

**Minutes of
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting
October 18, 2016 at Connect Charter School**

Board members present: Denise Kitagawa (C), Harold Lemieux (PC), Dave Robinson (VC), Joni Carroll, Tim Edwards, Jennifer Hittel, David McKenzie, Gavin Peat, Mackenzie Regent.

Board members absent: Mark Blake, Luana Comin-Sartor, Susan Gaetz, Mackenzie Regent, and Jeff Turner.

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

Guests: Susan Boughs, Ron Koper, Roman Lohin, Michelle Rousseau, Hyacinth Schaeffer, and Linda Trinh.

Ms. Cynthia Nillson, a grade 9 teacher, Sydney, a grade nine student, Ms. Shashi Shergill and Mr. Scott Blaskin, a parent, presented on their trip to Bamfield. The presenters were so engaged that it was an exciting time for the Board and they expressed their heartfelt appreciation.

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Motion 7.16 by Dave Robinson,
THAT the October 18, 2016, Board agenda be approved.
Carried

Motion 8.16 by Tim Edwards,
THAT the September 13, 2016, Board of Directors' meeting minutes be approved.
Carried

Myra Penberthy presented the Alberta Education fall budget update.

Motion 9.16 by Jennifer Hittel,
THAT the Board approves the Alberta Education fall budget update.
Carried

Myra Penberthy presented the Draft Quarterly Financial statements for August 31, 2016, to the Board.

Motion 10.16 by Dave Robinson,
THAT the Board approves the Draft August 31, 2016 Financial Statements
Carried

Motion 11.16 by Harold Lemieux
THAT the Board ratifies and approves the amendment to Ms. Heidi Swinamer's start date to September 27, 2016.
Carried

Motion 12.16 by Tim Edwards,
THAT the Board approves the following meeting dates: Dec 6, 2016, Jan 10, 2017, Feb 3 & 4 (Retreat), Mar 14, Apr 11, May 9, June 13, Sept 12, Oct 17, Nov 21, 2017 (AGM).
Carried

Health and Safety Report, Phil Butterfield,

- Dr. Butterfield updated the Board on a requested risk assessment tour with the Calgary Board of Education. This will help to guide some future actions around building security.
- Staff review of hazard assessments.

Phil Butterfield presented the Provincial Achievement Test results for 2015/16. In all areas Connect Charter School students were above the provincial average, including the Standard of Excellence. The Board was very engaged and appreciative of the presentation and noted that the test results were excellent since the Board has supported an inclusive population of students.

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

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

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- The Governance committee met on October 18, 2016, at 4:00 pm.
- TAAPCS meetings summary is in Appendix "B".
- The Governance committee was pleased that 6 prospective board members were in attendance at the October Board meeting.
- The next TAAPCS meetings will be on January 20 & 21 in Red Deer.
- Board members and potential Board members have been asked to submit to the Governance Committee their committee interests, which will be reviewed for committee selection.

Communications, Jennifer Hittel

- Reframing the purpose of the Communications committee. Terms of reference will be reviewed after November AGM.
- Elevator speech is a great communication tool and perhaps a print version on display would be a powerful visual.

Facilities, Tim Edwards,

- The committee met on September 29, 2016. The committee is working on rebuilding the priority list of enhancements and improvements.

Research & Innovation, David McKenzie

- No meeting has been held.
- Educators within the school have an opportunity to take on projects and once the projects are approved there is a \$2,000/40 hour investment of time requirement as well as a requirement to present the findings.

External Collaboration, Dave Robinson

- No report but Dave described the purpose of the committee.
- External collaboration is related to the visioning of the school and has focused on an investment by the school in the external collaboration communication coordinator over a 5 year period.
- Friendly relationships between universities and Connect Charter school are actively pursued.
- There are lots of great things that we are doing in our school and how do we go about sharing those successes.

Second Campus Committee, Tim Edwards

- Report in the dropbox under Appendix "C". Tim presented highlights from Mark Blake's report.

Secretary Treasurer & Audit & Finance Committee Report, Myra Penberthy

- Secretary Treasurer's Report in Appendix "D".
- The Board expressed appreciation on Ms. Krista Brenner successfully facilitating the WCB audit.

School Council, Jennifer Hittel

- School council workshop by Alberta School Council Association.
- Gear swap was a great success and the donations went to another school in Calgary which had need for the donations.
- "Screenagers" movie night for parents is the next social event.

School Operations, Denise Kitagawa

- Minutes in Appendix "E".
- Next meeting on November 7, 2016.

The meeting terminated at 8:05 pm

Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

Appendix “A”

Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report Board of Directors Meeting- October 18, 2016

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

One of the descriptors within the Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks is **Collaboration**, promoting and supporting a culture of collaboration in our school community and beyond. Dr. Shannon Kell, from the Mount Royal University Faculty of Health, Community, and Education, has been working with our physical education team. Last week and again this week, Dr. Kell brought a class of students to Connect to observe the physical education program at our school. In the upcoming weeks, the pre-service teachers will return to our school and teach the students based on their observations, research, and planning. We appreciate the opportunity to work so closely with Dr. Kell and our university partners and for the efforts of Dr. Kell, Mr. Schmeichel, and Mr. Cadman to facilitate this very worthwhile, collaborative endeavour.

Ms. Abby Saadeh is working with Pamela Karlenzig from Mount Royal University, Faculty of Continuing Education, in hosting three educational assistant students. This is the third year that Connect Charter has hosted EA students from MRU. One of the original practicum students was hired and has worked at our school for the past three years. It is very important to our staff to work with our university partners to provide an authentic, inquiry-based, quality learning environment. Comments from Ms. Karlenzig and the students are that this is a very unique environment because our programming; it is naturally inclusive within an inquiry-based environment and as a result of the ubiquitous technology. These are high accolades, and we appreciate the partnership.

We have hosted two different groups this month from the University of Calgary. Mrs. Ivy Waite and Mr. Rick Fawcett presented on *Inquiry-based Learning in a Humanities classroom* to thirty-three University of Calgary students in Dr. David Scott’s class. Fifteen Bridges students came to tour the school to see an authentic inquiry-based learning environment and to get more information on our programs. Comments from the students and faculty were very affirming.

As part of our communication mandate, Mr. Scott Petronech is speaking at the Treaty 7 Education Conference, hosted by Tsuu T’ina Education. His presentation is on the history of our school and how technology can be integrated within an inquiry-based approach to support student engagement.

Collaboration and **Lifelong Learning** are important elements in our frameworks. Mrs. Deirdre Bailey and Mrs. Jessica Kelly were contributors to a book, *The Ecological Heart of Teaching Radical Tales of Refuge and Renewal for Classrooms and Communities*, edited by Jackie Seidel and David Jardine. This book will be used for undergraduate classes in curriculum and teaching, as well as for graduate research methods courses interested in new forms of thinking and writing. We are very proud of our staff as they continue to contribute to sound pedagogical practices.

Another descriptor within our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks is **Environmental and Outdoor Education**, promoting and providing outdoor, environmental, and global stewardship experiences. We have now completed all of our fall trips, and we are very pleased with the quality of the trips and how well our students represented our school. Once again, we had absolutely incredible parent participation, and our staff provided strong leadership in the planning and implementation of the programs. This year, we once again modified our trips, and we are in the process of reviewing student, parent, and staff input sessions. The grade four trips to Riveredge were new this year, and the feedback has been very positive. One of the students said that they had never slept in a tent in the wilderness before! The students heard owls and coyotes, and the location was just phenomenal! The grade five students went to Foothills Fall Camp, which is located in the Bow Valley across from Bow Valley Campground and adjacent to YMCA Camp Chief Hector. This location offered great views of the front ranges of the Rockies as well as close access to wetlands, forests, and grasslands. It was the first time we had used this venue, too, and it was an extremely positive experience. Grades six and seven students went to Camp Sweet and were immersed in many of the familiar and much appreciated traditions that are associated with Camp Sweet. The grade eight students went on the

Rocky Mountain Tour. While they did have to make adjustments to the trip because of the Norovirus outbreak, the students were still able to participate in most of the activities. For this trip, the leadership team expresses their deep gratitude to the parent supervisors and the staff for the tremendous efforts to deal with the situations as they arose. We were also grateful to Alberta Health Services for their guidance. For the grade nine students, the trip to Bamfield was another incredible experience. The weather was phenomenal, and the students enjoyed their immersive activities at the Bamfield Marine Science Center. Thank you to all of the parents and staff for ensuring that our students have worthwhile and meaningful outdoor and environmental education experiences and to the Board for their ongoing support and commitment. We would also like to thank Mr. John Cadman for his extraordinary efforts and commitment to ensuring that high quality programs exist for all students and that extensive input is gathered to continually improve the outdoor and environmental program at Connect Charter School.

Our last trip will be the grades 8 and 9 overnight backpacking trip. Changes have been made to this course, also, with more leadership opportunities for the students in the preparation for the trip and during the three days they spend in the Kananaskis. Another addition is that we have our first practicum student on this trip from the Bachelor of Ecotourism and Outdoor Leadership program at Mount Royal University.

2. Education Plan and Annual Educational Results Report

Members of the leadership team have been involved in making reference to the board's strategic plan as well as feedback that has been received from students, parents, and staff through surveys and interviews as a report on the past school year and an education plan for the next three school years is prepared for submission to Alberta Education. The Education Plan and Annual Educational Results Report will be presented for approval at the November 22, 2016, meeting of the Board of Directors.

3. Remembrance Day Ceremony

The Remembrance Day Ceremony will be held at our school on November 9, 2016, at 10:30 a.m. We would like to invite any Board members who are able to attend to join us.

4. Alberta Education School Technology Advisory Committee

Scott Petronech was invited to become a member of the School Technology Advisory Committee. Alberta Education seeks advice from stakeholders on learning and technology through the School Technology Advisory Committee (STAC). STAC provides 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. A focus for 2016/2017 will be on the implementation of the policies and practices related to the **Learning and Technology Policy Framework** particularly as it relates to Policy Direction 1: Student-Centred Learning; Policy Direction 4: Leadership and Policy Direction 5: Access, Infrastructure and Digital Learning Environments. One of the key reasons for the invitation was because of the positive reputation of Connect Charter School within Alberta Education. Scott will be attending his first meeting on October 19, 2016, in Edmonton.

5. Physical Education Networking Day

A key focus area in the Board Strategic Plan is to provide leadership in exemplary learning, teaching, and leading. We will be hosting the seventh Physical Education Networking Day at our school on December 2. One of the key topics will be assessment in the physical education classroom. Potential breakout topics, depending on participant interest, include Designing the PE Program using CS4L/LTAD, Innovative ways to teach skill and physical literacy, Outdoor Education (Program Design), Design thinking in PE – how to bring creativity into the gym, Phys. Ed. Flex Program, and Climbing. To encourage university students to attend, they may attend for free. We appreciate the efforts of Dean Schmeichel and John Cadman in organizing these very worthwhile professional development experiences.

6. Alberta Education and the Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS) Meetings

January 20/21, 2017 □ TAAPCS Regular Meeting – Red Deer

May 11/12, 2017 – TAAPCS Regular Meeting – Valhalla Charter School

Nov. 18, Feb. 24, Apr. 17, June 9 – Executive Advisory Council – Red Deer

Appendix “B”

Report on the Regular and Annual Meetings of The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS) October 6 – 7, 2016 in Calgary

Attendee Schools: Almadina Language Charter Academy, Aurora Charter School, Calgary Arts Academy, Calgary Girls School, Connect Charter School, Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, New Horizons School, Suzuki Charter School, Valhalla Community School, Westmount Charter School, CAPE (Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence) Charter School

Absent Schools: Boyle Street Education Centre, Mother Earth’s Children’s Charter School

Connect Charter School Attendees: Joni Carroll, Jennifer Hittel, Susan Chomistek, Harold Lemieux, Ron Koper, Denise Kitagawa, Myra Penberthy

Superintendents’ Meeting (Oct 6)

1. **Research Proposal** – Chris Hooper, Westmount
Chris Hooper, from Westmount Charter School, asked permission to contact schools to see if principals wish to take part in his study: *Leadership Approaches to Student Resilience – A Qualitative Multiple-Case Study of Alberta Charter Schools*.
2. **Strategic Plan – Governance Goal**
Discussion on how superintendents see the goal of effective governance in going forward and how do we support our boards in the work.
3. **Executive Director for TAAPCS**
Discussion on the process and the timelines for hiring a new Executive Director.
4. **CRA and WCB Audits**
Joe Frank discussed their two audits and the recommendations that came forth after the audits.

Charter Board Directors’ Meeting (Oct 6)

1. Update on TAAPCS Strategic Planning:
 - Two key themes emerged from last fall’s meeting: TAAPCS governance and advocacy (particular with government)
 - Working to address governance questions before moving ahead on advocacy
 - New draft bylaws (prepared by consultant Becky Kalal) have been circulated. The most contentious point of discussion so far is around the makeup of the TAAPCS Board of Directors (just school board Directors or also school board employees (Superintendents)).
 - Thanks very much to Harold Lemieux for providing a detailed mark-up of the new draft bylaws and agreeing to serve on a working group to bring a revised draft to the next TAAPCS meeting.
2. Group Discussion Question: *If TAAPCS was a more effective organization for charter Boards of Directors, what valued outcomes would be achieved?*

Dinner (Oct 6)

1. Top-notch pre-dinner entertainment by Westmount Charter School senior jazz band
2. Halvar Jonson Awards presented to Dr. Jim Brandon and to Bill McGregor

Regular Meeting (Oct 7)

1. **School Spotlight:** Connect Charter School's Outdoor Education Program. Susan and John Cadman gave a quick overview of the depth and breadth of our program, key educational outcomes and how it fosters a sense of community and being welcomed. Questions from the audience related to how we assess the program, how it's funded and a recommendation to share a copy of the video with Education Minister Eggen.
2. **Research Spotlight:** Suzuki Charter School shared details of a 5-year research initiative being undertaken in partnership with Alberta Education and the University of Alberta. The project focuses on how the instructional approaches used at Suzuki Charter School have a positive impact on student learning, as well as social and emotional elements of student learning. The research is being funded through a successful application for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council federal grant (\$309,000) awarded to the Department of Educational Psychology at the U of A.
3. **Report from Alberta Education:** Education Act not proclaimed in September; no idea of new timeline. Consider subscribing to the monthly newsletter "[In The Loop](#)", which includes updates from the Minister and Deputy Minister. A six-year, six subject curriculum development process is underway (art, social studies, language arts, math, science, wellness); participating teachers (including teachers from 4 charter schools) have made an initial 3-year commitment to work on this project which is using a digital platform. 2016 PAT results have been released; basic math facts at the grade 6 level continue to be a province-wide concern. The Accountability Pillar survey results will be available in October. The new Teaching Quality Standards, Leadership Quality Standards and Superintendent Quality Standards have gone to cabinet.
4. **Table Talk Session 1:** Discussion of proposed new bylaws, all feedback will go to consultant Becky Kalal.
5. **Table Talk Session 2:** Discussion of communication/advocacy priorities. Denise volunteered Connect Charter School to draft key bullet points to answer the question "What is a Charter School" to be added to each school's website. This is a low-cost way to amplify key messages to counter some of the misinformation out there about charter schools and can be customized to each school by adding a few bullet points after the general content. All ideas generated at each table were collected for consideration by the TAAPCS Executive.
6. **Waiver Request**
Valhalla asked to be exempted from TAAPCS fees for the 2015/16 school year and the 2016/17 school year. Enrolment in the school is down this year, and the travel costs to attend TAAPCS meetings is very high for them because of the distance they must travel. They find the meetings to have much value to them, but they are not able to both attend meetings and pay the fees. Discussion from the group included information that this would not have a major impact on the overall budget. The waiver request for both school years was approved.
7. **Valhalla Invitation Re: May Meeting**
Discussion on attendance at May meeting if it were held in Valhalla. There was consensus that, while it is a long distance to travel, most boards will be in attendance.
8. **Changing Meeting Dates**
There was discussion on having TAAPCS meetings on Friday and Saturday. The January meeting in Red Deer will be on January 20/21, 2017. Attendance at this will be assessed, and a decision will be made as to whether to have more meetings on Friday evening and Saturday rather than on Thursday evening and Friday.

AGM (Oct 7)

1. Election of Officers

Co-Presidents – Dianne McBeth and Yvonne DePeel, Co-Vice Presidents – Dale Erickson and Lynne Paradis,
Secretary – Meredith Poole, Treasurer – Heather Christison
Next regular meeting – January 20/21 in Red Deer

Appendix “C”

Connect Charter School Second Campus Committee Minutes and Report

Attendees:

Mark Blake
Susan Chomistek
Scott Petronech
Tim Edwards
Gavin Peat

Location: Mountain View Room, Connect Charter School

Meeting started: 5:00 p.m. MDT Wednesday October 5, 2016

Proposed Agenda:

- Review latest developments with regards to the a second campus
- Round table discussion of scope of committee
- Discuss possible approaches to second campus and enrollment cap maximization

Discussion:

Susan updated the team with her most recent conversations with Alberta Ed. She had a conversation with Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) Michael Walters and he indicated informally that there is no real appetite to entertain a second campus for Charter Schools at the present time.

The word from CBE is that they do not expect decommissioned schools to become available in the foreseeable future. This is somewhat surprising given that approximately 15 new schools are being commissioned in 2016/17.

We still face the challenge of certain education stakeholders adopting an “anti-charter” disposition. Furthermore, as discussed previously, Connect is “painted” with the same charter stereotypes that may be more characteristic of other charter schools.

For the immediate future the committee recommends we continue the conversation and expression of interest in a new campus with both AB Ed. and CBE to stay top of mind as the situation evolves.

The discussion then turned to fully utilizing our current Charter enrollment cap of 720. Consensus is that our current campus is practically at capacity so a secondary space would be required.

The remaining enrollment cap could allow for the creation of one additional class of each grade. We discussed the idea of creating a secondary space buy repurposing an existing building or finding an “outdoors” space where we could build classrooms and then rotate each class through the secondary space. (i.e one month in - three months back in our current campus) We concluded with the plan to bring some of these concepts to the Board for broader discussion before continuing down any particular path.

Appendix “D”

Connect Charter School Society

Board Meeting
October 18, 2016
Secretary Treasurer’s Report

Draft Financial Statements

The draft financial statements for August 31, 2016, currently show a surplus of \$81,096. This is a positive variance to budget of \$186,000. The main reasons for this positive variance are tight management and control of expenditures and a focus on achieving a balanced budget for the 2015/16 school year.

Audit & Finance committee meeting

The Audit & Finance committee met on October 7, 2016. Items on the agenda included: Review draft August 31, 2016, Quarterly Financial Statements; Review draft August 31, 2016, AFS template and Notes to the Financial Statements; Review of insurance documents for the 2016/17 term; and Review Draft Alberta Education Fall Budget update. There were changes suggested for the Notes to the financial statements as well as the narrative on the Alberta Education Fall Budget update. Thank you to the Audit & Finance committee for their comprehensive review and suggestions.

Year end Audit

Currently Grant Thornton is conducting its audit of our financial records which is scheduled for October 11-14, 2016. They will be meeting with the Audit & Finance committee on October 27, 2016, to give their Independent Auditor Report as well as the complete Audited Financial Statements.

Worker’s Compensation Audit

On September 23, 2016, we had a Worker’s Compensation audit. The calculations for the 2015 calendar year were reviewed as well as the year end submission to ensure that the T4’s matched the WCB calculation spreadsheet. Ms. Krista Brenner did an excellent job reviewing the numbers with the auditor and ensuring that we were in compliance with all the rules and regulations. The letter from WCB is available for review and was circulated to the leadership team.

Secretary Treasurer’s Meeting

The Charter School Secretary treasurers met on October 6, 2016, at Westmount Charter School. Mr. John Liu hosted the meetings and there was a robust agenda including: school updates; Canada Revenue Agency and Worker’s Compensation audits; internal controls; technology including tech plans, purchases and disposals; group benefits and professional development funds. It was very good to connect and network with, the Edmonton and Northern Alberta Secretary treasurers who we do not normally meet with.

Respectfully submitted,
Myra Penberthy

Appendix “E”

Connect Charter School Operations Committee Meeting Minutes - DRAFT

Date: September 27, 2016 **Location:** Principal’s Office **Attendees:** Denise Kitagawa (chair), Susan Gaetz, Susan Chomistek, Cynthia Nilsson, Phil Butterfield **Regrets:** Jeff Turner, Deirdre Bailey

- The meeting commenced at 1:10 pm.
 - Reviewed and approved the agenda.
 - Approved the minutes of the February 29, 2018 School Operations Committee (SOC).
 - Phil reported that the Student Code of Conduct has been updated and re-introduced to Connect Charter School Students. Susan C. reported that a copy has been forwarded to Alberta Education. Note: this was the only comment/request made by Alberta Education upon reviewing the updated policies and procedures we submitted to Alberta Education last March in response to the Minister’s request that all school boards 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.”
 - Phil reported that work is continuing pursuant to the June 2015 Safe Side Consulting report. Documentation of our work on hazard identification and control is substantially complete, including templates related to work done by caretakers and cleaning staff, educational assistants and teachers. The Leadership team is in the process of establishing a Health and Safety Committee and is considering whether it makes sense for up to two Directors to be part of this school committee.
 - Phil confirmed that the building rental agreement signed by community groups using the gym and/or IAC prohibits any access to/use of the bouldering wall. This has been the case since the start of the 2015/16 school year. We discussed the hourly rental rate and support Leadership’s plan to increase the hourly rental rate from \$65 to \$70.
 - Denise expressed appreciation to Scott, Phil and Susan C. for their compassionate and calm response to the outbreak of norovirus on the Grade 8 Rocky Mountain Tour, including the timely, factual communication to parents and Directors.
 - Re-visited the background, rationale and definitions sections of the new Social Media policy. Committee members will continue to refine the draft using Google Docs with the goal of having a complete document for review at our next committee meeting to be held November 7. The goal is to have first reading of this new policy at the November or December Board meeting.
 - Established the following (preliminary) scope of work for the SOC for the 2016/17 school year:
 - o New policies:
 - Social Media
 - Risk Management (procedures)
 - o Updated policies:
 - 7.03 Volunteers, including Volunteer Code of Conduct
 - 6.06 Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs
 - 8.01 Safety Program (consider whether to maintain as a stand alone policy or include in the procedures section of the Risk Management policy)
- Reviewed the changes made to Policies 1.04, 1.05, 1.06, 6.01 and new policy 1.07, all in anticipation of the Education Act coming into effect in September 2016 and will make a recommendation to the Governance Committee regarding rolling back and/or implementing the changes given the continued delay on the part of the government.
- We are more than half way through a review of all instances of the word “ensure” in our policy manual and will report back to the Board not later than the November meeting.
 - The meeting terminated at 3:45 pm.
Minutes prepared by Denise Kitagawa