



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

January 17, 2011

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**Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Patrick Bensusan, Georgia Atkins, Phebe Eglauer,  
Carolyn Hunter, Duncan Knoll**

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

**2) Adoption of the Agenda**

Additional topic – Grade 4 class Website

**3) Review and Approval of October 18 and November 8<sup>th</sup> 2011 Minutes**

Adopted as is with a few minor corrections.

**4) Guest Teacher**

- Craig Savich – Jr. High Math and Science
- Mr. Savich outlined the use of a class website as a communication tool for students and parents.
- The site is maintained in conjunction with other Jr. High teacher websites to provide information on assignments, tests and schedules.
- The site is also used as a resource base allowing students to access materials online.
- Comments made by parents included the adaptation of the site to align with other teacher sites and to incorporate a consistent structure and look that is aligned with the main St. Albert Cogito website.

**5) Principal's Report**

1. Kindergarten Fair – The district fair to be held January 21<sup>st</sup> from 9:30 to 12:15 at Bellerose High School. Justine Melnychuk and Derek Harrison will be presenting the Cogito Program. Mrs. Hunter will also be attending. The Cogito Program will be offering a.m. and p.m. Kindergarten and a full day Kindergarten for the 2012/13 school year.
2. Gish Elementary Open House – The Elementary open house will be held Monday January 30<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 8pm. All programs will be profiled. In addition, the annual Cogito fashion show will be held this evening.
3. Back to School Solutions – The organization, Back to School Solutions, is offering a pre-order opportunity for school supplies for the up coming school year. Orders can be taken in June for delivery directly to the school for first day distribution. The prices are competitive with standard retail outlets. School administration is looking into the viability and logistics of this and will be making a decision by spring break.

4. Classroom Visits – Mr. Knoll will conduct Cogito classroom visits to ensure proper Cogito Program alignment and consistency. These observations will take place throughout January, February and March. Each class will be visited twice.

## 6) Committee Objectives

### Information exchange

- Information Exchange is seen as a good step towards strengthening the St. Albert Cogito program through sharing experiences with other Cogito schools
- Mr. Knoll will contact Principals of other schools and set in motion arrangements to initiate dialog
- A list of Cogito Schools and Principals
  - Kameyosek Elementary – Hector Potheir
  - Meyokumin Elementary – Gail Brierley
  - Mount Pleasant Elementary – Elisabeth Thomsen
  - Northmount Elementary – Glenn Iriye
  - Pollard Meadows Elementary – Renee McLaws
  - Richard Secord Elementary – Kathline Marzof
  - Stratford K to 9 – Eddie Mah
  - Allendale Jr. High – rob McPhee
  - Edith Rogers Jr. High – Camille Loken

### Managing Program Growth

- The setting of a limit on Cogito Kindergarten enrolment was discussed. The St. Albert Cogito Program is growing at an accelerated pace and as such consideration is being given by school administration to setting a ceiling limit for the number of students entering Cogito Kindergarten.
- The Cogito Elementary population over the next few years will see multiple classes for each grade – in essence doubling the Elementary population from a couple of years ago.
- The combination of Cogito Jr. High growth along with a larger Cogito Elementary population feeding into Jr. High, will put further pressure on the school to provide the facility and resources to accommodate the increase and continue to manage program growth.
- The question was raised, “What can parents do to help the situation?”. The awareness of the situation needs to be raised at the district and government levels. It was discussed that historically the best tactic would be to lobby the Alberta Government, to 1) raise awareness and 2) to promote a solution.

## **Program Statistics**

- The development of program statistics is seen as a good tool to help understand program growth and provide support to resolving program growth challenges.
- The stat areas to be addressed are:
  - Population growth, patterns and projections
  - Grade performance
  - Post Program performance

## **Guest Teacher spots**

- The committee discussed other topics that can be covered by the Guest Teacher spots. Key topic areas for the Guest Teacher spots could include:
  - Foundational Principles of Cogito
  - Direct Instruction – How it works and tools used. How do teachers learn the technique?
  - Measuring success – How do teachers know they were successful at the end of the year?
  - Cogito Scope and Sequence for each grade – How it differs from the AB Curriculum?
- Up coming Guest Teacher spots:
  - February – Justine Melnychuk – All Day Kindergarten
  - April – Tanya Reidy & Natalie Schneider – French Program
  - May/June – Derek Harrison – Kindergarten Writing Program

## **Continuous Improvement**

- Cogito Website - <http://cogito.spschools.org/>
  - The St. Albert Cogito Website is fully operational with a few content items to be added.
  - The next phase of the site will involve the promotion of the site to Parents and garnering feedback on how to improve the site and its contents.
- New ideas
  - Develop a St. Albert Cogito Font – Phebe volunteered to look into this.
  - “Signup Genius” – a website used to manage and organize events. This is seen as potentially an excellent communication and organization tool for both the Program and the school.

## **7) Uniform Update**

- There will be a sizing event in February – date is tentative.
- The sub-committee is happy to report there are no longer any backordered items.

## **8) Other Topics**

- Grade 4 Class Website – no discussion.

## **9) Next Meeting Dates**

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Meeting Adjourned



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

February 28, 2012

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**Attendance:** Cathy Carew, Georgia Atkins, Phebe Egluaer, Justine Melnychuk, Carolyn Hunter, Mira Mehta, Duncan Knoll, Michael Maxfield (Chair)

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

**2) Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as is.

**3) Review and Approval of January 17<sup>th</sup> 2012 Minutes**

Minutes were reviewed and adopted.

**4) Guest Cogito Teacher Presentation**

Ms. Melnychuk provided an overview of the Cogito full day Kindergarten offering. The session was very informative walking everyone through a day in the life of a full-day Kindergarten student. The extension to the Kindergarten day is spent with other non-Cogito students in a wide range of other activities.

**5) Principal's Report**

Projections for Cogito program student numbers show a steady increase. This year Cogito will be graduating 10 Grade Nine Cogito students and welcoming approximately 40 new students for next school year. The present student Cogito student count is 262 with every indication that the Cogito student body will be very close to 300 for the 2012/13 school year.

Alberta Education has provided funding in support of 45 Cogito students who are receiving supplementary assistance in English Language Learning. 38 of these students are in the Elementary grades. These students receive 42 to 84 minutes of individual or small group instruction per week. Junior High students receive 42 to 126 minutes of English support per week. In addition to this instruction time students have access to two web based diagnostic learning products called Lexia and Raz Kids.

The district and school is transitioning web presence to Google Web Page. Presently the majority of teachers are transitioning their websites from iWeb to Google. Links to the Cogito website will be established once all class sites have been converted.

The Fraser Report. Two Cogito schools are in the top 10 of the Alberta Fraser Report. Although the report is somewhat controversial it does speak to the quality of the program. E.S. Gish ranking is relatively low by comparison, however this represents an aggregated score between all students and program. The Cogito student results remain strong.

**6) Committee Objectives**

- a) Information Exchange with other Cogito Schools

**7) Uniform Sub-Committee**

No update

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

**9) Next Meeting Date**

Next meeting is April 17, 2012 7:00pm-9:00pm in the library

Meeting Adjourned



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

April 17, 2012

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**Attendance:** Cathy Carew, Georgia Atkins, Dawn Web, Carolyn Hunter, Elena Bensusan, Daniela Djogovic-Steele, Donna Goertzen, Mira Mehta, Duncan Knoll, Michael Maxfield (Chair)

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

**2) Adoption of the Agenda**

The agenda was approved as is.

**3) Review and Approval of February 28<sup>th</sup> 2012 Minutes**

Minutes not available for review and adoption.

**4) Guest Cogito Teacher Presentation**

Mrs. Hunter provided a demonstration on the use of iPods as a learning tool in her Grade 5 class. The iPods are assigned pair rotation. Each student receiving access every other day. The iPods are used strictly as an aid to learning. The technology itself is not the focus. The iPods and learning applications are used in series of learning scenarios that include class interactive review, research and general information retrieval. As an aid to research the iPod is seen as an excellent tool as students still must take notes from the information they access, rather than cut and paste on a standard computer.

The applications used on the iPods are free and presently included tools like: Brain Challenge, Brain Pop, Cultures and Math Quizzer.

Mrs. Hunter demonstrated an interactive example of how the students use the tools by having each committee member use an iPod in a learning scenario. The results were very impressive.

**5) Principal's Report**

Mr. Knoll has conducted 10 Cogito classroom visits and shared feedback with teachers regarding instruction and the Cogito foundational principles. This process will continue into June.

A request for academic data from past graduated Cogito students has been made to Bellerose and Paul Kane High Schools. The data will be compiled and shared with the steering committee at the next meeting. This data will include grade 10 data and past Grade 9 PAT results. Due to FOIP regulations students names will not be provided and in cases necessary the data will be anonymized to prevent any inferences.

At present there are 42 registrations for Cogito kindergarten. 15 are full day and 27 half day.

**6) Committee Objectives**

No discussion

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

**9) Next Meeting Date**

Next meeting is May 22, 2012 7:00pm-9:00pm in the library

Meeting Adjourned



**Elmer S. Gish Cogito Parents  
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May 22, 2012

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**Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Elena Bensusan, Georgia Atkins, Phebe Eglauer,  
Carolyn Hunter, Duncan Knoll**

**1) Welcome and Introductions**

**2) Adoption of the Agenda**

**3) Review and Approval of April 17, 2012 Minutes**

Adopted as is.

**4) Guest Teacher**

- Mr. Knoll - Principal
- Mr. Knoll provided a detailed account, including slide presentation, of his trip to China on a Chinese educational trip as a representative of the district and our school.
- The presentation was very informative and puts into perspective the wonderful education system we have in Canada – especially St. Albert.

**5) Principal's Report**

1. Portables Approved – Based on a needs assessment by the district, two portables have been approved for the school for the 2012/13 school year. The placement and installation of the portables will take place over the summer months. This is intended to alleviate immediate classroom pressures in the Cogito program.
2. Cultural Celebration Week – The first E.S. Gish Cultural Celebration week was held from April 30<sup>th</sup> to May 4<sup>th</sup>. It coincided with Alberta's education week. The feedback from the event was very positive.
3. Cogito Registration Numbers – The registration numbers for the program is up again this year, with a strong likelihood the school will be just over 600 students in total – all grades. The Cogito program is expected to make up half of that number.

2012/13 Registrations (as of May 2012)

Kindergarten – 47	Grade 5 – 17
Grade 1 – 65	Grade 6 – 22
Grade 2 – 35	Grade 7 – 22
Grade 3 – 39	Grade 8 – 13
Grade 4 – 31	Grade 9 – 6

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Total = 297



As a side note, the Cogito program is larger than some of the schools entire population in the district.

There was further discussion on rough projections for program growth based on recent registration trends and the decline in attrition between the Division 2 and Jr. High grades. It was discussed that a reasonable Cogito student body in 3 to 4 years time could be between 350 and 375 students.

4. China Trip – Mr. Knoll represented the school and district administration on a Chinese Educational Trip. The Principal of Ronald Harvey and Superintendent Barry Wowk were the other members of the district to go. The contingent visited 7 schools in Chongqing.

## **6) Committee Objectives**

Program Statistics – Mr. Knoll has committed to contributing longitudinal data on past Grade 9 students for the beginning of the next school year.

## **7) Next Meeting Dates**

September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Meeting Adjourned