

**Minutes of
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting
April 11, 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, Michelle Rousseau, Hyacinth Schaeffer and Linda Trinh (via Skype).

Board members absent: Mackenzie Regent

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

The new EXPO program was showcased by Ms. Brittney Glinsbockel, and two grade 4 students who shared their experiences during EXPO week. The Board was very appreciative of their speeches and their response to questions. Mr. Scott Petronech had a picture and video presentation of some of the highlights that the students experienced during the week.

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Motion 51.16 by Roman Lohin,
THAT the April 11, 2017, Board agenda be approved.
Carried

Motion 52.16 by Michelle Rousseau,
THAT the March 14, 2017, Board of Directors meeting minutes be approved.
Carried

Ms. Gaetz presented the policies which were reviewed by the School Operations Committee and are ready for Board approval. Mr. Robinson brought an amendment forward to Policy 8.01 for an addition in the principles of regular updates to the Board on Health & Safety issues. This reflects the current practice. Policy 7.03 will be reviewed by the committee and brought back to the Board for approval.

Motion 53.16 by Susan Gaetz,
THAT the Board approves amendments to Policies 1.03 Policy Development, Policy 4.01 Employee Relations, Policy 6.06 Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs, and as amended, Policy 8.01 Occupational Health Safety Program Policy.
Carried

Ms. Carroll presented the Terms of Reference for the Communications Committee.

Motion 54.16 by Joni Carroll,
THAT the Board approves the Terms of Reference for the Communications Committee as amended, and rescinds all previous versions.
Carried

Motion 55.16 by Dave Robinson,
THAT an independent contractor agreement be approved for Web Apps: Robert Pegg Inc., beginning on April 17, 2017, and terminating on May 17, 2017
Carried

Motion 56.16 by Dave Robinson,
THAT an independent contractor agreement be approved for Mr. Ron Sweet, beginning on April 17, 2017, until May 17, 2017, and subsequently from Aug 16, 2017, until October 31, 2017
Carried

Mr. Scott Petronech has accepted a position with the Horizon School District in Taber, Alberta, as Principal of a school there. Ms. Susan Chomistek, on behalf of the Board, congratulated Scott on his new position thanked him for all he has accomplished during his time at the school, and wished him success in his new position.

Mr. Petronech presented the iTel contract for internet services to the Board. The service provider has been very competent in the past and we are securing a five year contract with increased band width.

Motion 57.16 by Hyacinth Schaeffer,
THAT the Board approves the five-year contract with iTel Networks for internet services
Carried

Health & Safety Report, Dr. Phil Butterfield

- Dr. Butterfield updated the Board on the offsite procedures for trips, which are addressed in Policy 6.10, Educational Field Trips and Outdoor Education Excursions. Dr. Butterfield explained the training required of teachers, volunteers, and school administrators. In addition to this, he explained how volunteers are selected to support students on the trips in the most effective way, and he also explained the emergency location and communication devices which are used on the different trips.

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

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

Secretary Treasurer & Audit & Finance Committee Report, Myra Penberthy

- Secretary Treasurer's Report in Appendix "B".

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- Governance Committee Report is in Appendix "C"
- There was a meeting April 11, 2017, and minutes will be provided at the next Board meeting.
- The committee would like to contemplate a government advocacy role and sharing relevant information with our MLA's.
- Mr. Ron Koper has been doing a great deal of work on the ad hoc Communications committee with TAAPCS, and his contributions are greatly appreciated.

School Operations, Susan Gaetz

- There was a meeting on March 16, 2017, to work on the Risk Management Policy and there is a meeting on April 18th to review the Social Media policy.

Facilities Planning & Utilization, Mark Blake

- No meeting.

Communications, Joni Carroll

- The next meeting is on April 13, 2017

External Collaboration & Research & Innovation, Dave Robinson

- Next meeting will be within the next two weeks

School Council, Jennifer Hittel

- AGM on Tuesday April 18, 2017

Sustainable Funding, Ron Koper

- An initial meeting was held on Thursday April 6, 2017, with Dr. Butterfield, Ms. Regent, and Mr. Koper to review the current practice and connections between various fundraising groups in the school community.
- A meeting has been proposed between the Parent Fundraising Committee, Connect Charter Parent Society and the Board sustainable funding group and other interested parties.

Meeting terminated at 7:47 pm.

Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

Appendix “A”

Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report Board of Directors Meeting – April 11, 2017

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

The EXPO activities, which occurred during the week of March 20 to March 23, covered many of the descriptors within our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks – **Inquiry Based Practice, Meaningful Curriculum Implementation, Environmental and Outdoor Education, Collaboration, and Leadership**. The grade four students welcomed Randy Bottle into their classroom, an elder who spoke to students about the role of elders in indigenous communities. They also had an expert in water management speak about World Water Day. In the grade five classrooms, EXPO week took them out of the building to Telus Spark where they explored how electricity is used. They also went to North Glenmore Park and furthered their work on figurative language in relation to place. The grade six students had a former alumnus speak to them about gliders and aerodynamics. This was followed by a West Jet pilot who deepened their understanding of their Air and Aerodynamics unit. They ended the week by Skyping with a NASA aerospace engineer. In the Humanities area, Tara Nelson from CTV News came in to talk about her role in the media and linked this to the work that the students had been doing in looking at news articles for “real” and “fake” news. In the grade seven classrooms, the students went to the Cross Conservation Centre to look at wildlife corridors and to explore environmental impacts. The students installed cameras to track wildlife movement. They will be reviewing these in approximately six to eight weeks time. In grade eight, the students connected with the grade four students at the Weaselhead, to give a sense of place, and listened to the stories that the grade four students had created. They offered feedback and suggestions to the students. The students also hosted a doctoral student from the University of Calgary who spoke on the topic of genetic manipulation. Linking this information to the novel the students are reading and their upcoming debate on the topic, this was an excellent example of the interdisciplinary work the students are immersed in. The grade nine students travelled to the Weaselhead for an exploration of biodiversity. They related the classification of species to other work that they were doing within language arts and science. The Liberal MP candidate for the upcoming by-election presented to the class on what brought him into politics. They took a trip to the IGA to explore the issue of consumerism, which is linked to their Social Studies curriculum. For Physical Education, the students were exposed to different Inuit games. For PVA, a number of guest speakers and presenters were in the classes throughout the week – Leaving Thomas, a performance duo, Scott Henderson, and Arts Trek. The last day of school was devoted to First Nations Metis and Inuit experiences through a series of activities and presenters. Sessions on beading, storytelling, traditional dance, Metis finger weaving, and history of place formed a part of the day. A group of students also led a session making Dream Catchers. A culminating highlight of the week was our first annual Connect Pow Wow. Dancers from Tsuu T’ina and Wandering Spirit Dance Company performed for the students accompanied by the Rumbling Hills drumming group. The whole school was able to participate in this experience which provided a meaningful way to celebrate the end of our first EXPO week.

Another descriptor in the Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks is **Communication**. On March 15, Andrew Bolen took the grades six and seven band students to the Alberta International Band Festival held at Bishop Carroll High School. The students both performed and observed other schools from around Southern Alberta performing. The adjudicators had many constructive suggestions to communicate to our students to enhance their playing abilities. In April, the grades eight and nine students will compete at the Calgary Performing Arts Festival held at Mount Royal University. These are very valuable learning experiences for our musicians.

Parents as Partners, Relationships, Communication, and Authentic Assessment are descriptors in the Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks. This year, we

made modifications to our Student Led Conferences based on feedback during the Superintendent Surveys last year. Student focus groups and discussions with teachers at the beginning of the school year helped inform our changes. Our second round of Student Led Conferences was held on March 16 and 17. Feedback thus far has been extremely positive. Parents feel that the changes that have been made have led to a more meaningful experience for both them and for the children.

2. Parent Information Session for EXPO 2017/18 school year

As part of the ongoing consultation with parents regarding the EXPO program, a parent information session was held on March 22, 2017. The Parent Advisory Committee helped plan and organize the evening, and they had supporting material and information posters for the parents. Approximately 80 parents signed up for this, and the discussion was very positive and insightful and helped answer any outstanding questions that parents had about the program. There were many positive comments and offers to help EXPO.

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

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

April 7 and June 9 – Executive Advisory Council – Red Deer

Appendix “B”

Connect Charter School Society Board Meeting April 11, 2017 Secretary Treasurer’s Report

Budget 2017/18

We are starting to prepare the budget template for the 2017/18 school year and we will be presenting the draft budget to the Audit & Finance committee on April 27, 2017. At this time the committee will review the budget line by line and also in a summary version. The leadership committee has already worked on the budget in terms of staffing needs, the new EXPO program budget, as well as the overall facilities and instructional budgets.

I have calculated the impact of the carbon levy on our natural gas utility. According to the Alberta Government, the carbon levy will only be charged on fossil fuels, not on electricity. The impact is \$1.011 per gigajoule, which is a 38% increase, in our average yearly cost, per gigajoule. This will total an extra \$4,800 for next year’s natural gas.

Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA) Conference

I will be attending the ASBOA conference from April 23-26, 2017. Participants attend this conference from all over Alberta, as well as representatives from other parts of Canada and the United States. This year’s conference theme is “ASBOA - A Balanced Approach”. The conference includes a lot of great speakers as well as Alberta Education updates and the AGM for our membership.

Monthly Reporting communication from Alberta Education

*To: Secretary-Treasurers & Treasurers of Public, Separate, Francophone, and Charter School Jurisdictions
March 23, 2017*

Commencing April, 2017 each and every secretary-treasurer will be required to submit the summary of revenues; expenses by program; and expenses by object on a monthly, rather than a quarterly, basis. Submission of this financial information for April, 2017 will be due by the 15th of May, 2017.

With the increased frequency in the collection and consolidation of these figures, we have updated our process as well. We have completed testing of the new School Jurisdiction Financial Reporting (SJFR) System, as well as a Pilot with seven school jurisdictions simulating actual submissions, and are pleased to announce the system is ready to be used for April 2017.

The feedback received from the Pilot users was very positive in that the application was found to be very easy and intuitive to use. There were a couple items noted from the Pilot that resulted in changes to the system such as allowing for compatibility with older versions of Internet Explorer and ensuring data entered is saved as soon as you leave a field to ensure no information entered is lost if your browser times out.

You will receive a notification with information on how to access and use the system when it is live in production and ready for use (expected in early to middle of April).

Please do not hesitate to contact Mei-Ling Irwin, Robert Mah, or me should you have any questions related to this new requirement.

*Thank you,
Matt Grossman, CPA, CA
Manager, Financial Advisory Services*

Respectfully submitted,
Myra Penberthy

Appendix “C”

Connect Charter School Governance Committee Report for April 11, 2017 Board Meeting

Minutes from April 11, committee meeting will be included with the May Board meeting materials.

Environmental Scan

Provincial Budget Highlights:

- Enrolment increases fully funded (based on September 2017 enrolment)
- 2017/18 provincial budget for education is up \$258 million for operations and \$500 million for capital projects
- Operating increase includes \$54 million for Bill 1 to reduce school and bus fees paid by parents
 - Benefits 59/61 mainstream public school boards
 - Does not (yet?) apply to charter school boards
 - CBE anticipates students transferring back to designated schools from alternative programs
- Operating increase includes \$10 million for expansion of school nutrition pilot, such that by the end of next year there will be a pilot program in all 61 mainstream public school boards
 - Another instance of inequitable funding to charter schools
- As per the Alberta Education business plan, school divisions with operating reserves of >5% will be “monitored”
- In terms of the carbon tax, there is no specific funding
 - The Minister said he’s looking for creative education opportunities and energy efficiency improvements (through the provincial energy efficiency program)
- In terms of ATA negotiations, any increases in teachers’ salaries will be covered by the Alberta government.

TAAPCS:

- TAAPCS wrote to Minister Eggen and Premier Notley (cc: other party leaders) re: inclusion of charter schools in the planned scope of implementation of **Bill 1** for September 2017
 - The point was raised by Dr. David Swann in the provincial legislature
 - Minister Eggen’s response in the legislature was consistent with his written response to TAAPCS (copy attached)
- Ad-hoc communication committee has met twice. Focus seems to be narrowing in on “Charter Schools 101” and recommending a work plan/scope of work for the standing Communications Committee expected to be established in the fall of 2017.

School Governance Study:

- Connect Charter School has been selected as one of 4 school jurisdictions for a research study being done by Dr. Jim Brandon, Associate Professor, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary

Feedback from Alberta Education re: Three Year Education Plan and AERR:

- Overall positive feedback on our submission, which met all required elements
- Specific mention of our students’ _performance on the June 2016 PATs, the most recent Accountability Pillar results, our continued focus on the appropriate balance between deep inquiry and the need for basic skill development, the Connect Charter School collaboration rubric, our Connect! Blog, and partnerships with post-secondary institutions including MRU and Galileo Educational Network
- A copy of the letter is on file with the Secretary-Treasurer