

DPAC MONTHLY MEETING: 7 FEBRUARY 2019

Katia Dilkina called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm.

In attendance:

Erin Prescott
Katia Dilkina
Fiona Ely

Robin Grazley
Marika Glickman

Katie Ryan
Adrienne White

Staff: Ms. Brenna O'Connor, Mrs. Jana Relf, Mme Stephanie Mills

1. Principal & Vice-Principal's Reports

Discussion of Inclusive Learning at Doncaster (includes gifted testing)

- Brenna and Jana prepared a short presentation on the current discussions around inclusive learning [[slides available](#)], providing some context for the current discussions around catchment boundary review and inclusion
- This year our teachers have participated in professional development workshops with Shelley Moore -- where a lot of the thinking is, how we support learners
 - We are moving from medical "problem" model to thinking instead about strengths in different kinds of learning (slide 1)
 - diversity -- kids are different, we don't want them all to be the same -- accordingly, no single way for strategies as well (slide 2)
 - Carol Ann Tomlinson on differentiation (slide 3) -- Brenna highlighted the importance of assessment in our classrooms, each teacher taking time to assess and see what's next for each child
 - designing supports (slide 4) -- 3 tiers -- some strategies/supports are purpose-designed for particular learners, but can have benefits for all learners
 - question from Katia: Tier 3 kids need the most, but looking at this triangle model, are they receiving the least? Brenna: it's more that the tier 3 supports are designed for those who need it, but they can also benefit all learners. There may also be specific targeted support outside the classroom. Many things on Tier 3 are going to benefit all kids too -- universal design for learning, i.e. wheelchair ramps.
- Shelley Moore, <https://fivemooreminutes.com/> -- short video pieces with explanation of her thinking, examples of how to design curriculum with inclusion in mind. Moore is Vancouver-based, has been a teacher in the Lower Mainland and in New York City; she

has also been a consultant to school districts and organizations throughout Canada and the United States.

- Julie Causton will be coming next week -- <https://www.inclusiveschooling.com/> -- lots for parents as well. She is from Syracuse, NY; resources are American-based, but still useful.
 - question from Katia: is curriculum in the U.S. very different from Canada? Brenna: in some respects -- different ways of thinking, more structured and less flexible. This type of teaching requires a lot of flexibility. Again, encouraged to take a look at Shelley Moore -- bowling metaphor (look to the outside pins) -- when we design for those who struggle the most, we help the most kids.
 - Five Moore Minutes video: "The Evolution of Inclusion: The past and future of education" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQgXBhPh5Zo>)
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- gifted testing -- we have been thinking about the process in the district -- perhaps doing some rethinking? This affects Tier 3 kids again. Historically our district has used the Otis-Lennon test, but it's not the only method available. Andrea Woodrow looking at this right now -- advice: offer parent recommendation as well as teacher recommendation
 - psychoeducational testing is very resource-heavy, and is mostly used to identify learning disabilities in this district
 - skills requiring the most challenge for the brain -- critical thinking rather than rote learning -- ways to start to target those skills in a mainstream classroom, so kids are experiencing that challenge as well
 - testing happens at grade 4/5 levels, top 2% informed in letter -- may result in an IEP, looking at supports in an inclusive environment -- way to identify students (not always the ones teachers spot in the classroom) and offer them what they need
 - question from Fiona: what are the possible outcomes and results of this testing? Brenna: it's good for us to know -- the top 2-3% would have discussion with parents about IEPs, creating goals to support kids.
 - question from Katie: if a teacher had several high needs kids in the classroom (gifted and/or learning disabilities), how is that teacher supported? Brenna: someone might work with the teacher to develop an IEP. This is part of the complexities of the job, planning for all the students' individual needs -- often this can be met by doing the same activities with the whole class, but using different lenses to evaluate learning. Giftedness does not usually come with EA support.
 - Katia shared some observations from the January VCPAC meeting: many at the meeting objected to the district moving away from the specialized behaviour program. Brenna noted that this doesn't really apply to our school community, since our students' needs are being supported within our school; lots of people thinking about how to do that. Katia: more complex in high school? more material to be covered ... Brenna: not necessarily -- access points look different. Teachers here are very much thinking about sources of behaviour and what students need, how to work with them.

School Updates

- Brenna: the basketball jamboree is coming up -- thanks to our parent coach, and Mme Kremler and Mme Lampard
- Jana: grades 2 and 4 will be going to the symphony on February 25 -- about 115 students will be taken by bus to UVic, also our new music teacher, Alex Gregg, who will be here until the end of the year. Mrs. Johnson will return gradually. Thanks to Mr. Esquemilla-Duarte for filling in last term!
- Our last pro-d: Science Venture
- In April, we have a pro-d workshop coming up on learning experiences outdoors for kids -- working with Garry Oak meadow
- MakerSpace Caine's Arcade projects coming up -- stay tuned!

2. January 2019 Minutes to Approve -- motion to approve by Adrienne White, seconded by Katia Dilkina.

3. Date for Annual General Meeting

- March 7, April 4, or May 2? This is the meeting where we vote in the next executive.
- **We agreed to set the AGM for March 7**, as we are most likely to have quorum (10 parents) on this date. March also leaves us the possibility to try again if we do not have quorum.
- The budget meeting will happen after the AGM, can be scheduled separately.
- Treasurer's update from Erin: not much to report at this time, but an update in the interests of transparency (and if anyone has any thoughts on this, please share them -- much appreciated!). Part of the problem of doing the budget in January is that a number of fundraising things are not complete, hard to know where we are.
- Erin reached out to Maura Busby for an update on the classroom bikes. Maura has applied for a grant for one bike; the district has also agreed to pay for one bike. As discussed last month, Maura thinks we need 3-6 more bikes (\$655 each). We already have \$1000 allocated to the resource room, which will go toward bikes -- if we can support more, that would be good. We agreed that we can provide an additional \$3000 for a total of 8 bikes in the school, especially as \$4000 was allocated toward technology last year but not spent. The district is doing a purchase after Spring Break. Erin will let Maura know.
- Brenna noted the popularity of standing desks in our classrooms -- budget priority.
- Katie: looks like we are not near projected revenue? Erin: because we are not at the end of the school year, \$3000 differential seems reasonable -- funds raised from Bingo Night, Fun Lunch still to come. Also, we had budgeted to take \$3000 from GIC for the Garry Oak meadow restoration, but with McNally grant didn't need to do that. We will be spending on the garden project.
- currently \$24k in our account, \$7k in gaming account, and \$50k in GICs

4. Parent Education

- thanks to Jana and Fiona for organizing our recent parent education opportunities

Island Sexual Health -- Jana/Katia

- The parent presentation had a great turnout, lots of questions, very informative -- slides from Jennifer Gibson's presentation are available on the PAC website. Katia talked with Mariah, who is doing the classroom teaching -- she is very keen to come back at least once a year, and is also prepared to present to younger grades as well. In consultation with Brenna and Jana, we agreed that this opportunity will be offered to teachers as an option, something they can add in to their curriculum as needed/desired -- between this choice and the ongoing grade 4/5 presentations, the information will be reaching many students.
- The cost was \$275, one-time fee for the year, and they also do ongoing followup with community members. This flat rate is very inexpensive. Jana noted a significant benefit to this program: kids will become familiar with Jennifer and Mariah over time, in their schools, and may feel more comfortable tapping into ISH's resource in future when they need them.
- We expressed support for building this into the regular routine. Brenna & Jana will decide when to put the information out to teachers for next year. Likely we can still hold the parent talk in the library, so no need to book the gym.
- ISH follows B.C. curriculum (indicated in the letter that went home to parents), and the importance of kids having accurate information about sexual health is clear. Parents are always welcome to ask if they have any questions about curriculum.

The White Hatter -- Fiona

- grade 4 & 5 presentation and parent presentation both held on February 5 -- went well, Brandon Laur and the teachers were pleased that students were so engaged for nearly 2 hours. There was not a lot of time for questions at the end, but a full afternoon.
 - Several noted that the parent presentation was quite long -- over 2 hours without a break.
 - 67 people registered on EventBrite, estimated 50+ there -- good turnout, Brandon was pleased. He also provided quite a few resources for parents to take away -- available anytime for questions.
 - Parents noted the positivity of the presentation: good practices rather than fear; support, listen, rather than forbid.
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- Ideas for future parent education: Fiona encouraged parents to let her know if they hear of anything interesting. Please share ideas, even if they are for next year! Marika mentioned the Story Studio Writing Society, a non-profit which offers intensive classroom workshops in which each student creates their own book (<http://www.storystudio.ca/>). They generally run their programs in the winter/spring. Brenna and Jana have some prior experience with their workshops, and noted that they may be very expensive, as publishing the students' books is a labour-intensive process. We agreed to investigate this as an option.

- Fiona: many of the education opportunities I have hear about involve a community of schools -- Katia is not getting this information from VCPAC, however. Brenna shares whatever the principals share. It would be good to have a clearer flow of information from the PAC side.
- Another idea for parent education: Nikki Lineham's presentations on the new math -- she has a website, Educating Now (<http://educatingnow.com/>), with many resources. Jana has worked with her before. Parents expressed lots of enthusiasm about this as an education opportunity.

5. Garden Project Update

- Brenna: we have the go-ahead for fencing and irrigation (can be tied to the existing system). The cost is \$4500 for irrigation, plus \$1500 for the fence: \$6000 total. We have the money to get started.
- The next piece is some community consultation. Marni from SD61 is keen to support us on this project. We need to make sure our neighbours are on board, then we can begin with the fencing.
- This means a realistic spring start. We do need to consult before we announce it, though -- district approval, other pieces are done.
- Brenna is working with Marni to get the consultation organized.
- Erin: we have money to cover water, fence, and a little extra -- can look for in-kind donations as well -- Abigail working on grants -- Matthew from LifeCycles is working with a Doncaster parent on sourcing a shed.
- Consultation re: the childcare portables is also a factor.
- Erin: if there's anything we can do to support that, please let us know. Brenna: Abigail may have have grant proposals to look over in the near future.

6. Bingo Night -- Katia for Mercedes

- we are on -- we have a caller, still need donations for prizes -- if you have donations, please tell Mercedes!
- Katie: Mercedes will also put the volunteer signup sheet in the lobby too so people can see it (a copy is on the reverse of the food order forms).

7. Board Game Night -- Katia

- possible dates: Thursday April 11 (before Pro-D day) or April 18 (before Easter Break), Friday April 26. We agreed that people might be more likely to come on a Thursday of a short week.
- **Consensus was to hold it on April 11, 6:30-8 pm**, since people may be heading away for Easter Break on the 18th.
- Brenna will book the gym, and we will ask for Carla's help in coordinating setup with after school care.
- We can borrow games from Doncaster's lunchtime Board Game Club as long as they are properly organized and cared for -- families can also bring their own. We may also ask if the grade 5 leaders who have been helping with the Board Game Club would like to come with their families and help with this event.

8. TC10K/Thrifty Foods Family Fun Run -- Katie

- Signed up, since we had a couple of days left for the early bird discount. Last year's numbers were low, and we may have left it too late to advertise -- starting earlier this year.
- The family run is 1.5 km -- we may wish to emphasize this! 10K runners can still be part of the Doncaster team, however.
- we need at least 10 people registered to be able to get the Doncaster dragon on our shirts.

9. Doncaster at a Royals Game

- Brenna was contacted about this by the Royals organization -- they announce the group presence, there is a skate with the players afterwards. However, we need more information to fully discuss this -- in particular, we need details about cost for families. Jana agreed, noting that there is not much time left this year -- maybe 4 regular season games left.
- It would be a matter of advertising it, encouraging families to come out -- possibly too late notice for this year, but could look at this for next winter.

10. Other Projects

- playground committee for the intermediate side -- so far, Marika, Cyndi Whaley, and Katie have volunteered. Thank you!

11. Info from the January VCPAC meeting

- Katia: topics covered included proposed changes to late French immersion, catchment boundaries, special ed/behaviour program
- It was interesting to see all these parents so involved, knowledgeable about system and its politics -- would be great to have someone from our school at these meetings on a regular basis, providing insight on a larger scale.
- Discussion turned to specialized programs in middle/high schools -- i.e. aviation program at Mt Doug, circus program at Central -- catchment vs. transfer? talk about raising awareness, schools not allowed to advertise programs
- Should we have a Doncaster PAC rep to attend future VCPAC meetings? Next meeting is Feb 26 at George Jay. Katia noted that many of the parents present in January were not exec, but designated VCPAC reps who report back. Attendance also unlocks tickets to BCCPAC conference -- advocacy role with ministry, etc. (multi-day).
- Adrienne might be interested, but cannot go Feb 26 or April 23 (Katia can attend that one, which will be held at Doncaster -- VCPAC AGM).
- VCPAC also sponsors teacher and parent awards -- Adrienne will add this to the newsletter. Nomination deadline is May 4: www.vcpac.ca/vcpac-awards.

12. Parent Feedback on School District budget for 2019/20

- Handouts available for PAC input -- people can fill out and return to Katia, or directly to Doreen Hegan at SD61

Next Meeting: Annual General Meeting, Thursday 7 March 2019

Katia Dilkina adjourned the meeting at 8:46 pm