

## DPAC MONTHLY MEETING: 1 NOVEMBER 2018

*Katia Dilkina called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.*

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In attendance:

Erin Prescott	Robin Grazley	Fiona Ely
Katia Dilkina	Cindy Luchka	Alison Hamer
Katie Ryan	Cyndi Whaley	Elizabeth Corry
Penelope Barillaro	Adrienne White	

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

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1. October 2018 Minutes to Approve -- motion to approve by Cindy Luchka, seconded by Elizabeth Corry

2. September jobs – Katia

- class reps - Robin has offered to take on this job for next year, but will pass it off if someone else wants it
- back-to-school picnic/BBQ & PAC social - Cyndi has volunteered to be part of the crew organizing these events — thank you!

3. Magic Forest clean-up – Katia for Mercedes

- round two scheduled for November 3
- Mercedes reports that things are going ahead well — weather is sketchy, but hopefully people will show up
- information needs to be circulated about this event — Katia will check in with Mercedes and make sure a reminder goes out by email, with the time

4. Thank you to the McNally Foundation for financing the “Magic Forest” restoration -- Katia

- This was an action item for last month: are we following through?
- Brenna: this is in the works -- some kids have started cards, but need to issue a reminder to teachers, with a deadline

5. Parent Education – Fiona and Katia

- White Hatter event:
  - booked for February 5th — confirmed for grades 4/5 during class time — presentation is 90 minutes for kids, 2 hrs for parents, and we need to set times for both.
  - After consultation with Brenna and Jana, it was agreed to book the student presentation for the afternoon, and the parent session for 6:30-8:30 pm.
  - Fiona contacted Braefoot about grants, but did not hear back by deadline of October 26, so Doncaster’s application for \$250 grant was submitted separately. Later, Braefoot PAC

responded that they do want to join us and did submit their grant on time. If we are all successful, we'll combine the grants and put \$500 toward the presentation. Braefoot parents will participate in the evening session. Brenna made a note that she/Margo will confirm the date with rentals.

- Sexual health education with Kerri Isham - needs to take a different format than originally planned and/or consider alternatives acceptable to the school district.
  - Katia: it seems that this not going to happen in the format that we were hoping.
  - Katia has been speaking with Brenna this week, and was asked to contact Harold Caldwell (Director of Learning, Learning Support Team) at SD61 re: process for bringing the Power Up program into our school. Katia circulated a print copy of her email exchange with Harold, in which he suggests alternatives to Power Up but does not directly address the question she asked. Brenna was able to clarify his comments regarding one of these alternatives, Second Step.
  - Discussion followed about these alternatives. A few parents noted that most of the suggestions focused on abuse prevention, rather than "body science" and healthy sexuality as well as bullying, acceptance, and gender diversity. They raised questions about a) the District's familiarity with Power Up's content and b) Kerri Isham's statement in her presentation to parents that schools may be interpreting curriculum guidelines in a way that evades discussions about sexual health. Brenna maintained that the curriculum is clear in what should be taught and is not subjective; moreover, it is online and visible to the public. However, some parents' experiences suggest this may not be carrying through to the classroom, which is why the PAC wanted to explore bringing in an enriched program. Brenna stated that she would follow up with teachers about what is being addressed in the classroom.
  - Brenna offered to speak to these concerns from the district perspective, as she had asked for their advice following the meeting with the professional development committee. Concerns centre around two main areas: first, some pieces of Power Up's content are not curricular, especially the material offered to grade 2 on reproduction and the digestive system; and second, Kerri's approach, which would combine two classes for the presentation, may not provide a safe environment (e.g. if a child were to disclose abuse), as it is a larger group than the familiar classroom setting and she is an outside educator. The advice received was that sexual health education is better done in-house because it creates a safer environment if there were to be disclosures. Reference was also made to poorer success rates with "one-time" presentations. Their advice points to "no" for Power Up.
  - Discussion returned to the fact that parents feel that in practice, sexual health is not being addressed in the classroom. Several parents made suggestions to resolve the impasse. These included:
    - asking Kerri to provide further information and/or consider teaching individual classes rather than combined ones;
    - asking Harold for clarification re: a vetting process for speakers coming from outside the district;

- asking teachers whether or not they feel comfortable presenting material on sexual health and/or whether they would like some support in facilitating this content, from Kerri or another source;
- asking parents (e.g. a poll) whether they feel sexual health is being adequately addressed in their children's classrooms, and whether they would like to see additional education being offered.
- A number of parents made arguments in favour of bringing in an outside educator to address sexual health, some of which were specific to Kerri and Power Up. These included:
  - comfort level -- it is understandable that not everyone would have the same comfort level talking about this subject, and we don't want to force teachers to do something they don't want to do. Bringing in a specialist educator and later drawing from her knowledge, but allowing her to deliver the bulk of the material, may ease the pressure on teachers who feel discomfort with this subject. Receiving content on a sensitive subject from someone who is palpably uncomfortable may be worse than no information at all.
  - "one-time" presentations -- Power Up is intended to be a sustained program with more than one visit per class, with content later revisited and carried through by the school's teachers. Perhaps the only comparable alternative to Power Up in terms of content which Harold suggested, the workshop with Island Sexual Health, is a one-time presentation, although they do constitute a local resource for follow up. Partnership with the school and its teachers is a cornerstone of Power Up's approach.
  - Safety -- abuse disclosures happen in multiple ways. Some may feel more comfortable disclosing to an outside educator who is clearly comfortable with the topic. Bringing in an outside specialist to address sensitive material may also ease difficulties with parents who are uncomfortable having their children receive education about sexual health, deflecting bad feeling from their relationships with their children's classroom teachers.
  - Children are exposed to sexualized content at earlier and earlier ages. Many parents see the need to ensure that as many children as possible receive information about bodies and how they work, healthy boundaries, and acceptance, to promote healthy relationships and combat bullying as well as sexual abuse. Again, parents had mixed experience as to whether and how the topics mandated by curriculum were being presented in the classroom. The presence of a program like Power Up means parents know these issues are being addressed.
- The parents present generally felt they wanted more clarity around specific problems with the Power Up program, as implied in Harold's email and Brenna's comments following the professional development committee meeting. Fiona pointed out that the White Hatter presentation has not received the same scrutiny, yet he will be discussing online pornography and this may be some students' first exposure to that topic. Similarly, Island Sexual Health's presentation on maturation for Grade 5s would not be

subject to the same kind of vetting, yet is a one-time workshop with an outside presenter. Brenna responded that Harold is working on a vetting process for outside presenters, and the PAC could, in collaboration with Kerri, offer a proposal. It was observed that Kerri has presented in a variety of districts around B.C. and likely has supporting material to hand. She may also not be surprised to encounter some resistance. However, some concern was expressed about the length of our process -- Fiona has now been in dialogue with Kerri for over 6 months -- and whether or not the next steps are entirely clear.

- Parents felt that if the school and/or the district have concerns specific to Kerri and Power Up, these concerns should be addressed directly so that the PAC (and Fiona in particular, as she has been our point person on this initiative) does not invest any more of our time, Kerri's time, or the school's time on a project which cannot be successful.
- Brenna reiterated the importance of following the process, and of ensuring teachers' autonomy re: content in their classrooms.
- Parents reiterated their frustration around the lack of clarity re: next steps to resolve some of these concerns, and keep open the possibility of offering Power Up's program to Doncaster's students. It was important to the parents present that our children receive this level of sexual health education, and we are willing to provide funding to support it, but it was unclear whether this program would be allowed to be brought to our school. We briefly explored the possibility of asking Kerri to offer the program in an after-school format, with parents giving permission for voluntary attendance, or perhaps using space in another facility (e.g. the Greater Victoria Public Library).
- Brenna had noted earlier that Island Sexual Health has reached out to the school in the past about doing a maturation workshop with grade 5s. Some parents were in favour of bringing in this workshop, as it would at least provide some support to address sexual health in the classroom. Brenna stated that she would follow up with Island Sexual Health.
- Katia will follow up with Harold. It was unclear what Fiona should tell Kerri.

#### 6. Halloween Dance – Katie & Marika

- Thanks to Katie & Marika for organizing! Great turn out and lots of helpers!
- Katie: lots of volunteers, parents were very helpful with circulating the halls — keeping things simple worked. There were a few comments about no pop/sugar, but overall things were good.
- Discussion about staffing the concession more effectively: 2 people on cash, 2 people getting orders seemed to work best. We may want to use a similar approach for the Craft Fair.
- three organizers is best — one to focus on food, one on organizing volunteers, and one on decorations
- Gym setup, with more lights and parent resting area, also got points this year
- Asking the DJ to judge the costume contest may have been too much to ask -- not entirely comfortable for him. Next year, we should try different options for judging. Some also felt the music was too adult. This DJ has been working our dance for years and seems to have a lot of pride in his work — if we are interested in exploring changes, Elizabeth has a contact and will pass his info on to next year's organizers.

#### 7. Craft Fair - Katia

- things going well - have been waiting to clear the Halloween Dance and Magic Forest cleanup before asking for volunteers. Adrienne will put a call in the next newsletter.
- lots of community support — \$400 from Thrifty's, gift cards from Fujiya, coffee from Starbucks, and volunteers from Reynolds. Nicole will help Katia wrangle volunteers -- thank you, Nicole!

#### 8. Movie Night – Katia for Nicole & friends

- Nicole and some friends have also volunteered to plan this year's Movie Night -- planning is underway

#### 9. Gaming Report – Erin

- application for the gaming grant has been successfully completed — thank you, Erin! We received nearly \$10K, \$1500 more than expected.

#### 10. Christmas fundraisers - Katia

- QSP Magazine Subscriptions – Cindy — she will do this when brochures arrive
- Purdy's Chocolates – Alexis — on it when the time comes

#### 11. Other Project Proposals for this school year?? - Katia

- Between the gaming grant and money budgeted for Power Up, we may have additional funds to spend this year — what should we do with it? please come forward with ideas
- Katie: follow-up on pumpkin carving contest, which was proposed by Hilda — Katie discussed Hilda's ideas and it sounds great, but we would need a committee of people to make it run. We agreed to revisit this idea in May/June and start some forward planning to get it organized. Brenna thinks Hilda may be willing to be involved herself as long as there is a PAC committee to carry the work.
- Elizabeth: could do a school-wide crazy hair day — Brenna will bring this idea to leadership students as well

#### 12. Garden Project - Erin

- Abigail Bigam is looking for parents to help with grant writing. Elizabeth & her father might be interested in helping out, providing some input — Erin will connect them. Adrienne will add a note to the newsletter (respond to [dpac.doncaster@gmail.com](mailto:dpac.doncaster@gmail.com))
- Brenna — there have been some personnel changes at Facilities — we are talking with our contact at the District to get things ready to go
- Jana: update on the welcome pole: protocol is that we approach the Songhees & Esquimalt Nations to ask whether a carver might be available. Both Nations are very busy/in flux, however; the Esquimalt chief passed away last year, and Songhees education person is dealing with some health issues as well as other business, so it may take a while to hear responses.
- The carver who made Spectrum's pole has health issues as well.
- Again, estimated cost is \$60K.

- Brenna can ask Oaklands about grants, but they have been fortunate in that a parent who is a carver donated his time. Alikei was aware of a way we might get the log donated, but we are unsure about logistics.
- Katia: it would be good to communicate with Oaklands about the process, so that we don't find a carver and then ask them to wait — could we open an account for the pole and save for it there, as with the playground?
- Discussion turned to the money being saved for replacement of the big kids' playground — consensus is that we shouldn't spend that money on the welcome pole in case we do need to fund the replacement ourselves. The spinner has already been removed, and will not be replaced — it is more expensive comparatively to replace one component than the whole playground. We would need an extra fundraising push to replace the wooden structures.
- Estimate is \$60K to replace the playground. Brenna noted that there has been some success with offsetting costs by letting community volunteers help with installation (with district oversight).
- If we were to move ahead, we would need a playground committee — someone to shop for playgrounds, organize targeted fundraising. Last time they did a scratch book, which people take around their neighbourhoods to get donations — prizes, etc. to motivate people — requests to businesses as well. We can also explore possible grant partnerships with out-of-school care.
- **We agreed that it is time to call for a committee on playground replacement, to go out in the newsletter in January.**

### 13. Principal & Vice-Principal's Reports

- Jana: cross-country season was very successful — 45 kids taking part -- we did have a bus for last event (no parking issues!) and braved the fog.
- Basketball starting soon — more organized games after Christmas — parents to help out? Also planning to open the gym for shooting practice for other grades at recess as weather gets bad.
- Brenna: team of teachers looking at early literacy, including learning support & librarian. This team will work together all year to think about collecting assessment data, getting best results for kids — French & English.
- Jana: we have been focusing on numeracy as well — K-3 and 4-5 — some Pro-D coming next week. The new curriculum is very open, so we have been trying to figure out new ways to teach math — varied ways of learning, working with many different styles of learning to create interest. Brenna noted that this includes some work with math manipulatives.
- Jana: thanks for new playground equipment — purple, yellow, blue, green — accountability among senior students in making sure it all comes back in
- Brenna: Board game café will be starting soon -- sessions started last year, with donations — lots of attendance, so we needed to manage & maintain enthusiasm. A teacher committee with 5-6 volunteers has been working on this. First, a blitz week, so each grade can come -- giving our students the chance to practise social skills/different opportunities at lunch. Thanks to the volunteer teachers who have committed to see this through — kids love it, so we need to keep it sustainable. In addition to the teacher brains figuring this out, the leadership students will also be helping with younger grades.

- Video screening: Our Doncaster Learning Community, scripted & filmed by Mme Malo's Grade 5 class -- highlights some of the 4 principles, multiple and different learning, environment, citizenship
- Katia: thanks to Jana for the suggestion about the volunteer signup bulletin board — worked for the Dance!

*Next Meeting: Thursday 6 December 2018*

*Katia Dilkina adjourned the meeting at 8:39 pm*