



**Elmer S. Gish Cogito Parents
Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes**

October 19th 2010

Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Casey Boyd, Christine Kendrick, Lysha Ursulak, Donna Goertzen, Shalmin Jaclay, Saeed Ahmad, Elena Bensusan, Anna Wong, Ufuma Odebala-Freyene, Gene Plots, Tammy Mollenkapl, Daniela Djogovic-Steele, Randall Kondruk, Carolyn Hunter, Duncan Knoll

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was approved with the additional topic – Policy Handbook.

3) Review and Approval of September 21st 2010 minutes

Minutes were reviewed and adopted as is.

4) Cogito Guest Teacher Presentation

A new feature added to the meeting Cogito is teacher presentations to the parent committee. Each Steering Committee meeting a Cogito teacher is invited to present to the group a more in-depth look into the Cogito classroom for their grade/subject. This provides an opportunity for parents to get an insight into the program in other grades or subjects; plus it provides for further open communication between parents and teachers – especially teachers that parents may be interacting with in future grades.

Our first Guest Teacher Presenter was Mr. Kondruk. Mr. Kondruk took the group to his classroom and talked about some of the topics covered by Cogito grade 7 and 8 science and math, at times focusing on some of the differences for these subjects specific to the Cogito program. The presentation was both informative and entertaining - Thank you Mr. Kondruk.

5) Uniform Sub-Committee Update

A uniform sub-committee meeting was held October 19th at 6:30pm to review the information and proposals issued by RJ McCarthy and TopMarks. After deliberation on the merits and challenges with both vendors a vote was held and a unanimous decision to proceed with RJ McCarthy as the Cogito uniform supplier to Elmer S. Gish School. Some key reasons sighted for this decision include:

- Cost – generally the overall cost is less with RJ McCarthy (although some items are more whereas some items are considerably less – costs will vary depending on quantity and number of items purchased)
- Quality – garments from RJ McCarthy are of a higher quality than TopMarks
- Buying Experience – Purchasing options are more flexible through RJ McCarthy than TopMarks. Plans may be in the works to establish an onsite (in school) parent

managed “store”. The details and viability of which will be investigated at the next Uniform Sub-committee meeting.

- Uniform options – RJ McCarthy had available more options in sizes and items than TopMarks. RJ McCarthy sizing to suite small children up to adult sizes. In addition the are options and sizes for garments (e.g. Hoodies) available to Junior High students.
- St. Albert Cogito Tartan – RJ McCarthy was able to re-produce the St. Albert Cogito tartan.

A question was raised with regards to opportunities to make changes to the uniform. This topic was briefly discussed. It was agreed that: any changes would be small; and further discussion on this would be tabled at the next Uniform Sub-Committee meeting.

5) Principal’s Report

a) Website

Paul Kane high school was unable to find a student from their Career Technologies Studies to help with the building of the St. Albert Cogito Website. An advertisement will be placed in the school newsletter for a person with the time and ability to build the website.

Based on discussions around this topic it was agreed that a special Sub-Committee for the website be struck to help move this item along. Saeed Ahmad volunteered to head up this sub-committee. Sub-committee members to date are:

- Saeed Ahman
- Michael Maxfield
- Gary Woo
- Duncan Knoll

b) Classroom reps

All Cogito classroom websites are operational.

c) Portable Delay

For logistical reasons with contractors the portable is behind schedule. Based on re-projections the end of October is a possible new entry data for the grade 6 Cogito class.

6) Committee Objectives for the Year

As remaining time was short this item, in detail, was deferred to the next steering committee meeting. A handout was provided that identified last years objectives as well as a worksheet to aid in discussion. For anyone wishing to get a copy of the handout please e-mail Michael Maxfield at mmaxfield@xcura.com.

7) Policy Handbook

Section 8.7 is revised.

Section 8.8 is revised.

Section 8.3 (school celebrations) needs to be updated. Provisions need to be made to accommodate extracurricular activities.

Note: a uniform swap will be held during the November Parent-Teacher interviews.

11) Next Meeting Date

Next meeting is Tuesday November 17th, 2010 7:00pm-9:00pm in the library

The Guest Cogito Teacher presenter will be: Mr. Harrison

Meeting Adjourned - Motion Michael Maxfield



**Elmer S. Gish Cogito Parents
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November 16, 2010

Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Cathy Carew, Kristine Kendrick, Lisa Ursulak, Tammy Mollenkoph, Ufuoma Odebala-Fregene, Jennifer Rowland, Daniela Djogovic-Steele, Duncan Knoll, Donna Goertzen, Anna Wong, Carolyn Hunter

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as is with the addition of 2 items: 7a) Policy Handbook and 7b) Noon hour activities

3) Review and Approval of October 19th Minutes

Minutes were reviewed and adopted as is. Motion to approve Minutes – Anna Wong

4) Guest Cogito Teacher Presentation

Mr. Derek Harrison took the committee to his kindergarten class and demonstrated his approach to teaching this level. Mr. Harrison provided:

- A review of the day in the life of a Cogito Kindergarten student;
- Information about the techniques and learning resources used in class;
- Information about the great teacher (thank you Mrs. Hunter) and administration (thank you Mr. Knoll) support he receives; and
- Answers to questions.

Further, a discussion was held on how best to promote the program in venues like the Kindergarten Fair. Thank you Mr. Harrison.

5) Committee Objectives for the coming year

Reviewed last year's list.

Suggestions for this year:

1. Program Mission Statement

Bring to the foreground the vision or mission statement such that it can anchor program objectives and priorities.

- As a preliminary exercise to this objective the question was asked – Fill in the blank, “My child will be after grade 9.....” Some responses at the meeting included:
 - Will be an independent learner
 - Will be a confident learner
 - Will be a self motivated learner
 - Will be conscientious
 - Will be a student that enjoys learning

- Will be better able to get into University
 - Will succeed in a challenging environment
 - Will have an easier transition to High School
 - Has learned how to balance academic excellence with extra curricular activities
 - Will have solid study habits for life
 - With a solid foundation for study skills and work habits
 - With a second language
 - Suggestion was made that time could be set aside in each meeting to work on this over time.
2. Program Continuous Improvement
- a) Involve/integrate Junior High Students in Elementary grade topics
 - Junior High Students could author the elementary level recitations.
 - b) Continue to work on and improve program documentation – policies, hand guides, etc.
 - c) Involve students in Steering Committee matters
Suggestions made...
 - Could be a lunch hour meeting to go over the minutes from the steering committee meeting
 - Then a student representative could come to a designated meeting to voice their opinions on the issues
 - d) Build on the Buddy Initiative
3. Communication and Community Awareness
- a) Cogito Program Website
 - b) Promote student performance and program successes
 - c) Revisit the Communication structure and mechanisms with a view to achieve better communications
 - d) Marketing of all grades
4. Consistency with other Cogito Programs
- a) Visit and exchange information and ideas with other Cogito Schools in the Edmonton Area
 - b) Connect with other Cogito School Parent/Steering Committees – exchange of ideas and best practices

6) Principal's Report

Uniform Supplies Update

Top Marks uniform supplier was contacted regarding the programs decision to go with another supplier. Top Marks indicated that the Cogito program at Gish is required to pay for some existing uniform material purchases. The new uniform supplier, R.J. McCarthy, will buy the existing material from Top Marks.

Free Standing Cogito Website

A meeting was held with Sam Pratoompron, web developer, regarding the design and setup of the Cogito website. Further sessions will be help with Mr. Pratoompron regarding design and schedule for the website.

Cogito Writing Initiative K-9

Mrs. Hunter has coordinated a program wide Cogito Writing Initiative, Kindergarten to Grade 9 Progressive Writing Analysis Strategy. Writing assignments are done once per term at all grade levels. Rubrics will be followed with specific writing prompts.

Baking Club

Two Cogito grade 4 students submitted a proposal to start a baking club in our school. Miss Chute, our Home Economics and grade 7/8 Cogito Teacher is supervising the club. The club is to meet every Tuesday at lunch.

Chess Club

The grade 6 Cogito teacher, Mr. Gibson, has started a Chess Club. Presently there are 32 members from division II grades meeting every Monday at lunch in room 161.

7a) Policy Handbook

Proposed homework revisions were presented. Further revisions were requested to promote consistency in messaging, particularly in Junior High.

7b) Noon Hour Activities

Existing activities seem to be mostly for Division II. A proposal was made to have some activities (eg. a play, or singing) for the younger grades

8) Next Meeting Date

Next meeting is Tuesday January 18, 2011 7:00pm-9:00pm in the Library

Meeting Adjourned



**Elmer S. Gish Cogito Parents
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Meeting Minutes**

January 18, 2011

Attendance: Casey Boyd, Cathy Carew, Saeed Ahmad, Daniela Djogovic-Steele, Elena Bensusan, Phebe Egluaer, Ufuoma Odebala-Fregene, Carolyn Hunter, Donna Goertzen (Scribe), Michael Maxfield (Chair)

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was approved as is.

3) Review and Approval of October 19th Minutes

Minutes were reviewed and adopted with correction of typo on page 3 (help to held).

4) Guest Cogito Teacher Presentation

Tessa Wright, Grade 2 Cogito teacher, was this meeting's guest teacher. Mrs. Wright provided an in-depth review of the Smart Board and various uses in the classroom. The Smart Board is a powerful teaching tool and provides a creating and interactive method of learning for students. Thank you Mrs. Wright.

5) Principal's Report

Advanced registration and school tours have begun. Early indications show an interest in full day kindergarten. Mr. Harrison and Mrs. Hunter will host the Cogito session at the Kindergarten Fair. An update from which will be provided at the next steering committee meeting.

The Elementary Open House will be February 3rd from 6:00pm to 8:00pm with Kindergarten session being held between 6:00 and 6:45.

Working continues on the Cogito website. Professional photos are to be taken and incorporated into the site.

6) Uniform Supplier Update

- A representative from Neat Uniforms (by RJ McCarthy)TM Sam Khimani was in attendance as a meet and greet. Sam will be the primary uniform vendor contact to our school. Sam welcomes feedback and questions from parents (phone #1-800-668-8261 ext 207).
- A uniform closet in the school has been established. Uniform samples will be kept in room 121 – concession room. The uniforms in the closet, by design, consist of garments not in Gish colours. These garments are merely samples to used for size fitting.

- Ordering of uniforms can be made on-line, by phone or fax. (www.rjmccarthly.com).
- The company is unique with its social responsibility initiative. It's monitored by independent organizations focused on ethical production of clothes.
- In April/May, there is a plan for a focus week for parents to come in and order for the fall. If the child has a growth spurt, any unused items with tags on can be returned for exchange or refund.
- An article will be placed in the Cogito section of the newsletter providing more information about the uniform closet

7) Committee Objectives – Ideas and Actions

- a) Mission Statement – more discussion and ideas on vision statement points. Draft mission statements are to be crafted and tabled at the next meeting for discussion and decision.
- b) Continuous Improvement
 - Get Jr. High Language Arts students to write poems for Elementary recitation. Mrs. Hunter will discuss at the next teacher staff meeting.
 - Jr. High student participation at a Steering Committee meeting. The idea was discussed with regards to having a guest student from Cogito Jr. High at the April/May Steering Committee meeting. Mrs. Hunter will table the idea with Jr. High teachers and discuss topics, logistics and other details.
 - Expanded Buddy System. The idea was raised to expand the buddy system to higher grades. Mrs. Hunter will table the idea with other teachers and report back to the committee.
- c) Communication & Community Awareness
 - Cogito Program Website – a version will be completed by the end of February with the objective to be publicly available at that time.
 - It was suggested the marketing and promotion literature should promote all the grades of the program. Information and materials for entry level grades make no mention of Cogito Jr. High as a long term option.
 - For the next meeting, further canvassing of ideas for marketing, communication and community awareness will be conducted.
- d) Consistency with other Cogito Programs
 - It was discussed that contact be made with other Cogito Schools – in particular other parent committees. Mrs. Hunter will look into contacts.

8) **Other Topics** – there were no other topics raised.

9) Next Meeting Date

Next meeting is March 15, 2011 7:00pm-9:00pm in the library

Meeting Adjourned