

Inspiring Hearts and Minds: CRPS Futures Planning

Canmore Community Forum Input: Phase 3

Introduction to forum process

The two over-arching directions for CRPS that are being used to frame the discussions tonight are to:

- 1) Deliver education that fosters development of the whole child (intellectual, emotional, social, physical and spiritual development), and
- 2) Position schools as the centre of learning and development in the community with the aim of building strong connections between schools, families and community organizations in support of educational delivery and life-long learning

Table discussion topics

1. Program delivery – e.g. ways of delivering education; thinking beyond the traditional classroom; program options; use of technology; school day and school year schedules; student involvement ...
2. Community connections – e.g. partnership development; community networks; linkages with individuals, families, organizations; sharing of resources, expertise and learning opportunities ...
3. Learning content and assessment – e.g. ways of learning; learning beyond the 3 R's; whole child development; curriculum (content and amount of material); ways of assessing and evaluating learning ...
4. Learning places – e.g. where can learning take place; use of facilities (school and community); infrastructure; the outdoor classroom; healthy buildings ...
5. Role of teachers – e.g. changing role of the teacher; relationship between student and teacher; whole teacher development; who else is the 'teacher'; teacher training and support ...

Discussion questions

In each of the five topic areas:

What has to be considered or happen for CRPS to move in the directions of (1) whole child development and (2) schools as the centre of learning and development in the community?

Of the ideas generated, which are the top two ideas that are most significant for achieving real and deep-rooted change?

Table discussion notes

A. Program Delivery

1. Initiate a wide variety of programs to meet the needs of all students
 - a. Programs for non-academic students are needed
 - b. Individual student based philosophy as the foundation and guide to program delivery.
 - c. Aim specific programs at middle level of students
 - d. Develop interest based content (Forensics program)
 - e. Integrate high school and community college programs (credit in high school)
 - f. Use community and parent skills to assist in programme delivery
 - i. Community involvement
 - g. Alternate ways of grouping students
 - i. Interest based
 - ii. Not age based
 - h. Initiate alternate methods of delivering programs
 - i. On-line
 - ii. Teacher facilitators
 - iii. Interdisciplinary (Ascent program)
 - iv. Un-box the curriculum
 - i. Make school day longer to bring non-curricular programs into the school (sports and arts programs for instance (dance, music) (Make extra-curricular into curricular programs)
 - j. Current program and delivery constraints include curriculum and methodology
 - k. Change the model of schools
 - l. Use community mentors to enhance programs
 - m. Four day school week
 - n. Shorter school day with more variety
 - o. Use more work experience programs
 - p. Start school after labour day
2. Work to enhance student engagement in program of study
 - a. Promote love of learning
 - b. Promote in-class enrichment
 - c. Make delivery of education “fun”
 - d. Promote an environment which engages students
 - e. Involvement and engagement come from working to the strengths of kids
 - f. High school should start later
 - g. More work experience and experiential work placements
 - h. Consider students as stakeholders
 - i. More music, arts and non-core curriculum programs

3. Develop leadership qualities of teachers to develop content and variety for individual students.
 - a. Promote teacher education and PLC's which encourage innovative approach to teaching
4. Involve students in assessment.

2 Big Ideas (group report out)

1. Broaden the variety of programmes to enhance engagement of students with a variety of strengths, interests and goals.
2. Develop and implement alternate methods of program delivery that is student based and with facilitated learning.

B. Community Connections

Big Idea 1

Bring in community (resident and part-time) experts to support and augment the curriculum with "real world" connections and, where possible, reflect the community we live in.

- Art/artist in residence
- Technology
- Environment
- Sports – climbing, orienteering
- Health sciences - nutrition
- Life skills – eg. organizational, financial
- Town planning
- Music/rock camps
- Dance
- Journalism/writers in residence

Why do this?

- exposes students to "real world" applications
- helps students find and develop their "passion"
- gives students the opportunity to "take a stand" and participate on issues within the community (and beyond). i.e.: the environment, Town planning, civic process, technological applications etc. This was dubbed "service learning" and gives students the opportunity to have a voice and affect change (similar to the recent Biodiesel project in Banff).

Considerations:

- Would teachers need to be present when experts in class (need to work within the confines of the ATA)
- Need the Board, teachers and community to truly support this process if we want to make it "real"
- What are the "right" offerings that will engage students and better prepare them for the "real world"?

- Need to make this inclusive to all students, not just enrichment programming. In fact, these opportunities are often best suited to students who may not be engaged in a traditional classroom setting.
- Need significant manpower (over and above the Implementation Coordinator's role) to facilitate and manage these partnerships.
- Need someone to look for grant opportunities

Big Idea 2

Schools as the physical “hub” of the community incorporating services such as:

- Day care
- Before/after school care
- Parent development workshops
- Mental health workers
- Health services - nutrition
- Medical services
- Adult classes – day and evening
- Employment services
- Public library

This concept may be particularly suited to Canmore schools where we'll be faced with declining enrollment/extra space

Considerations:

- Need significant manpower (over and above the Implementation Coordinator's role) to facilitate and manage the provision of services
- Would make the school a year-round institution

Other Community Connections

- Need to engage parents both in the classroom when possible and through regular communication with teachers
- Monthly evening open-houses for parents
- Link high school students with younger students as teaching assistants

C. Learning Content and Assessment

- Need to determine what success looks like on a social, emotional, spiritual, physical, cognitive level. The community/school/family needs to determine indicators or performance measures
- Create opportunities to bring in outside expertise/professionals to work with children on non-traditional (interest) curriculum (e.g. music, arts)
- Encourage different learning styles (e.g. accommodate children coloring, laying on the floor)
- Create a picture/story of what whole child/school as hub looks like – smaller classrooms; innovative training for teachers; technological support; hands-on learning (inquiry-based learning, don't teach to provincial tests/do away with them); develop educational philosophy that focuses on building capacity in children, resiliency, strength-based approach
- Inquiry-based learning that allows child to explore ideas, and approach and create what they study, and how – based on child's interest – create own curriculum

- Teaching approach is tied to assessment and what is brought into the classroom
- Diverse curriculum
- Alternative workshops – learn about different methodologies during PLC's
- Teachers and CRPS to explore outside 'best practices' to expand ideas and approaches
- To build resiliency and capacity we have to work from strength-based approach
- Do away with A,B,C's and replace with narrative that provides context of classroom
- Decrease focus on academics
- Focus on different learning styles, and change assessment to assessing strengths of the child
- Children create own lesson books and decide what they will focus on around the curriculum – create art and add to lesson book through year, to take away at end. All student's lesson books will look different and have different content
- Curriculum taught in experiential way
- Environmental education as standard part of the curriculum from Grade 4 on – a lot of curriculum content could be brought into this
- Curriculum has to relate to world around them and be relevant to the student (a part of their life)
- Use technology to deliver curriculum
- Evaluate what is relevant in the curriculum and do away with that which is not
- Focus curriculum on 70% of students that won't go to university (e.g. option courses should be expanded – perhaps through community partnerships)
- Hard to have deep learning as curriculum is so full – present options to Alberta Learning that we will focus on fewer topics in more depth ('slow learning' like 'slow cooking'). Really focus on what is necessary in each grade. (e.g. assess spelling by determining understanding instead of focusing on the right letters – build confidence in children)
- Propose that we take away provincial exams as it is not focused on the whole child
- Help parents re-focus on what their children really need to move forward and be resilient children
- Make tests more meaningful
- Including other assessments that show growth
- Look at how other schools (e.g. Waldorf School) set up their curriculum and their approach to assessment
- Teach organizational skills/decision making skills at a young age
- What are the 'meaningful components' of a test? (is it just school based)
- School should buck a societal trend on focus on media/technology and instead focus on family literacy, music, aesthetic values. This would need buy-in from parents
- Need to move to a 'basic place' – 'simple pleasures'
- Need basic standards – but not teach to the test
- Tests at post-secondary level are used to filter out students – how do we work with this reality?
- What happens in public education needs to link with what is happening in post-secondary
- Need to ensure curriculum addresses needs of those not going on to university – need exposure to world they are interested in without prejudice. Need to explore our values around education
- Encourage parental involvement in classroom
- Roots of Empathy program is teaching to whole child – need to look for exemplars to teach compassion
- Encourage peer to peer empathy; value of friendship

- Do an inventory of what we are currently doing in the classroom to build resiliency, compassion, balance, etc (whole child)
- 'Building moral intelligence' – good example of tool for parents
- What would the content actually look like if we were teaching to the whole child? Can it be done in a classroom of 26?
- How do we integrate cultural differences?
- What we are talking about and want is in conflict with different cultural ideas of education (e.g. Asia's approach to education) and post-secondary admittance criteria
- Throw out the box and start again!
- Curriculum and assessment that is meaningful and relevantleads to child that is prepared for their future; connects child and his/her world, connects to the teacher; changes assessment to capture relevancy and engages the child; teaches to the whole child.
- **IMPORTANT** – CRPS needs to keep engaging the community in this type of forum

2 Big Ideas (group report out)

1. CRPS needs to paint a clear picture of (a) our educational philosophy, (b) what content would look like if we were teaching to the whole child, and (c) what would success look like. ACTION: explore what is out there; nuggets of best practice
2. Curriculum and assessment needs to be meaningful and relevant.
 - (a) Be relevant for the child (connects to their world) so it excites the child to learn and engages them, and measures the excitement of learning and honors the child's imagination
 - (b) Prepare the child for the future
 - (c) Be relevant for teachers and their strengths and expertise
 - (d) Be relevant for whole child development, building on strengths

D. Learning Places

- Spaces need to accommodate ages blending
- Physical spaces to accommodate mobility and movement – learning centres
- Canmore Recreation Centre – unused time to be used for students. Possibly extend school day in either direction to do more DPA
- Framing community sites (Civic Centre, Library, Art Galleries, Museum, Rotary Park and other parks, as "learning centres". With appropriate assessment. Both indoor and outdoor venues.
- Partner with Parks Canada and Alberta Sustainable Resources
- Businesses – at all ages (Gr 1 -12)
- Churches (spiritual/cultural)
- Learning/appreciation of outdoors needs to be systemic (teachers will need professional development in this area)
- Camp Chief Hector as a site/opportunity for learning (not necessarily teacher led)
- Development of community facilitators
- In order to develop whole child, child needs to learn in many places
- Use the building itself to learn about environmental issues. Analyse their own learning place (e.g. energy audit, water conservation measures)
- Real life spaces; real life lessons
- Outside school district – distance learning

- Where does technology fit? Use technology to visit the world. Technology is actually adaptable – adapt it to us, not us to the technology
- Our spaces used to facilitate learning (remotely). Homeroom teacher to help with non-technical things. Teacher is more like facilitator.
- Outreach and remote sites offer provision for independent learning and biggest possible variety of programs. Independent learning but provide adequate supports and sense of community.
- Synthesis of technology and social interaction and community
- Use outdoor space more because of where we live – appreciation of the beauty and sense of place
- Blur the lines, more integration not only between ages but spaces – school to school, school to community/businesses (like Marilyn Dyck’s class)
- Incorporate business partners
- Learning places that are trans-generational
- School need to be more welcoming (e.g. stay at home parents can’t bring siblings)
- Schools not exclusive – integrate with other community services
- Volunteerism – get students out to other places

2 Big Ideas (group report out)

1. Whether the kids are out in the community or the community is in the school, let’s find ways/places for students to experience diverse expanded learning opportunities to find and develop their passion.
2. The physical school spaces need to be flexible, adaptable to new technology, and kids need to be able to move as well. The lines between schools and the community need to blur; think local to global.

E. Role of Teachers

Changing role of the Teacher

- More use of technology.
- Leadership in learning strategies and life-long learning
- Facilitator of learning vs dispenser of knowledge
- Increased social role; will need increased autonomy and skills for managing needs in the classroom. May be much like a case manager for students social needs
- Use of an increased knowledge network for teachers across school boards and out with the boards
- Integrated learning vs subject specific
- Model educational psychology
- Teacher facilitates experiential, real life project learning (constrained by legalities and curriculum?)

Relationship Between Student and Teacher

- Stronger student/teacher relationships
- Teacher could follow students for 2-3 or more years to strengthen relationship. Any disagreements or conflict should be discussed as part of the learning

process, if resolution is not easily found then processes such as mentoring either teacher or student or mediation for example should be in place. As a last resort moving either pupil or teacher may be considered.

- Teacher may act as case manager for the external supports for the student

Who Else is the teacher?

- Experience
- Opportunity
- Other students
- Family
- Community
- E-learning
- Themselves

Whole Teacher Training Development and Support.

The quality of education and the success of the student is directly related to the quality of the teacher.

- Effective performance management programme. Performance Appraisal feedback on the 'whole teacher' at least annually
- Allow teachers to teach to their strengths and passions
- Need to work in a culture of leadership with vision core needs and policy clearly evident.
- Support 'positive deviants' in the system. i.e. non-conformists with a positive role. Use as mentors for teachers.
- Ongoing teaching for teachers
- Change how teachers are taught at university to reflect the new reality
- Learn how to facilitate, teach with subject integration.
- Perform a passion inventory and allow teachers to teach to their passion and strengths
- Strong information network within the Board, across other Boards and externally to the education system.
- Time to develop new lesson plans and skills
- Time for professional development, reflection and change
- Engage teachers in programme development
- Learn about relationship building and life balance
- Be Finland; teachers have 3-4 weeks per year for professional and classroom development

2 Big Ideas (group report out)

- Student: teacher relationship. The teacher stays with the student over a number of years.
- Experiential Learning. Make learning fun and reality based.

Both of the above items would need to have the appropriate support systems in place.

Additional notes from small group report out:

Program Delivery Idea 1:

- Broaden/develop more program opportunities for ALL students
- Move away from singular focus on academics
- Enhance student engagement

Program Delivery Idea 2:

- Develop and implement alternate methods of program delivery – ask the question: what do kids WANT to learn? Make it engaging and exciting.
- Use student-based methods to deliver learning

Community Connections Idea 1:

- Bring community “experts” into the classroom to share “real-world” knowledge – arts, music, life-skills, health sciences, journalism, environment, etc.
- Then the students take this knowledge and apply it to a community project/cause that they spearhead (reciprocal learning)

Community Connections Idea 2:

- Community schools – schools as the physical hub of the community integrating services such as daycare, parent development centres, before/after school care, medical services, social services/agencies, adult learning etc .

Learning Places Idea 1:

- Moving students into the community to experience the “real world” (eg. Camp Chief Hector) AND bringing community experts into the schools
- Goal of this – to find and develop a passion within each child, especially in those that aren’t engaged by traditional schooling

Learning Places Idea 2:

- Physical space - blurring the lines between school and the community; make the entire community a learning place.
- Using technology to bring the world into the classroom

Curriculum Content and Assessment Idea 1:

- CRPS needs to develop a clear picture of its educational philosophy; what does content look like? What does success look like?
- Look at current success stories that are already out there

Curriculum Content and Assessment Idea 2:

- Ensure curriculum is relevant to our children’s future
- Ensure the assessment is relative to the whole child
- Ensure assessments are engaging to the child/honours the child’s imagination

Role of Teachers Big Idea 1:

- The student/teacher relationship is changing
- Ensure teachers are able to pursue their teaching passion
- Consider having students with one teacher for 2+ years or teacher for same subject throughout high school (need to have safeguards in this system should difficulties in the relationship occur)

Role of Teachers Big Idea 2:

- Experiential learning using a project-based approach
- Teacher as facilitator for real-life learning
- Integrated learning between subjects for teachers
- Teachers need support and planning time for this