



The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools
Jan. 16/17, 2014
Sheraton Hotel, 3310 – 50 Ave.
Red Deer, Alberta

MINUTES

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1. Call to order

- 1.1 Introductions – Attendees introduced themselves with their school affiliations, their reasons for attending today’s meeting, and a word or two that described their thoughts about our Association. Thanks were extended to Jay and the Foundations for their gig in the entertainment slot of the evening, and for the rousing sing-song in the hospitality room. Connect Charter School provided numerous door prizes for which we had many “first-time attendee” winners!
- 1.2 Consideration of Agenda – Item 1.6 postponed and replaced by Item 5.3. The U. of C. presentation will move from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- 1.3 Approval of Minutes
#14/17/01-01 M/C to approve the minutes of the Oct. 24, 2013 regular meeting as presented.
Garry McKinnon
Yvonne DePeel
- #14/17/01-02** M/C to approve the minutes of the October 2012 Annual General Meeting as presented.
Kurtis Leinweber
Teresa DiNinno
- 1.4 Financial Report
#14/17/01-03 M/C to accept the September - December 2013 financial report as presented.
Johnathan Liu
Heather Christison
- 1.5 School Spotlight – Gail Reid (Educational Technologist) and Tina Grus (ELL Coordinator) provided a “snapshot” of Almadina’s best practices: Discover Reading, Virtues Program, Planning and Assessment, and ELL Strategies. These are accessible at through an E-Book <http://goo.gl/FOWIWt> (EBook) or <http://goo.gl/y9nWO5> (pdf).
- 1.6 Research Update: Phil; Butterfield, Connect Charter School. Phil’s research asked the questions, “How do charter school principals perceive their instructional leadership practice impacts student learning?”, and “To what extent is it necessary that the approach to leadership align with the approach to student learning in the school?”

Findings:

- Instructional Leadership in charter schools is influenced by unique contextual variables (primarily the charter mandate).
- Beliefs about teaching and learning inform instructional leadership practice.

- Support of exemplary teaching practice through professional learning is considered essential to student success.
- Time management and task priorities play a role in establishing opportunities for instructional leadership.

Recommendations:

- Continue to build leadership capacity within public charter schools.
- Engage all stakeholders in discussions regarding student success and assessment practices.
- Critically reflect on the notion of innovative or transformational educational practice – what does it look like in various contexts.
- Conduct further research to examine perceptions of other charter school leaders and those who lead parallel programs in other public jurisdictions.

2. Committee Reports

2.1 ESL – No report. Pam Halverson will look into the status of this committee for our new ESL representative, John Deines.

2.2 Board Chairs' Committee – The Directors' meeting reaffirmed the importance of the role of Government Relations and the benefit of Professional Development. Directors will check with their Board re what kind of PD they would like to see (e.g. social media, fund development). The group agreed on a clear, concise message for use in conversation with elected officials:

- a. Charter schools are autonomous public schools with unique mandates and elected boards, and
- b. Charter schools are public schools which, through unique programs, offer both innovation and choice to parents.

Directors were asked to approach MLA's with the message that charter schools expect to receive equal funding for Inclusive Education.

Jolene would like to amass contact information for all charter school directors and has asked the Superintendents to send that to her.

2.3 Workforce Planning – Dale Bischoff will be attending future meetings on behalf of TAAPCS. The next will be on Jan. 30.

2.4 Dialogue on Teaching Quality – Refer to written report distributed prior to meeting and reattached with minutes.

2.5 Regional Collaborative Services - Refer to written report distributed at meeting.

3. Update from Alberta Education

3.1 Department News

- The Deputy Minister and ADM have been in discussions regarding Inclusive Education funding for charters. It is unclear whether a decision has been reached, or whether any such decision will be final. We may have to wait for the March budget announcement to find out.

- An *Inspiring Education* Symposium will be held in Calgary on Feb. 19; more information will be sent out from the Minister's office.

- The last Directors' Report contained information about High School Redesign. Two days of workshops have been held with 96 high schools, including Westmount Charter (160 participants) looking at such things as credentialing and assessment models that might be modified to allow high school students to be more successful.

3.2 Regulatory Review Update - The Education Regulatory Review Committee will be providing a summary of their work to date to the Minister later this month; next steps will be determined in February and stakeholders will be kept informed.

3.3 Application of the New *Ed Act* to Charter Schools – A limited number of handouts were distributed highlighting the sections of the *Education Act* that are applicable to charter schools. See document attached to minutes.

3.4 Excellence in Teaching Update – A report and recommendations should be available in early February. An overview will be presented at the February 19 *Inspiring Education* Symposium in Calgary.

3.5 Curriculum Update – 1. RFP submissions are still under consideration; no official decisions yet. The process is due to be completed in Dec. 2014, 2. The majority of schools will be using the SLA's next year, although many have chosen to do both SLA's and PAT's, 3. All spots for visits to the *Inspiring Education* demonstration schools have been filled. It was suggested that perhaps 2 days did not afford enough opportunity for schools that would have liked to take part.

4. Education Advisory Committee (EAC) Report

4.1 Leadership Project Part 2 – Next session is Feb. 6 at Deerfoot Inn in Calgary. School leadership is a key component of the Inspiring Education “blueprint” for education reform, and TAAPCS was very pleased to be given a second grant to continue this professional development initiative.

4.2 Conference 2013 – Feedback on both the keynote and breakout sessions was very positive. 300 attendees were expected and 547 registered, which presented some space challenges that were handled very well by CGS (many thanks to them!). The event realized a profit of \$771.66; please ensure that your attendance fees are submitted to CRC. It was suggested that this event should always be held in Calgary since that is where the majority of the attendees are based. Garry expressed his thanks and amazement for the incredible spirit of volunteerism that exists throughout our schools.

4.3 Municipal Government Act – The MGA is currently in the public consultation stage of review; EAC will be drafting a position paper for submission. Charter schools are hoping to be identified as having legitimate access to municipal reserve lands.

4.4 Stakeholder Reps at Meetings – AE had to discontinue hosting meetings for Charter superintendents but we are pleased that there will be government representation in our meetings as they go forward. As well, we would like more Director input at the EAC meetings and Chair Jolene Kochendorfer will make every effort to attend these. It is also gratifying to have CASS representation at our current meeting, and we hope to continue this positive relationship. Barry Litun will put forward the suggestion of having a TAAPCS presentation at their annual conference in May.

4.5 Conference 2015 – It was decided to maintain the same format as the last two conferences (i.e. breakout sessions held by our own people, inclusiveness) around a few possible themes (e.g. Inspiring Education, U. of C. Research).

4.6 Vendors/Sponsors for Conferences - This might help support the conference financially but vendor interest depends on a number of factors: location & available space, duration, attendance, cost for vendors. There is also a possibility of having vendors sponsor sessions, or present sessions using their own people. This will be discussed further at EAC.

- 4.7 Meetings with Deputy Minister - Jay and Judy met with DM Greg Bass on Nov. 27, 2013.
- Inclusive Ed Funding – The DM seems to be supportive of charter schools and aware of our frustration regarding Inclusive Education funding.
 - Facilities – The Minister is seeking expeditious amendments to the MGA, and we hope these will benefit charter schools.
 - Communication – Mr. Bass seems to be willing to partner with us in increasing the understanding of charter schools among the general public.

5. New Business

5.1 Increasing Membership Fees – Due to the 15% reduction in our AE grant amount, it was proposed that we increase membership fees by the same percentage to cover the shortfall. (New fees - small schools: \$2200, medium schools: \$2600, large schools \$3500)

#14/17/01-04 M/C to increase the current TAAPCS membership fees by 15%.
Denise Budgen
Hal Curties

5.2 Input into Teaching Excellence – Meredith will recirculate Garry McKinnon’s report (Dialogue on Teaching Quality).

5.4 Inclusive Ed Funding – TAAPCS will be requesting per student funding equal to that received by the mainstream Boards.

5.5 Support for Teaching Excellence Recommendations – Funding will not likely be provided, but it might be helpful to the Deputy Minister to receive letters from charters identifying what kind of support might be beneficial. EAC will consider this.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Dr. Diane Gereluk and Dr. Eugene Kowch – Drs. Gereluk and Kowch gave a brief overview of some of the findings from their research. More detailed information will be shared with participating charter school superintendents on or about Feb. 4, but it was very exciting to learn that our organization appears to be quite unique, and a few “tweaks” away from being world-class!

6. Meeting Reminders

6.1 May 8/9, 2014 (Edmonton): Entertainment – Suzuki/Winspear Event; Door prizes – CAA; Hospitality – CCS; School Spotlight – Valhalla; Research Report – ?

6.2 Oct. 23/24, 2014 (Calgary): Entertainment – Almadina; Door Prizes – CCS; Hospitality - CAA; School Spotlight – CAA; Research Report – ?

Adjournment 2:20 p.m.