



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

October 22, 2013

Attendance: Erin Steel, Carolyn Hunter, Malina Ganske, Michael Maxfield, Christine Cookson, Gillian Cherniwchan, Mira Mehta, Traci Bishop, Georgia Atkins

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

3) Review of the September 24, 2013 meeting

4) Principal's Report – E. Steele

- 1) Congratulations to Derek. Grade 4 teacher Mr. Harrison was featured in this month's ATA magazine for the work that he did this summer building schools in Kenya. His expertise will also be showcased at this year's provincial Social Studies conference.
- 2) Program wide writing assessment. Gr. 1-9 will write on the same theme (fall theme - Friendship and "Just Be Brave"). This occurs three times a year to ensure program consistency and that students are achieving curricular outcomes. Classes will begin writing next week.
- 3) AIMS Web Assessment. This is an assessment tool that we will be using this year (Gr 4-9) as part of the school's literacy project. It is a diagnostic that allows teachers to check for fluency and comprehension. As a school we are also working on strategies to help students once we find out "where they are at".
- 4) ELL. This year we have 120 students in Cogito. We have increased Brad Gibson's time to work with these students; as well we have hired Shalon Watson to work with the junior high students. Brad is a leader in this area and the entire district is using his expertise as he is presenting various workshops.
- 5) Citizenship Ceremony. The choir will be presenting at this ceremony tomorrow.
- 6) The school has an official total of 101 new students this year.
- 7) Chrome books and iPads have arrived and there is a move toward developing a mobile computer lab rather than the standard "computer room".

5) Jr. High Sub-Committee Update – M. Maxfield

- The objective for the Jr. High sub-committee this year will be to look at how the Cogito Jr. High aligns with the Cogito foundational principles, in part looking for opportunities for improvement.

6) Committee Plans and Objectives for the Year

- Committee plans to administer a Parent Survey regarding the Cogito program. Can we use “Thought Stream” for online survey? Erin Steele will get Catherine to look into a model for next meeting.
- Parent engagement is still a concern. Discussed “Parents as Partners” and the possibility of using “School Zone” or “Teacher/Home Logic” at the elementary and junior high levels. Traci Bishop will look into ways to foster more parent involvement.
- A continued focus on program improvement.

7) Uniform Survey

- Gillian Cherniwchan developed a Uniform Satisfaction Survey to distribute to parents.
- Discussed how to distribute – fillable form, paper distribution, Survey Monkey? Gillian will look into these possibilities.
- An objective statement will be added to the survey and results will be returned to the committee and shared with the supplier.

8) Other Topics

- It was brought to Mr. Steele’s attention that the Cogito website is down. He will look it to recovering it. Also, it was identified that some content is still missing from the site.
- Committee discussed how the Cogito program has changed over the years. Comments included that it has improved in execution and consistency.
- Questioned raised regarding the possible “screening tool” for the Cogito program. Staff is working on developing exemplars. There could be a parent and a student component. Committee wants a “best fit” model rather than exclusionary model.

Next Meeting Date

Junior high sub-committee: November 26, 2013 at 6:00pm in the library

Steering committee: November 26, 2013 at 7:00 pm in the library

Meeting Adjourned



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

November 26, 2013

**Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Erin Steele, Carolyn Hunter, Christine Cookson,
Gillian Cherniwchan, Traci Biship, Phebe Eglauer, Mira Mehta**

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

3) Review of the October 22, 2013 meeting

4) Principal's Report – Erin Steele

1) The playground committee has done all their planning. They have secured \$82K from the provincial government, \$49K from the City of St. Albert, and \$22K from the GPA. All the equipment has been ordered and we are looking at a late April install. The process will include taking out all existing sand. We will be looking for volunteers for this exciting project.

2) The kindergarten Fair will take place on Saturday, January 11, 2014. This is the beginning of our recruitment process. Ms. Melnychuk and Ms. Pederson will be presenting on the benefits of the Cogito program. The Open House will take place at the school on February 13, 2014.

3) The administration team presented to the Board of Trustees on Thursday, November 21. The Gish Education Plan includes 3 main goals:

- a. Engaging students,
- b. Building empathy, and
- c. Communication.

We have identified 5 issues and trends that effect the decision making at our school:

- a. Managing growth
- b. Managing the needs of our ELL learners
- c. Providing professional growth opportunities for staff
- d. Providing literacy supports of both students and teachers and
- e. Building a sense of community and empathy.

5) Jr. High Sub-Committee Update

- The Jr. High Sub-Committee has begun work on aligning the Cogito foundational principles with the jr. high program.
- The creation of a Parent-Student handbook for jr. high is being discussed. Feedback from current parents and students will be helpful in creating a useful handbook.

6) Parent Engagement

- Traci Bishop looked into ways to foster more parent involvement. The committee believes that there is good communication between school and parent in division I and this may be the time to garner parent involvement and look for ways to maintain this involvement.
- “Thought Stream” was discussed again as a possible way to communicate with parents.

7) Program Growth

- Screening/Best Fit Assessment – The school board has not yet determined if any screening will be done for the Cogito program. We are waiting for their response before moving ahead.

8) Cogito Website

- The site is still not working. Phebe will look into it, and Erin will phone district office and talk to I.T.

9) Other Topics

- Uniform Survey – Gillian Cherniwchan looked into online distribution choices and presented three options. Google Forms was chosen and the survey will be distributed mid-January, with a two week deadline for responding. The results will be returned to the committee and shared with the supplier.
- The committee discussed the needs of ELL learners and their impact on the Cogito program.

Next Meeting Dates

January 21, 2014

February 18, 2014

April 15, 2014

May 20, 2014

No meetings in December, March, or June

Meeting Adjourned



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

January 21, 2014

Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Erin Steele, Carolyn Hunter, Christine Cookson, Phebe Eglauer, Georgia Atkins, Alida Smith, Kirsten Miller, Andrea Panzeter, Tammy Mollenkaph

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Motion

- Michael Maxfield made a motion to become Chair of the Cogito Parents Steering Committee, rather than Vice-Chair.
- Georgia Atkins seconded.
- Motion passed.

3) Adoption of the Agenda

4) Principal's Report

1. Cogito Best Fit Exemplars

- The introduction of a screening tool was brought to the attention of the board, but nothing is currently in place for the upcoming school year.
- As such, we have developed a binder to share with parents during tours.
- It contains exemplars from all grades.
- It is a visual to share with parents the expectations of the Cogito program.

2. Kindergarten Registration

- The district held the kindergarten fair of Saturday, January 13 at Bellerose Composite. The purpose of the day is to educate parents on the choices in St. Albert Public Schools and to highlight the programs of choice. As in previous years our school presented Cogito to interested parents. Thanks to Ms. Melnychuk and Mrs. Pederson who are great advocates for our school.
- The school is expecting approximately the same numbers into the program as last year (50 – 55 kindergarten students).

3. Kindergarten/Elementary Open House – February 13th

4. Excellence in Teaching

- We are lucky to have many dedicated teachers who inspire students and colleagues. These awards allow us to show our appreciation. If you are interested in nominating a GISH teacher, please let me know. Deadline is February 5th.

5. Stakeholders Workshop

- Thursday, January 30th 9:00 – noon.
- Gillian Cherniwchan will attend on behalf of Cogito Parents.

6. School Utilization

- The school is currently operating above its 668 student capacity.
- The school Board will be calling a meeting for parents February 11th, 2014 at 7:00pm in the gymnasium to discuss options for next year. Several scenarios will be presented, followed by a Q&A. Following the meeting, the Board will be emailing all Gish parents a link so parents may share thoughts and feedback.

5) Jr. High Sub-Committee Update

- The committee is currently reviewing the draft of the Junior High handbook. A final draft will be completed in April with input from students. The committee projects that the handbook will be completed in May.

6) Uniform Survey

- Gillian Cherniwchan distributed a link to the uniform survey on January 13th. As of January 21st, there have been 42 responses. The survey closes January 31st. Gillian will compile the results and pass them on to the supplier.

7) Cogito Website

- The site is still not working. Erin will phone district office again. Mike will follow through with district office if there is still no response.

Next Meeting Dates

February 18, 2014

April 15, 2014

May 20, 2014

No meetings in March or June

Meeting Adjourned



**Elmer S. Gish Cogito Parents
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February 18, 2014

**Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Erin Steele, Carolyn Hunter, Christine Cookson,
Phebe Eglauer, Georgia Atkins, Traci Bishop, Gillian Cherniwchan**

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

3) Review and approval of the January 21st, 2013 Minutes

4) Principal's Report

1. Cogito Best Fit Exemplars

- We have developed a binder to share with parents during tours.
- It contains exemplars from all grades.
- It is a visual to share with parents the expectations of the Cogito program.

2. Junior High parent handbook

- Teacher/Student created
- Hoping to use next draft for Junior High open house

3. Kindergarten Registration is on-going

4. Kindergarten/Elementary Open House – February 13th

- Was a great success

5. Excellence in teaching

- Congratulations to Justine Melnychuk who has been nominated.
- Ashley O'Neill has been nominated for excellence in First year teaching (Edwin Parr).

6. Playground

- Set-up/install will occur May 23 & 24th
- Information regarding volunteers provided at the spring concert

7. Music Concert

- Will take place February 26 & 27 at the Arden Theatre
- 1000 tickets sold, requests for 200 more tickets
- Next year may require a larger venue

8. Program Accommodation

- The School Board presented several strategies for dealing with the high utilization of Gish on February 11th, 2014.
- The Board will be emailing parents and stakeholders a link for sharing thoughts and feedback.

5) Jr. High Sub-Committee Update

- The committee is reviewing the current draft of the Junior High handbook and are receiving teacher and student feedback. A syllabus format for subjects is in development. A final draft will be completed for the April 9th junior high open house. The committee projects that the handbook will be completed in May.

6) Uniform Survey

- The uniform survey closed January 31st and 47 responses were received. Gillian Cherniwchan will compile the results, share with the steering committee at the next meeting, and pass on to the supplier.

7) Cogito Website

- The site is now up and running; however, the data that was formally posted is gone and there are content issues. Mike Maxfield will continue to look into this matter.

Next Meeting Dates

April 15, 2014

May 20, 2014

No meeting in June

Meeting Adjourned



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

May 20, 2014

Attendance: Michael Maxfield, Carolyn Hunter, Christine Cookson, Gillian Cherniwchan

1) Welcome and Introductions

2) Adoption of the Agenda

3) Review and approval of the April 15th, 2014 Minutes

4) Principal's Report

- Carolyn reported that enrollment in the Cogito program is up and additional classrooms are likely to be added for next year.

5) Jr. High Sub-Committee Update

- The Junior High Handbook is completed and will be ready to handout to parents and students for the 2014-2015 school year.
- The handbook will be introduced at the Welcome to Junior High meeting taking place at the Welcome picnic on August 28th, 2014. Teachers will highlight the major changes in the handbook.
- Teachers are ready to use a syllabus and home logic for the 2014-2015 school year.

6) Uniform Sub-Committee Update

- Gillian is coordinating volunteers for the sizing event to take place June 18th. Carolyn has been organizing the sizing event bookings.

Next Meeting Date

September 16, 2014

Meeting Adjourned