



École Intermédiaire Lawrence Grassi Middle School Council
Wednesday, May 22, 2013 – 7PM
Meeting/Staff Room LGMS Minutes

Brian Wityshyn, Leanne McKeown, Alison Andrews, Betty Mah,
Adrienne Lawlor, Alanna McLeod, Alison Carter (Minutes)

1. Call to Order & welcome any guests at 7:10pm

2. Adoption (Amendment) of Agenda: Agenda adopted with some changes in order of items discussed.

3. Confirmation of Approval of Past Minutes: Minutes of April 10, 2013 approved by email.

4. Principal's Report: Brian Wityshyn

- **Green Energy Futures** (a blog showcasing pioneers of green energy): David Dodge's video highlights the green efficiency of LGMS see via link on <http://crps.ab.ca/> for video (or podcast).
- **The 2nd Annual Iron Chef**, April 22, was a hit with students thanks to Mandy Stonier, substitute teacher. Note: volunteer parent coordinator opening for next year's event.
- **Distributed Learning**, May 1: Brian attended this Distributed Learning meeting. This series of meetings promotes excellence in teaching in the CRPS division. Types of questions asked: What does that excellence look like? Who are the champions and the leaders in school? How can peer mentoring be implemented? Is it possible for Brian to be in the classroom more, and how can he help further? What are our beliefs and values? It is also a question of relationship building. Parents will see new terminology being used to describe the methods and uses of Distributed Learning. Implementation is expected in the fall.
- **Cell Phone Tower 817-7th Street**: Telus held a public information session, May 1; community members, parents, school council and CRPS representatives attended. The school and school council support the CRPS position, that is '*The CRPS Board of Trustees directed administration on June 12, 2012 to contact the Town of Canmore and Telus to request the temporary cell phone tower near Lawrence Grassi Middle School NOT BE PERMITTED*'. See <http://crps.ab.ca/>. Comments to Telus can be addressed to telusconsultation@telus.com (although deadline may or may not have passed).
- **Education week**, May 6 – 10, saw the LGMS jazz band along with Ms Murphy taking their music to the streets outside Canmore Civic Centre. See front page photo, Rocky Mt. Outlook, 16 May 2013.
- **Citizenship grade 7 classes** will be holding a number of fundraising events on behalf of Hearts & Hands and others. Awareness will be raised for cancer and a number of other issues chosen by the students. It's the students' way of giving back to the community.
- **Leadership Academy**: Brian attended the May 8/9 Leadership Academy. Many educational 'gurus' presented their thoughts, e.g. representative from the OECD. Brian has a binder with further very interesting material.
- **Environmental Rock Band**: *Mindil Beach Markets*, a popular BC rock band, generate awareness about the decline of the health of our oceans and the health of the planet. The band gave an impromptu, well-received, rock performance for LGMS students. See <http://thejellyfishproject.org/>
- **Archbishop Oscar Ramara**, April 29, gave an enjoyable performance for LGMS students.
- **Step Up Today**, May 22, is an initiative put on by the Town of Canmore and a number of other volunteers with a variety of physical and social activities. The 1-day workshops invite grade 7 & 8 students (from LGMS-OLS-BHS) to step out of their comfort zones, and try out the different

activities and meet different people. It was helpful to let girls and boys take part in their separate groups. Students reacted with varying amounts of enthusiasm from great to ok. Alison A. recommends capturing students' feedback from the day.

- **Open days at CCHS:** Grade 8 students visited CCHS in the first week of May; CCHS councillors came to LGMS and handed out Option information. Parents had the opportunity to attend an information evening on April 30 at CCHS. Teachers will be meeting to discuss student needs in preparation for grade 8 graduation to CCHS.
- **Grade 3 & 4 students** have visited LGMS from ERS. This turned out to be a great visit – the youngsters had a blast, and are excited about coming to LGMS. Parent evening was good, but low attendance. Teachers have discussed special education needs for transitioning students with severe needs.
- **Technology:** 4 New iPads and the Rotary sponsored, Audio-Visual Screen have been ordered.
- **Staffing:** Brian is working on staffing and will share this plan at the next parent council meeting. Approx. 110 grade 8's leaving with 140 grade 3 & 4's arriving. Although final numbers not known until September. Also some parents double register children, so it is hard to gauge exact numbers.
- **Student Numbers:** There is some evidence of new families moving to Canmore: ERS kindergarten classes now have up to 27 students.
- **The Waldorf school,** grades K-4, to be sited within CCHS is a go for next year. These students will be registered as CRPS students, which means CCHS will receive the basic Alberta grant per student from which teachers and facility costs are paid.

5. Treasurer's Report: Alison Andrews

- **April Finances:** Alison sent out a revised April financial statement. Bottom line: surplus is estimated at just over \$5,000, so School Council is in financially good shape.
- **Pencils:** school has sufficient pencils – EBS money can go elsewhere.
- **Technology costs:** 4 iPads and 7 covers (extra ordered for previously bought iPads) will cost about \$3,000 incl. GST.

Motion: To allocate an extra \$600 from surplus for the iPads.

Proposed by Alanna McLeod. Seconded by Adrienne Lawlor. All Approved. Motion Carried.

- **Daily Physical Activity (DPA) equipment:** Andrea is researching DPA equipment needs and costs. Action: Alison A. needs to know the cost of DPA equipment by the next meeting in order to make out a timely cheque. Approx. amount will be \$300. Alison also needs the invoice for \$75 for TREX art exhibit.
- **Audio-Visual equipment** has been ordered. Budget was \$3,500, but the final amount will be closer to \$3,100 incl. GST and shipping. So not over budget. Surplus in the AV budget can be used for maintenance of the equipment and to purchase related set-up materials.
- **Stream of Dreams:** at present Brian does not have a teacher to lead this. Discussion on postponing this to next year. However, Alanna offered the possibility of taking the lead. To be decided. Budget of \$500 has already been allocated, and this may be used this year or held in reserve for next year. Goal is to install the fish, painted by students, all the way around the school fence perimeter.
- **Future Wishes:** Brian would like to see the 'evergreening' of the old computers. To upgrade the computer carts, Darren estimates that \$300 – \$400 per computer is needed. It is time for something new as students find the computers very slow to start up. Action: Grant writing and try for a matching grant. There are also revenues generated from the two rounds of pizza in a month. Perhaps this could be earmarked for technology.

- **Further to the 1:1 laptop initiative.** Brian says the research shows ‘let’s go for it’ and bring technology into schools; but are we advancing too quickly? Brian would like to slow down a little, and give time for those discussions. Teachers will be doing a review with grade 8’s for their input on the questions of students having their own computers, and if laptops should be made mandatory for grade 7 students or not.

6. Proposal for Managing Screen Time & Toolbox Project/Trial Equipment follow-up: Adrienne Lawlor

- **Movement Tools:** Adrienne would like to have a supply of movement tools, e.g. chair-balls, for students who need a little more movement and sensory feedback when sitting.
 - Adrienne has emailed Learning Support teachers for their input on the usefulness of these chairs: recommendation was to create a loan bank of chair-balls for students to try out. They cost around \$40 each. Parents will typically purchase a chair ball for their child once they see these special seats really help their child concentrate.
 - Other equipment needs include: Air-filled cushions for seats; Thera bands to put around the legs of a chair for the child to push off from; and portable ‘Move-and-Sit’ cushions. The sensory input from this equipment benefits those students who find it difficult to sit still for long periods.
 - Whether chair-balls are used in a class or not is also dependent on the teacher’s views, age of children, and how many chair balls in a class. (Having a class of +30 grade 8 students on chair balls could be stressful !)
 - Ideally for LGMS there would be one chair-ball per class. Brian worked out the numbers for next year for grades 4, 5, and 6, at about 10 classes with 2 spare chair balls at \$40 each, i.e. about \$500 allocation. Adrienne recommends to initially purchase a selection of equipment. Fit Systems out of Calgary sells such equipment. Betty will ask if they have educational pricing.

Motion: To donate \$500 to buy chair balls/tools for learning/movement tools, and add to the program if feedback is positive.

Proposed by Adrienne Lawlor. Seconded by Alanna McLeod. All approved. Motion Carried.

- **Tool Box Project:** Adrienne has personally signed up for a 1-day training workshop at end of June in California to learn more about the tool box project (a Social-Emotional Learning curriculum). Adrienne proposes to pilot it in 2 classrooms; and if successful discuss expansion of the program and future funding with school council. See www.dovetaillearning.org
- **Learning Component: Video Gaming:** Follow up to the Peter Churchill presentation. Adrienne spoke to Spencer Schneider (AHS Mental Health & Addictions) and a number of parents after the presentation. Feedback from parents was that it was a good introduction, but a little heavy on academic themes. Parents are looking for more support *on how to deal with technology and their kids, and solutions*. Spencer and Adrienne are keen to work on a Part 2, and this could be a Learning Component for early fall, i.e. the October time slot. For Part 2, families would have an opportunity to talk about their own struggles. The wish would be to make the evening engaging, perhaps with a game show, something really interactive. It would be fun to have kids test out *multitasking versus focusing on one task at a time*, and observe what trying to do math, listen to music, facebook, chat, game, snack, all at the same time really does do to their math homework!

7. Items for the Principal: Brian Wityshyn

- **Terpischore Dance:** A fairly large group of LGMS dancers have missed some school because of dance practice and competitions. It would be nice for these students to show their schoolmates why they have missed some school. The dance group of 26 would like to bring their well-rehearsed dance routine to the talent show at the end of June. The performance would be a treat for everyone. Sonja Howatt is enthusiastic for this to happen. Council was also enthusiastic that it would be great to highlight the work of these young students.

- **School Gardens:** Bonnie Hamilton has organized for **Farm Box** (local organic food initiative) to build a rooftop garden at CCHS. Bonnie spoke with Liz about doing something similar at LGMS.
Action: Brian will follow up with Bonnie to see what a garden at LGMS might look like.
For example, What happens over the summer with caring for the garden? Previous plans for a garden in the LGMS bike area (safe from rabbits) have been suggested so the school is very interested in pursuing the Farm Box idea. See www.farmbox.ca

8. Board of Trustees Budget Meeting (April 10): Alison Andrews

- **Number of Trustees:** The number of trustees has been cut from 7 to 5, saving \$28,000 per year.
- **Budget Cuts:** Serious budget cuts are expected for the coming 2013 – 2014 CRPS school year; certain government programs like the 3yr cycle of *Alberta Initiative for School Improvement* (AIS) government funding have been cut; incentives for student credit payments have been reduced. The CRPS trustees are in discussion with CRPS Superintendent Chris McPhee on how to proceed, and how parents might be involved. Trustees will work with parent councils on this topic.
- **Next Board of Trustees Meeting is May 29.**
- **Class Sizes:** Budget cuts mean bigger class sizes; for example French Immersion grade 9 class at CCHS is expected to be at 41 students! Many parents have been expressing disquiet at this class size.
- **Discussion on amalgamation of school boards:** The school board division is small and that has disadvantages. However, at least CRPS have a voice rather than their voice being overshadowed if they were part of a larger division. CRPS wish to remain as is and not join another school board.

9. Staff Appreciation Lunch on June 14.

- **Staff Appreciation Lunch:** Invite Karen Dreaver, and the two lunchtime supervisors.
- **Jazz and Java:** All LGMS volunteers including Ruth Kerr will be invited to Ms Murphy's 'Jazz and Java' volunteer recognition event.
- **Appreciation gift** to be bought for the pizza coordinator as thank you for all her hard work on this. Pizza days are a good fundraiser for the council.

10. ACEE Seminar/environmental component in curriculum redesign: Alison Carter

- **ACEE:** Alison attended a free workshop at the recent **Alberta Council for Environmental Education** conference where educators discussed how to increase quality and quantity of Environmental Education in Alberta's school curriculum. See <http://abcee.org/championeer/>
- **Curriculum Review:** Alison suggested parents may also be interested in what this would look like. Gareth Thompson is Executive Director of ACEE (and LGMS student parent), which also includes Bow Valley teachers on their board. Alberta Education is undertaking a review of school environmental curriculum, and now is a good time to have those discussions before the curriculum is decided. **Action:** Brian will look into what the school curriculum review is about.

11. School Transitions: CCHS Transitions & class sizes: Alison Carter

- **Grade 8-9 Transitions:** Alison along with other parents have expressed disquiet at the expected Grade 9 French Immersion class size of 41 at CCHS. *What can be done to mitigate the negative effects of such large classes?* Awaiting decisions from Alberta Education, and further advice from the CRPS Board of Trustees.

12. Council Initiatives: All

- **6 copies of 'Blink' for library.** Not planning to order. Will look at possibly ordering some next term.

- **Gro-i-ro council website link:** There is now a direct link (the last tab on the top right of the LGMS home web page) from <http://www.crps.ab.ca/lgms/> to www.gro-i-ro.weebly.com. Brian thanked for getting this organized.
- **Grant writing:** Future grant writing prospects/projects at LGMS and building granting relationships. Alison C. attended a very worthwhile Grant Writing workshop (lunchtime with lunch included at \$10) at Town of Banff, Town Hall. These are very useful workshops with handouts, and usually one or two workshops are planned a year. Recommended to sign up for one.
- **Take away messages:**
 - i) The most important element is for LGMS to develop a relationship with prospective grantors;
 - ii) Grantors welcome applicants to call them with questions (good idea to do some background reading first from the website), and to discuss possible projects, and to discuss if the project is a good match for the grantors values and interests; also it is good practice to ask for feedback if an application is not successful – it will improve chances of being successful for any next application.
 - iii) Plan & research well in advance of the grant application deadline – rushed applications show that, and likely will not be funded; plan *now* for next year's grant applications.
 - iv) For the Banff Community Fund (contact: Lorraine Widmer-Carson, Executive Director), they fund in Canmore, but wish to see the connection made between Banff and Canmore. The recent Artist-in-Residence application was unsuccessful because BCF look for the broader benefit to the community.
 - v) Nancy Lewis, FCSS Community Dev. Coordinator is happy to assist with advice on prospective grantors for Bow Valley organizations.

13. Items outstanding & Action Items from minutes: All

- **The traditional Grade 8 farewell dance, Thursday, June 20,** will go ahead as planned on. Brian talked to students, and it would cause heavy disappointment if the farewell dance was suddenly altered to a different event.
- To ensure best behaviour from students, this year's dance will be organized by parents who will be chaperoning and expecting respectful manners (as they would at home) from students.
- Grade 7's have always been invited to the dance (very empty gym if only grade 8's dance): 'the more the merrier'.
- An email will be sent out by Brenda Jefferies requesting help with organization, and for on the night volunteers.
- With the younger grade 4's joining LGMS the format of LGMS dances may change to include the whole family.
- **Action:** Recruitment needed for New Council Members. Vacancies will include: Communications Coordinator (newsletter & website updates); Iron Chef Contact ; Member(s) at Large. Parents also may wish to nominate themselves for other board positions as well.
- The year-end BBQ will be held on Wednesday June 26 at lunchtime. A budget of \$500 has already been allocated.
- Alison A. will supply the June 14 financials, which will suffice as the end-of-year financial statement.

14. Next Meeting: June 12th AGM.

- At the AGM, council members will need to officially vote in 4 positions: Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.
Action: Leanne will send an invitation (via Audrey) to grade 3 & 4 ERS parents for them to put in their nominations if they wish. They will need to be present at the AGM.

Adjourned 9:08pm

Action Items May 2013 council meeting:

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