
- Encouraged teachers to explore areas of interest or areas for professional learning by undertaking a Research and Innovation project.
- Built on previous Research and Innovation projects, considered and implemented appropriate recommendations and continued to make enhancements based on these projects.

## **6. Enhance Research, Innovation, and Collaboration Mandate**

- We invited Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Minister of Education, other Alberta Education leaders, and key government, corporate and community leaders to visit Connect Charter School to develop an understanding of our school and to engage in a dialogue on strategies to promote a transformation in education: Ms. Kazim, MLA for Calgary Glenmore, came to the school on November 10, 2015, April 25, 2016, and June 29, 2016. Minister of Education David Eggen has committed to coming to the school. Specific contacts were made with our liaison, Beverly Barca, with Pam Halverson, Director of Metro Services, Mark Swanson, Executive Director Field Services Sector, and Michael Walter, Assistant Deputy Minister of Education Program and System Support Division.
- We were approached by the Alberta Assessment Consortium to participate in a cohort study focused on current and developing assessment practices. Dr. Jim Parsons from the University of Alberta headed up this research and was assisted by AAC facilitators. The study is supported by a grant from Alberta Education. Connect has two cohorts of teachers participating, which included 11 staff members. The first meeting took place on January 19, 2016, and was followed by 60-75 minute meetings every 3-4 weeks thereafter. We are hopeful that a leadership cohort will start up this year. This is an excellent opportunity for our school, and we were very honoured to be chosen to participate.
- Thirty pre-service teachers from the University of Calgary and experts representing specific professions helped to judge our Science Fair.
- For the grade eight independent science projects, and as a celebration of learning, twenty-one experts came to discuss with our 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 School District visit our school.
- Fourteen pre-service teachers from Hokkaido, Japan, visited our school and observed in different classrooms.
- 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 involve students in real-life learning experiences with experts in their fields.

### **Priorities for Action for the 2016/2017 School Year**

During the next school year we will continue to build on these and other accomplishments, and we will pursue recommendations for further action including those identified in the Superintendent Surveys and the recommendations in the Connect Charter School Strategic Plan 2016 – Lead, Share, Transform.

#### **1. Explore Suggestions for Further Consideration Generated through the Superintendent Interviews of Students, Parents, and Staff Members**

An Executive Summary of the document relating to the superintendent interviews of 40 parents, approximately 600 students (as class groups) and 45 staff members is posted on the school website. In addition to the areas of commendation and the strong support that is shown for the Connect Charter School goals and the Board of Education, an appreciation for the professionalism of the staff, commendations for the students and their accomplishments and contributions, and the strength and commitment of our parents, there are a number of suggestions for further consideration that will be reviewed. Specifically:

The following suggestions for further consideration (with a response rate of 8% or more) were identified through the parent interviews:

- I. **Consideration Should be Given to Offering A Second Language (28%)** – Representative comments include:
  - Second language. We almost did not come to Connect because of this. Government jobs require this. Teaching this at Connect would be of benefit when applying for jobs, but now it is disadvantageous. Even an after school program would be of interest as the Calgary Girls' School does
  - A second language needs to be seriously considered (7)
  - I think that it would be nice if there were some second language classes offered. Personally, I'd like my kids to take some Spanish - not with the intent to become bilingual, but I feel that, as with music and art, learning a second language, even just recreationally, is a great way to develop additional neural pathways in the brain. It just works a different area of the brain than learning your primary language does
- II. **Enhance Communication Processes (25%)** – Representative comments include:
  - Communication: Use agendas in all grades; if there is an impending due date, send a text blast out (gets lost in emails); having said that, do not want to add to work load of teachers (2)
  - Opportunity to get Darrell and team in front of parents. Needs to be more face-to-face interactions.
  - More awareness for parents on inquiry based learning and assessment
- III. **Student Led Conferences Should be Reviewed (10%)** – Representative comments include:

- Not a big fan of student led conferences. My kids share a lot with me and I enjoy engaging with the teachers to hear their perspective about how my child is doing and what they can do to improve
  - Prefer regular parent teacher interview to student led conferences –if I could just sit with the teachers for 10 minutes, I would get more value
  - Would prefer interviews with teachers to student led conferences (2)
- IV. Different Approaches to Assessment and Reporting Should be Considered (10%) –** Representative comments include:
- Everyone should be on the same page for assessment and have a common system for evaluation
  - School should develop a 10 – 12 system for grading instead of a 1 – 4
  - Difficult to source online comments; percentages would be better
  - Grading system, 1 – 4 not a lot of nuance ; Grades 7 – 9 core subjects should have percentages
- V. Continued Support for the Performing and Visual Arts (10%) –** Representative comments include:
- I am involved with the PVA program and wonder if there could be more support in these classrooms – perhaps a volunteer coordinator would help or a teaching assistant.
  - My child is going into grade seven band and repeating the grade six curriculum is problematic
  - Kids want to do electives and want to do band, too. Is there a way to do both?

The following suggestions for further consideration (with a response rate of 58% or more) were identified through the student interviews:

- I. Outdoor Space Enhancements (92%) -** Representative comments include:
- Put a tether ball pole up
  - Update basketball nets
  - Extension of Clem’s Garden
  - Outside water fountains
  - Compost bins – garbage and trash in there
- II. Indoor Space Enhancements (83%) –** Representative comments include:
- Space for recording
  - Section off washrooms to allow for a change room/ cubbies/benches
  - More use of bouldering wall – taller extensions
  - Heating and cooling system in the classrooms
  - Specific bins for recycling in more places and place for compost
- III. Changes to School Electives (75%) -** Representative comments include:
- Electives – longer classes, more input into what the electives are
  - Electives with the environment and animals
  - More advanced photography elective
  - More advanced elective for coding on the laptops
- IV. Changes to Family Groups (75%) -** Representative comments include:
- Extend Family Groups to two periods or twice a week - Each year have different family groups
  - Change Family Groups every two years
- V. Offer Second Language Electives (58%) -** Representative comments include:
- Second Language (6)

- Second Language – French, Spanish, Perhaps students from other countries teaching
- VI. Make Provision for more Interschool and Intramural Sports Teams (58%)** - Representative comments include:
- Opportunities for more sports teams: sports teams for younger grades, flag football team, rugby team

The following suggestions for further consideration (with a response rate of 11% or more) were identified through the staff member interviews:

**I. Do More to Address the Special Learning and Personal Development Needs of Students (33%)** – Representative comments include:

- As we diversify, make sure that supports are in place for different learners (balance between sharing what we do and doing good work). Our school is on a strong and positive path; continue to place a stronger emphasis on how social/emotional learning can impact academic achievement; continue work on the safe and caring environment, self regulation, and the emphasis on developing positive relationships
- Need to look for ways to support complexities in the school environment (levels of books, reading levels) and to be proactive rather than reactive.
- Need to support our girls better – Only 10 girls out of 80 students in robotics; we need to add the “strong programming for girls” piece to our narrative

**II. Further Refine and Enhance Leadership Practices in School (33%)** - Representative comments include:

- Appreciate admin in my classroom – even more would be better; coaching support from admin has been valuable – have used Darrell’s expertise, I appreciate their feedback (2)
- Huge loss for our school when the Communications and Collaboration leader was eliminated – with our charter, to not have this role is tragic
- Portfolio leader positions should be rotated and allow for other staff members to bring their skills and knowledge forward; this would give experienced people more opportunities for leadership

**III. Enhance Professional Development Programs and Initiatives (29%)** – Representative comments include:

- Getting to work with more experts in the field as it helps us to refine our teaching practices and empathize with our students.
- Should have better mentorship of new teachers; teachers should observe in other classrooms as an integral part of their practice; nurture professional learning in terms of counseling so teachers have more capacity as counselors
- Have breakout sessions at PD days where staff lead the sessions – examples – Deirdre and Kevin with Fresh Grade, Geospatial technologies with Greg, sharing M Ed work

**IV. Explore Strategies for Taking our Outdoor and Environmental Learning Programs and Initiatives to a Higher Level (20%)** – Representative comments include:

- Review of outdoor education trips after they have occurred (2)
- Need to regain some of the elements of environmental stewardship that we lost (composting, community gardens)
- Would like to find even more ways to incorporate outdoor education in the Humanities class
- Collect and house staff certification

**V. Electives Should Be Examined (11%)** - Representative comments include:

- Need opportunities for staff to have more input into the way electives are set out. It would be good to have a whole staff elective discussion at the beginning of the year

- Electives – sign up and organization is not working. Teachers could submit what they want to do at the beginning of the year. Students could then choose, and not be allowed to repeat the course, so they are better rounded; if there are only 7 students in band, for example, run the elective anyways. Could we spend some time at our retreat planning the electives for the year?

**VI. Modifications to Family Groups Should be Considered (11%)** - Representative comments include:

- Like the spirit of Family Groups but worry about the implementation. It is tough to develop the relationships if you only meet every 6 or 12 days
- Consistency around Family Groups throughout school
- More opportunities for students to know teachers in other grades besides with the Family Groups

**2. Connect Charter School Board of Directors' Strategic Plan**

There are specific recommendations in the Connect Charter School Strategic Plan 2016 – Lead Share Transform, which was approved by the Board of Directors in March of 2016.

- **Secure Sustainable Funding**
  - Develop and implement a plan to secure differential funding for inclusive education, to identify options for targeted grant funding, to develop strategic partnerships, and to establish a system for targeted donations
- **Enhance Research, Innovation, and Collaboration Mandate**
  - Continue to support staff to conduct Research and Innovation projects internally and in collaboration with education researchers from partnering institutions
  - Enhance and promote the sharing of research findings within the school and beyond
  - Develop and implement strategies to promote partnerships with agencies and organizations and involve outside experts to enrich learning experiences
  - Expand affiliations both within and beyond the school
  - Apply time and resources in a sustainable way
  - Engage in meaningful sharing of information with our highest priority partners
- **Pursue Facility Growth and Utilization**
  - Identify options to enhance and expand the current facility and actively pursue arrangements for a suitable second facility to provide a middle school program (grades four to nine) to align with the current Charter guiding principles, vision, mission, and goals and to accommodate the students on our wait list
  - Ensure that the school's physical environment, inside and outside, is optimal for student learning, within the means available to Connect Charter School Society
- **Enhance and Expand Communication**
  - Refine existing communications plan to better support the promotion of the school as an active contributor to a collaborative network of schools with the shared goal of promoting exemplary learning, teaching and leadership
  - Build on our distinct Connect brand in order to facilitate connections with partners
  - Identify, engage, and develop external supporters and champions

The foregoing provides a reference to the action plan from the 2015/16 year, observations and reflections on what has been accomplished thus far, and identified areas for continued focus for the 2016/17 school year. Our leadership team is looking forward to the upcoming school year and continuing with the Connect Charter School Mission:

To promote innovation and the ongoing development of exemplary learning, teaching, and leadership practices within an active inquiry based learning environment.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Chomistek

## Appendix “B”

### Connect Charter School Superintendent Action Plan for the 2016/17 School Year Susan Chomistek - September 1, 2016

In conjunction with the leadership team, I will focus my action strategies on the document *Reflecting on Key Accomplishments in the Past School Year and Outlining Priorities for Action for the 2016/2017 School Year*. In addition to this, I will focus on the following three goals which I believe should be priorities for action: providing and promoting instructional leadership, promoting and enhancing the work of the school, and supporting the work of the Board of Directors. I have identified the following action strategies for each of the three goals and have noted some key indicators in parentheses and bold font:

#### **Providing and Promoting Instructional Leadership**

1. Establishing positive, respectful relationships with every staff member through strategies including the following: ongoing informal interactions; classroom visits; supporting student projects and special initiatives; providing feedback and sharing ideas through informal discussions, written documents, appreciation certificates and teacher evaluation reports; attending and participating in teacher and school leader team meetings, staff meetings, staff retreats and PD days, and attending school functions and special events. ***(I continue with efforts to have a strong presence in the school community. Results from the superintendent survey that was issued to all staff last year indicates that the commitment made in this area is valued and that staff would like to see continued emphasis on this area of leadership.)***
2. Working closely with the leadership team in providing support and assistance on an ongoing basis. Developing and implementing action strategies with a focus on instructional leadership through the weekly leadership team meetings. ***(The superintendent, principal, assistant principals and secretary-treasurer meet weekly to identify needs and develop action strategies to address these needs. An ongoing record is maintained of items that were discussed and the items remain on the agenda until appropriate action has been taken.)***
3. Promoting leadership development using the Alberta School Leadership Competencies (April 2016 version) as a framework. ***(Continue the work that had been started with Connect Charter School leadership team in using the Alberta Education school leadership framework as a focal point for enhancing leadership practices with an emphasis on providing effective instructional leadership. Survey results from the teachers indicate a very strong appreciation for the efforts of the administrative team in supporting them in their work within the school. Preliminary meetings have been held with the administration to discuss how the instructional leadership format for the upcoming year will develop. This will continue to be a priority as well as developing action plans for enhancing the work of the administrators and others in school leadership roles as instructional leaders.)***
4. Being actively involved in the recruitment and selection of new teachers and assisting in providing ongoing support for new teachers. ***(I am involved in the interview and selection process for new teachers. I will spend time in their classrooms and through informal discussions offer support and assistance. During the upcoming school year, I will complete written evaluations of teachers as part of the process for recommending teachers for permanent certification.)***
5. Promoting exemplary teaching based on Connect Charter School’s descriptors of exemplary teaching and student learning through a variety of initiatives. ***(The Exemplary Teaching, Learning, and Leadership documents will continue to serve as living documents to guide teaching practices. The documents will be used as a framework for each teacher to develop a professional learning plan. The Exemplary Learning document serves as a guide for students to inform them of the expectations for learners in Connect Charter School. This year, work will continue on further refining the learner profile/student growth plan for all students which is in keeping with the Alberta Education Action on Inclusion initiative and will be***

*used to personalize learning experiences and to give every Connect student the opportunity to experience success as a learner. In addition to this, the Connect Charter School Exemplary Teaching framework will be used as a foundation for teacher recruitment and hiring, teacher evaluation, teacher professional growth and the organization of professional learning activities.)*

### **Promoting and Enhancing the Work of the School**

6. Serving as an advocate and ambassador for Connect Charter School and promoting positive, productive working relationships with: Alberta Education; The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS); the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS); the Galileo Educational Network Association; the University of Calgary; Mount Royal University; the University of Lethbridge; Augustana University; the Calgary Regional Professional Development Consortium; the Calgary Board of Education; the Calgary Catholic School District and other stakeholders in education. **(I have several upcoming meetings scheduled. Together with the leadership team, a concerted effort to be involved with our partners in education will remain a focus.)**
7. Providing assistance and support to the Portfolio Leaders and school leadership team members in promoting partnerships and joint ventures for the benefit of the school. **(We are grateful for the strong partnerships we have developed with the University of Calgary, Mount Royal University, Rocky View Schools, the Werklund Foundation, other charter schools, and the Calgary Regional Consortium. Continued efforts will be made to encourage continued collaboration.)**
8. Participating with members of the school leadership team in programs and initiatives sponsored by Alberta Education, TAAPCS, CASS, and other educational organizations, which are designed to promote school improvement. **(Continued involvement and leadership in CASS, the TAAPCS School Leadership Learning Initiative, and with Alberta Education. Will pursue further opportunities with other organizations.)**
9. Supporting the participation of the school in research initiatives, pilot projects and joint ventures that are designed to enhance learning and teaching. **(There will be a strong commitment to the very successful board initiative to foster opportunities for teachers to engage in action research through the \$20,000 budget allocation for Connect Charter School's Research and Innovation Fund. This will be a strong area of focus for the year and will be reported to the Board three times during the year. The involvement of teachers, Board members, and students in sharing their experience through presentations and blogs is appreciated. We are looking forward to continued work in this area.)**
10. Work with the portfolio leaders and other members of the school community in considering ideas to continue promoting student leadership and ethical citizenship, to further the long term plans for outdoor and environmental education, and to continue the work with inquiry-based learning and quality assessment. **(We will continue with the transformative work that was done during the 2015/16 school year by the Portfolio Leaders and the staff at Connect Charter School.)**
11. Pursue ideas for "hearing the student voice" including the possibility of having student think tanks and processes for providing feedback to their teachers in regard to their learning experiences, including what is working well and suggestions for improvement. **(In May and June of this year, through the process of interviewing each of the classes at every grade level, a wealth of valuable feedback relating to areas of commendation and suggestions for further consideration was gathered. Darrell Lonsberry accompanied me, and this format proved to be very effective. We will be building on this success based on positive feedback from the students and will seek opportunities for "hearing the student voice" on a more regular basis. Dr. Butterfield and I will be involved with these activities. Teachers will be encouraged to seek information from the students based on the Exemplary Learning and Teaching frameworks. Additionally, there will be students at some of the board meetings over the course of the year.)**
12. Continue to develop and promote initiatives to foster authentic, meaningful parental involvement in the education of their children. **(There are numerous examples in which parents were provided opportunities**

*for meaningful involvement in the education of their children including the very successful parent volunteer program, the parent conference, and the active School Council. The School Council expanded the parent conference to include a student segment. There is a solid foundation of meaningful parent involvement on which to continue to build in the new school year. Our programs would not be so varied and rich without the parent involvement that exists.)*

### **Supporting the Work of the Board**

13. Working closely with the Secretary-Treasurer in overseeing the financial operation of the school and carrying out responsibilities associated with the work of the Board. ***(There are challenges associated with the tight financial situation and overseeing the implementation of the balanced budget. I appreciate the strong leadership provided by our Secretary-Treasurer and the Audit and Finance Committee.)***
14. Actively participating in Board committee meetings.
15. Facilitating and supporting the work of the Board and providing leadership in keeping with the role description of the Superintendent.
16. Promoting Connect Charter School as a centre of excellence and innovation in striving to fulfill the mandate as a charter school. ***(There is tremendous potential in promoting Connect Charter School as a centre of excellence and innovation in the transformation of education in keeping with Connect Charter School's Strategic Plan: Lead-Share-Transform. We have an excellent opportunity to expand the realm of influence of the school through the universities and with Alberta Education. We were very pleased with the number of very strategic committees on which we were invited to be a contributing member last year.)***
17. Working with members of the school leadership team and members of the Board of Directors in revising the strategic plan in keeping with the 15 year charter guiding principles, vision, mission and goals and using the strategic plan as a, "living document" which serves as a framework for action. Specifically the following priorities for action which have been identified during the past school year should be addressed:
  - 1) Develop a plan to have Connect Charter School serve as a crucible for change and innovation and a catalyst in the development of a network of pre-service teachers, teachers, and school leaders.
  - 2) Complete the extensive work that was started during the 2015/16 school year on the outdoor education component of our charter. Review all pillars of the Connect School charter.

The foregoing provides an overview of the plan for action in the 2016/17 school year. I will be responsive to emerging situations and will address challenges and pursue opportunities as they arise during the school year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Chomistek



## Appendix “C”

### Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report

#### Board of Directors Meeting – September 13, 2016

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

**Technology Enhanced Learning, Leadership, and Communication** are all integral parts of our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks. Scott Petronech was invited to attend Apple Canada’s - Apple Professional Learning training session that drew approximately thirty educators from across Canada. Attending this session means that there may be times when Apple Canada will invite Mr. Petronech to attend events such as conferences to speak about Connect and the role technology plays in our school.

Modeling the descriptor of **Lifelong Learning**, Mrs. Jessica Kelly and Mrs. Erin Piper completed the requirements for a Master of Education degree in Curriculum Studies. Three staff members are currently working on Master’s programs.

##### 2. School Opening

Connect Charter School got off to a great start for the 2016-2017 school year. Following a very successful Staff Advance on August 15 and Professional Development Day on August 16, the arrival of students on August 18 went very smoothly. Commendations are extended to the caretaking, office and teaching staff members for all their hard work in preparation for the new school year. There were a number of projects undertaken over the summer, including paving on the west side of the school and the walkway and asbestos removal and new lighting in two of the classrooms on the west side of the school.

Additionally, we had three work bees in August, one at the school, one at Camp Sweet, and one at Owl Camp. Over ninety parents, students, and staff attended the work bees, which made the work much easier, and we were able to get a huge amount of work done in less time. There was also great attendance at the opening day parent reception and Meet the Teacher Day, and there were many comments of appreciation. One parent said, “This doesn’t feel like a school, it feels like a community centre!” These positive comments are much appreciated!

Our first trips to Owl Camp with the grade 5 students and to Camp Sweet with the grades 6 and 7 students departed the last week of August and the first two weeks of September. In the next few weeks, the grade 4 students will go to YMCA Camp Riveredge, the grade 8 students will travel for the Rocky Mountain Tour, and the grade 9 students will spend a week at the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

##### 3. Baillie Family Pre-Service Teaching Scholarship

The Baillie family, who were members of the Calgary Science School /Connect Charter School community both as students and committed parent volunteers, have created a very generous scholarship for alumni of Calgary Science School/Connect Charter School. These scholarships will be awarded to university students who have completed at least one pre-service teaching placement. The recipients must be passionate about bringing a disposition of inquiry and innovation to their classroom and committed to classroom teaching. We were very honoured and pleased with the generosity of the Baillie family in supporting our alumni and the ideals of our school. Mrs. Wendy Baillie was a very strong member of our Board of Directors and served on the team that wrote and submitted the Charter Renewal document that resulted in our school receiving a fifteen-year charter. Mrs. Baillie also was a key member of the Communications Committee when the name was changed to Connect Charter School

##### 4. Registration of Grade 4 Students

We are anticipating an overwhelming response from parents with children in kindergarten who will be given the opportunity on September 15 to register their child to attend the Connect Charter School four years into the future.

## 5. The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS) Meetings

September 9- TAAPCS Education Advisory Committee meeting- Red Deer

October 6 - TAAPCS Superintendents' Meeting,  
Superintendents & Directors' Meeting – Connect Charter  
School

October 6 - TAAPCS Banquet - Grey Eagle Hotel and Casino

October 7 - TAAPCS AGM - Grey Eagle Hotel and Casino

### Appendix “D”

## Connect Charter School Society

### Board Meeting

September 13, 2016

### Secretary Treasurer's Report

#### Audit & Finance committee meeting

Our next Audit & Finance committee meeting is scheduled for September 23, 2016 at 7:30 am. We will be discussing preliminary results for August 31, 2016 as well as reviewing insurance coverage for the 2016/17 school year.

#### Financial statements for August 31, 2016

We will be reviewing the financial statements at the October 18, 2016 Board meeting. We are projected to be on budget and will have draft financial statements available for review by the Board at that meeting.

#### Waste and Recycling Contract

On September 1, 2016 we had a meeting with Pat Pelligrino from Green for Life our new Waste and recycling contractor. We discussed the new contract and rates. We also discussed implementing a new bin for recycling on October 1<sup>st</sup> rather than waiting for the new City of Calgary bylaw to take effect on November 1, 2016. This way we will have worked out the system operations by the November 1, 2016 deadline. Our new contract will take effect February 1, 2017 for the waste and cardboard recycling portion of our contract, once our notice period had been fulfilled with our existing contractor.

#### ASBOA committee day

I am attending the ASBOA committee day on Friday September 9, 2016. This is our opportunity to work together across the zones on the various standing committees. I am currently on the Professional development (PD) committee for ASBOA and we will be setting the agenda for PD for the next 2 years.

Respectfully submitted,  
Myra Penberthy