

Calgary Christian School Council January 2015 Meeting

Meeting: CCS School Council

Date: January 7, 2015

Chairperson: Gwen Russell & Hendria Nielsen

Time: 7:00 – 9:00pm

Secretary: Bonita Halford

Location: High School Commons

Attendees – Gwen Russell, Hendria Nielsen, Bonita Halford, Gwen Uittenbosch, Jason Kupery, Maureen Tarnowski, Phil Bonk, Paul Verhoef, Layne Kilbreath, Ken DeWyn, Thomas Kuhnand 13 parents.

Special Guests –Layne Kilbreath

Item	Time	Description
1	7:05	<p>Welcome and Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwen Russell –“You can’t make a difference in the world today if you are living just like the world today.” – Teaching Pastor Jason Strand
2		<p>Approval of School Council December 2014 Meeting Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion made and carried
3		<p>Special Guest – Pastor Layne Kilbreath – CCS Chaplain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23rd Feb @ 7:00pm – Session on internet safety in the High School Commons – it will be a parent focused session to begin the conversation on internet safety. This is part of a series that Tamara Menzies (Secondary Family School Liaison Counsellor) is initiating. The first session on January 12 is on stress. (7pm in the High School Commons) Tamara will be at the sessions teaching parents how they can help their kids. • Thank you to the parents for the opportunity to do this role • Update on What I Do - First few months was fitting it to what was happening at the school with principals and teachers and keeping a radar on what was happening spiritually. I’ve grabbed on to the theme from the book <i>Do Hard Things</i> – it’s a great way to challenge the kids, great for chapels and for everything at school • Chapels – Everyone Welcome – 20% of my time is at the elementary campus and 80% at secondary. I lead the ES chapel the first Tuesday of every month. This past Tuesday they talked about influence. In MS/HS, chapels occur every other Friday at Emmanuel Church. The Chaplain leads or coordinate the guest, alumni and student speakers. We’re using the theme to reveal how God calls us to hard things and rewards those who follow. Students participate on worship teams, provide tech support, perform readings or offer insight on topics. Chapel schedules are on the website. If you subscribe to the google calendar you will get updates and changes as they are posted. There is also more information posted on the school calendar such as questions for parents to ask or information about the topic of study for parent follow up at home. If you need help getting subscribed to the calendar talk to Leona or Corrin. The calendar has school wide events and you would get updates for everything. • Layne is working to get the kids to see that He is approachable and willing to meet with them. • Good News to Share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parents who Pray- meet at 9am at the High School. It is an open, committed and supportive group for the school. They take prayer requests. They now have an email

		<p>address and can be reached under contacts or through the Parents Who Pray tab under Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grade 6 Bible Study – started at the initiative of a student. 15 students come on a regular basis and will be challenged to lead ○ Passages Symposium: Risking, Trying, Trusting – Both Christian and non-Christian speakers inspired and influenced the MS/HS students on November 28. ○ Do Hard Things Book Discussion opportunities – there are Feb and March opportunities. Please sign up on SignUp Genius before you come. It is beneficial if you read the book ahead of time. ○ InspirAct – This is a volunteer fair that lets students know about places to serve. This year students in grade 5 and up will participate. This year there will also be daily devotionals and volunteer opportunities and a time reflecting on these opportunities after. ○ Growing Relationships – Being a full time presence of Jesus on Campus is helping me listen well and support students and teachers as we all grow in faith. Being here is providing students the opportunity to dialogue about their faith and share what they really think and not just what they think we want to hear. I believe that supporting teachers is key, supporting each one will help them live out their faith as authentic examples and integrate faith into the subjects they teach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can you stay connected with the Chaplain’s office? – Call or send an email any time. Connect through parents tab on the website. I’m always open to suggestions and concerns. I use the newsletter, webpage/chaplain’s blog and Facebook (often re-posts by Karen Dees) to communicate what is going on. ● How can we pray for Layne? Please pray that the transition into the role continues to go smoothly. Also for big eyes, ears and heart as I respond to student and teacher needs and develop a plan for developmental Faith Formation. I will be looking at what we’re currently doing in Bible and Teaching Through Transformation through conversations with teachers, students, parents and PCCE staff. I will also be looking to define goals to see what is happening and also evaluating that. Defining what success looks like and develop a process for evaluation and growth (including graduates after 5 or 10 years). Looking at what we can do better to help students develop their faith.
4		<p>Review of Draft 2015/16 School Calendar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Draft – The principals have been given the approved calendar from the district. So far they have only added in the second week of spring break and the Christian teachers convention. ● The Big Dates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● August 26 – the teachers are back to school. ● September 1 – School starts (This is the week before Labour day. Start date is based on Palliser policy) ● October 22-23 – Christian Teachers’ Convention ● December 18 – Last day of school before Christmas break ● January 4 – First day back to school ● February 15 – Family Day ● February 18-19 – Teachers’ Convention ● March 25 – First day of Spring Break (Good Friday) ● June 28 – Last day of school

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calendar will be submitted at the end of month to Palliser board to be reviewed. May be available in finalized form to parents in March. • There is more continuity to the 2015/16 schedule than there was this year. For example, Remembrance Day is on Wednesday and will not be extended like it was this year. • Why is there a 2 week break for spring break? The extended break is necessary for mission trips planned in the HS. • School council has a responsibility to look at and review the proposed calendar but there is a framework that needs to be followed and time requirements needs to be accounted for • The calendar can't be posted until its final, but no big changes to be expected • Some parents would like more communication about the exam schedule for MS/HS – Jason will be sending out an email regarding the dates and expectations • Do we need to take Remembrance Day off? – Yes. It gives people the opportunity to attend a service if they choose.
5	<p>Follow Up Topics</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ES Reading Program Volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community helpers – teachers sent out an email to parents requesting readers so that there is consistency, there was a greater response this way. • Getting seniors in to help – They need to have their criminal checks done and we need to find a way to get this done that works. • Is there a volunteer needed to do this? – There is someone at Shalem who is available to help it out but we also need to figure out how to cover the cost for them. The current cost is \$15 per adult. The School Society is working on that but it will take time and we also need a commitment from the seniors. Next year there won't be a fee for doing criminal checks. 2. Criminal Record Checks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminal checks need to be done annually. Currently parents pay the fee. The Society is working to get a number (VOAN) that allows the school to get the checks done through charity status, but then the process and responsibility is put on the society to get the checks done. Two registration periods for parents would be held each year. Potentially one at the beginning of the year and one mid year or near the end of the school year so that parents would be cleared and ready to go by the beginning of the following school year. However, it would not be ongoing and could only be done during those registration times. They are hoping to have this in place by May. Leona has done a lot of the work setting this up. Annual checks are difficult for parents who get flagged and need to go through a more extensive background checks as the process has taken several months for some. With the new system, the criminal checks could be used with other organizations. • The process of inputting data for the record check is done through the school. They do the work online. Is there a volunteer needed for data input? Not sure as the person doing the input needs to be secured, cleared person with confidentiality agreement in place. They are still waiting on approval. 3. Grade 5/6 Playground Leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information was not sent to Gwen. Bonita to follow up with parent who initiated the idea. 4. Buddy Bench

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesley was to take it to the board. • Gwen feels it is not something kids would quickly go do and may draw more negative attention than necessary. • Hendria to follow up with Lesley for Feb 23 board meeting. <p>5. Caught Being Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are watching all of the kids so that every student will be caught at some point throughout the year • They are expecting good things from them not just looking for the bad. • It is affirming for the students. • Only given when the teachers catch them or other students point out positive behaviours in another student. It is not given to those who approach the teachers with their own good deed.
6		<p>New Topics, Questions, Comments</p> <p>1. School Directory Distribution Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we get it earlier in the year? Sept 30 is when they are completed as they need to wait until the enrolment numbers are finalized. From there it takes 3 weeks to format with the printer. This year was unusually late as there were health issues with an employee from the printer company. It is a very big job. The printer is very accommodating to the school and bends over backwards for us. • Can it be done unofficially? Can parents collect contact information from other parents through the teachers? This will be looked at with Monique and see what FOIP issues may be involved. It may be possible to set up a social coordinator role for each class/grade that could facilitate this process. Gwen will deal with this before June with Monique. This role would allow relationships to form amongst parents. <p>2. Parent Sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it possible to get information from the meetings to parents who can't attend? The school counsellors have their own names on the school website where they have resources and links to resources posted. There is also a link in the newsletter to information for parents who can't attend. <p>3. Alberta School Council Association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an organization that supports school council groups like this one. • They are looking for parents to join a one hour on line focus group about grade 3 learning assessments. Hendria has information if you wish to participate in giving feedback. The Grade 3 teachers were to forward the information on to their parents. John Bird and Sharon Bolink attended a workshop about it. They along with the other grade three teachers will be attending another one that will highlight any changes and what feedback there is. <p>4. MS/HS Exam Schedule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jason will be sending out an email regarding the clarification of study days and class days. Please see his letter on the school website. • The changes for grade 9's are due to semester system. • We lost a day from the snow day back in September. Please see his email on the school website for specific dates of classes, study days and which days students are mandated to be in school and which days are exam days. <p>Questions</p>

- **Grade 9 course selection.**
 - More options are good, but parents would like more communication about how to pick the classes and what the process is. It seems to be a bit of a lottery. The school has finite resources. They attempt to give students their first choices but options are narrowed down by what seems popular. Students are then put in classes accordingly. They can accommodate to a limited extent due to resources and space if kids are unhappy.
 - Is there any way to get a heads up about which course students are put in? There is an issue with computer program scheduler. But communication can be improved.
- **What is the rationale for dropping Grandparents/VIP Tea?**
 - The teachers are exhausted with only 2 preps a week. It can't be done as it was in the past because of the work required.
 - Is this something that parents can take on? The physical building space during lunch can not accommodate the number of students and grandparents/VIPs that were here last year. It was a huge fire hazard. There are also mobility issues for some grandparents navigating the numerous steps in the school. If something were to happen it could be a huge problem.
 - Perhaps grandparents/VIPs could be invited to Remembrance Day chapel instead or to the chapels led by specific grades.
 - Some parents want to continue to honour our roots; those who gave so much. They also want to continue to build community and need their support and want to build legacy. It also seemed to be a fundraiser opportunity.
 - Possible solutions - Split the divisions? Have it at the high school gym? Do we need a group of people to look into other options? It was a lot of work for teachers with emails flying around regarding space issues and where to put everyone. Currently the day includes VIPS – can it be split? Host grandparents one time and VIPs another? But the work remains the same or doubles for the teachers. There needs to be clarity about what the day needs to be, what is important about Grandparents Tea. Is it the food? Chapel? Can it be reformatted? Can they be reading with them? It needs a coordinator to look at this issue. It is hard to get volunteers with little clarity. We need volunteers this year to organize it for next year who can then have more specific information to be put on sign up genius.
 - Does it have enough support to move forward with relooking at?
 - We need to be careful about highlighting the immigrant nature of our grandparents as the school population has changed. As well, some don't have grandparents here. We need to be sensitive to that.
 - Can there be clarification on what significant? Is it up to the teachers? Can parents take this on without adding the stress on teachers?
- **What happened to the motion to change the school council bylaws?**
 - Currently, our school council does not need to be led by Christian leaders according to the bylaws. Last year there was a motion to change the bylaws so that school council chairs would have to be Christians. Where is this process at? The new bylaw has been passed on to a lawyer to finalize and analyze the wording. It is being worked on. After the lawyer has reviewed it, it will go back to the board. The change in bylaws would then need to be approved by the school council.
- **Last year the topic of school uniforms was brought up – where is that at?**

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Going forward the vision for the school needs to be clarified. Listening groups around Mission and Vision, which would include opportunity to reflect upon the use of uniforms, were anticipated to begin in Spring 2014. This has not yet occurred. It is still in the process. It is not top of the list for board right now. ○ The School Society Board is revisiting the mission at the moment. They are looking at what the driving force for the school should be. It is still in process. ○ Do uniforms fit with the vision/mission? It became a bigger question of what will the school look like. The Society Board will create a process that will allow parent discussion. They won't come back with a yes or no. ○ The Society Board has sub working groups. They are working on policy, how to gather momentum, vision. It is still a work in progress with many issues involved – the size of school and what it should be, how to and what learning needs the school should address, and the need to know who we are first amongst all the Christian schools in the city ● Parent Survey – Should be coming out soon. Doug has not been well so it has been delayed. He is working with Leona on it. It should be going out at the end of January. ● Accountability Government Survey – Will be going out at the end of January and goes until March. It is done by students and parents in grades 4,7, and 10. For students it is done at school with teachers. Parents, please do it because it forms the practice in the school no matter what the results. Valid results are better than a small sampling that may not accurately reflect the feelings of the families. It takes 15-20 minutes or longer to do. It is done electronically not on paper. The results show on the accountability pillar. The link will be on website as well. ● Do Grade 9 students have a day where they go to work with their parents? Yes. ● Please pray for Marcie Howie. She is scheduled to have her baby on Friday (January 8) ● Will there be a Lego contest? It is undecided. ● Agenda topic for next meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can some information be given to parents about what the stresses are that teachers are facing? What does teaching look like today? Why has there been this change? There is lots of prep for teachers to do with no time. It is not likely to improve soon. What can parents do to help teachers with their prep time?
7	8:45	<p>Closing Comments, Prayer and Adjournment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next Meeting - Thursday, February 5 @ 1:30 – 3:30. Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church.