

ST. ALBERT COGITO STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES April 27, 2004

Principal	Ardyth Garrison	459-7766	<a href="mailto:garrisona@spschools.org">garrisona@spschools.org</a>
Co-Chairpersons	Marie Cusack	973-3284	<a href="mailto:cusack@shaw.ca">cusack@shaw.ca</a>
	Christina Unruh	459-0038	<a href="mailto:unruh6@telus.net">unruh6@telus.net</a>
Classroom Reps.-Gr.1/2	Shelene Hlus	459-5737	<a href="mailto:shelenehlus@shaw.ca">shelenehlus@shaw.ca</a>
Gr.3/4	Claudia Johnston	459-6870	<a href="mailto:cjohnsto@westaim.com">cjohnsto@westaim.com</a>
Gr. 5/6	Donna Glennie	459-9115	no e-mail
Community Volunteer	Cheryl Joseph	459-7795	<a href="mailto:cjoseph@telusplanet.net">cjoseph@telusplanet.net</a>

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Cogito programme, please feel free to contact the Principal, or one of the Steering Committee members or the Community Volunteer.

Meeting held at 7:00 pm., April 27, 2004 at E.S. Gish School.  
ALL COGITO PARENTS ARE INVITED TO COME AND TAKE PART IN  
DECISIONS AFFECTING YOUR CHILD

IN ATTENDANCE: Principal Ardyth Garrison  
Cogito Parents: Marie Cusack, Sheryl Beuerlein, Val Katerenchuk,  
Shelene Hlus

CALL TO ORDER

1. Chairperson, Marie Cusack called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES- (revision)

Ardyth Garrison indicated the section with regards to the District Report needed to be revised. It will now read as: All District teachers are asked in April whether they intend to continue teaching in the next school year. The school principal submits their staff projections to the District. The District internally posts any staff vacancies. The District also uses an online recruitment process. If a suitable candidate is not available within this process; principals may advertise using other media. This whole process is completed in a timely manner.

Sheryl moved to adopt revised minutes and Shelene seconded. Motion carried

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

2. Casual Dress & Fun Dress Up days.

It was suggested upon that Cogito students have the option to wear casual clothes on early dismissal days (the first Wednesday of the month). As well, Cogito students will be encouraged to participate in the school's fun dress up days. The purpose of these events is to promote school spirit.

Ardyth did note that in the new school year staff will be more firm regarding uniform dress code.

Discussion around consequences of not following uniform dress code

1<sup>st</sup> violation. – a note will be written in the student's agenda book. Parents are expected to initial the note indicating that they have seen the note.

2<sup>nd</sup> violation – parents will be notified directly, and the student will lose the privilege of that day's noon hour, or recess.

3<sup>rd</sup> violation.- the parents will be notified directly and the student may be required to serve an in school suspension.

It was noted that hair accessories, make-up, jewelry should be non-distracting.

If Monday is a stat. holiday or a day off, the Tuesday will be treated as the formal day.

### 3. RESULTS FROM CTBS TESTING

The results are back. The student's teacher should have discussed the results during parent teacher interviews. If this has not occurred parents can ask for the results from their child's teacher. Ardyth did note that CTBS tests will not be done this spring. Ardyth reported that the CTBS testing takes a fair amount of class time. As the CTBS tests were done in December they might not be a valuable indicator if done again too soon i.e. in May. The CTBS tests will be done in the fall and the purpose would be to use them as a base line and compare the results from last year.

### 4. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT- Ardyth Garrison

#### a) ENROLLMENTS FOR NEXT YEAR

The majority of this year's 53 Cogito students are planning to return for next school year. 82-85 enrollments for the 2004/2005 school year.

21+ kindergarten students are registered

11 grade 1 students are registered

Ardyth is in the process of contacting all the families that showed an interest from last year but did not register due to concerns (ie. Split grades, transportation, newness of the program. The viability of a grade 7 program is still being considered. At present there are currently 11 grade 6 students with the majority indicating they will come back for Cogito grade 7. If these numbers don't increase enough to become a full class, Ardyth would consider offering a 6/7 combined class.

4b. April 15, 04 the open house went well. The fashion show was a hit, and the band did a great job. Sheryl suggested a guest book at the door to get an idea of the new families.

4c. Ardyth felt that the kindergarten open house could have been promoted better.

#### 4d. Planning for 2004/2005

A discussion around the importance of advertising the program. Portable signs seem like a good means of advertising. The sign companies will only agree to put signs on private property with the owner's permission.

It was suggested that a request notice is put in the Gish Gazette asking parents if they own any land where a portable sign could be put that would be visible location.

The St. Albert Trail is a great spot to advertise the program. The Cogito Banner has been posted in this location.

It was suggested that Canada Post do a mail drop (pamphlet). Ardyth advises that it is more economical to do a distribution with the St. Albert Gazette. It was suggested that the next distribution be done in the Deer Ridge area. This is subject to the guidelines within the district.

Letters to the editor may be a good way to promote the program.

### 5. DISTRICT REPORT

Ardyth had nothing new to report.

6. Cogito Curriculum from kindergarten through grade 6 is available for the parents read in the library. Also available for parents to sign out from the Gish Library, are the following books:

\*How to make your child a reader for Life. (Paul Kropp)

\*How to double your child's grades in school. (Eugene Schwartz)

\*Kids are worth it! (Barbara Coloroso)

\*How to maximize your child's learning ability. (Dr. Lauren Bradway, Barbara Albers Hill)

- \*No more Misbehavin'. 38 Difficult behaviors & how to stop them. (Michele Barba)
- \*How to Talk so kids will listen & listen so kids will talk. (Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish)
- \*How to Behave so Your children will, too! (Sal Severe)
- \*Character Matters. (Thomas Lickona)

#### 7. UNIFORMS

It was decided that crests will be done in the white lettering.

Kindergarten through grade 6 will wear grey pants.

7-9 grades will wear black pants.

#### 8. FUNDRAISING.

Sheryl brought up interesting ideas for fundraising (ie. bulbs orders, a Cogito family car rally)

Sheryl volunteered to look at planning a car rally for Sept. 2004. The money raised could help buy education games/books for each classroom.

#### NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, May 25, 2004 at 7:00 pm in the school library

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by Shelene Hlus

#### PARENTS CORNER:

(Please use this space for any issues you would like to see addressed at the next Steering Committee meeting. Individual concerns can be raised with your child's teacher through a note in the agenda book. This form will be forwarded by the homeroom teacher to Mrs. Garrison).

## ST. ALBERT COGITO STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 22, 2004

Principal	Ardyth Garrison	459-7766	<a href="mailto:garrisona@spschools.org">garrisona@spschools.org</a>
Co-Chairpersons	Marie Cusack	973-3284	<a href="mailto:cusack@shaw.ca">cusack@shaw.ca</a>
	Christina Unruh	459-0038	<a href="mailto:unruh6@telus.net">unruh6@telus.net</a>
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(Grade 3/4)	Claudia Johnston	459-6870	<a href="mailto:cjohnsto@westaim.com">cjohnsto@westaim.com</a>
(Grade 5/6)	Donna Glennie	459-9115	no e- mail
Community Volunteer	Cheryl Joseph	459-7795	<a href="mailto:cjoseph@telusplanet.net">cjoseph@telusplanet.net</a>

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Cogito programme, please feel free to contact the Principal, one of the Steering Committee members or the Community Volunteer.

**Meeting held at 7:00 p.m., March 22, 2004 at E. S. Gish School  
All Cogito Parents Are Welcome To Attend  
The Steering Committee Meeting**

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IN ATTENDANCE:	Principal:	Ardyth Garrison
	Cogito Parents:	Marie Cusack, Mary McMurdo, Sheryl Beuerlein
	Prospective Parent:	Tracey Minaker
	Community Volunteer:	Cheryl Joseph

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### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Marie Cusack called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Welcome and introduction by all in attendance.

### ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Mary moved to adopt minutes as presented from last meeting on 25 Nov 03. Sheryl seconded. Motion carried.

### BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

- EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**  
This will be covered in the Parent Handbook. The key strategy in Cogito is direct teaching – Ardyth recommended defining this, and Marie suggested presenting it as a workshop/in-service to Cogito parents along with other topics e.g. homework. This would likely take place at the school in early fall 2004.
- ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY**  
The Cogito curriculum meets and exceeds (in some areas) all the requirements set out by Alberta Learning. This includes the requirement for infusion of the core program with Information and Communication Technology. In Cogito, this means that computer technology skills are taught at appropriate grade levels, but they are not the focus of education.
- CHARITABLE TAX RECEIPT REGULATION**  
Financial donations can be made to the District (payable to ‘St. Albert Protestant Schools’) and designated on the cheque memo line ‘to E. S. Gish - Cogito Programme’. The District will allocate this money to Ardyth’s budget and will also mail out a charitable income tax receipt for any donations greater than \$25.
- RESULTS FROM CTBS TESTING**  
Results from the CTBS are back. Teachers will be sharing the appropriate information with parents at the Parent-Teacher Conferences on March 23-24, 2004. There will be follow-up testing at the end of this school year to measure growth. The results from those tests are expected within a month after being written. At this time, class averages from the CTBS results will not be shared

with parents, due to the small class sizes (for example, there are only six Grade 5 students). However, as class sizes increase, averages will be disclosed, perhaps as early as next school year.

5. NETWORKING WITH EDMONTON COGITO

Ardyth has been in contact with the principal at Britannia Junior High School about the possibility of a joint development session in April. The session would include, but not be limited to: effective strategies and resources for direct instruction, ideas for poetry selections, and general sharing of information. Ardyth has tried, but has not yet been able to connect with Mount Pleasant and Elmwood schools for similar sessions.

6. FAMILY PHONE DIRECTORY

Thanks to Chris Unruh, the Cogito Family Phone Directory has been and was distributed to Cogito families in the March 19, 2004 Friday Envelope. It was suggested that next year's Directory be updated and published earlier in the school year. Ardyth suggested that the Steering Committee send out the Directory permission forms in the first school week of September 2004.

7. FAMILY SOCIAL

Donna Glennie is presently collecting information on possible places, dates, and prices to organize a Cogito Family Social. Some suggested venues are the Fountain Park Pool and Dynamyx Gymnastics Club. All Cogito students, parents, and staff would be invited and encouraged to attend.

Ardyth described another opportunity for Cogito families to socialize. E.S.Gish is planning to host a Welcome Back BBQ & Meet the Teacher for the whole school on August 31, 2004.

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

1. NEW REGISTRATIONS TO DATE

To date, 27 new students have registered in the Cogito Programme, with the possibility of 5 more registering soon. Seventeen of these are enrolled in Cogito Kindergarten, and 7 in grade 1. There have been several requests for school tours and further information about the programme.

2. DEBRIEF FROM JANUARY 27, 2004 INFORMATION NIGHT

Despite the weather, the January 27<sup>th</sup> information night was a success - due in large part to the parent advocates. The tri-folds/displays were very well received.

3. PROMOTIONS PLAN FOR APRIL 15, 2004 OPEN HOUSE

The format this evening will be different from the Jan 27 Information Evening. On April 15, families will be given a passport and will be encouraged to get their passport stamped at each of the classrooms they visit. All classrooms will be open. Teachers will answer individual questions, do a presentation or conduct an activity within each classroom. Student work will be displayed. Ardyth will be in a separate room (e.g. library, or somewhere else suitable) to operate a power point presentation about Cogito and will be available to answer questions.

**ACTION:** Current Cogito families are encouraged to come out this evening, with their children in uniform, to also see the displays, talk to teachers, and to be available to answer questions from prospective Cogito parents.

There has been a lot of positive feedback about the ads that have run in the Gazette and the St. City News. The two papers will run a series of full-page and half-page ads that will outline the different programs that St. Albert Protestant Schools offer (Cogito, International Baccalaureate, French Immersion, Logos, Etc.). This is in addition to the separate ads that E.S. Gish will place. An information package from District about all their programs including Cogito, will be going out this week to all daycares and preschools.

4. **PLANS FOR COGITO KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION NIGHT ON APRIL 22, 2004**  
Carolyn Hunter, a teacher at Elmwood-Cogito, has again, graciously agreed to come and speak about Cogito Kindergarten on April 22. Cheryl suggested distributing a flyer to the preschools that would specifically advertise the Kindergarten Info Night. Ardyth is looking into advertising on a mobile sign to be placed on 170<sup>th</sup> Street in Edmonton.
5. **SELECTION OF THREAD COLORS FOR CREST**  
Thanks to Mariellen Meszaros for preparing an approximate prototype logo for us. From this example, metallic gold and white were the preferred thread color choices. Prior to finalizing thread choice, Marie will request an official prototype from the uniform supplier using these thread colors. All cardinal red pullovers, vests, cardigans and black fleece vests will be recalled in mid-June to ship to the uniform supplier to have the cresting applied to all these items.
6. **SELECTION OF SHAPE OF STITCH-ON CREST**  
Marie presented a sheet showing 8 variations of crest shapes. Crest #6 was unanimously chosen. It was decided that it would have the dark cardinal red background. Ardyth suggested removing the 'St. Albert' at the top of the crest to reduce the size of the crest. With less stitching, this would also reduce the stiffness on the embroidered articles (cardigans, vests, etc.) It was suggested by Tracey, that the crest edge be bound in metallic gold thread, and then self-stitched onto the clothing with the Cogito cardinal red thread. Mary alternately suggested a 2-thread wrap (gold & cardinal red) on the edge of the crest. Marie will request an official prototype from the uniform supplier. The stitch-on crest is intended for the white and cardinal red golf shirts, and will also be available for sale to parents to use where ever else they want.
7. **STATUS ON PREPARATION OF HANDBOOK**  
The Handbook Committee has met several times, and things are progressing nicely. Ardyth has enlisted the help of Mrs. Reilander (school Librarian) to provide a bibliography on topics of interest to Cogito parents. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

### **DISTRICT REPORT**

Ardyth discussed the District staffing process/timelines. All District teachers are asked in April whether they intend to continue teaching in the next school year. The school principal submits their staff projections to District. District internally posts any staff vacancies. The District utilizes an on-line recruitment process. School principals seek to fill vacancies from these resumes. If a suitable candidate is not available within this internal process, principals may advertise in other media. The goal is to staff our school with excellent teachers in a timely manner.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **UNIFORMS COMMITTEE MEETING UPDATE**  
The Uniforms Committee met on March 4, 2004. Sheryl Beuerlein volunteered to serve as the Uniforms Consignment Coordinator. Minutes of that meeting are available upon request from the School Office. Next uniform meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 29, 2004 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. All Cogito parents are welcome to attend. Call Shelene Hlus at 459-5737 for directions.
2. **CASUAL DRESS AND FUN DRESS DAYS**  
Marie suggested that the first Wednesday of every month (early dismissal at noon) could be a casual (i.e. non-uniform) dress day for the Cogito students. It was also suggested that Cogito students continue to be allowed to participate in other 'dress-up days' such as Halloween, Pajama Day, etc. and that students be given a tentative schedule of them at the start of each school year. As always, care would be taken to preserve instructional classroom time.
3. **OTHER**  
Sheryl requested that if next spring the Delwood School Council in Edmonton was once again hosting the Literacy & Learning Day at NAIT, that the information could be included in the E. S. Gish newsletter. More information can be found on their website at [www.literacyday.ca](http://www.literacyday.ca)

**NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, April 27, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. in the school library

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Sheryl Beuerlein

**PARENTS CORNER:**

(Please use this space for any issues you would like to see addressed at the next Steering Committee meeting. Individual concerns can be raised with your child's teacher through a note in the agenda book. This form will be forwarded by the homeroom teacher to Mrs. Garrison.)

# **ST. ALBERT COGITO STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES**

## **Meeting of May 25, 2004 at Elmer S. Gish School**

**All Cogito parents are invited to come to any or all Steering Committee meetings to be informed and to take part in decisions affecting their child.**

Principal	Ardyth Garrison	459-7766	garrisona@spschools.org
Co-Chairpersons	Marie Cusack	973-3284	cusack@shaw.ca
	Christina Unruh	459-0038	unruh6@telus.net
Classroom Representatives (Grade 1/2)	Shelene Hlus	459-5737	shelenehlus@shaw.ca
(Grade 3/4)	Claudia Johnston	459-6870	cjohnsto@westaim.com
(Grade 5/6)	Donna Glennie	459-9115	no e-mail
Community Volunteer	Cheryl Joseph	459-7795	cjoseph@telusplanet.net

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Cogito programme, please feel free to contact the Principal, one of the Steering Committee members or the Community Volunteer.

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Principal: Ardyth Garrison

Deputy Superintendent: Barry Wowk

Cogito Parents: Marie Cusack, Sheryl Beuerlein, Val Katerenchuk

Community Volunteer: Cheryl Joseph

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson, Marie Cusack called meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Welcome and introduction by all in attendance.

### **DISTRICT REPORT**

The Cogito programme at E.S.Gish will be in need of one more teacher for next school year. According to Barry Wowk, District will be filling this position with the usual District process. District will select a suitable candidate from within the following candidate pools which are listed in order of priority:

1. from within District from teachers who have requested reassignment and who are on continuous contract
2. from teachers returning from leave
3. from teachers on probationary contracts
4. from open advertising

### **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Val moved to adopt minutes as presented from last meeting on 27 April 04. Cheryl J seconded the motion. Carried.

### **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

#### **CASUAL DAY & FUN DRESS DAYS**

Ardyth and the Cogito teachers have discussed these ideas. They are concerned that allowing regular clothes on the first Wednesday of each month (early dismissal days) would add to the distraction that all students already exhibit on these early out days. Regarding the spirit days that the Junior High Student Council organizes (i.e. Fairy Tale days, Western days, etc.), they agreed that Cogito students should participate fully in these events to participate in school spirit activities. They suggested that any Cogito students not wanting to dress up for the theme day could wear regular clothes.

#### **CAR RALLY**

Saturday, September 25, 2004 was selected as the date for the first annual Cogito Car Rally. This event is meant to be a social mixer for Cogito students and their families. Anyone willing to help should phone the Car Rally Coordinator, Sheryl Beuerlein, at 459-6272. She will be working on this event over the summer and would appreciate the help.

#### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**



Val and Sheryl B have both written a 'Letter to the Editor' of the St. Albert Gazette. Val has already sent her letter in. It was published on June 2, 2004. Sheryl B. will send hers in soon. It is hoped that these letters will stimulate further enrolment in Cogito. Additional 'Letters to the Editor' from other satisfied Cogito parents would be appreciated at any time. Cheryl Joseph (459-7795) would be willing to help you write or expedite your letter.

## **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

### **REGISTRATIONS TO-DATE**

There are about 79 students currently registered for Cogito Programme in 2004/2005 in grades K to 6. There are also 7 students registered for Cogito grade 7 which is not enough for a stand-alone grade 7 Cogito class. Creative alternatives will be considered as enrolment patterns emerge. New enquiries continue to come in.

### **PLANNING FOR 2004/2005**

Ardyth will investigate what is available for Cogito teacher team training this summer through Edmonton Public or Calgary Public.

### **SUMMER PROMOTION PLANS**

Ardyth wishes to rent portable boulevard signs for the summer. The City of St Albert won't allow these signs on their property. Ardyth will ask through the Gish Gazette whether there are any Gish families with high visibility personal property within City of St. Albert who would allow this kind of signage on their property. She will also put a suitable message on the school's boulevard sign for summer. Marie suggested that all of these boulevard signs display the Gish website.

District is sending out a brochure to all outgoing grade 6s in all St. Albert Protestant Schools that will advertise the District's alternative junior high programmes, including Cogito.

Cheryl J volunteered to encourage Saint City News to do another article about Cogito. She also volunteered to try to arrange for an article in the Edmonton Journal.

Ardyth will stimulate the 'word of mouth' promotion avenue by sending home a letter of explanation and about 10 flyers. She will be asking all Cogito families to give a flyer this summer to friends, family, neighbours and co-workers who are potentially interested in the Cogito programme.

Ardyth will print up as many flyers as needed for any parents willing to do a mailbox stuffing walk-about in their neighbourhood or any other neighbourhood(s). The following parents have already volunteered for:

- \* Kingswood (200 flyers) by Sheryl B.
- \* Lacombe Park (200) by Val K.
- \* Forest Glen (200) by Cheryl J.

If anyone else is willing to do a walk-about, phone Ardyth and tell her what neighborhood you're doing and how many flyers you need. You may phone her at 459-7795 prior to July 1 and after August 20. To reach her between July 1 and August 20, you may leave a message with the receptionist at District Office at 460-3712.

Ardyth is considering whether to create a bridge banner and ask the City for approval to hang on the pedestrian bridge over St Albert Trail during late summer.

### **RAINMAKER PARADE**

E.S.Gish school will be in the parade. The junior high's will be on a flatbed doing Western line-dancing. Elementary students and parents will be walking, biking, rollerblading, etc. Everyone is welcome to participate. Thank you to the Cogito families who are planning to participate: McMurdo's, Cusack's, Katerenchuk's. There will be flyers and candies to hand out.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **HANDBOOK**

This project is approaching completion within the Handbook Committee. It will then be sent to Michele Dick for her review. Upon final completion, copies will be distributed to all parents in September.

### **PERSONAL PLAN SYSTEM**

This system is evolving and developing. It is meant to provide communication to home, to provide for additional learning time if homework is not completed or to modify inappropriate behaviour. It is being revised to include a checklist for the younger students, and to include a written reflection exercise for misbehaviour incidents.

### **PARENT IN-SERVICE SESSIONS**

Ardyth suggested that after the executive elections for Steering Committee on September 21, 2004; that time (up to about 1 hour) be provided for a parent in-service session (possibly "Homework" would be a good topic). Information about homework that is specific to each classroom would be provided by the classroom teacher.

### **PHONE DIRECTORY**

Claudia Johnston has volunteered to initiate and coordinate the publication of a programme-wide Cogito Family Phone Directory in early September. Ardyth suggested that participation consent forms could be sent home via the first Friday envelope of the year on September 3, 2004.

### **HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS**

Marie summarized the many successful avenues of communication that Gish provides between school and home:

1. Regarding school-wide information: monthly newsletter "Gish Gazette" in hard copy, via e-mail, and posted to website; weekly summary "Gish at a Glimpse" of important dates and events in the upcoming week; monthly parent groups' meetings (School Council, fundraising group "Akinsdale Parent's Association", band group)
2. Regarding Cogito programme-wide information: monthly Steering Committee meeting and published minutes
3. Regarding classroom information: monthly newsletters from homeroom teacher, other notices if necessary
4. Regarding individual students: two parent/teacher conferences; timely return of student work, homework agenda books

### **UNIFORMS UPDATE**

Sheryl B is setting up two bank accounts for Steering Committee: Used Uniforms and Fundraising. Two of three authorized signatures will be needed on all cheques.

The first opportunity for parents to purchase used Cogito uniform items is being organized for the first early dismissal of the new school year, on Wednesday, October 6, 2004. If you have uniform items that you wish to sell, call the Used Uniforms Coordinator, Sheryl Beuerlein at 459-6272 for your sales number and more information.

A letter will be coming home in mid-June requesting that all cardinal red cardigans, vest, and pullovers; white or cardinal red golf shirts; and black fleece vests be labelled with student's name and handed in to the school office. They will be shipped to Neat Uniforms for cresting with the Cogito logo and returned by late August.

### **WELCOME BBQ**

Gish staff will be hosting a welcome back BBQ for all Gish students and their families on August 31, 2004. More details will come later.

### **NOMINATIONS FOR NEW EXECUTIVE OF COGITO STEERING COMMITTEE IN 2004/2005**

Marie related that Claudia Johnston is willing to be nominated for Chairperson; and that Cheryl Joseph is willing to be nominated for Vice-Chairperson. All Cogito parents are encouraged to take part in their child's education, and meet new friends by attending the first Cogito Steering Committee meeting of the new year on September 21, 2004.

**NEXT MEETING**

7:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 21, 2004

Even if this is not specifically mentioned in any notices or newsletters, all Cogito parents are always welcome to attend any meeting of the Cogito Steering Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.  
Minutes submitted by Cheryl Joseph

<b>IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES</b>	
Tuesday, August 31, 2004	Welcome Back BBQ for all grades (5 pm)
Wednesday, September 1, 2004	School starts
Tuesday, September 21, 2004	Cogito Steering Committee Meeting
Saturday, September 25, 2004	Cogito Car Rally
Wednesday, October 6, 2004	Used Uniforms Event

CUT -----CUT

**PARENT'S CORNER:**

(Please use this space for any suggestions for improvement or for any issues you would like to see addressed at the next Cogito Steering Committee meeting. This form will be forwarded by the homeroom teacher to Mrs. Garrison. Individual concerns can be raised with your child's teacher through a note in the agenda book.)

Principal	Ardyth Garrison	459-7766	garrisona@spschools.org
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	Christina Unruh	459-0038	unruh@compusmart.ab.ca
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(Grade 5/6)	Donna Glennie		
Community Volunteer	Cheryl Joseph	459-7795	cjoseph@telusplanet.net

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Cogito programme, please feel free to contact the Principal, one of the Steering Committee members or the Community Volunteer.

**Meeting held at 7:00 pm, November 25, 2003 at E.S. Gish School**  
**All Cogito Parents are Welcome to attend**  
**the Steering Committee Meeting**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Principal: Ardyth Garrison  
Cogito Parents: Marie Cusack, Christina Unruh, Claudia Johnston  
Mary McMurdo, Belinda Facchin, Sheryl Beuerlein, Lori and Garnet  
Boulette, Shelene Hlus  
Community Volunteer: Cheryl Joseph

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson, Marie Cusack called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Welcome and introduction by all in attendance.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Marie moved to adopt minutes as presented from last meeting. Christine 1<sup>st</sup>. Mary 2<sup>nd</sup>. Carried.

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**1. **HOMEWORK**

Ardyth reviewed feedback regarding Section 5. Student Work. She expressed a concern that we must be careful not to adopt any documents that may impose too stringent or limiting guidelines or regulations. It should be allowed to further evolve prior to adoption. A general document entitled "Homework" was presented Ardyth as an introduction to the topic of homework.

Action Item: Sessions on homework, student assessment and a variety of related topics to be covered in later Parent In-service sessions.

2. **CLASSROOM VISITORS GUIDELINES**

Visits will be scheduled by appointment through the Principal A sign up sheet for in-classroom tours will be available at both the Information Evening on January 27, 2004 and Spring Open House.

3. **CLASS PHONE LISTS**

This will be a Cogito parent initiative.

Action Item: Christine will provide a formal release form for the purpose of obtaining parent phone numbers in order to develop a Classroom Parent & Student Directory. Grade 3/4 and 5/6 classroom parent representatives will follow through with this initiative.

4. **CTBS TESTING**

Tests have arrived. Baseline testing will occur first week of December.

5. **COGITO NAME AND LOGO**

Edmonton Public Schools has allowed St. Albert Protestant School Board to use the Cogito name under the following provisos:

-the curriculum used (called the Cogito Scope & Sequence) is the one developed specifically by Edmonton Public Schools for all Cogito programs in whatever school it is delivered in.

-beginning reading instruction focuses on explicit phonics

-the programme is structured

-the programme follows the Cogito Foundational Principles as approved by both St. Albert Protestant School Board and Edmonton Public School Board; and which were developed by the Cogito Alternative Program Society of Edmonton.

The Cogito programme offered at E.S. Gish will be known as the *St. Albert Cogito Alternative Programme*.

6. **DISTRICT STEERING COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

St. Albert Protestant School District does not have a formal written policy on how a 'Steering Committee' should be governed or structured- The establishment of a Steering Committee is at the discretion of the principal of the school. The role of the committee is to support and enhance the experience of the students in the programme. The committee is advisory in nature, providing input to the principal. The membership in the committee includes all parents of students registered in the programme. A District Office representative is also identified to work with the committee on a needs basis.

Note: This committee is not "representative" in the sense of being elected to speak on behalf of others. All parents are welcome to contact the teacher or principal on matters related to the programme at any time.

7. COMMITTEE VACANCIES

All Steering Committee vacancies have been filled.

Vice-Chairman: Mary McMurdo; Christine 1<sup>st</sup>, Claudia 2<sup>nd</sup> Carried.

Uniforms- position will be shared by Shelene Hlus, Sheryl Beuerlein, Cheryl Joseph (M.R.)

Grade 1/2 Class Rep: Shelene Hlus

Treasurer/Fundraising Coordinator: this position does not seem to be needed and was therefore deleted.

8. CHARITABLE TAX RECEIPT REGULATIONS

Deferred to next meeting. Ardyth will continue to investigate.

All business arising from the October minutes has been covered.

**NEW BUSINESS**

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

NETWORKING WITH EDMONTON COGITO TEACHERS

A joint Personal Development session is being planned this Spring for St. Albert, Edmonton, Calgary Cogito and Cogito-like programmes

COMMUNICATION PLAN

An Information Evening about Cogito hosted by the Cogito Steering Committee will be held Tuesday, 7 pm, January 27, 2004 at E.S.Gish school. Presentations by staff, educators and parents will be included in the format. The purpose of this event is to attract new student registrations and to educate all interested parents about Cogito, including those parents whose students are currently registered in St. Albert Cogito and those parents who are potentially interested. Current Cogito parents are invited to come to this evening and are asked to bring along their friends, family, coworkers or neighbors.

An organizational meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2003 to plan for the Information Evening. Additionally, a school-wide Open House will be held in April to feature all programs at E.S.Gish including the Cogito Programme.

Plans are also being made to host a Cogito Kindergarten Information Evening. Details will follow later.

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Deferred to next meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Marie raised the suggestion of organizing a Cogito Family Social. This would be a parent initiative and its success dependent on interest expressed by all Cogito families. Some ideas presented were: Pot Luck Dinner and Gymnastics at Dynamix Gymnastics; skiing at one of the local hills; spring BBQ. If you have other suggestions or would be interested in having a Cogito Social organized please pass this on to one of the Steering Committee members.

NEXT MEETING

7:00 p.m. Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Even if this is not specifically mentioned in any notices or newsletters, all Cogito parents are always welcome to attend any meeting of the Cogito Steering Committee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Claudia Johnston

**IMPORTANT DATES**

Tuesday December 9, 2003 7:00pm Organizational Meeting for Cogito Information Evening

Tuesday January 27, 2004 7:00pm Cogito Information Evening

Monday February 1, 2004 Kindergarten registration begins

Tuesday February 24, 2004 7:00pm Next Cogito Steering Committee meeting

April, 2004 Open House, Registration for 2004/2005 begins

**PARENT'S CORNER:**

(Please use this space for any issues you would like to see addressed at the next Cogito Steering Committee meeting. This form will be forwarded by the homeroom teacher to Mrs. Garrison. Individual concerns can be raised with your child's teacher through a note in the agenda book.)

## E.S. GISH-COGITO STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 28, 2003

Principal	Ardyth Garrison	459-7766	garrisona@spschools.org
Co-Chairpersons	Marie Cusack	973-3284	cusack@shaw.ca
	Christina Unruh	459-0038	unruh@compusmart.ab.ca
Classroom Representatives (Grade 1/2)	vacant		
(Grade 3/4)	Claudia Johnston	459-6870	cjohnsto@westaim.com
(Grade 5/6)	Donna Glennie		
Community Volunteer	Cheryl Joseph	459-7795	cjoseph@telusplanet.net

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Cogito programme, please feel free to contact the Principal, one of the Steering Committee members or the Community Volunteer.

### Meeting held at 7:00 pm at E.S. Gish School All Cogito parents are welcome

#### IN ATTENDANCE:

Principal: Ardyth Garrison  
Cogito Parents: Marie Cusack, Christina Unruh, Claudia Johnston  
Mary McMurdo, Belinda Facchin  
Community Volunteer: Cheryl Joseph

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson, Marie Cusack called meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Welcome and introduction by all in attendance.

#### OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

#### MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF STEERING COMMITTEE AND ELECTIONS OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Marie reviewed committee positions filled and remaining vacancies.

- Secretary  
Marie made motion to appoint Claudia Johnston for position of Secretary. Christina 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.
- Treasurer & Fundraising Coordinator  
Discussion held on functions of this position.  
\*Action Item: Ardyth will investigate regulations governing the issue of charitable tax receipts for parent donations to E.S. Gish on behalf of the Cogito programme.
- Uniforms Coordinator  
Marie discussed our need have this position filled. Issues discussed were coordinating new uniform sales, used uniform sales/drives and uniform storage. Ardyth indicated storage space of uniforms for resale can be temporarily allocated at the school.
- Documents Repository Coordinator – various forms and documents relating to the Cogito programme are available to all parents from the office secretary. Ardyth indicated that these will be coordinated through Hazel Strynadka (office administrator).
- Grade 3/4 Classroom Representative – Claudia Johnston indicated interest in filling this vacancy. Marie carried motion. Christine 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.
- Remaining vacancy positions: Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer & Fundraising Coordinator, Uniforms Coordinator, Classroom Representative Grade 1 / 2. Efforts will continue to be made via classroom notices to fill remaining vacancies.

In an effort to provide all Cogito parents with an efficient communication tool, Claudia motioned to include both e-mail and phone numbers of Co-Chairpersons and Classroom Representatives in the Steering Committee minutes. Mary 2<sup>nd</sup>. Christina motioned to dedicate an area at the end of the minutes as another option for communication. Marie 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motions carried. Cheryl requested to be included as an E.S. Gish Cogito community volunteer.

All business arising from the September minutes has been covered in the agenda.  
Marie moved to adopt minutes as presented from last meeting. Claudia 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## NEW BUSINESS

### HOMEWORK

- An extensive draft document entitled Section 5. Student Work has been developed as a result of many dedicated hours put forth by Marie and Christine. Its purpose is to guide and assist Cogito parents and teachers in the area of homework in alignment with the Cogito programme. It addresses reinforcement of curriculum, time on task, appropriate practice, and communication and stresses that the focus must be relevant to the curriculum. The homework component is a home-school communication process and an integral part of the programme.
- At present, it has been distributed to the teachers and is under review.

### DISTRICT REPORT

The Annual Education Results Report will be presented to the Trustees November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 2003.

Ardyth reviewed the accountability framework of the Report which is addressed by its three main components.

1. Three Year Education Plan (2003-2006) – aligns school goals that are consistent with the five year provincial district goals. These targets are identified yearly.
2. Satisfaction Surveys address the accountability component. These surveys are administered to staff, parents and students.
3. Provincial Achievement Tests.

Additional number of initiatives are in progress. A Lock Down Drill initiative is projected for January implementation.

### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

#### COMBINED GRADES

A presentation was given by Ardyth on Combined grades versus Single grade classes. Statistically 1 out of every 7 classrooms across Canada are a combined grade. Included were the top 10 questions raised on this topic. It was emphasized that we should approach our classrooms as combined versus split. Our children are learning and growing in a combined community network as opposed to a split or segregated setting.

It is interesting to note that all cited research indicated NO adverse effects on children's performance of combined grades. The only downfall of combined classes as cited by research indicated a much more demanding workload on the teacher. Teacher skills need to include a strong knowledge of two grade levels of curriculum, strong organizational skills, and ability to create and function in a more structured environment. Edmonton Public provides Combined Grade Manuals which are used by our teachers to address these challenges.

Some of the research findings of combined grade outcomes:

Older grades are the "experts" and are able to teach others, resulting in increased or equal achievement to single grade classes. Opportunity to work at different levels. Build positive attitudes with increased confidence. Stronger social skills. Many cited examples of children in combined grades out - performing their peers in single grades.
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Comments from our Cogito parents: My kids are learning how to focus and tune out distractions. More opportunity for hands on work in class. More opportunity to address difficult or challenging homework. Increased independence.
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#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- On October 17, 2003 a seminar on Professional Learning Communities presented by Rick Dufour was attended by all of our teachers. Mr. Dufour is the Superintendent of a school in Illinois selected four times in the past decade to be listed on the President's top 10 school list. An emphasis was placed on working as a collaborative group of community professionals.
- Professional Growth Plan (PGP) – Increasing the inner growth and development of our teaching professionals where each teacher identifies areas in which they recognize a need to develop as a professional.
- Our Cogito teachers will be developing professional network relationships with the Cogito teachers from both Mount Pleasant and Elmwood in the upcoming months.

#### OUR PRECIOUS CLASSROOMS

- Present practice does not allow visitors of any nature to visit our classrooms. Although we are all advocates and want to promote our Cogito programme, the security and safety of our children is a priority. These priorities will need to be further developed prior to changing this practice. Some discussion ensued on directing our efforts toward displaying the work of our students, as opposed to having the students feel as if they are on display. Further discussion will continue on this issue.

#### ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

- Our Cogito programme will adopt the use of CTBS (Canadian Test of Basic Skills) as an assessment tool.
- This is administered twice a year; at the beginning and at the end. Due to initial start up and budget restrictions the CTBS was not administered in September but will be administered in early November.
- The CTBS is a normative national test standard, level and age appropriate. Its content is of skills considered to be age/grade appropriate in a broad sense and is not directly related to Alberta Curriculum as the provincial achievement tests are. The format is multiple choice. It is used as a tool to gauge yearly development.
- Report cards are divided into two main categories. The social-personal development category is graded using descriptors. The academic category is graded using percentage levels. In core subject areas, major learning outcomes will be listed; in language arts and math the various strands and weightings will also be included. In addition, an overall percentage level is calculated. Grade 1/2 is not graded using the percentage scale, but a gradient scale of 1 to 5, with 1 as the low and 5 as the high.

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

- E.S. Gish tradition of commemorating Remembrance Day was presented by Ardyth. This is a unique and touching tradition which will be shared by all at Gish.

#### CLASS PHONING LISTS

- Grade 1/2 class phone list is already in place.
- \*Action Item: Grade 3/4 and 5/6 phone lists will need to be developed by office staff.
- Mary motioned that these should be available to the Steering Committee. Christina 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

#### PROGRAMME IDENTITY

- Proposed draft by Ardyth to identify unique name for our programme.
- It was assessed that the draft requires revision in order to clearly identify the legal requirement for a new identity and logo.
- It was adamantly confirmed that the scope and sequence of our Cogito program completely aligns with Edmonton Cogito.
- Much discussion ensued on a need to keep the “Cogito” term in our name in an attempt to not discredit or loose the ground we have gained to date.
- \* Action Item: Christina motioned to put forth the new draft, as will be prepared by Ardyth, to all parents with a request for name suggestions. Marie 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

#### TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Due to the inclement weather and safety considerations, our first major snow storm of the year, the teacher representatives were graciously excused from attendance.

Agenda topics “how a combined grade class works” and “description of the process to prepare teacher year and unit planning” will be moved to the November Agenda.

#### NEXT MEETING

7:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 25, 2003

Meeting adjourned at 10:15p.m.

Minutes submitted by Claudia Johnston



**PARENT'S CORNER:**

(Please use this space for any issues you would like to see addressed at the next Steering Committee meeting. Individual concerns can be raised with your child's teacher through a note in the agenda book. This form will be forwarded by the homeroom teacher to Mrs. Garrison.)