

Board Highlights February 2017

Transportation

The Board received the Annual Transportation Monitoring Report which includes comparative data on many aspects of transportation including the revenue and expenses for past four years. Significant reductions in the on-going transportation deficit have been realized over time and while the current budget shows a deficit as of January 30, 2017, the funding is over a twelve-month period whereas expenses are over a ten-month period. The projection is to be “on budget” by year end. Of note, subsidies last year (2015-16) totaled slightly more than the deficit at year end. Fees to parents went down year over year from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

The Board considered several of the pressure points noted in the report including the challenges of “distance and sparsity” as CGS transports to/from all quadrants of Calgary. The Board also expressed interest in learning more about “best practice” in transportation services for students, and in particular, examples of cooperation among cities, municipalities and school boards.

CGS has posted an RFP for Transportation Services as the current agreement with First Student expires on June 30 this year.

Enrolment

The Board considered the Annual Enrolment Monitoring Report which shows comparative enrolment by grade and quadrant of the City over the past four years. Recently opened new schools in several neighborhoods of Calgary have impacted enrolment at CGS. The majority of students attend from SW neighborhoods and enrolment is growing from NE neighborhoods.

An invitation for parents to participate in an online Early-Exiting Students Survey will be forthcoming before year end. The purpose is to gather information on reasons for exiting CGS prior to completing grade nine. The information will be helpful in improving our school.

Governance Policy

The Board continues to review its Governance Policy Handbook in a regular, sequential policy-by-policy approach in order to build shared understanding, monitor for compliance, responding to any changes in the context, and consider the impact of a particular policy. The Board considered *Policy 5 Role of the Charter Board Chair* and agreed to a minor amendment that specifies Roberts Rules of Order as the “go to” for basic meeting procedures.

Board Development

Board Chair Natalya Nicholson commented on the success of the CGS initiated Board Development Seminars for Calgary-area charter boards. B. Kallal, formerly a Board Chair with a large urban public school board, facilitated the last session on January 24 which focused on effective meetings. Approximately 30 Directors and Superintendents attended this event which was also an opportunity for networking among charter schools.

Speak Out for Parents

Margo Purcell, Vice Chair serving as Chair of the Governance Committee spoke about the planning that is underway for the Parent Speak Out. The event will be held prior to the spring break (last week in March) although the specific date has not yet been determined.

Facilities

Wendy Juergens, Secretary-Treasurer updated the Board on a number of items including the success of the Plant Operations and Maintenance Agreement with Foundations for the Future Charter Academy. The Agreement results in improved service and reduced costs for both parties. Wendy also spoke about the recently announced replacement modular classroom units that are coming to Lakeview. The two, old modular units will be de-commissioned and removed. Architects have been invited to quote on the project design and preparation of the tender documents which will go out very soon to ensure the classrooms are ready for use this September. As well, CGS is addressing the flooring at Bel Aire and has now received quotes for removal and replacement. This work is also expected to be finished over the summer break. Alberta Education and AB Infrastructure review the condition of school facilities over a five-year cycle. Lakeview was recently assessed and CGS is waiting for the report that looks at the building envelop and mechanical systems. And finally, the Board considered a very preliminary architectural rendering of a design concept to “open up” the front office of Lakeview in order to create a more welcoming, functional work environment.

TAAPCS

Director Geordie MacPherson commented on his attendance, along with Director Wayne Marshall, at the recent TAAPCS General Meeting in Red Deer. He noted that the Board of Directors for TAAPCS approved the new Bylaws which are the culmination of work that started approximately 18 months ago. A new organizational chart visually represents the new structure and intention – that TAAPCS becomes the voice for Charter School Boards of Directors. Director Caroline Claussen and Directors Stanley Wong were appointed to represent CGS on the TAAPC’s Communications (Advocacy) and Fees Committees. The Fees Committee will bring forward a recommendation and the Communications Committee will bring forward a plan (and proposed budget for advocacy) to the spring General Meeting.

Please note that Highlights is intended as an internal communications document. The official record of the meeting is found in the Minutes (February Minutes will be approved in March) and the Board Agenda package which is posted to the website in advance of the meeting. Questions or comments, which are always welcome, can be directed to Dianne McBeth at Dianne.mcbeth@calgarygirlsschool.com or by calling 403.252,0702.