

Gordon Elementary PAC meeting

Nov 30th 2009 6:45-8:45pm

Gordon Elementary Library

Attending: Karen Wood (secretary), Liz Iglesias, Gerardo Iglesias, Linda Drozdowski, Carmen Rida, Elke Porter, Sharon Koehn, Anna Johnson, Miriam Grob, Michelle Chui, Monika Haus, Margaret Davidson, Nina Dolleris, Trusha Desai, Shelina Bergson, Elena Pederson, Chris Shirley, Niki Blakely, Heidi Schmidt, Frank Goodman, Tricia Wallace, Kristine Chapman, Charlotte French, Ingrid Sulston, and others that did not sign in.

Quick business:

1. Vote in this year's SPC members
Margaret introduced concept of School Planning Council (Advisory Committee), which considers what kids to have in school and how to get all levels involved, how is literacy progressing etc. Meet 4 x a year and report back to PAC. - Unanimous vote to pass motion for 4 parents to join.
 - i. Karen Wood
 - ii. Gerado Eglesias
 - iii. Jennifer Sears
 - iv. Jan Hare
2. Approve Oct PAC meeting minutes
Anna Johnson approved minutes, seconded by Roberta Stuart.
3. Motion to pay for music performances (to be voted on in January)
Christine Chapman motioned, Roberta Stuart seconds (\$1200, to be voted on in January)
4. Supporting student lunch fees
A system to donate lunches to families in need discussed. Margaret will discuss potential options with staff.
5. Update on school activities by Margaret
Skipping activity in full swing (mon 8am, Tues tba) a notice of times to be sent home. Basket ball commences in Jan. Comic book club for 10 members on Fri lunch time, has started. UBC students came to discuss recycling - asked if Gordon would be interested in a plot of land at UBC to see garden develop (Margaret pursuing the opportunity). Performance Dec 10th. Santa's workshop kicking off. Craft fair Dec 10th, families can sign up for a craft table.
6. DPAC
Roberta Stuart attended a meeting with DPAC (DSV) sharing new ideas of schooling approaches called "Assessment for Learning". The approach considers replacing testing with lots of observations, open ended questions, allowing students to speak about their interested. Margaret very supportive of the principle. Many teachers at Gordon already use the approach and eager to introduce it as a standard approach for all teachers. Roberta introduced a CD picked up at the meeting to be shared for viewing. Second item discussed at the meeting was the cut in Govt Gaming funding. Roberta observed that most district pacs were just in shock. A template will be placed on the school website to enable parents to provide feedback on concerns related to government gaming cuts so that feedback can be given to the MLA. Other PAC's spent the funds on field trips. Roberta emphasised that parents need to get mad and provide feedback, this path has provided results for Gordon in the past.

Guest speaker at 7:30pm

Jane Garland speaks on "Mindful Parenting": Today's world is busy and pressured. How does this affect our children? How do we help our children reduce this stress? Dr. Jane Garland, child psychiatrist and head of BCCCH Mood and Anxiety Clinic, discusses the latest neurobehavioural research alongside of developmental psychology, philosophy and traditional spiritual practices to help parents understand and use mindful parenting. Dr. Garland will also talk about school based programs (Friends, Roots of Empathy and Mind Up) and how to advocate for these programs.

Mindful Parenting

Jane Garland introduced as role model and mentor at Children's Hospital by Andrea Chapman.

Latest research over past 10 years exposing how minds work to greater degree, providing better insights. People today frequently feel they are continuously in **Chronic emergency mode**. This generation of kids life expectancy shorter than today's parents due to diabetes, blood pressure, bones density lower - linked to diet, sleep, exercise, stress hormones being higher. Outcome frightening.

Emphasis parenting on slower more rhythmic life patterns. Show kids by example, role models incorporating compassion, coping styles etc, (2 weeks of daily journaling of what went right shown to alter brain patterns!). Mindful research showing that there are core traits which help support life. These character traits emerged in early cultures and can be all modelled and learned:

Virtues

1. Be grateful
2. Be patient
3. Be compassionate, empathetic, loving kindness
4. Be generous
5. Be honest, truthful
6. Be tolerant / accepting
7. Have sense of Justice

Skills

- Mindfulness (be aware without judgement) - provides greater attention & self regulation capabilities
- Team work / co-operation
- Ability to focus
- Communication (not just words, also emotional connection, non verbal can be more vital)

What would we like to see more of?	What would we like to see less of?
Unstructured time	Anger
Special family times (rituals)	Fatigue
Closeness	Anxiety
Joy	Disrespect
	Stress
	Homework

Principles to approach putting more good time in our lives

Creative, Collaborative, Connected, Costless - make activity fun, use song, use dance

Little gems

- Kids need to feel competent at doing things by doing them themselves.
- Kids are rarely ever just thinking & pondering. Need to learn how to teach brain how to calm and think. ‘ I spy’, viewing clouds are good. Instead kids spend so much time plugged in, when they are not they fluctuate between anxiety and boredom, because they have not learned to think. Research has shown many genius’ had large amount of time sick (unplugged, just thinking).
- Really good to get kids outdoors, sun exposure, bring friends along.
- Older people feel happier when working - connections are meaningful, we’re in a flow. The younger generation sees work as a chore - be careful with the messages we send to kids.
- We often say things in a negative view, in opposition to how we actually feel.
- Our brains are not wired well to multi-task, less info goes to memory.
- Take time each day to sit, close eyes, focus on breathing, pause and centre.
- Need to find kid leaders (change agents) get them to be creative, get them to connect classes and connect needs e.g. elderly (whom may be lonely), come to schools to teach reading (aiding kids that are struggling with reading), baking class to provide snacks (incorporating baking, purchasing skills). Doing things ourselves is not genetic.
- As family try to catch family member being kind and pop penny in jar. Changes focus of family to positive. Put lines on jar and when get to a level get family treat - crates collaboration, connectedness and creativity.
- Develop rituals, so you can flow with the events e.g. songs
- Get unplugged Go camping - get to play board games
- “Affluenza” - condition of having everything instantly leading to intolerance to and for everything. When you camp and have to wait for food to cook, it tastes so good. We need to teach patience.
- “Friends for Life” program is good program to teach self regulation skills.
- “Roots of Empathy” is another program - baby brought into school and kids follow the development over 10 months to become aware of needs of someone other than themselves.
- “Mind Up” is a further program.
- Vital for parents to support others in co-operative structure to resist cultural impacts.
- Families can help each other out. Also connects elderly and kids.
- Suggestion - get high school kids to volunteer time to help with clubs.
- **Do less and involve kids in problem solving.**