

**Minutes of  
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting  
May 9, 2017, at Connect Charter School**

**Board members present:** Denise Kitagawa (C), Dave Robinson (VC), Mark Blake, Susan Boughs, Joni Carroll, Susan Gaetz, Jennifer Hittel, Ron Koper, Roman Lohin, Christy Newson, Gavin Peat, Mackenzie Regent, Michelle Rousseau, Hyacinth Schaeffer and Linda Trinh (via Skype).

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

*The presentation on the 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens Leadership Training, by Ms. Cynthia Nillson, grade nine teacher and two of her students, was very well received by the Board.*

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Motion 58.16 by Roman Lohin,  
THAT the May 9, 2017, amended Board agenda be approved.  
Carried

Motion 59.16 by Gavin Peat,  
THAT the April 11, 2017, Board of Directors meeting minutes be approved.  
Carried

Ms. Penberthy and Ms. Regent reviewed the 2017/18 Operating and Capital Budget for Connect Charter School Society. The Board had a lot of very insightful questions, and provided their input on the narrative for the Alberta Education budget submission.

Motion 60.16 by Mackenzie Regent,  
THAT the Board approves the 2017-18 Connect Charter School Society operating and capital budgets.  
Carried

Ms. Gaetz presented the policies which were reviewed by the School Operations Committee and were ready for Board approval.

Motion 61.16 by Susan Gaetz,  
THAT the Board approves amendments to Policies 7.03 Volunteers, approves Policy 2.05 Risk Management (which received first reading in June 2016 as Policy 1.08), and approves first reading of Policy 4.10 Use of Social Media.  
Carried

Facilities Planning & Utilization, Mark Blake

- The committee has concluded that in the current environment, efforts to pursue a second campus will be placed on the “back burner”. The committee will focus on facility requirements for our current campus and assisting with facility related requirements for launching EXPO.
- Administration met with Calgary Board of Education (CBE), regarding the functioning of the boiler. CBE will be replacing a part of the boiler, which will address some of our heating issues. The changes will happen this summer.
- Other efforts are underway: Redoing the gym floor, with 50% fundraised, and 50% operating budget funds. Trying to schedule completion of the asphalt apron on the southwest side of the school.

Motion 62.16 by Joni Carroll,  
THAT the Board accepts with profound regret the resignation of Mr. Scott Petronech as Assistant Principal effective July 31, 2017.  
Carried

Dr. Phil Butterfield presented information on new employee contracts.

Motion 63.16 by Dave Robinson,

THAT the Board approves a temporary teaching contract for Mr. David Cloutier from August 16, 2017, to June 30, 2018.

Carried

Motion 64.16 by Gavin Peat,

THAT the Board approves a contract for Mr. Christopher Hooper as Assistant Principal effective August 1, 2017, until July 31, 2018.

Carried

The Board asked if a Board Information Technology committee is needed.

Health, Safety and Risk Management Report, Dr. Phil Butterfield

- Dr. Butterfield and Ms. Chomistek reported on the progress of Occupational Health and Safety review.
- Dr. Butterfield also reported on a partnership with the Outdoor Council of Canada to develop risk management protocols, that streamline our system of developing off site approval forms, identifying risks, and generating informed consent forms for parents.

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

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

Secretary Treasurer & Audit & Finance Committee Report, Myra Penberthy

- Audit & Finance Committee report and Secretary Treasurer's Report in Appendix "B".

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- Governance Committee Report is in Appendix "C"

Communications, Joni Carroll

- The minutes of the Communications meeting are in Appendix "D"

External Collaboration & Research & Innovation, Dave Robinson

- The minutes of the External Collaboration Committee meeting are in Appendix "E"

Motion 65.16 by Susan Gaetz,

THAT the Board approves the Terms of Reference for the External Collaboration Committee and rescind all previous versions.

Carried

School Council, Jennifer Hittel

- AGM on Tuesday April 18, 2017, new executive starting in June 2017. 2017/2018 School Council Executive: Chair – Ms. Jennifer Hittel, Vice chair - Ms. Lisa Lackmanec, Secretary - Tamra Murray/Erin Derksen, Treasurer - Reem Tanta

School Operations, Susan Gaetz

- School Operations committee meetings were held to work on policies and involved all committee members.

Sustainable Funding, Ron Koper

- There was a meeting on April 27, 2017, between Connect Charter Parent Society, School Council, the Board, and Administration.
- There is an opportunity for the Board to take on fund development, including possibilities and options.

Meeting terminated at 8:30 pm.

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Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

## Appendix “A”

### Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report Board of Directors Meeting – May 9, 2017

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

**Outdoor and Environmental Education and Leadership** are descriptors in our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks. Spring is an incredibly busy time at Connect Charter School as many of our outdoor and environmental education programs take place. All of the grade six students participated in a winter camp at Ribbon Creek in January and February, where they studied the night sky, cross-country skied, built quinzees, and practiced winter survival skills. The grade four students will soon be leaving on Southern Alberta History Tour (SAHT). This year, they will be staying overnight at the Royal Tyrell Museum and at the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre. They will also be making a stop at the Bar U Ranch National Historical Site. This trip provides a wonderful opportunity for students to explore the actual sites where significant events from Alberta’s history have taken place, and to make real-world connections with what they have been studying as part of the grade four Humanities and Science curricula. The grades five and seven students are in the midst of their Fort Steele trips, which have strong historical and environmental contexts. As part of the leadership development at Connect Charter School, sixteen grades eight and nine students will play leadership roles at all of the camps. These leaders are trained and supported through the efforts of Mr. Cadman and Ms. Haigh. They receive training and guidance before going on the camps, and they are supported by teachers and Mr. Rob Pegg while immersed in the activities. We have found this has a powerful impact on both the leaders and the younger students. We are appreciative for Mr. Petronech’s leadership and guidance at Fort Steele. Working collaboratively with the teachers, Mr. Sweet, and Mr. Pegg, he spends countless hours making sure all details are managed. As the administrative representative, he is at Fort Steele for the entire two weeks ensuring that everything runs smoothly for the 200 students who attend.

The inspiration for the grade eight trip comes from the Social Studies Program of Studies in which students are challenged to learn from a variety of historical case studies in which they examine the consequences of differing worldviews. They will also be examining the idea of how different cultures make sense of their world by comparing and contrasting various ways of knowing including indigenous, scientific, geographical, and historical. The ultimate destination is Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park. We will also make a variety of historically and culturally important stops along the way including The Fort Museum at Fort Macleod and Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, as well as a stop at the University of Lethbridge. These stops and activities have been specifically chosen and curated to allow students to “examine issues related to contact between societies with differing worldviews” (ibid.) as it relates directly to history and modern-day Alberta.

All of our grade 9 students will be going to Rivers Edge near Water Valley for a culminating experience to celebrate their six years at Connect Charter School and their time developing skills and attitudes with regards to leadership, environmental awareness and stewardship, and competence in outdoor education skills. They will be participating in archery, on a high ropes course, in orienteering activities, in community building activities, and in field and gym games.

There will be a celebration dance in the evening for the students. The students are excited to be involved in a different initiative that has all of the students together for one of their final activities at our school.

Under the areas of **Communication** and **Leadership** and addressing one of the five key goals within our Board Strategic Plan of **Enhancing Research, Innovation and Collaboration**, we hosted educators from around the world with four different full day sessions. Apple Canada, the Canadian Education Association, the Calgary Regional Consortium (CRC), and a group from Hokkaido University, all came to our school in April!

On April 18, we hosted twenty-four people from nineteen different school districts across Alberta. Apple Canada had organized the day for these educators to showcase innovation in an Apple Distinguished School. Highlights for the attendees included the opportunity to go into the classrooms and talk to teachers and students as well as to look at the configuration of the network. The use of technology in the Phys. Ed. program generated much interest. After the tours, there was much interest on the blog because of the documentation teachers have done in this and other areas. The Canadian Education Association held their Western Canada Regional Exchange meeting at our school on April 26. Educators and representatives of parent groups from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba public schools and universities attended the one day session. Once again, students toured the participants, and there were many great questions posed. The students were excellent ambassadors for our school, and there was much interest generated in the next few weeks! The CRC used our space for a Learning Commons Workshop. Fourteen librarians and learning commons facilitators from Calgary Board of Education, Palliser School District, Calgary Catholic, and some private schools toured the learning commons and held a professional development session. This group is meeting three times this year to talk about how to best transition libraries into learning commons. Suzanne Veteikis will attend the next meeting of the group, hosted at Sir William Aberhart School, in June. The Hokkaido University group, which is affiliated with the University of Calgary, toured our school and worked with our students, teaching them elements of life in Japan. It was another great day filled with much learning!

## 2. Parent Summits

The third of our four Parents Summits for the year took place on April 29 with over eighty people in attendance. The topic was Raising a Resilient and Resourceful Youth, and the focus was on helping parents of youth in grades four through nine understand what social science research has uncovered regarding the key protective factors necessary to develop their positive capacity to cope with stress and adversity. Participants were given information on four key protective factors and four critical moves parents can make to build resiliency and resourcefulness within their youth. There was positive feedback from the parents who attended the session.

This final workshop for Connect parents is designed to develop practical communication skills to help families resolve conflict on their own, peacefully. Conflict style inventory questionnaires will be completed by workshop participants in advance of the session. The Inventory will be used to discuss key conflict traits, goals, irks, etc., and teach parents how to work with their own style in relation to the styles of others. Parents will learn to identify their own needs as a basis for the conflict, as well as how to identify the needs of others. Differences in perspective will be explored, and skills taught to help families come to an understanding of a disputed

matter. Communication skills are taught, from active listening through paraphrasing, questioning, and other techniques, to help parents learn how to communicate effectively in a conflict. Parents will also learn to separate people from the problem, and focus on what is important, in a collaborative effort. The suggestion for this workshop came from the January Parent Summit. We are very grateful to our parents who have organized sessions this year which have been very successful.

### **3. Update on Superintendent Interviews for 2017**

I have completed the interviews for all parents and approximately half of the staff. Dr. Butterfield and I will be setting up student interviews in the next few weeks. I will compile the qualitative information and will present the Executive Summary to the Board. It is always an extremely positive exercise to receive the feedback, and I look forward to completing and sharing the final documents.

### **4. The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS)**

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

June 9 – Executive Advisory Council – Red Deer

## Appendix “B”

### Connect Charter School Society Board Meeting May 9, 2017 Secretary Treasurer’s Report

#### **Budget 2017/18**

We have prepared the Alberta Education budget template for the 2017/18 school year and have presented the draft budget to the Audit & Finance committee on April 27, 2017. The Audit & Finance committee provided some excellent leadership on the budget process and presentation to the Board.

*I have calculated the impact of the carbon levy on our natural gas utility. In addition to the \$4,800 for next year’s natural gas, there will also be, according to Kevin Melendez-Duke at Enmax an additional \$2,300 for electricity, which is imbedded into the electricity charges. This will not show separately but Mr. Melendez-Duke has provided an excellent detailed analysis between next year and this year to show the increased charges.*

#### **Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA) Conference**

I attended the ASBOA conference on April 23-26, 2017, with Ms. Reta Morgan, Secretary Treasurer of Foundation for the Future Charter Academy and Ms. Wendy Juergens, Secretary Treasurer, Calgary Girl’s School. It was very helpful to attend with other Secretary Treasurer’s and share information and ideas.

- *The keynote speaker spoke on “Mental Health and Students” 90% of teachers and 94% of administrators report that mental health issues, (mainly anxiety), are their biggest concern, and yet no universities in North America formally teach or train teachers in social/emotional curriculum.*
- *Legal updates and Audit committees with McLennan & Ross, Ms. Theresa Hakyowsky, Labor and Employment Law. She articulated that the Audit committee adds value, ensures good judgment in financial decision-making process, and provides oversight of financial reporting.*
- *Medical Legal Marijuana and what it means for employers, Mr. Colin R. Fetter, Partner, Practice Area Leader, Employment & Labour Group. Mr. Fetter also discussed a lot of best practices around employment contracts.*
- *Information Governance, with Mr. Rick Stirling, President Western Information Management. He recommended joining ARMA, the records management association. Records make up only 8-12% of the information, the other data, which you don’t need, is 88-92%.*
- *Growing up Digital in Alberta, with Dr. Phil McRae, Executive staff officer with the Alberta Teacher’s Association. He spoke on balance, which is needed in informational technology in the classroom.*
- *Alberta Education panel presentation with Mr. Brad Smith, Executive Director Strategic Financial Services, Mr. Richard Arnold, Director Business Operations and Stakeholder Support Branch and Ms. Wendy Boje, Acting Deputy Minister, Public Sector Working Group, Treasury Board and Finance. Items addressed were Bill 1, operating reserves which are recommended to be 5% of expenses, and the reduction of CEU funding for Grade 12 students.*

The conference offers a draw for \$1,500 to support the attendance at an annual international conference in Denver Colorado or leadership forum in Austin Texas in February. I was the fortunate of recipient of the award this year!

I would like to express my appreciation to the Board in allowing me to attend the conference this year and support the professional development of the Secretary Treasurer position. I will make sure that I share all the valuable information with others over the course of the next few weeks.

Respectfully submitted,  
Myra Penberthy

## Appendix “C”

### Connect Charter School Governance Committee Report for May 9, 2017 Board Meeting

Highlights from the May 9<sup>th</sup> Governance Committee meeting will be presented verbally at the Board meeting.

#### *Environmental Scan*

##### **Bill 1:**

- Despite MLAs David Swann and Greg Clark asking in the legislature for inclusion of public charter schools in Bill 1, it passed 3<sup>rd</sup> reading without an amendment to include public charter schools
- Since our April Board meeting, the Connect Charter School Communications Committee collaborated to prepare background information and craft key discussion points and questions for meetings with Calgary-area MLAs, on the topic of Bill 1
  - Our Superintendent, Board Chair and one Director met with MLA Mike Ellis (Calgary-West, PC), who was very supportive of public charter schools and will continue to advocate on behalf of public charter schools in the legislature
  - Our Superintendent and Board Chair met with MLA Anam Kazim (Calgary-Glenmore, NDP)
    - She strongly reiterated Minister Eggen’s support for public charter schools
    - She shared that the Minister plans to expand the scope of Bill 1 to include public charter schools in the future (this is consistent with the Minister’s letters of response to correspondence from TAAPCS, copy of most recent attached)
    - She elaborated by sharing that public charter schools are not included at this time because of timing (the Minister consulted with the Alberta School Boards Association, which represents districts with 99.9% of public school students; the remaining .1% of public school students are represented by 13 charter school boards)
  - We have a meeting scheduled with MLA Greg Clark (Calgary-Elbow, Alberta Party) in June and are waiting to hear back from MLA Deborah Drever (Calgary-Bow, NDP)

##### **TAAPCS:**

- [Danielle Smith interviewed TAAPCS Co-Vice President and Suzuki Charter School Superintendent Lynne Paradis on 770 AM on April 19.](#) Lynne’s conversation with Danielle runs from 44:41 to 1:02:43
  - The \$13,000/student number referenced in the Fraser Report appears to come from a Statistics Canada 2016 report
  - The Alberta Education 2017 budget shows \$8.8 billion total (including \$1.3 billion for facilities funding) for a projected total enrolment of 684,000 = \$12,866/student (\$10,965 exclusive of facilities funding)
- The TAAPCS ad-hoc communications committee surveyed all public charter school boards to be sure that the draft work plan appropriately and accurately reflects the membership’s views on communications priorities and associated strategies. A copy of Connect Charter School’s responses is attached to this report. The committee will summarize the results for the May 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> TAAPCS meeting in Valhalla.

#### **Alberta Education Monthly Newsletter:**

- In an email to Board chairs, the Minister announced the launch of the online version the department’s monthly newsletter, [In The Loop](https://education.alberta.ca/in-the-loop/) (https://education.alberta.ca/in-the-loop/)
- You may wish to bookmark this page and check back periodically for new articles

#### **In the News:**

- [Albertans tell survey they want more focus on math and literacy in education curriculum](#)
- [No new raises for Alberta teachers, but cap on “assigned time” in tentative deal](#)

## **Appendix “D”**

May 8, 2017

Connect Charter School Board

**Communications Committee**

Notes for Board Meeting -- May 9, 2017

### **Emerging Issues**

- Crisis – Christian Sarile charged: The consensus of our Communications committee is that the Connect leadership team is doing an excellent job supporting our students and staff and communicating with parents and the Board.

### **Advocacy re Charter Schools**

- Worked closely with the Chair, Superintendent and Principal over the past month
- Updated the ‘Elevator Speech’ (to be distributed to Board members)
- Wrote an advocacy Letter to Parents including FAQ has been written (not distributed yet)
- Helped develop a program to contact sitting MLAs
- Thank you to Michelle Rousseau and Jennifer Hittel for participating in weekly meetings over the past month – and to former board member David McKenzie
- Kudos to Denise Kitagawa who has done an enormous amount of work creating ‘talking points’ for the meetings with MLAs
- Board members are encouraged to add names to the circulated spreadsheet and to participate in a meeting with their respective MLAs
- Thank you to Mark Blake who supplied Excel mapping of Connect family postal codes so that we could create riding by riding graphics to support these meetings

### **Other**

- New website – same content but much easier to navigate and graphically cleaner. Kudos to Phil Butterfield, Rob Pegg and team
- TAAPCS Communications Plan Survey response has been shared on dropbox under Governance

### **Pending**

- Communications ‘toolkit’ as a resource for the Board, staff, parents, grant writers, etc. including FAQ, ‘elevator’ speech, etc.

## Appendix “E”

External Collaboration Communication Meeting, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017

Attendees: Erin Piper, Phil Butterfield, Susan Chomistek, Debra Scott-Pylypiw, Lori Wilhelm-Einsporn, Torben Bech-Hansen, Gavin Peat, Dave Robinson (Chair)

Via Skype: Hyacinth Schaeffer

Meeting called to order at 4:10 and agenda accepted

1. ECC activity update
2. Terms of Reference update
3. Doing more with less (manpower)
  1. Current efforts are focused on renewing activity on the Connect Blog which are a respectable 8000 visits per year despite no concerted efforts to generate traffic. This is down from a high that was double that from when we had a dedicated outreach coordinator. In the short term EXPO will dominate the Blog submissions. School visits by outside educators and student teacher practicums have continued much as before.
  2. Updated Terms of Reference attached
  3. Where we focus efforts conversation was blended into the Terms of Reference discussion. In short, the strategies outlined in the Terms Of Reference will be leading our goals to document EXPO success and activity at as many levels of Connect as possible (teachers, administration, parents and even the Board)

No date set for next meeting