

# Inspiring Hearts and Minds: CRPS Futures Planning

## Teachers 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?

## Discussion notes

### A. Community Connections

- Systemic supports within all schools (social, emotional, opportunity)
- Community agency/connections to school – each (school and agency) needs to do what they do best
- Represent aboriginal community
- Role of literacy education – impact on all of society; connect everyone to a central purpose
- Inclusion of everyone in the education process
- Hands-on experience – link to the work force
- Projects focused on the trades
- Satellite schools in areas where kids are leaving to work
- Family roles – address how family impacts the child
- **Key:** Parental education – welcome into the process and community of education. This needs to be an expectation.
- Need community involvement – schools can't be everything to everyone
- Put the onus on industries that engage/employ school-age students to provide some sort of training/apprenticeship/skills that they will walk away with. Students are being drawn away because they can earn so much money elsewhere.
- Mentorship and apprenticeship program (e.g. with FCSS, ADAC, health nurse, RCMP, reading week authors, singers)
- Utilize businesses as partners
- Work experience/work study – begin in Gr. 5
- Expand Ascent program, Baby Roots of Empathy, Children's Festival, RAP
- We need more students being mentored in the CALM program
- Grant to pay someone (position) to organize community connections
- Use spaces in our buildings to get in community members so that they have their own space to set up
- Creating a community awareness
- Stronger link with Mental Health – Parent Link, the Playroom, FCSS, Healthy Start
- **Key:** Need a school/community coordinator position to study trends, and manage work skills and mentorship programs
- Scope and sequence chart of opportunities from Gr. 1 through Gr. 12
- Locally developed course for 1) connect, 2) work study, 3) work experience
- Big Brothers/Sisters connection
- Education parents/community about 'whole child education'. Less focus on academic achievement only.

### **2 Big Ideas (from group report out)**

1. Educate parents/community about 'whole child education'. Less focus on academic achievement only. Educate industries to not just hire students (drop outs) as workers, but to provide more intentional learning opportunities.
2. Provide a space for community members/groups to utilize (e.g. Pine Tree players rehearse at LGMS and students take part in or watch rehearsals). Put more of the agencies right in the schools (e.g. BES/ERS Mental Health worker/coordinator in schools). This may help provide performing

- arts, music and art with a dwindling student population (e.g. having seniors teach painting, knitting)
3. Bring back in Partners in Education program

## **B. Learning Places**

- Outdoor/cultural/community involvement program – progressively longer excursions from Gr. 1 through Gr. 12; consistent progression throughout the Bow Valley schools; community involvement
- Flexible school year – our current calendar doesn't work for everyone; year round schooling/cyclical/mornings or evenings; allow for athletics, teams and training
- Apprenticeship model – students learning skills in the workplace
- Consistency across the division – bridges between schools; maintain a quality program across the division; maintain and promote all educational choices within our division equally (e.g. recent French and English issue)
- Flexible curriculum – flexible programming (i.e. chunk of time when students aren't in the 'classroom'; places are determined by the content; spend more time beyond the finite schedule; cross curricular projects to help make the connections
- Technology – bring content to the classroom; break away from the idea that what's happening at one school can't be accessed by students in other schools (e.g. use video conferencing, or students attend several schools)
- Boundary-less system – one specialist with students traveling to the teacher; maximize resources throughout the division
- Healthy buildings – look at a sustainability framework (link with Town of Canmore and Natural Step)
- Learning academies for differentiation of needs
- Brain research studies re: flexible school hours
- Video conference courses – e.g. offered at CCHS and BCHS students attend; 'Second Life' (see B. Skinner)
- High level athletes should be given credit for Physical Education
- Professional judgement on credits – can administrators not make a decision re: credit on local learning opportunities; now Alberta Learning's decision
- Use of facilities to bring types of education together
  - 1) Bow Valley College in same building so students could take a college course
  - 2) Day Care and Preschool in same building and students could work with 'clients' (learning about baby food; creates empathy and understanding)
- Bring in more student teachers to help students to see how learning is going on
- Connect community centres with schools
- Naturalist Program – kids at all ages learn about the environment in which we live
- Involve and plan with community resources – Parks, Banff Centre, Kan. Country, libraries, Nordic Centre, various businesses and home businesses that have unique building attributes, have community resources in building (e.g. AADAC, health services)

## **2 Big Ideas (from group report out)**

1. Outdoor/cultural/community involvement program – progressively longer excursions from Gr. 1 through Gr. 12; consistent progression throughout the Bow Valley schools; community involvement
2. Flexible curriculum – flexible programming (i.e. chunk of time when students aren't in the 'classroom'; places are determined by the content; spend more time beyond the finite schedule; cross curricular projects to help make the connections
3. Use of facilities to bring types of education together:
  - Bow Valley College in same building so students could take a college course
  - Day Care and Preschool in same building and students could work with 'clients' (learning about baby food; creates empathy and understanding)

### **C. Program Delivery**

Integrating theme for this discussion is **flexibility** in relation to:

- Provision of support for outreach, technology and for teachers in planning professional development
- Curriculum delivery – depth; cross curricular connections; PLC role
- Community understanding and support
- Department of Education – role of timetable; flexibility in awarding credits (e.g. credits for community classes)
- Scheduling - (a) Of the day: early and late starts/finishes; 9 for 10 (go to school 9 out of every 10 days, and (b) Of the year: terms of even length (e.g. 3 months); year-round school schedule
- Programs – video conferencing across schools to allow program variety (e.g. AP course in Canmore taken by kids in Banff); community teaches classes to our kids (e.g. yoga); supported independent learning; learning the trades
- Self-directed learning – develop necessary skill sets
- Languages – French immersion and other languages
- Research-based
- Cater to the student's learning styles. Connect with students according to how they learn (traditional or other ways such as cooperative)
- The key to this is the 'teacher' – teacher to follow the students
- Kids need to take ownership of their learning. Kids need to be motivated (light the fire within)
- Kids need freedom to make more choices and take more responsibility
- We need to be more thoughtful in delivering the technology program

**Big Ideas (from group report out) – see flexibility theme and points**

### **D. Learning Content and Assessment**

- Slow learning down – give time needed for reflection; too much information leads to learning that is a mile wide, and an inch deep; aim for deeper understanding
- Many children, many solutions
- Know the end result you want, then assess what you want
- Divisional report card
- Focus on motivation and developing passion
- Working smarter rather than harder – integrate cross-discipline (e.g. Ascent program)
- Different way of presenting a final product (written, oral); process is also important
- Different skills needed as society is changing (e.g. computers); decrease in memory
- More flexibility with ways of learning, whole child development
- Learning beyond the 3 R's – spiritual, emotional, work experience, learning different languages
- Opening up the curriculum to provide more opportunity for case study (for credits)
- Support open learning, self-paced learning
- New math curriculum – strong foundation, good
- New social studies curriculum is too advanced
- Life long learning strategies – less content
- Teach to student needs and styles vs. provincial achievement tests
- How do we assess the whole child (emotional, social, spiritual)? Do we need to assess? – through anecdotal comments
- Opportunities needed for the above within the community
- School links with AADAC, Mental Health, FCSS – gets stats on areas of need for whole child support and focuses on those
- Distinct communities need to be assessed differently – 1) Aboriginal communities and Exshaw, 2) French immersion/English dual track in Canmore, 3) Static demographics in Banff
- Target the idea of assessing the importance of education. Why is education not held as a top priority in communities?

## **2 Big Ideas (from group report out)**

1. Learning beyond the 3 R's and teaching to student needs and styles vs. provincial achievement tests
2. Education of parents and trades businesses to move toward apprenticeship programs at the schools (e.g. job shadowing). Take on streaming of kids to develop skills and self confidence (e.g. getting along with other people).

## **E. Role of the Teacher**

- As facilitators of self-directed learning
- Mentoring beyond the classroom
- Teacher advisors become the student contact. A relationship which students rely on: an advocate for all learning. View as a 'surrogate parent' or a 'go-to person'. This is developed over the student's years at school. Need to be clear of boundaries with this idea.
- There must be a different perspective from the community and government
- More interpersonal skills are necessary for stakeholders
- Managers of technology

- More of facilitators so that students can access programs within the communities (e.g. apprenticeships, and work experience at younger levels). See Finland model (S. Howatt contact)
- Teachers still do core teaching but need a school/community coordinator position
- Teacher as learner – needs time to reflect on practice; study/questions then meet, discuss, research, practice, meet again, revise, etc. Not just a one-off lecture or workshop for professional development. Mastering learning should apply to teachers as well as students. Teachers are role models. Let us get excited about our learning.
- Personal contact with students (e.g. BCHS T.A.G. program)
- Teachers are teamed (science/humanities) and this team teaches all subjects to a block of students (e.g. Ascent program idea)
- Colleagues – we need time for collegiality; mentorship feedback from classroom observations
- Students can teach each other (i.e. child goes on a trip and teaches other students upon return). Parents need to encourage child to learn – we are all teachers
- Not ‘sage on the stage’ (expert) anymore – rather ‘guide on the side’
- Parents need to partner with teacher
- No longer money collectors, forms, etc. – let teachers teach! Someone else needs to do administration
- Teachers need to be open to feedback and willing to change – no closed door classrooms
- Role of teachers at present means doing too much parenting – refocus family on family unit; parents need to teach too
- Partnering with Mental Health, Wood’s Home, other community agencies
- What is the ‘core’ side of teaching? What are the essential responsibilities? (avoid burnout doing so many other things such as fundraising, recycling, etc)
- Role of teacher as showing students how to find information, evaluate, make decisions, develop independence, develop relationships. This fosters or leads to motivation, passion, risk taking, self confidence, independence, success. This is all possible more with smaller classes. Relationship building is key.
- Being a good role model by liking what you do
- Reach out an involve community

## **2 Big Ideas (from group report out)**

1. Agree what the ‘core’ of teaching is, then as teachers, live as mastery learners in community with other teachers (open to feedback, reflect on own teaching, have mentors, collaboration, sharing best practice).
2. View community and parents as teachers too – need necessary skills and support, and inclusion to do their part.