

Glynn A Green School Council Meeting - Tuesday April 9, 2019

In Attendance:

Superintendent: Kelly Pisek

Principal: Todd Halliday

Vice Principal: Kelly Phillips

Teacher: Kim Downs

Trustee: Nancy Beamer

School Council Members: Gaetanne Barton, Jennifer McGregor, Susan McGlynn, Julie Stitt, Tom Freure, Craig Mustard, Emily Rochon, Jo-Ann Kinnear, Kim Molnar

Call to Order: 6:30 p.m.

Superintendent Update - Kelly Pisek

- Kelly Pisek let us know that the Human Resources inquiry into the situation at Glynn A Green has concluded. Kelly's parallel review of the school culture and climate has also conclude and she shared her findings.
- Kelly Pisek has spent time looking into what happened. She stressed that the concerns expressed from parents did not originate over the past year but rather were long standing issues that grew over many years.
- She complimented the assistance and professionalism of our co-chairs (yeah Gaetanne & Jennifer)
- During her investigation she discovered a variety of themes:
 - Blurred lines between teachers and the community.
 - Information disseminated by staff to community rather than through the appropriate channels/structures.
 - Perceived favouritism for teachers' kids (make teams, different rules or open access to school before and after instructional time etc)
 - Parents uncomfortable with sharing concerns about and with teachers because they were friends / knew each other through the community
 - Concerns were spread without accurate sources - everything is hearsay "I heard that ...". This made it very difficult and at times impossible to address issues.
 - In the future, if parents have concerns, they should speak directly to the teacher themselves rather than talking to other parents/staff/community members
 - Staff were sometimes hesitant to give accurate reports of students' behaviour/academic concerns because they felt challenged on their professional judgement.
 - Going forward the school needs to have a "student focus"
- During the last PA day, they brought in a third party facilitator to work with the staff, admin and superintendent.
 - Discussed expectations for students - how to teach students explicitly to be kind to each other, teach them rules, enable student voice
 - Discussed that kids' need to feel proud of their school

- Our students need increased responsibility and ownership for their school
- Many teachers are now taking AQ (Additional Qualifications) courses in math, technology and Indigenous studies - there are many good things happening within our system and we will embrace these things at GAG
- The third party facilitator helped them to discuss what it means to be a team at school and discovered that it meant very different things to different staff members. Message was sent that it is not about being friends and having fun, it is about being professional and putting students first
- Some staff mentioned missing professional collaboration (working and planning with grade groups, etc) since they joined the GAG team. Professional collaboration had not been happening, in part because some staff had concerns about trusting one and opening their teaching practice to each other.
- Staffing
 - Staffing season starts in May but parents are already talking in the community that many teachers will be leaving the school. Which is a current example of information being in a community that should not be at this time. Significant movement will be happening and it happens for many reasons.
 - Some staff want to move on and have a fresh start. Staff will be informed of their proposed teaching assignments at GAG and some may not like their new teaching assignments and may wish to move to a school where a position exists that is a better fit.
 - There are teachers in the board who want to come and work at GAG
 - Staffing will be announced at once at the end of the year - the end of June newsletter will include “good-bye and good luck” to those moving on and welcome to those who have been hired to join the GAG staff.
- Voice of Pelham wants to do a follow up story on the bathroom incident. Kelly Pisek would like Parent Council’s input. She does not think it is a good idea to dwell on past problems as it only brings up negativity and pain. Parents spoke and agreed that we would all welcome the Voice to do good news stories and report on the many positive things that are happening at our school.
- Plant (Building) Changes - locks will be added on change room doors and a buzzer has been installed at the back door (hooray!!!!!!!!!!!!)
- Gaetanne explained that moving forward, Parent Council is looking for collaboration between parents, teachers and administration
- Jennifer McGregor asked if there had been concerns among the staff about parent volunteers in the classrooms. Kelly Pisek said that had not come up and Todd agreed that they want parents to continue to be involved and volunteer in the classroom
- Jennifer McGregor asked if the board has experienced other close knit community schools with problems such as ours. Kelly said that it hasn’t come up to this degree and her and the other senior admin are considering what they can learn from this experience and how they can identify other schools with concerns and apply the things they have learned.
- Todd Halliday added that we need to build confidence and faith in our school that the school will do the right thing.

- Gaetanne asked about the impact of the recent announcements by Doug Ford regarding education.
 - Kelly explained that the DSBN budget comes out in May.
 - The elementary panel is not in a position to lay off teachers because of good budget & fiscal management over the past few years and upward enrollment.
 - If necessary, central staff will be re-assigned to schools and will work directly with students to ensure student needs' are met.
 - More significant changes may be made at the secondary level again with central staff & instructional coaches being reassigned to schools to ensure students are supported
 - Unions are doing their jobs to spread the message that cuts to education hurt kids
 - DSBN responded immediately to cuts to Autism funding as did other boards.
 - Contract negotiations will be starting soon. The teacher and admin in our board get along well and know not to take the process personally
 - We will not be seeing enormous cuts to elementary this year
 - Until something comes out in an official memo, it is not official. The DSBN does not act until it is official
- Everyone thanks Kelly Pisek

Old Business

Fun Fair (Todd Halliday)

- Committee has met twice
- Plan to update games
- Bouncers have been selected
- Getting pizza this year instead of BBQ
- Everything is in place and on track
- Looking for volunteers - please volunteer NOW so they can plan ahead and not be stressed out at the last minute!
- Planning on student leadership
- Volunteers will get 5 tickets (so they can get pizza, etc)
- Auction items are going well (there is already stuff in the vault)
- Ask parents for donations
- We will be doing classroom baskets again

Graduation (Todd Halliday & Jennifer McGregor)

- Lookout is booked for the celebration

Treasurer Report (Todd Halliday)

- Stephanie is absent
- No big changes
- We have enough money for fun fair
- Todd confirmed that there an account for Breakfast Program / Niagara Nutrition Partners

- Jennifer mentioned that NNP will give grants based on the amount of money we raise
- Gaetanne mentioned a concern with School Cash Online - you can only donate once. Todd will look into this

Principal/VP Report - Todd Halliday with Kelly Phillips

- The staffing process has started
 - We will be staffed for 390 students
 - We are planning on the same number of classes as last year
 - Staffing will continue for the next few months
 - Staff move schools for a variety of reasons
 - End of June newsletter will contain new staff who have been hired and good luck to those who are moving on
- GREAT things are happening in our school!
 - Breakfast program - new counter top & cupboards
 - May 7 Track & Field
 - Chess Club sent 9 members to DSBN Championship and they played well
 - Me To We held a very successful Food Drive with Pelham Cares
 - Eco Club is doing the plastic bag challenge
 - Bag to School used textiles event - DO NOT send clothes early!!!
 - Robotics Club - a family has donated 10 Lego Robotics Kits & I pads as well as banners for our robotics team.
- Code of Conduct
 - DSBN is working on a board wide Code of Conduct
 - Todd is on the committee
 - Code of Conduct will be given to principals first and then the school community
- Upcoming Events
 - Forest of Reading - 16-20 kids are going to April 26 conference
 - Dance Team -20 kids aer working with Mrs Furtney and Ms Fairchild
 - Technology - a STEAM night is being organized. 5 teachers volunteered
 - All gr 7/8 split classes in DSBN are involved in EDWIN - they are given a laptop to use with resources from Nelson
 - April 17th Parent Workshops (Bullying vs Conflict etc). Come see what your kids have learned at school so you can continue the conversation at home
 - Earth Day Activities next Thursday. Grade 7/8s are doing a community clean up project & K-6 are cleaning up the school yard
- Trip Updates
 - JK/SK - Niagara Falls Children's Museum
 - Grade 1/2 - Safari Niagara
 - Grade 3 - Niagara Falls
 - Grade 4-6 - Niagara Falls
 - Grade 7 - Youth University at Brock University
 - Grade 8 - Camp Olympia
- June 25th is graduation

- All anti-bullying etc presentations are complete. Some teachers have requested follow up
- Door monitors have been installed at recess and hall sweeper duty has made a huge difference for the better. The students and staff have adapted well to the changes.
- **School Climate Survey** - Todd explained the results of the School Climate Survey through a slideshow. Some highlights:
 - GAG is unique in that we have one washroom for all grades
 - Kids feel most safe in the Learning Commons
 - GAG students feel mostly as safe as other DSBN students
 - Parents at GAG report that kids are less safe while the kids themselves report feeling more safe
 - Parents reported concerns with busing - we need to look into this
 - Playground and washrooms were the greatest areas of concerns for GAG students and parents and these are areas that Todd wants to address
 - Julie Stitt mentioned that these were areas of concern in past discussions of school safety and climate assessments
 - GAG kids reported less or comparable stress to other DSBN students
 - GAG students biggest stress was related to their future while parents report that their kids biggest stress is friendships
 - 14% of GAG kids feel excluded (approx 28 kids)
 - 24% GAG kids say they're bullied at GAG (30% in DSBN)
 - Kelly Phillips worked hard to ensure students understood and completed the survey by visiting every classroom and remaining to support students while they completed the survey. Some confusion regarding stress questions in grades 4 & 5
 - Feedback regarding the survey itself is welcome
 - DSBN is hoping to do this yearly

New Business

- **School Trustee - Nancy Beamer**
 - Requesting feedback from community regarding upcoming vote on flying the LGBTQ+ flag at all DSBN schools
 - Parent council overwhelmingly supported the initiative
 - Todd Halliday expressed the need for a board wide flag policy and clear and consistent messaging around the meaning of any flags displayed

Adjournment and Next Meeting

- Next meeting May 21 - Lisa Mooney, chair of all Parent Councils for DSBN and Nancy Beamer, DSBN Trustee will be presenting
- Last Meeting of the 2018/2019 school year is June 18 – planning for next year including suggested meeting dates and topics for the 2019/2020 school year.