

Calgary Christian School Council December 2014 Meeting

Meeting: CCS School Council

Date: December 4, 2014

Chairperson: Gwen Russell & Hendria Nielsen

Time: 1:30-3:30

Secretary: Bonita Halford

Location: Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church

Attendees – Gwen Russell, Hendria Nielsen, Bonita Halford, Gwen Uittenbosch, Jason Kupery, Maureen Tarnowski, Leslie Halcro, Colleen Dietz and 6 parents.

Item	Time	Description
1	1:30	Welcome and Prayer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hendria – Eph 4:29-32
2		Approval of School Council October 2014 Meeting Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion made and carried
3		School Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If parents wish to contribute to school council or have things they would like to discuss they can send an email to the school council – schoolcouncil@csce.net or speak with Gwen or Hendria
3		Fiesta Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Went well overall Some were wondering how to help, not all positions listed on Sign Up Genius were applicable to abilities. Sign up genius needs to be checked by parents as an overall way of finding out the opportunities. There was just the right amount of food left over. They ran out of seasoned beef not GF beef. Staff took home some fresh veggies. How is the money that was raised divided? Specific areas (like Belize trip) had their booths and those profits go directly to them. \$5500 was netted from bake sale etc. and goes into the annual fundraising. From there it will be divided as funds come in according to goals set out.
		Sign Up Genius <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the school send out emails letting parents know about opportunities on sign up genius rather than parents continually checking the website? From Corrin - groups can be created for info to be sent out, but it's not made to handle large groups. It's up to parents to take the step to check it. Some parents find it easier to sign up using sign up genius. Reminders are sent from there to remind you of upcoming commitments. You can ask to be put on the group to get heads up emails, but there will be many emails sent out. Teachers have been good at getting volunteer opportunities out on sign up genius and letting parents know. MS is different from ES in terms of volunteering – parents would like more opportunities in the MS. Needs to be a better job of communicating MS opportunities as students won't always let their own parents know of them.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are welcome in the HS.
4		<p>Staff Appreciation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Coordinator for HS/MS but one is needed for ES. Some want it done once a month or every second month. It's an intimidating role. Perhaps lower the expectation of what needs to be done. Communicate with admin to find out what the staff want. • Affirmation is more important to staff - words mean more than anything, as they often hear only the negative • Highlighting staff members in newsletters was good. Brought attention to a person not everyone would know. • Maybe a committee is better than an individual for heading up staff appreciation. May not be so overwhelming. Alicia and Leslie offered to head it up! • One teacher suggestion was to provide meals during report card time. Next ES report card week is in March. • Principals to seek ideas from staff of what they would like.
		<p>ES Reading Volunteers: Using Grandparents/ Community Seniors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a need for more volunteers? Gwen U. would like to tap into the Shalem Manor community. • Children have an opportunity to build empathy by working with seniors. • Gwen's Vision – for parents to listen to kids read so that they read well by age 8 and to have them affirmed for all their efforts. Kids need self confidence to read. • Currently there is a problem of teachers forgetting or not ready for parents to read or not sending the kids who really need help. • Can a special invite to grandparents go out from the kids? Criminal record checks need to be done for everyone volunteering. Seniors are not getting them done. Perhaps one person could coordinate going over to Shalem Manor and help those wanting to volunteer get their security check paper work done. • Some teachers are finding it more work to get the readers ready. • Consistency is the key between teacher and helper. Direct communication between teachers and helper is better in terms of setting up the times. • Is there a need for this kind of help in the MS? Scribes, homework help? What kind of help can be offered in the other campus? More thought of how to do it with MS/HS in terms of working with kids so they aren't too self conscious. Maybe working with 2 kids so there isn't the same attention on them. Jason will think through ways to get parents involved.
		<p>Technology and Social Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been problems with apps that kids are using. Recently one particular app has caused major issues. The problem of this app surround FOIP issues (names of people are being posted), and more seriously the content of what is posted as the comments can be made anonymously. Derogatory and other terrifying comments have been said about teachers and other students. The app was developed by several students from the U of C with the original intent of encouraging people. Palliser is looking at some of these apps and legal action against the developer is being taken. • There are plans to hold seminars on cyber safety for both parents and students. Parents need to monitor what their children have on their phones and other devices. • Filters have been increased at the school. Youtube is a hard one to monitor as there are

		<p>both educational and inappropriate videos on it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids are putting themselves out there on the internet. What happens on some of the apps is very serious. This is the stuff kids commit suicide over. It's not happening just on phones but on iPods or anything with wifi. • Thank you from parents for helping us to identify these areas and highlighting concerns with parents. • Can we open the seminars to ES? • As a board Palliser is saying teach students early about internet safety. • Is there an opportunity for school council to put on seminars and open it to other parents? Get the dialogue going between parents. • It's how apps are used, not necessarily the app itself. The issue is respecting others. Kids are impulsive.
		<p>Symposium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was amazing. All about raising expectations • All of the guest speakers were amazing. Many students were completely drawn into the variety of sessions.
		<p>MS Schedule Changes and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything is temporary. • Literacy happens all year with English in one semester and Social (a text heavy course) in the other. • There is the issue of keeping math skills up all year as courses are only for the semester and then it's a long time before they take it again. • Is the volume of work a problem? With the compression of time in the semester system are students getting too much at one time? It's a work in progress. Some like it and others struggle with it. • Working on scheduling with teachers' time as well as they are shared between MS and HS • If the semester system doesn't work it won't be kept.
		<p>Grade 9 High School Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With reenrollment approaching what can we do to share the benefits of CCS to keep kids here and not move to other high schools? Some families are going to other schools' open houses, looking into IB programs etc. • Parents are making decisions earlier than the information about CCS comes out. • We need early information for students moving from grade 6-7 and grade 9-10. • How do we get parents out to offer feedback? There is a need to get parents more involved. Information nights? Reading materials to give to parents to help them with why they should stay. • At course selection time parents have decided to stay, but what about earlier? Can we get information out to the students even? • In terms of sports, CCS has done very well. Brent Clements won award in football with the Rundle Cobras football team. Even though Rundle College is a rival to CCS in other sports, the football team has had a very cohesive team and CCS students are making a difference there. Former CCS students are also on the national volleyball team. But it's marketing that will keep them here. • Can something be put into the reenrollment packages? For this year it needs to be done

		<p>now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The marketing needs to be done for those key years. (Families with students moving from grade 6-7 or 9-10). Maybe the school can put something in the newsletter, somewhere where people are looking for the information and not give people the idea that they should look elsewhere. It's a balance. • How many students leave? 10-15 but 20-25 come in. Lots from Menno Simons move to CCS. With both schools belonging to Palliser it's a seamless move. With space limitations, the school also relies a little on some families leaving. • We need to let parents know who we are – some stuff isn't what we do, but we do other things well too. • Maybe a parent night is too much work for the number of families that are really looking for the information, but it can be made available. • Jason does information sessions at Menno Simons and Trinity. These sessions let the students know what CCS is all about. Maybe a similar thing could be done here with our students.
		<p>Items of Highlight from Gwen Uittenbosch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazel Hutchins, a guest author brought in for the book fair, was amazing. It was a successful book fair. They hope is to have her back as she is very talented. • All parents are invited to the Gr 4-6 Christmas concert on December 18 at Bethel Reformed Church • If parents are bringing in treats, no sugary treats please during the week before Christmas break. • The school calendar for 2015/16 will hopefully be brought to the parents for next school council. While some things cannot be changed there will be an opportunity to get some feedback from parents. • Prayer request – Arnold Zwart (director of maintenance) has had lingering ailments and is now waiting for surgery. • As highlighted in the newsletter, parents of students in grades K-2 are asked to drop their children off at door and leave them. We want to help them gain independence. There are a number of parents in the hallway helping kids. It's very crowded in the hall with the extra bodies.
		<p>Topics Raised by Parents</p> <p>1. Caught Being Good Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What message are we sending to kids? Will every student have his/her name in the jar? Teachers are watching to make sure all children will get in the jar. Are kids doing "good" for public recognition only? The principals want students to be in the office for good behaviour not just for bad behaviour. • Recognition of these students in chapel – highlighting some kids from each class or recognizing just one or two, doesn't work. The behaviours from these chosen students are sometimes quite different from what the other students see and what the teachers see. Some teachers highlighted the whole class and parents felt this was better. Layne (school chaplain) was made aware that this may not work with elementary. • Caught being good recognition is done during a worship time chapel or when a grade is leading it. Done at least once a month, but no pattern has been established yet.

2. Website Use

- Information about chapel? Maybe something can be put on about what is happening in chapel that month. Is this a part of Layne's role? When are parents invited? What is being talked about? If information is given to parents it allows them the chance to discuss more specifically with their children about what happens in chapel.
- There was no communication about the Grade 6 Bible study with Layne to parents. Could this be put on under the eTeacher section?
- eTeachers - MS teachers are doing a great job of using it. ES –teachers need to put more information on about what is happening. This could include upcoming tests, upcoming topics, or even study guides for students who may have missed school. Lower grade teachers have more face to face with parents. Agendas are used in grades 4-6 to let parents know of upcoming events.

3. Differences between teachers in the same grade

- Parents want the same information on the website. For instance, one teacher puts spelling lists on the web, while another doesn't post them and may not even be using the same spelling program. When do these differences become a problem? Are there expectations for the teachers on how much they use the website and what is being taught? Teachers have flexibility on how and what they teach like spelling. Also rewards for reading are different among teachers of the same grade.

4. Homework

- There is a significant increase in homework from grade 6-grade 7. Some students are finding it to be a lot. Would it be beneficial to have a gradual increase in homework through the later elementary years to help students get ready for grade 7? They need to learn how to study and how to effectively manage their time.
- Maybe the introduction to middle school could include information on how to study and how to organize yourself. This was done in flex time. (Flex time in MS is time allotted for students to get their homework done.) Can this have been communicated to parents? There is a risk of over communicating. The month of January will be used to teach students how to study, how to handle stress, etc. in preparation for exam time. Can this be introduced in grade 5 or grade 6 in the spring?
- Homework isn't effective if the work isn't understood. Flex time is meant for kids to get help with homework. Is it effective? Yes. It teaches them the skill of working for 45 minutes straight. During flex time the math help is good but can there be social studies help as well to develop critical thinking skills? Can parents help there as well? Maybe. There is a former teacher in there who volunteers almost daily. It may be weird for students to have their parents in there. It is an opportunity for kids to help themselves and go to the help they think they need. The students check in with the homeroom teacher and also the teacher they go to for help to keep track of where the students are. The time is good for project work or small group work as after school time is difficult to manage with activities. It is good for the whole school but funding for HS is different so it is a work in progress of how to expand it into HS.

5. Playground Leaders

- With the problems on the playground earlier this fall is it possible to get leaders from the grade 5's or 6's to set up guided activities for the younger grades.
- Currently kids from grade 9 are running intramurals and that is successful.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year sports day will be lead by the grade six classes. PE time will be used to teach them the activities and how to lead groups through them. This will allow the teachers to be able to walk around the stations. • Information on the playground leaders will be sent to Gwen to see if it can be done here. • Buddy Bench – getting a bright coloured or fun looking bench for students who don't have a friend to play with to go to and then students who are trained on what to do if they see students sitting there can help them get involved at recess time. • There has been some discussion at the board level about setting up benches around the playground for community use as well as school use. It's possible it may be a safety hazard however. Maybe this could be a project Phil Bonk can do in his shop classes. • The board is looking into getting garbage cans, more lighting and better security cameras for the area.
		<p>Update from Colleen Deitz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last week's board meeting highlights are on the website • Annual Report to the Community is also on the website – this highlights what the division is doing • Are there any issues with the government bills being proposed? These are not new issues. Why they are picking out one group of students rather than making a blanket statement on caring is unclear. Currently the school's Safe and Caring Policy is being rewritten – it's not a statement about what is believed, but that you are safe and cared for.
		<p>Blessings and Burdens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no needs at the moment for Christmas • Ways to help are now on Sign Up Genius. This is good as it keeps a constant flow of food and lets others know when you are running short. • There needs to be another push with teachers to get them on board to pass information to Gladys. • Blessings email is on website. • It's confidential. Gladys has signed an agreement.
		<p>Concluding Questions/Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table discussion is more inviting. • Parents need concrete ideas on how to get parents more involved in MS/HS. Once ideas are presented groups can be formed.
		<p>Closing Comments, Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting Wednesday, January 7 @ 7pm – High School Commons (upstairs area)