

**Minutes of
Connect Charter School Society, Board of Directors Meeting
June 13, 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.

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

The students of the Agents of Change elective, who travelled to Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Human Rights Museum, gave a presentation on their trip and on the projects they worked on in their elective over the past two terms. Malayka T. spoke about Human Rights, CJ S. and Rona K. spoke about Arts & Educational Equality, and Kayla N. and Claire M., spoke on Environmental Food Security. The Board enjoyed the students' dynamic and engaging presentation

Mr. Ron Koper and Ms. Mackenzie Regent guided a fund development discussion for the Board to consider key points over the summer, and be prepared for another discussion at the September 2017 Board meeting. It is important to develop a robust program for experiential place based education (EXPO), which benefits not only the Connect Charter School Society students but students from other public schools as well, and this will require additional funding sources. One of the questions posed was, "How do we position our Board for success in September?"

Board Chair Ms. Denise Kitagawa declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 6:26 p.m.

Motion 66.16 by Susan Boughs,
THAT the June 13, 2017, Board agenda be approved.
Carried

Motion 67.16 by Susan Gaetz,
THAT the May 9, 2017, Board of Directors meeting minutes be approved.
Carried

Ms. Penberthy and Ms. Regent reviewed the Connect Charter School Society School and Transportation Fees and Costs Schedule for the year ended August 31, 2018.

Motion 68.16 by Jennifer Hittel,
THAT the Board approves the Connect Charter School Society, School and Transportation Fees and Costs Schedule for the year ended August 31, 2018.
Carried

Ms. Penberthy reviewed the Connect Charter School Society Quarterly Financial Statements for the period ending May 31, 2017, along with the minutes from the Audit & Finance Committee's June 9, 2017, meeting, where the financial statements were reviewed.

Motion 69.16 by Gavin Peat,
THAT the Board approves the Connect Charter School Society Quarterly Financial Statements for the period ending May 31, 2017
Carried

Dr. Phil Butterfield and Ms. Susan Chomistek reviewed the resignations and employee contracts which were up for approval.

Motion 70.16 by Dave Robinson,
THAT the Board accepts with regret:

1. The resignation of Ms. Tarysha Mayerle, as teacher, on a full time continuing teaching contract, effective July 31, 2017
2. The resignation of Ms. Shannon Mitchell-Flek, as school counsellor, on a part time continuing teaching contract, effective July 31, 2017

Carried

Motion 71.16 by Dave Robinson,

THAT the Board approves an extended parental leave, for Ms. Deidre Bailey, effective October 16, 2017, until June 30, 2018.

Motion 72.16 by Susan Boughs,

THAT the following contracts be approved:

1. A full time continuing Principal contract for Dr. Philip Butterfield effective August 1, 2017;
2. A full time continuing Assistant Principal contract for Ms. Satwant Shergill effective August 1, 2017;
3. A full time probationary Teaching contract for Ms. Heidi Swinamer effective August 16, 2017, to June 30, 2018;
4. A full time probationary Teaching contract for Ms. Katlin Haigh effective August 16, 2017, to June 30, 2018;
5. A full time temporary Teaching contract for Ms. Caitlin Price, effective August 16, 2017 to June 30, 2018, or sooner should the employee on leave, return to active employment; and
6. A full time continuing caretaker contract, for Amanpreet Sandhu, commencing on August 1, 2017.

Carried

Motion 73.16 by Mark Blake,

THAT the following are appointed as representatives to The Alberta Association of Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS) Board of Governors, until the next Annual General Meeting of Connect Charter School Society:
Mr. Ron Koper, designate
Ms. Denise Kitagawa, alternate

Carried

Motion 74.16 by Ron Koper,

THAT the Board approve the Terms of Reference for the Governance Committee and rescind all previous versions.

Carried

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

- No report

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

- Ms. Susan Chomistek submitted the Leadership Team Report in Appendix "A".
- Ms. Susan Chomistek submitted her annual Parents, Students and Staff Interview Report. The Executive Summary is Appendix "B"

Governance, Denise Kitagawa

- Governance Committee Report is in Appendix "C"

External Collaboration & Research & Innovation, Dave Robinson

- No report

Facilities Planning & Utilization, Mark Blake

- No report

School Operations, Susan Gaetz

- No report

School Council, Jennifer Hittel

- There will be an EXPO celebration for Students, Parents and Board members on June 15, 2017

Communications, Joni Carroll

Advocacy re Charter Schools

- Committee has worked closely with the Chair, Superintendent and Principal over the past month
- Advocacy Letter to Parents including FAQ has been written (not distributed yet)
- Advocacy Letter to Minister of Education from Board Chair
- Ongoing meetings with sitting MLAs
- Board members are encouraged to add names to the circulated spreadsheet and to participate in a meeting with their respective MLAs o FAQs re Connect Charter School
- Elevator Speech

Communications Folder in Drop Box:

Pending

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

Secretary Treasurer & Audit & Finance Committee Report, Myra Penberthy

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

Ms. Janice Boiko, Principal, Lloyd Sadd Insurance Brokers, presented Connect Charter School's insurance policy, and reviewed in detail the Directors and Officers Liability portion. The Board was very impressed with Ms. Boiko's presentation, and they were very appreciative of her answers to their many questions.

The meeting terminated at 8:46 pm.

Denise Kitagawa, Board Chair

Appendix “A”

Connect Charter School Superintendent/Leadership Team Report

Board of Directors Meeting – June 13, 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. This is the third year for our backpacking electives courses. Outdoor Education electives provide a natural extension to core outdoor education trips. We are very pleased with the increased student and teacher participation, especially among first time participants. The grades 4/5 Outdoor Education electives have been consistently oversubscribed all year with 77 students in all three terms. The focus at grade 4/5 is to build skills with regard to comfort in the outdoor environment, to build capacity in the students to be ready to learn outside through effective self-care, and to build upon their sense of wonder and appreciation for the outdoor world. The Term 3 edition of the grades 4/5 ODE elective also had two grade nine students join the elective for its entirety. This leadership opportunity was initially suggested by Saige Stretch, one of our grade nine students currently working with the 4/5 elective. Saige was also an excellent Fort Steele leader this year. For the grades six through nine electives, over 150 students have participated in a wide variety of Outdoor Education courses. These courses range from outdoor survival, cycling, fall and spring backpacking, and winter cross country skiing and climbing, a multi-sport elective. With the acquisition of new bikes, Term 3 has seen two cycling electives run simultaneously, one in grades 6/7 and one in grades 8/9. A huge thank you to Eric Crammer who does weekly maintenance on our bikes to keep the fleet running with minimal interruption to instructional time and also ensuring student safety. This spring, Jacob Campbell, a Mount Royal student enrolled in the Bachelor of Health and Physical Education, Ecotourism and Outdoor Leadership program, is completing a 250 hour practicum at our school. During the time he was at our school, he has worked with the Outdoor Education Portfolio Leader and EXPO Program Coordinator to find appropriate venues for both programs in the 2017-18 school year, he has attended and supported one of the grade four Southern Alberta history trips and one of the grade eight Southern Alberta worldview trips. Additionally, he planned a day trip for the grades 4/5 Outdoor Education elective, assisted and mentored grade nine leadership students in the grades 4/5 Outdoor Ed. elective, performed outdoor gear inventory, maintenance and repair, assisted the ODE Portfolio Leader with the Outdoor Active Schools initiative, and updated the Connect Outdoor Education website. We are pleased that Jacob applied to complete this practicum at our school and have been very grateful for his expertise and enthusiasm. Providing support for university students is part of our mandate under the descriptors in our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks for **Collaboration, Outdoor and Environmental Education and Leadership**.

As our spring trips are finishing, final details for the fall trips are also being made. The grade four students will be going to YMCA Camp Riveredge, now under the management of YMCA Camp Chief Hector. We are in the process of developing a MOU for future use in the EXPO program. This site is hidden within Calgary’s river valley. The emphasis for the grade four program will be an introduction to outdoor education focusing on outdoor learning, community building, developing self-care in the outdoors, and building the culture of mutual respect. The site has tee pees, places for a large campfire, a low ropes course, and potential access to the river. The grade five students will be going to Waterton Lakes National Park. John Cadman successfully secured spots for two classes to attend camps run

by Parks Canada staff focusing on ecosystems. We booked lodgings at Camp Columbus, which is the same camp used by Park Canada, and will be providing the remaining two classes of grades five students with the same ecosystems program, run by Connect staff and hired guides and experts. Of note, the two camps provided by Parks Canada are FREE! In addition to the new activities planned by the Parks Canada staff, the students will participate in traditional outdoor and environmental activities, such as the night walk, the animal game, hiking, and campfire songs. Grades six and seven students will be going to Camp Sweet once again, the grade eight students will be exploring fresh and salt water systems in different ecosystems, and the grade nine students will be travelled to Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

Leadership, Meaningful Curriculum Implementation, and Student Engagement are three of the descriptors in our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks. We are very pleased with the positive response to our Agents of Change elective. Students in this elective participated in their trip to Winnipeg in May. The trip was extremely successful. Students engaged in the programming and exhibits at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. They shared their insights and knowledge through ongoing debriefing sessions and reflective journaling throughout the trip. As this was the second year of this elective class, students provided teachers with feedback on the trip and the elective. Overwhelmingly, the feedback was positive. Some insights that students shared were that they appreciated being part of an elective over two terms where they were immersed in and focused on a particular topic. This allowed them to make deeper, more meaningful connections in their learning. The highlight of the trip was the two days of programming at the Museum of Human Rights. Students recognized through critical analysis the patterns of behaviour and decision-making that in the past led to these atrocities, patterns that are being repeated even now in our world. The students appreciated the guided tour at the Manitoba Legislature and being able to sit in the public gallery during question period. This group had an impromptu visit to the main offices of Canada History. Further connections are being made to see how we can formalize our involvement as part of the programming for this trip. This trip was an uplifting experience because the students felt that as individuals they could actually make a difference.

Another program that has been very positive for our students under the **Leadership, and Student Engagement** descriptors is our Peer Mentoring program. Due to the collaborative nature of our classrooms, we already adopt a number of peer assisted learning strategies at Connect. Peer mentoring is a more formal procedure for students receiving support and mentorship outside of the classroom setting. It is an instructional method that uses pairings of mostly stronger students to tutor students who require support, under teacher supervision. The Peer Mentoring program has been running for four years. The goals of the program are relationship building, mentorship and support, and school connectedness. We currently have one hundred twenty mentors from grades seven through nine working with and providing support to over one hundred and twenty students in the school across grades four through nine. Ms. Leane Riley, one of our educational assistants, does an amazing job as the role coordinator and supervisor of the program at the school. The program is administered and overseen by Shashi Shergill. The growth of this program over the last four years has been phenomenal and we have increasing numbers of students who wish to be mentors. Many of our new mentors have been mentored in the past, and they volunteer so they can give back because of their gratitude for the difference the program made in their lives.

Parents as Partners is one of the descriptors in our Exemplary Learning, Teaching, and Leadership Frameworks. We are incredibly fortunate to have so many talented parents who give of their time and expertise so freely to help our students. During winter camps, over twenty parents volunteered, for Fort Steele, fifty parents volunteered, seventeen parents went with students for the Worldview trips and another seventeen for the Southern Alberta

History tour, and six parents are presently at the grade nine final trip. These numbers do not include all of the parents who have been assisting the physical education teams with biking and long boarding excursions, as well as other special activities within the classrooms and the PVA experiences. Two other parents who have helped a great deal this winter and fall through their business, Mel's Lawncare Ltd., are Nick Melathopolous and Brent Mitchell. During the winter, they volunteer by clearing the parking lot and putting gravel down. They are always at the Camp Sweet work bees, and they bring a crew of people to cut and trim the grass and split wood. They pick up tractor from the school and take it and their crew to Camp Sweet. In the spring and summer, they trim around fences inside and out and in the parking lot and cut some of the grass. We are so very grateful for our parent volunteers!

2. Bouldering Wall Update

The bouldering wall was a huge hit again this year. The wall was used in two Physical Education units, the first in November and again in March. The November unit was an introduction to bouldering and bouldering games and the March unit focused on advanced movement skills and technique. The wall was also used for a weekly morning Bouldering Club, run by Mr. Neil, Ms. Haigh and Mr. Cadman. Over the course of the year, several new volumes have been added to the wall. Volumes are an excellent solution for giving depth to flat walls or extra technical features to angled walls. Over the winter, MANY new and entertaining climbing holds were ordered, thanks to money from the fundraising committee. Members of the MRU climbing wall group have volunteered their time on several occasions to do route setting for Connect. As a result, our bouldering wall now has routes built using the V-scale from VO (beginner) to V4 (intermediate). The scale goes to V14. We are hoping to have a bouldering competition in the coming school year. This year, a four-day climbing unit was planned with all 600 of our students using the new and improved climbing wall. Work was also done to clean up the protruding insulation and unfinished edges of the bouldering wall, left behind from its construction. Looking ahead to the 2017-18 school year, we will continue to use the wall in bouldering specific PE units and are planning on incorporating the use of the wall in other PE units such as Mission Impossible, an Obstacle Course Racing (OCR) unit, and potentially the Fire Fighter Games unit. The student feedback has been very positive and we are grateful to the Board for supporting this endeavour, to Mr. Neil for training the entire school, to Mr. Cadman for continuing to change the courses with additional holds and overhangs, to the teachers for supporting the use of the wall, and to the students for their unbridled enthusiasm.

3. Registration

Registration has gone well again this spring. Our orientation sessions for grade four parents and students were very positive, and spots for the grade four classes were filled quickly. We are planning for 620 students for the 2017/18 school year.

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

October 27/28, 2017 Regular Meeting (Edmonton)

Appendix “B”

Connect Charter School Parent, Student and Staff Interviews - Executive Summary Susan Chomistek – June 12, 2017

The eighth annual superintendent interviews of parents, students, and staff members were conducted over several weeks in the spring of 2017 as a component of the ongoing school evaluation process. 40 parents were interviewed between March and May, 2017. In May and June, grades 4 to 9 students as class groups (24 classes - approximately 612 students) were interviewed. I was pleased that Dr. Phil Butterfield was able to join me for all of these sessions. As well, meetings were held with 42 teachers and support staff. The feedback generated through the two questions, "*What causes you to believe that Connect Charter School is a very good school?*" and "*What suggestions for improvement would you like to offer?*" has been organized as commendations or recommendations for further consideration, on the basis of common themes, which were identified through a thematic analysis process. The frequency of common themes is indicated in parentheses and denotes the percentage of respondents who mentioned the theme during the interviews.

Parent Interview Responses - Key Themes

The following major areas of commendation (with a response rate of 18% or more) were identified through the parent interviews:

1. The teachers and support staff are very dedicated and the quality of the teaching is excellent (92.5%) -

Representative comments include:

- Engaged and committed staff who have new approaches to curriculum. They use innovative ways to deliver curriculum which is connected to real life. They are engaged with students and they care about the curriculum. Students understand as they do not make the subject matter too pedantic and they care on a personal level.
- Observing teachers and staff interacting with students and, with very few exceptions, it is very respectful and each of those teachers or staff have found a way to like or enjoy each of those kids and is truly invested in them as learners. That impresses me. I am deeply in awe of Connect teachers and staff to be really engaged with each kid in a meaningful way. That is completely foundational and if you didn't have that, it wouldn't matter what outdoor trips or other trips you had or what place based learning experiences existed.
- Teachers are engaged with students and their learning. Their style of teaching and learning gives students empowerment. Students are heard and teachers allow them to dive into the learning and what they are interested in.

2. Connect Charter School is a great school (63%) – Representative comments include:

- There has been a great culture created at the school where everyone works toward the vision of developing extraordinary citizens. This drives the success of the school. Developing positive relationships are obviously valued – student to student, teacher to student, teacher to parents. The culture of mutual respect is seen in all of the programming –peer mentoring, Family Groups, service learning and social justice. Everyone is working towards the vision.
- Never heard other kids talk with such passion as the kids at Connect do. Students are so loyal and rarely do you hear the kids say anything negative about the school. They articulate it well. They care. The fact that they care is important. The academic side is very strong.
- Connect School takes its practice seriously. When I first went to the school, there was such a respect for the students. We spoke to the custodian; he likes the kids. We knew the custodian was part of a family. We spoke to a bus driver; he was happy to get the route. There is a feeling that everyone belongs and has a part to play and they are listened to.

3. The outdoor and environmental education program is excellent (58%) – Representative comments include:

- School has a strong focus on outdoor education and stewardship towards the environment.
- Our kids have really loved the trips and have commented on what they have learned.

- Overnight trips are great. We appreciated how the grade four students were paired with the grade eight students at Kamp Kiwanis. There was so much growth for our child.
4. **Connect Charter School provides a well-rounded program through the core courses, the performing and visual arts, physical education, the electives and the leadership programs (55%)** – Representative comments include:
- Appreciate the diversity in programming; there is such a good balance. Our daughter is very artistic, and that program is great. Outdoor ed. is an amazing component that helps them as human beings. Sports for life are a focus – another great program
 - Range of opportunities in Phys. Ed, PVA, and electives – backpacking, Amazing Race, biking. There is a good variety.
 - PVA provides a great outlet for kids who are not as academic and we like how the arts are incorporated into math and science.
5. **The use of technology in the school significantly enriches learning and teaching (38%)** – Representative comments include:
- Access to technology to enhance my kids' learning.
 - Appreciate the technology because it is supported here and teachers know how to use it effectively.
 - Use of technology as a tool. Our kids were taught how to use technology effectively, knowing it is not the only tool. They also write and draw. There is a much better balance than six years ago.
6. **The emphasis on learning and teaching through a disposition of inquiry is highly valued (35%)** – Representative comments include:
- What drew us to the school and continues to resonate with us is the experiential focus- the hands-on learning, the inquiry-based approach, and the extension to the learning.
 - Teachers really buy into the inquiry based model and are empowered to teach well.
 - Inquiry based and hands on learning is great for our children. They are stimulated and challenged.
7. **The administration provides strong leadership for the school (33%)** – Representative comments include:
- Appreciated how our admin are innovative and yet they still listen to parents.
 - Administration are very engaged with the students and listen to them.
 - I have great trust in the admin as they are strong and know what they are doing
8. **EXPO is a valuable expansion of our programs (33%)** – Representative comments include:
- Excited about the potential of EXPO and how this programming can support even deeper learning in the students.
 - When EXPO was introduced, it was surprising. Appreciated how parents were listened to, the approach was modified, and our voices were heard in the planning process. We are really happy with it now. We are a small school, so these things can happen. I love the innovative part of this.
 - Layer rich use of technology with amazing outdoor education experiences and, coming in the fall, EXPO takes everything over the top.
9. **The emphasis on developing students as ethical, respectful, and responsible individuals is highly valued (20%)** – Representative comments include:
- Leadership programs the grades 8 and 9 students do. They help in mentoring students and leading groups. This is powerful for the younger students and for the leaders. Peer mentoring is another area which benefits both the student and the mentor. There is an increased confidence and it gave our son a sense of giving back and it solidified his understanding of some of the things that he was teaching.
 - Students have a strong work ethic and learn presentation skills and are taught responsibility for their learning.

- Our child has been taught how to take risks and be responsible for his learning through a growth mindset.

10. Parent support is very valuable (18%) – Representative comments include:

- Parent community is great. They have a good understanding of what the school is trying to do and they are there to give support (instruments, bouldering wall, audio system)
- Volunteer part is really important. Hard to get the volunteer opportunity. You have to fight to get the spots. This is very unique. As a volunteer, the trips are so fun. Because of the volunteering, I got to know more of the parents and the kids. It makes a stronger connection and it helps the whole school.
- Relationships with the parents is very positive. There is an openness and a transparency

The following suggestions for further consideration (with a response rate of 13% or more) were identified through the parent interviews:

1. Different approaches to assessment and reporting should be considered (18%) – Representative comments include:

- Similar assessment/grading between grades.
- Prefer percentages in the older grades. There is too great a range in a 3.
- Assessment practices need to be addressed. Having a 3 is too wide a range. It is difficult to see if there is improvement.

2. Enhance communication processes (13%) – Representative comments include:

- I wish that the school would use a uniform mode of communication. Edmodo, Fresh Grade, Power School, Google docs...this gets confusing and time consuming to have all these platforms. Just from the parents' perspective a more uniform approach would be nice.
- We need a cleaner method of communicating. I don't want different platforms and different ways of communicating and from multiple sources.
- We need a generic learning management system. The communication piece is so important.

3. Continued or improved strong academic standards (13%) - Representative comments include:

- Introduced to homework and assignments earlier. They cannot avoid this when they are in higher grades. They can then get into the habit of studying earlier. They can see this is part of their learning curve. Give the students tips on studying, how to achieve goals, how to memorize.
- Need more foundational knowledge.
- Need more rigour. This is the real world. They also need to do final exams.

Student Interview Responses - Key Themes

Connect Charter School students from grades 4 to 9 were interviewed as class groups. The students were asked two basic questions: What causes you to believe that the Connect Charter School is a very good school? What suggestions for improvement would you offer? It is interesting to note that, without exception, in every class the students identified learning through the disposition of inquiry and meaningful, real-life learning opportunities; outdoor and environmental education and school field trips; the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching; dedicated teachers and staff members; the environment both within and outside the school; and the well-rounded program through the core courses, the performing and visual arts, physical education, and the electives as special features of their learning experience. These themes were, in their view, what make Connect Charter School a great school. When interpreting the student data, it is important to consider that the students were interviewed as a class group, and if one child commented on an area, it is recorded as a class response and not an individual response. The following areas of commendation with a response rate of 100% or more were included:

1. Learning through Inquiry and meaningful, real-life learning opportunities (100%) – Representative comments include:

- Inquiry encourages us to think deeper in our work and not just skim the surface.
 - Exploring topics in depth helps us with the understanding and inquiry based learning helps us to learn on our own.
 - Education here is different – we don't use text books, it is very creative and very in depth. We explore different ways to approach or to solve problems.
2. **Outdoor and environmental education/school field trips (100%)** - Representative comments include:
- Overnight trips where we experience new things and learn about nature and the wild or about the wetlands. We don't just learn information from a book, we experience it.
 - Experiential learning and going on field trips and doing things there as the lab and not from a text book.
 - Trips – Camp Sweet, winter camp, Fort Steele, SAHT, outdoor ed. electives. We get to go outside to the Weaselhead to learn about our environment.
3. **Using technology to enhance learning experiences (100%)** - Representative comments include:
- Technology in science such as the GIS which is an interesting tool that provides us a variety of opportunities to learn skills in different classes. Technology makes it easier to do your work as you don't have to search through a textbook. 3D printer and stage lights.
 - Productive use of technology.
 - Technology enhances our learning and gets us to delve into topics, read for more information, and get our hands on more parts for our learning.
4. **Dedicated teachers and school staff (100%)** - Representative comments include:
- The office staff are kind and the teachers are positive. There are staff that can help kids who struggle with their learning. Our learning is personalized – teachers expect more from different students.
 - Staff – all have positive attitudes and care for us. Janitors work hard and give us high fives. Staff and teachers trust us. Teachers are really creative in electives and PVA with crazy out of the box activities such as making movies with creative camera shots. Teachers get involved in PD activities outside of the school to help us and we can do things like the Mayor's Expo.
 - Staff, principals, caretakers, superintendents – they are all nice. Teachers are always there when we need help. Student teachers – we learn and they learn - that is really good.
5. **Environment both within and outside the school (100%)** - Representative comments include:
- Nice environment that we are working in. Little things make a difference like the furniture and the posters that are related to our learning and our creations are displayed around the school so others can be inspired. There are paintings in the halls and stairwells. We are able to customize our classrooms.
 - We have the bouldering wall and quiet spaces where we can work if we need to. We have lots of space, especially outside, and more than one space to extend our learning such as the IAC. There is sunlight in every room through windows or solar tubes.
 - School is very clean and the Learning Commons is big and you do many things in there. Our school and playing fields are nice and big so we have opportunities to do a lot of things.
6. **Connect Charter School provides a well-rounded program through the core courses, the performing and visual arts, physical education, and the electives (100%)** – Representative comments include:
- Gym, DPA, PVA, electives: we have so many choices in all of these areas. We have a fleet of bikes and cross country skis for activities.
 - We have variety in our schedules and do a lot of different sports like quiddich, lacrosse cricket. Get to go on field trips and have guest speakers coming in for different cultures and have the pow wow. PVA and PE programs - amazing teachers to teach them and we go into a lot more in depth learning than other schools.

- We are learning about today's issues that affect every one of us - in humanities we learn about politics and issues and dive into them to learn more and in science we do things that affect us every day in our lives. Electives such as woodworking and CO2 powered cars. Focus on core subjects like how we can connect the topics to democracy and politics and how we run it. We have elections and voting on what we want and we are allowed to make the choices.
- There is a high level or standard for our learning and this makes it easier to transfer to other subjects. We have opportunities for different sports. Humanities keep us updated on current events. Over the past two years, our humanities teacher has made us love books. Projects that we do are similar to high school projects. Choices for electives are interesting and prepare us for high school. We know what we are learning and how to apply it in the real world and school prepares us for this.

The following additional areas of commendation (with a response rate of 67% or more) were also identified.

- 1. Opportunities for collaboration and leadership (83%)** – Representative comments include:
 - We can make our own clubs and have experiences with how to lead and be a role model.
 - Peer mentoring is positive for both sides - taking on the role helps develop good relationships with someone from a younger grade.
 - Given so many leadership opportunities. Older students are allowed to be leaders for tours and camps.
- 2. Culture of mutual respect in the school (83%)** – Representative comments include:
 - Our school is based around mutual respect. It is easy to bond with friends and build relationships.
 - Community where people always are doing small acts of kindness in every grade. There is a culture of mutual respect – people always feel safe here and the grade nines are so supportive.
 - We share our respect in so many ways – when we sing O' Canada, Peace Festival, Terry Fox Run.
- 3. Student voice is valued (67%)** – Representative comments include:
 - We like that students are listened to.
 - People listen to us to improve our environment.
 - We like doing this survey because we get to improve the school.
- 4. Family Groups are very important (67%)** - Representative comments include:
 - Family Groups bring us together.
 - Family Groups so we can bond with other grades.
 - Family Groups – relationships between students in different grades. As I am in the middle it helps us to see how the older students choose and plan the activities.

The following suggestions for further consideration (with a response rate of 33% or more) were identified through the student interviews:

- 1. Outdoor space enhancements (100%)** - Representative comments include:
 - Small greenhouse so the grade fours do not have to grow tomatoes in the science lab.
 - Consider expanding Clem's Garden, putting in more stepping stones for when it is muddy, and adding bright flowers and benches.
 - Update the basketball nets and go over the paint for the games.
- 2. Indoor space enhancements (100%)** – Representative comments include:
 - Bigger windows and take care of the heating issue in the classrooms.
 - Repaint the lockers similar to our logo and paint the stage black. Put a lighting track above the stage and repaint the cabinets in front of the stage.
 - Room for voice recording assignments.
- 3. Changes to school electives (58%)** - Representative comments include:

- More choices for electives - outdoor ed. elective every term, advanced electives more often, or an elective to prepare for high school.
 - More people who can get into specific electives and make clubs if students cannot get into an elective.
4. **Changes to Family Groups (42%)** - Representative comments include:
- Double periods for Family Groups.
 - Family groups should be changed every year so we meet more teachers and students.
5. **Make provision for more interschool and intramural sports teams (33%)** - Representative comments include:
- Introduce more school teams such as baseball, flag football, rugby and soccer.
 - Sports teams for younger students.

Staff Interview Responses - Key Themes

Informal interviews were conducted with (42) staff members and the following major areas of commendation (with a response rate of 12% or more) were identified through the staff interviews:

- 1. The supportive, caring, and collaborative culture is a key to success (88%)** Representative comments include:
 - Our culture is what makes us a good school, the idea of school connectedness with students, staff, and parents as well as our commitment to excellence in education and being innovative with a strong focus on relationships.
 - Supportive school which encompasses the Board, the School Council, the students – everyone.
 - Highly supportive environment where people have enough resources to do what they need to do, support from the Board, admin, parents, students, and other staff, and the belief that “We are all in this together.”
- 2. We have a very capable and highly dedicated staff (76%)** - Representative comments include:
 - Staff have the capacity to recognize the needs of the learners and to adapt their teaching to meet the students’ needs.
 - Staff is so dedicated and committed to going above and beyond. There is never a feeling that failure is a possibility.
 - Teachers are able to deal with the complexities of being off campus and this provides good learning opportunities for students.
- 3. The leadership and support from the administration/leadership team is appreciated (69%)** – Representative comments include:
 - Administration team are dedicated to helping teachers handle life, not just curriculum or helping students, but all three of them continue to do what they can to always treat issues with humility and humour while supporting everyone in the school.
 - Leadership is strong. They give support where it is needed and freedom and independence to take charge. The portfolio positions are a great asset, too.
 - Supportive leadership team. They are so positive and constructive and that helps me to be positive and constructive.
- 4. The students are excellent (55%)** – Representative comments include:
 - Our students are what makes our school good – there are so many reasons they are great- they set high goals for themselves, and then they strive to achieve them. They are smart and aware of themselves as learners and as people.
 - Students are beyond fantastic!
 - Students are willing to accept challenges and try new things which make them uncomfortable. They grow because of this and embrace challenges.
- 5. EXPO is a very positive element of our school (38%)** – Representative comments include:
 - Looking forward to next year and the interdisciplinary and place based approach with EXPO.

- We are constantly looking at how we can be innovative. Teachers were involved in the process. We are not stagnant as we are constantly looking for ways to get better.
 - Appreciate the partnerships that are being forged. We are pushing what inquiry means and pushing our practice.
- 6. Parental involvement and support is excellent (31%)** – Representative comments include:
- Parents are a huge part of what makes our school great. The parent community does so much to support the work of our school – so many parents volunteer on a regular basis or for field trips or other off site opportunities, Parent Summit committee, EXPO initiative, volunteer committee, Hot lunches, the list goes on
 - Parent involvement is good. They are super involved and super good. Our parents are very academic focused and have a very philosophical approach to education. They value the core objectives but also other aspects of their child’s education.
- 7. We have a great vision for the school and clearly we are moving in the right direction (29%)** – Representative comments include:
- There is a great scope and variety of programming within our charter pillars. We have a solid foundation being guided by the exemplary Learning and Teaching Frameworks in taking forward the mandate of our charter. I am excited that we are looking ahead to the next version of Connect.
 - Focus on citizenship and developing extraordinary citizens and all the work that takes place to support it.
 - We have a great school because of the programs and the opportunities for students such as electives and the authentic learning experiences. Hands on learning solidifies what students are learning in class. Because of our charter, they are given experiences they might not have otherwise had.
- 8. The outdoor and environmental education programs and taking learning beyond the classroom continues to be a key component of the school learning activities and the success of the school (26%)** – Representative comments include:
- Outdoor ed. experiences are great – I am improving because of the support I am receiving.
 - Outdoor education program is great as it gives an opportunity to build relationships - teachers to students, students to students, teachers to parents, students to parents.
 - Having bikes available has been great and our location is conducive to strong outdoor educational opportunities.
- 9. Budget allocation and acquisition of appropriate resource for students is effective (14%)** - Representative comments include:
- Site-based financial management makes a difference. As a teacher, I have control over the program and ownership of it and I am given the resources to do what I believe is best for student learning.
 - Great resources so we can enrich the learning environment and design programs about what is best for students.
- 10. The focus on professional development and ongoing growth is appreciated (12%)** Representative comments include:
- There is a focus on PD and it is supported through resources. Really appreciate the professional development and how educational assistants are also included and valued.
 - Professional development is so valuable and PD opportunities with a school wide focus.
- 11. Technology is making a difference in the learning opportunities for students (12%)** - Representative comments include:
- Effective use of technology in the school. It is not considered the be all and end all, it is just used effectively.

- Technology – the green screens, Apps, Google capabilities, integration of technology into place-based opportunities, the connectivity.

The following suggestions for further consideration (with a response rate of 10% or more) were identified through the staff member interviews:

1. Considerations when implementing EXPO (31%) - Representative comments include:

- Moving into EXPO, we need support in developing interdisciplinary work.
- Stay true to our commitment to inquiry as we move towards EXPO.
- Important moving forward that we have effective professional development in experiential learning.

2. Consider ways to ensure workload is manageable and there are not too many priorities (21%)-

Representative comments include:

- Number of things that are going on at one time. There are so many priorities. Focussing on fewer might allow us to do everything better. Perhaps we could do Family Groups less often even though these are very valuable. Learning Strategies is another area where these could be held less often.
- Tendency that all schools have to keep adding things. Sometimes less is more.
- We have a lot of balls in the air. There is only so much time, yet we still want to push our practice and do what is best for all students. Planning for field trips takes a lot of work and this can take away from other work we are doing. How do we manage everything?

3. Enhance communication (17%) - Representative comments include:

- Need to improve some aspects of our communication.
- Could we use the monitor outside the office for activities for the day?
- We are taking on more responsibilities and need to have really good communication with teachers so they can be supported.

4. Further refine and enhance leadership practices in school (33%) - Representative comments include:

- Admin presence in the classroom. If a teacher is new to the school, there is a great deal of presence. Provide this support to all teachers.
- Release time for portfolio leaders is a necessity. They are taking on a lot of administrative responsibilities and need time to support teachers.
- Nervous about our admin workload. They are working so hard and I don't think it is sustainable.

5. Do more to address the special learning and personal development needs of students (10%) -

Representative comments include:

- Needs to be more support so everyone embraces the inclusive education philosophy.
- To me, the inclusive education mandate remains at the forefront and needs to be the priority so that every student is successful. We need to focus time and energy on that. The counselling position needs to be a priority and should be a full-time position.
- Teachers having a better understanding of diversity and needs of our students.

6. Enhance professional development programs and initiatives (10%) - Representative comments include:

- Need to maximize the benefit in our PD activities. Place based education and our charter pillars have to be our focus.
- Re-examine how we do PD days. What could we be using the time for? Could we put staff meetings at the end of the day?
- We need to use PD more effectively. Bring in external people.

Appendix “C”

Connect Charter School Governance Committee Report for June 13, 2017 Board Meeting

Highlights from the June 8th Governance Committee meeting will be presented verbally at the Board meeting.

Environmental Scan

Research Project: Superintendency Leadership for Full Circle Governance

by Dr. Jim Brandon, Dr. Dennis Parsons and Jeff Turner

- Connect Charter School one of a handful of school districts (and the only charter school) selected to take part in the research project; most interviews at Connect took place the week of May 23
- The study aims to provide insights into various ways that district leaders strengthen governance at all three levels of Canadian education: the school district level, the school level, and the provincial level
- Preliminary findings presented at 45th CSSE Conference, week of May 27
- We will receive a summary report of the study’s results

Relationship Building and Advocacy

- Board Chair wrote to Minister Eggen, expressing appreciation for Budget 2017, desire for public charter schools to be included in Bill 1 and inviting him to the June 15th EXPOsition of Learning and Family Barbecue
- Board Chair invited several MLAs to the June 15th EXPOsition of Learning and Family Barbecue
- Meeting with Greg Clarke

Bill 1

- The Minister’s “Key Message and FAQ’s
re: Bill 1 includes the following:
 - Are charter school authorities impacted by this legislation? Why or why not?
 - No. Only public school boards, separate school boards, and Francophone school boards are impacted.
 - Fees charged by charter schools may be considered in future versions of the School Fees Regulation.
 - While it’s true that families with students at charter schools will not benefit from fee reductions, charter schools have to comply with all of the policy and reporting requirements of the new *School Fees and Costs Regulation* and the new *School Transportation Regulation*
 - Copies of existing policies 3.01 – Fees Policy, 5.01 – Student Transportation and 2.02 – Appeals were sent to Alberta Education the week of June 5th and we are awaiting feedback
 - A detailed schedule of all fees that Connect Charter School has/will charge during the 2017/18 school year must be submitted to Alberta Education by the end of June
 - Must include a justification for any fee increases of more than 5% over the 2016/17 amount for the same trip/activity/etc.
 - Must include all fees – _cannot charge a fee that isn’t on the fee schedule submitted (and approved by the Minister)
 - What this means, for example, that if a new opportunity comes up we either have to figure out a way to provide it without charging a fee OR we have to wait to add it to our 2018/19 fee schedule before we can offer that opportunity to our students
- This month, our Board Chair is sending a letter to parents, drafted by the Communications Committee, encouraging parents to contact Education Minister Eggen and/or their local MLA to request that public charter schools be included in Bill 1 and in the School Nutrition Program

Bill 202 – _Protecting Victims of Non-Consensual Distribution of Intimate Images Act

- Private member's bill sponsored by MLS Scott Cyr (Bonnyville-Cold Lake, Wildrose Party) Triggers changes to the *School Act*, expanding the definition of bullying to include non-consensual distribution of intimate images
- Has received royal assent, comes into effect August 4, 2017

TAAPCS

- Hosted by Valhalla Community School, with support from the Valhalla community
 - 3 charter pillars: direct instruction, second language, rural leadership
 - School evaluation just completed, with charter renewal application due Dec 2017
 - Requirements and recommendations from school evaluation include:
 - Update charter to align with Alberta Education initiatives
 - Strengthen research component and develop research partnerships
 - Enhance sharing of best practices with educational community
 - Develop framework for teaching and learning
 - Develop enhanced assessment practices for rural leadership program
- Biennial conference will take place 10 am – 4 pm on Friday, October 27 in Edmonton, hosted by Aurora Charter School; coincidentally, this is a PD day for Connect Charter, which should allow several teachers from Connect Charter to attend
 - TAAPCS Executive Director (Kath Rhyason) has invited Deputy Minister of Education (Dr. Curtis Clarke) to attend the conference and is awaiting his reply
 - Suggestions for sessions and keynotes may be emailed to Janet Rockwood, Conference Committee Chair
- 2017/18 budget notes:
 - Alberta government has clawed back unspent portion of SLLI grant from a few years ago
 - TAAPCS has not received the expected ~\$25k funding for 2016/17 from Alberta government
 - Extensive discussion/debate re: member fees eventually resulted in one-year fee schedule that reduces annual fees for 3 smallest public charter schools and increases fees for the other 10 members (including Connect Charter School)
 - Fees and revenues will again be on the agenda at the October general meeting
 - Approved 2017/18 budget includes \$10k for communications initiatives
- Transition to operating under new TAAPCS bylaws:
 - Executive Director authorized to strike TAAPCS Policy Advisory Committee
 - Several policies approved in principle, including: Policy Development and Review, Committees of the Board, Elections, Waiver of Membership Fees
 - There will be many opportunities for public charter school Board Directors (and even parents from public charter schools) to join TAAPCS committees
 - Need to select a Director to be Connect Charter School's representative on the TAAPCS Board of Governors, as well as an alternate
- Holding the spring general meeting at one of the member schools worked well
 - Significantly more opportunities for informal discussion/networking
 - More experiential school "spotlight"
 - Downside was that the Valhalla Directors were so busy cooking for us that they had limited participation in the meeting
- MLS Wayne Drysdale (Grande Prairie-Wapiti, PC) and his wife Sherry attended the Friday evening dinner
 - MLA Drysdale brought greetings from Education Minister Eggen
 - He also encouraged all public charter schools to continue advocating re: Bill 1
- The bison farm tour scheduled to follow the Saturday morning Directors' meeting was cancelled due to rain; Ron took advantage of the situation and facilitate a two-hour workshop aimed at gaining consensus around the key messages for a short "Public Charter schools 101" (Grande Prairie-Wapiti, PC) and his wife Sherry attended the Friday evening dinner
 - Directors from public charter schools across the province had an opportunity to participate in an affinity

mapping exercise

- The results from the session will be used by the TAAPCS ad-hoc communications committee as it moves ahead with the “public charter schools 101” video initiative

Other news from Alberta Education

- **Grade 3 Student Learning Assessments** (SLAs, replaced PATs for grade 3 students beginning in the 2014/15 school year) will be optional, at teachers’ discretion, beginning 2018/19
- To keep up with news from Alberta Education over the summer, bookmark the department’s monthly newsletter, In The Loop (<https://education.alberta.ca/in-the-loop/>)
- Emails went out to the staff, parents and Board members of Connect Charter School about the spring 2017 curriculum survey open from May 15 through June 2; completing the survey was an efficient way for parents and Directors to learn about the potential scope and sequence across subject areas of interest
- **Bill 6** received royal assent; the bill will reinstate an elected board of trustees for Northland School Division as of the October 2017 municipal elections and is intended to improve students’ learning and engagement, including students from First Nations and Métis communities in the area
- The department released literacy and numeracy progressions and competency descriptions for the current curriculum, as an additional resource for teachers
- Alberta Education also released a new mental wellness resource for schools
 - Support for using the resource will be available beginning in the fall, through the Calgary Regional Consortium and will include awareness sessions, webinars, community of practice sessions and workshops
 - The resource describes how many Alberta schools are using a whole-school approach to create welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that support the positive mental health of students

In the News

- [Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta: What is the Cost of Choice?](#)
- [CBE and Education Minister clash over public rebuke of transportation plan](#)
- [BRAID: Calgary Board of Education deserves its provincial investigation](#)
- [Four candidates emerge for Calgary Board of Education trustee race](#)
- [Alberta teachers ratify two-year agreement with province](#)
- [High school crunch forces Edmonton Public to consider night classes, other radical solutions](#)
- [Rocky View School parents lose with Bill 1](#)
- [Minister fires warning shot at St. Albert Public \(re: Bill 1 unintended consequences\)](#)
- [Media readers deserve the whole story about the sources reporters quote in public policy stories](#)

Appendix “D”

Audit and Finance Committee Meeting

June 9, 2017 7:30 – 8:15 am

Attendees: Mackenzie Regent, Christy Newson , Linda Trinh ,Gavin Peat, Susan Chomistek, Phil Butterfield, Myra Penberthy

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

School and Transportation Fees & Costs Schedule

The 2017/18 Connect Charter School Society “School and Transportation Fees & Costs” Schedule was reviewed by the Audit & Finance committee.

The following highlights were noted:

- The schedule shows the proposed per student fee for 2017/18 and totals, as well as the forecasted actual per student fee and totals for 2016/17.
- Any amount that has a variance > 5% must be explained in the final page before the summary.
- The Consolidated Fee Revenue Schedule Summary shows the total fees.
- In consultation with Alberta Education the schedule must tie into the Budget Document approved at the May 9, 2017 Board meeting.
- The School and Transportation Fees and Costs Schedule will be presented to the Board at the June 13, 2017 Board meeting with approval by the Audit & Finance Committee.
- The Minister of Education has also requested a copy of our Fees Policy to which we will add our Appeals Policy.

May 31, 2017 Quarterly Financial Statements

- The May 31, 2017 Quarterly Financial Statements were presented to the Audit & Finance Committee for their review.
- Ms. Christy Newson inquired about the positive budget variance of \$99,000. This amount includes \$39,000 of unspent fundraising money of which \$20,000 is committed for EXPO grant application matching as well as other committed purchases including: Gym Floor & Stage \$7,300; Recycling containers \$1,900, Cabinets for sound equipment \$2,000; Gallery rail system to show art in grade hallways \$3,000; structured bean bags, learning commons \$1,000; seating cushions in drama room \$800.
- We also have committed \$7,000 for EXPO release planning time for teachers and E.Piper’s salary will come in at \$28,000, additional expenses related to gym floor and stage and summer repairs/maintenance will be \$25,000.
- We are still on track to have a balanced budget.

Prepared by,
Myra Penberthy

Connect Charter School Society
Board Meeting
June 13, 2017
Secretary Treasurer's Report

Budget 2017/18

We have been advised by the Deputy Minister that Alberta Education requires us to complete the "School and Transportation Fees & Costs Schedules", in addition to the Budget Report, for the year ended August 31, 2018. The schedule compares our projected fees for the current 2016/17 fiscal year, with the budgeted fees for the 2017/18 fiscal year. The fees are also presented on a per student basis, and there is a variance analysis to explain why the fees have increased, if the amount is over 5%.

Recommendations for Equitable and Adequate Plant Operations and Maintenance (PO&M) Funding

An ADHOC PO&M Committee through ASBOA (Association of School Board Officials of Alberta) was formed to analyze the current PO&M funding model in Alberta. The committee determined if the current model provides equitable and adequate resources to fund current operations and ongoing maintenance of school buildings for School Boards, Francophone Regional Authorities and Charter Schools.

- Based on its analysis the committee has determined the following regarding the current PO&M funding model:
 1. While Alberta provides the highest per student funding in Canada at a total level, its funding to PO&M is substantially lower than the level funded by comparable provinces.
 2. A per student allocation does not accurately reflect the costs of providing PO& M services. The square meters that a jurisdiction must operate and maintain is the main determinant of the costs that a jurisdiction must incur.
 3. The PO&M Grant should:
 - (a) provide incentive for jurisdictions to effectively manage and operate their space
 - (b) be relatively easy to administer, ie use available data and,
 - (c) adjust for inflationary factors that impact PO&M expenditures on an annual basis.
 4. The historical growth of board surpluses could indicate that the education system as a whole is sufficiently funded.
- It is recommended that the government consider the following changes to the funding model are implemented for the 2018-19 school year:
 1. That the PO&M grant funds school jurisdictions based on the square meters of utilized school space as defined by in Area Capacity and Utilization (ACU) reporting, be based on a driver based cost recovery rate of \$79.95/m2 (Connect - \$494,338)
 2. That the PO & M grant funds school jurisdictions based on the square meters of underutilized school space, defined as non-utilized space in ACU reporting, at a reduced rate of 80% of utilized school space funding, ie \$63.96/m2, (Connect - \$59,099)
 3. That the 75% Relative Cost of Purchasing Adjustment (RCPA) supplement for PO&M is reinstated and applied to all portions of the PO&M grant (Connect - \$55,000).
 4. That the government reallocates funding from Basic Funding to fund the increase to the PO&M grant.

Overall the recommended model is estimated to increase PO&M funding by approximately \$75 million over the level funded in the 2016-17 school year. The committee is recommending that this increase is funded by a reduction to the Base Instruction Funding rate, which the committee has estimated at 1.7% (Connect Reduction -\$69,000. The new funding structure would net an increase of \$60,000, for Connect PO&M Grant).

Thank you and Goodbye

I would like to thank Mr. Scott Petronech for his considerable contribution and dedication to Connect Charter School, and wish him success and congratulations, in his new position as Principal, within Horizon School Division. Scott has been an exceptional member of the leadership team at Connect. I will miss his great advice on all matters technology related, including managing a considerable Information Technology budget, transitioning the entire school to a Mac environment, and planning our IT needs over the long term, to maximize the efficiency of our limited resources. I have enjoyed working with Scott, and his talents are enhanced by his great sense of humour, dedicated work ethic, and proactive approach to opportunities. It is with a sad heart that I say goodbye!

Respectfully submitted,
Myra Penberthy