

From the Chairman....

Chris Hoff

Well, the school year is in full swing. Time moves quickly - it is hard to believe that March break approaches, another round of report cards are forthcoming and student led interviews are just around the corner. While the school has been humming along, the Board has been quite active as well.

Program Delivery for September 2016

In the previous *Branches* we noted that, in addition to retaining the current Grade 5 and 6 split for the next school year, we were also considering options for a fairly large Grade 1 class with up to 28 students. With this in mind the Board has since decided to hire an additional teacher and we are very pleased to announce that Jennifer Harink will join the CCES staff next year. This was announced by email to membership, but for those that do not receive this email the announcement follows:

"... we are pleased to announce that Jennifer Harink will join the staff for the upcoming school year. Jenn grew up in Southern Ontario. She graduated with a B.A. from McMaster University, and completed the teaching program at the University of Western Ontario. She has also taken further special education courses from other universities, and has supplemented her secular education with some offerings from our teacher's college. Jenn has taught Grade 4 and 7 as is presently a special education/intermediate French teacher at our sister school in Hamilton.

Jenn has a firm commitment to the Reformed faith and the covenant that God has established with each of us, and our children. This was evidenced in our discussions, but also in her philosophy of Christian education which states that 'Every child who walks into my classroom is a covenant child, chosen by our Father and entrusted to me to guide them on their path to learning more about Him and the world He has placed us in.' We are thankful that God has seen it fit to raise Jenn for the purpose of helping train our children, and welcome her into our school."

The arrival of Jenn as an intermediate level teacher will lead to some grade reassignments of teachers for the next school year - and these are described in the Principal's report. Some uncertainty remains with

teaching assignments in the intermediate grades, but this should become clearer by April.

Other Board Matters

Otherwise, the Board continues to be active in the regular governance activities of the school. In addition to regular committee duties, this also includes matters such as attending the Combined Boards meeting in Yarrow, participating in classroom / school visits, and the annual Board-staff visits that take place in February. As a Board we are blessed with stability, a unity of purpose, diligent and active directors, and an excellent working relationship with the administrative team. This is not something we should take for granted, but rather is something to be deliberately grateful for.

As part of the ongoing policy review, specific attention has been paid to some of the guiding documents for the Education Committee. At the February Board meeting a number of changes were made to the mandate of the Committee to make it more focussed on core functions such as curriculum review and development. This is especially important given provincial changes to curriculum, but also serves as a good tool to ensure that what is taught promotes the unique purpose of the school. In addition to this, the Education Committee also retains its mandate for functions such as organizing school visits, advising the Board on program delivery and, when requested by the Board, advise on policy matters.

Changes were also made to the classroom /school visit protocol. More specifically, while classrooms will be visited, the focus is more on the overall character of the school. For some background on this, please see the article on school visits by Arthur Kingma that is included in this edition of *Branches*.

This is an exciting new direction for the Education Committee - and we thank the Committee (Mandy Dewit, Bob Huttema, Ivan Scheper, Wenda Sikma and Melissa van Popta), as well as Otto Bouwman and Jennifer Onderwater for their contributions to the updated mandate and school visit protocol.

I gather that the next edition of *Branches* is planned for April. By that time we should have more certainty about our program delivery for next year including a final staffing plan and preliminary budget estimates. Until then we wish you God's blessing as each of us goes about His business.

From the Principal....

Otto Bouwman

This past week the second term came to a close. Roughly speaking, that should mean that we are about two-thirds of the way through the school year. It's a good opportunity to take stock of the blessings that are evident at CCES. We thank God for his blessings to us!

School Realities

When we look back, we note:

- the safe arrival of students every day to school. Though we might take that for granted, we have received some reminders lately that accidents do happen; a couple teachers were involved in traffic accidents. Please continue to pray for safety on the roads as staff, parents, and students weave their ways to school through the busy traffic.
- a tremendously successful fundraiser - Coldest Night of the Year. It was so successful, as a matter of fact, that the Credo Cubs were acknowledged favorably in the local newspaper. I have witnessed other Christian schools being mentioned in the newspapers for far less complementary realities. Let's be thankful for having a reputation like that in our community and work deliberately to keep it up.
- diligent students who show much happiness about their work and relationships at Credo. Please keep the well-being of students in your prayers. Some have to work extra hard to make the necessary progress; you students are commended for your hard work! Parents, continue to provide the necessary structure and encouragement that enables your children to optimally develop the gifts our Father has given your children.
- diligent teachers who show much happiness about their work and relationships at Credo; what a team. The teachers too benefit from being upheld daily in prayer - without the Lord's blessing work does not succeed.
- an amazing Art Open House at the end of January. Because of the meticulous organization spearheaded by our vice-principal, the inspirational efforts by all the art and music teachers and school decorators, the creative productions of the excited students, the warm welcome by our seventh grade greeters, the serenading of our musicians, and the delightful ambiance created by all our guests, the entire experience was quite a thrill. As you can see, pretty much everyone contributed in a significant way!
- a fabulous *Peter and the Wolf* production. Thank you, sixth graders! Thank you, sixth grade teachers

- Mr. Kanis and Mr. Scholtens! Thank you, Mrs. Timmerman for your contributions in the music and choreography departments! It all came together very nicely.

- the smooth behind-the-scenes activities that not many people see. There is a board, an education committee, a finance committee, a building maintenance committee, a secretary, and a host of others who labor - usually quietly and unnoticed by most - in such a way that the visible things go smoothly. What a blessing for all these willing workers! Keep it up!
- a very successful FISA conference at the end of January, with inspirational speeches and workshops for the teaching staff. Discussions continued in the staff room for quite some time as teachers digested many challenges related to current trends in education, all the while seeking to maintain our Christian identity.

Evidently there are many other developments which could be mentioned. Hopefully this little snap shot is enough to remind you of some of blessings we can appreciate and be thankful for.

Staffing Developments

Some time ago many of you received a notice that Jenn Harink had been hired for an intermediate position at CCES for next year. As you could tell from that news release, the board and administration were very thankful for Jenn's acceptance of the board's offer of employment. With regards to the coming school year, the anticipated breakdown of staffing is as follows:

- Kindergarten Mrs. J. Onderwater and Mrs. L. Scholtens (like this year)
- Grade 1 Mrs. MacDougal and Mrs. Winkelaar
- Grade 2 Mr. Hoogerdijk
- Grade 3 Mr. Chase
- Grade 4 Miss VanderHoek
- The exact responsibilities for the remaining regular classroom teachers - Mrs. VanRhee / Mrs. VanSpronsen, Mr. Kanis, Mr. Scholtens, Miss Harink and Miss Nobel need to still be finalized. Through the efforts of this team, we expect our students in grades 5, 6, & 7 to receive quality instruction.

Additionally, we're looking forward to our skilled Special Education department, led by Mrs. Huttema, to continue to provide much support and assistance to staff and students. I am very thankful for the evident flexibility that everyone has demonstrated as we grapple with

class size challenges. It's also great to have these plans tentatively in place by the end of February; it's not like that every year!

Looking Ahead

Report cards are scheduled to come home this week. Near the end of the week, teachers are looking forward to welcoming many parents as you come to CCES to witness your children's progress. Please be sure to use the opportunity not only to show interest in your child's activities, but also to provide a word of appreciation and encouragement to your child's teacher. It is a blessing when home and school work together and feel support from each other.

Following the report card flurry of activity, spring break is anticipated. Enjoy the break from the regular rigors of school life!

This spring break is expected to be particularly exciting for one of our staff members: Miss Hicks is excitedly looking forward to transitioning to Mrs. Beintema. Scott and Sarah: we wish you a wonderful day on March 19, and God's blessings during a long and happy marriage!

Elsewhere in this publication there is information related to our spring concert. Please plan to attend this school year highlight.

A Note of Gratitude

One particular blessing I also wish to acknowledge is the sense of collaboration that is evident - not only between the many different parties directly involved in all the different facets of CCES's operation, but also between the various Canadian Reformed schools in the valley. Just this past week the education committees of the schools met together, as we grapple together with how we ought to respond to the changing requirements related to our curriculum. Elsewhere in this *Branches* there is also reference to combined activities by teachers related to curriculum - fantastic. And then there are also the combined student happenings, including sports competitions and other activities.

The benefits that flow out of joint collaboration and interaction are great; please join me in being thankful for this blessing.

Wishing you all God's continued blessings in your lives.

CCES Calendar Update			
March	8	Report Cards	
	10 & 11	Student-Led Conferences	
	14-25	March Break	no school
	25	Good Friday	no school
	27	Easter Sunday	
	28	Easter Monday	no school
	29	School reopens	
April	15	Ready, Set, Learn	
	21	Spring Program	
	29	Pro-D Day	no school
	29	Quad-School Public Speaking	

New Curriculum? What is the Big Deal?

Jennifer Onderwater

The New BC Curriculum has received a fair amount of media attention, both positive and negative, over the last few months. There have been articles and editorials arguing for the need for a curriculum that teaches life skills instead of just information. There have also been articles emphasizing the importance of "the basics".

The teachers of Credo, along with the teachers of John Calvin and William of Orange, have been working with the new curriculum. This started with a Professional Development Day in November where all the teachers had a look at the themes and world view of the New BC Curriculum. Then the teachers from each grade level met together on different days throughout January to begin to prepare course outlines for each subject area. This means taking the new goals and objectives of the government's curriculum and meshing them with the goals and world view of our Christian schools.

Teachers from each grade will meet again on a variety of days in the beginning of April and continue this work on course outlines and then move on to unit plans. In the past, the government would release new curriculum in only one subject area at a time, usually one subject per year. This mass overhaul of all curriculum at once is huge.

Finally, all the teachers will meet on Friday, April 29 to look at the outlines we have developed and assess whether there is consistency and a scaffolding of skills and concepts from one grade to the next. With outlines in place for each subject area and every grade,

teachers can work on unit plans and lessons as they prepare for next year.

The new BCEdPlan, which is being phased in during the coming school year, will not immediately change education. If the vision of its creators is realized, education will become more personalized, technology will be embraced, and assessment will change.

The teachers from our three elementary schools have reservations and questions about the new directions in BC. We see trends and a world view that is not Christian. We see challenges and concerns.

We also see opportunities and God's grace. The emphasis on flexibility and autonomy for students must also result in an increase in flexibility and autonomy for independent schools. We are already seeing the first signs of this, and it is our expectation and prayer that our schools will not be forced to implement changes against our will. The current educational direction of our government should not cause us fear; instead, it brings possibilities. We believe there will be opportunities for new programs. There will be opportunities for technology to enhance learning. There will be opportunities for "the basics" and much more.

We are excited to be working together as Canadian Reformed teachers. We are excited to assess and build on our own curriculum. We are excited to continue to educate students to serve God and their neighbour.

Short Report of Board Meeting

Short Report of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of Credo Christian Elementary School January 11th, 2016

- **Opening and Welcome:** The Chairman, Chris Hoff welcomed all the Directors and Principal Otto Bouwman to the meeting. There was no official opening, as this meeting was preceded by the Legal Authority Meeting. The Board meeting planned for December 2015 was cancelled due to various illnesses.
- **Agenda Approval:** The agenda for the regular board meeting was approved.
- **Minutes and Short Report:** The Minutes and Short

Report of the November 10, 2015 Board meeting were adopted.

- **Principal's Report:** Otto Bouwman presented the Principal's Report for December 2015 and January 2016 and provided updates on various staffing matters including a request to advertise for additional EA help for the Grade 2 classroom.
- **Chairman's Report:** The Chairman's report for December 2015 and January 2016 were received for information. Chris Hoff reported on his activities as chairman.
- **General Business:** A number of matters were discussed including the agenda for the upcoming

Combined Board meeting and the salary committee report. A report from the Foundation Committee was received and discussed. A board-staff visit guideline was approved along with a number of revised policies.

- **Membership Committee:** Membership Committee minutes were submitted and reviewed. Document proofs for the new promotional materials were reviewed and discussed. A revised mandate for the Membership Committee was approved.
- **Education Committee:** Education Committee minutes were submitted and reviewed. A revised guideline for classroom visits was approved. Mandy Dewit was appointed to the committee, and a replacement is being sought for outgoing member Lisa Van Dyke. Positive reports were received for first term classroom visits.
- **IT Committee:** Tim Rook reported on the activities of the IT Committee. A long term inventory replacement plan is currently being developed with input from staff.
- **Maintenance Committee:** Maintenance Committee

minutes were submitted and reviewed. The Committee is working on a five-year plan for further upgrades to the school.

- **CCSTA:** Al Leyenhorst reported on the activities of the CCSTA. A report on the CCSTA finances was received and reviewed.
- **Finance Committee:** The income statements for November 30, 2015 and December 31, 2015 were submitted and reviewed. Oliver Hansma presented the Salary Committee Report for review.
- **Next Meetings / Events:** The combined boards meeting is planned for Wednesday, January 27, 2016. The next regular Board meeting is planned for Monday, February 8, 2016.
- **Closing:** Bob Huttema closed with thanksgiving prayer. Chris Hoff closed the meeting and thanked all for coming.

Board Members' visits: Are They Necessary?

A. Kingma

From: *Clarion*, Education Matters January 5, 2001

Board members visiting

If you are a teacher unfamiliar to the Canadian Reformed School system, you would be rather puzzled when board members (board members may include education committee members) come to visit your school. They usually visit in groups of two, sitting in the backs of classrooms, chatting with the teacher at the end of the lesson, and joining the staff in the staff room for coffee if there is time. Another Reformed tradition, you might say, and wrong you are. It is not really a Reformed tradition; rather, it was a very standard tradition before public school systems of superintendents and before evaluation teams came to being. But instead of discussing how school visits came to be, discussing the value of the school visit is more interesting. Do board members know why they are visiting? Do teachers know why they are visiting? Are these visits necessary?

Newer board members are usually nervous the first time they visit the school. They often have not been well prepared to know what to look for either. What must they really observe? Should they focus on noise levels, students' attitudes or teachers' ability to teach? The beginning teacher (and maybe even the not-so-beginning teacher) is also nervous. What will the visitors look for? Will they evaluate my performance? Should I see this visit as a teacher visit rather than a school visit? Some school societies have prepared

checklists for the board members. The check list provides security for the visitors, not only in looking for details that are supposed to be important, but also in providing details for reporting back to the board. With a checklist in hand, board members no longer need to feel nervous. And if the school has the policy of sharing this list with teachers (a copy in the teachers' handbooks), then the teachers can really be prepared also. Nervousness therefore can be reduced, and the school visit can become a more objective and concrete experience.

First visit by board members

An "old-time" teacher recently shared that she was very nervous about her first school visit by the board (way back in 1972). Two older gentlemen came to the school, spent the whole day in the school, moving from one classroom to the other. When they came to her room, they sat in the back for only a very little while, walked about and started chatting with their grandchildren, then left. She did not receive any oral communication except for "Looks good." Of course the comment was positive, but it left a nagging question, "What looks good?" Perhaps those board members felt that there was good rapport, good Reformed teaching and thus a good atmosphere. Perhaps they judged on the basis of an intuitive sense that things were going right in the classroom. And perhaps that's all a school visit is and should be.

Necessity of these visits

A document that circulated throughout our schools in 1992 suggested that school visits are still a necessity, but have their limitations. They are not teacher visits. They are and should remain exactly what they should be: school visits. The author, Drs. van den Berg, outlined that a school visit should perform two main functions: to examine the fundamental/philosophical aspects of the school, and to show concern for personal or individual matters of the school (Zin en Onzin van het Schoolbezoek, Drs. van den Berg, Kampen, 1988; translated by R. Koet, 1992). Van den Berg does not outline these two tasks well, but I venture to interpret the first task to be that of observing whether the teaching and atmosphere are visibly Reformed. For example, are knowledge and faith interwoven in teaching and discipline? The second aspect deals more with keeping up the relations between board and staff- showing personal interest in the school's activities. By stating this, I think that van den Berg likes to cover that whole aspect of personal contact which board members should have: listening and sharing with teachers and students, observing good communication and proper atmosphere in the halls, classrooms, and perhaps even the staff room.

What should it not be?

So if that is what the school visit should be, what should it not be? When a school visit becomes a teacher visit, or a subject-content visit, then the visit changes character and is no longer a school visit. Visiting a teacher usually has a different intent. One is trying to analyze methods of class management; the correct method of instruction given to the age-level students; or one is trying to decide whether the method followed (either the textbook/activity book method or the

teacher's self-made units materials) is the best for the children. Or perhaps one is trying to see whether all students' needs are being addressed by the teacher. These areas, van den Berg says, are really the areas the principal oversees, or the areas an external evaluator should review. At the least, these areas should receive the board's attention in different ways, not in the school visit.

I wish to add a third reason for the board's visit. Being representatives of the parents, board members must be interested in and knowledgeable of the school. They have the delegated task to ensure that our schools do remain Reformed. They, therefore, do need to inspect and evaluate the school. Can this task be done in a school visit? Certainly. Twice a year, generally speaking, board members visit, and they do get a good sense of what is going on inside and outside the classroom. If they cannot say, like those two old-time visitors, "Looks good," then they need to schedule follow-up visits with the principal, and maybe also the staff (member) to help solve the "problem."

Clear objectives

Doing a school visit is not an easy task for board members. Having clear well-versed objectives in mind will make the task easier. Discussing the purpose and the procedure together with staff and board would be very productive. It would build trust and understanding too. For the board to do its work knowledgeably, we must continue the practice of school visits. Sure, the school visit is only one method, and perhaps a limited one, but it is one method which can help board members say thankfully, "Looks good."

Credo Aid Update....

The planning for this years **MOTHERS' DAY FAIR**, to be held on Saturday, May 7th, is well under way and we are looking for 3 new committee members. It is a fun committee to be on! We usually have just 1 big meeting, then communicate by email and have one wrap up meeting. It's coming up! Let Cindy Luiten know if this is something you can help with! You can email her at luitenmatt@gmail.com. Thank- you.

Reminder: sign up for the **BABYSITTERS' COURSE** on April 9th from 9-3pm. Due to some changes in the policy of the St Johns Ambulance course, we've had to

increase our fee to \$60, rather than \$40. Email Loretta Homan at lorettahoman@hotmail.com to register. Please let Renee Leffers know if you have any questions. Thank you.

This upcoming fall 2016, Credo Aid will be looking for 2 **NEW MEMBERS** to join their board. If you feel like this would be a good fit for you, or if you'd like to know more about what being on the board entails, please contact Renee Leffers via e-mail -rbleffers@gmail.com. Thanks and hope to hear from you.



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Board of Directors

Mr. C. Hoff (2018)	Chairman
Mr. B. Huttema (2017)	Vice Chair/Ed. Com
Mr. W. VanOene (2016)	Secretary
Mr. O. Hansma (2018)	Treasurer
Mr. N. Dykstra (2017)	Development/CCSTA
Mrs. F. Jansen (2016)	CCHS/SpEd
Mr. A. Leyenhorst (2016)	Maintenance/CCSTA
Mr. T. Rook (2017)	IT/Finance

Education Committee

Mr. B. Huttema	
Mrs. M. Dewit	Mr. I. Schepers
Mrs. W. Sikma	Mrs. M. VanPopta
Mr. O. Bouwman	Mrs. J. Onderwater

Membership Committee

Mr. N. Dykstra	Mr. B. Graham
Mrs. S. Sikma	Mrs. M. Vanderhorst
Mrs. D. VanDyke	

Special Education Committee

Mrs. F. Jansen	Mr. D. Huttema
	Mr. O. Bouwman

Finance Committee

Mr. O. Hansma	Mr. T. Rook
	Mrs. E. Kuntz

Maintenance Committee

Mr. T. Bontkes	Mr. A. Leyenhorst
Mr. R. Bisschop	Mr. D. Hofsink
Mr. B. VanOene	

Staff

Mr. O. Bouwman	Principal
Mrs. J. Onderwater	VP, Kindergarten B
Ms. L. Scholtens	Kindergarten A
Mrs. M. MacDougal	Grade 1
Mrs. A. Winkelaar	Grade 2
Mr. S. Chase	Grade 3
Miss A. Vanderhoek	Grade 4
Mrs. L. Vanspronsen	Grade 5A
Mrs. N. VanRhee	Grade 5A
Mr. M. Hoogerdijk	Grade 5B
Mr. J. Kanis	Grade 6A
Mr. J. Scholtens	Grade 6B
Miss D. Nobel	Grade 7
Mrs. L. VanDyke	Grade 7
Mrs. D. Huttema	SpEd, LA
Mrs. K. Timmerman	Music Gr. 4-7
Mrs. W. Deleeuw	Educational Ass't
Miss S. Hicks	Educational Ass't
Miss K. Mostert	Educational Ass't
Mrs. J. Spoor	Educational Ass't
Mrs. P. Vanderhorst	Educational Ass't
Mrs. L. Vanderven	Educational Ass't
Mrs. A. VanSpronsen	Educational Ass't
Mrs. E. Kuntz	Office Administrator

Credo Aid

Mrs. C. Luiten	Mr. S. Stam
Mrs. K. Schepers	Mrs. A. VanSpronsen
Mrs. R. Leffers	Mrs. J. Sikma

Fee Structure 2015-2016

Membership	125.00	Kindergarten	285.00
Elem. (1-3)	495.00	Elem (4-7)	515.00
Junior High	660.00	Senior High	710.00

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 Alan Dyck email: ccsta2015@gmail.com



Grade Six presented...



Peter and the Wolf



February 2016