

## GSF Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2016

**Called to order:** by John Dasher 7:06 p.m.

**Present:** John Dasher, Suzanne Maloney, Karen Russillo, Jaclyn Guelfi, Chuck Kurz, Jane Kurz, Monika Farrar, Bret Goldman, Caroline Jensen, Stephen Roth, Sarah Brewer, Keala Landry, Sheila Rooney, Wilhelm Klesius, Ramina Winton, Leslie Capinpin, Adam Treewater, Andrea Small, Riley Urban, Nicole Klock, Michael Mink, Becca Mink, Sondra Lewis

**Approval of April Meeting Minutes:** Caroline Jensen moved to approve, Wilhelm Klesius seconds. Minutes approved.

### **Principal's Report – Kim Goodhope:**

Golden Ribbon ceremony was held last week based on our response to intervention/Encore. Erica Guagenti and Christina Ramos came also attended, along with Lisa Bordley. Dr. Watenpaugh will be here in 3 weeks for a Monday morning gathering to celebrate with us. For clarification, Blue Ribbon is a national recognition and Golden Ribbon is a state recognition. The Golden Ribbon takes the place of what used to be the California Distinguished designation.

Staff/Classroom changes – For this upcoming year, there will be three kindergartens, four 1<sup>st</sup> grades, four 2<sup>nd</sup>, three 3<sup>rd</sup>, two 4<sup>th</sup>, a four/five, and two 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Some teacher assignments are in place, some are still in flux.

SSC (School Site Council) - We have 3 parent members of the site council for Glenwood who won't be here next year so we are looking to fill 3 open parent positions. Would love for anyone interested in guiding the vision and mission of Glenwood to express interest. Please pass it around.

**Teacher Liaison – Adam Treewater** – The teachers want to thank the parents and GSF for the teacher appreciation week. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade visited Vallecito to see the standing desks. We will be putting a Donors Choose page which takes 3-6 months to fund. Costs about \$11k per class to get the desks. Adam will be the first to do the process and will let the other teachers know. Today was the auction winners' afternoon with the teachers. We all went with our auction winners to the various locations in the auction. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders are going to Sacramento on June 2 to visit the State Capitol. 1<sup>st</sup> grade had Marine Mammals Center and 5<sup>th</sup> grade is working on Glenwood University where they learn something and teach their peers.

**Special Presentation:** Michael Mink - Presenting Principal Bob Marcucci from Davidson Middle School. Two Davidson students, Lucy Goldman and Andrew Mink, are here with him to answer your questions.

Bob Marcucci – Happy to have Lucy and Andrew here. Davidson is a great school. All our students come together for 3 years during a crucial time, when kids are going through so many changes between 11-14 years old. We are proud that the school is a representation of the culture of all of San Rafael. 1175 students, so it is a big school. A benefit is that it's like a comprehensive high school with so many opportunities. There's something for every kid there. We have about 55 teachers. There's also a wide range of adults on campus to help families and students work through things. Going into next year, we want to continue working on the climate and culture at the school. We have a behavioral response approach. Feel we might want to work on proactive, pre-emptive approach. We focus on community and events that impact all of us, and as an example, during the school's 4<sup>th</sup> period there's a schoolwide

topic for discussion. Always seeking ways to stay small as we get bigger. We want to continue to create connections. What questions do you have?

Q. What advice would you give outgoing 5<sup>th</sup> graders?

A. Andrew – Try not to use the restrooms between classes because you probably won't make it to class on time. Bathrooms are very crowded. There are only 5 minutes between classes. Try to make friends as soon as possible. New 6<sup>th</sup> graders are open to meeting new people. Later in the year kids already have developed their friendships and it's harder to mix in.

Bob – At the beginning of the year, you see all the kids at lunch clumped together with their former elementary school buddies, but later in the year they are all mixed in together.

Lucy – My recommendation is to use your homework planner because it really helps with organization, especially if you are not used to having to do that. Also, as Andrew said, try to make friends as soon as possible, but that doesn't necessarily mean kids aren't open to meeting new kids later, just that it gets a little harder.

Bob – It is an adjustment, going from self-contained class environment and going to having 5 different classes....agendas, writing homework down...it's an adjustment for all kids. Some support might be needed if this is challenging for a kid. Core teachers can help with this – students have a core teacher for 2 periods so this becomes the more self-contained class and they get to know the teachers/students better. Get that communication line going early on with the core teacher.

Q. If your child is having trouble with that executive functioning stuff, is there anything else in place to help with that adjustment? Would you contact the teacher, or all the teachers?

A. Bob – Always communicate with all your child's teachers. Schoolloop is something that we have gotten better at using. Schoolloop is an open grade book where you can log in and look at each class and look at missing assignments, see your kid's grades, and how your child is doing. Whenever a student comes in to see me I will pull it up and look at grades. It can also be accessed from smart phone. There are also academic counselors if a student is struggling, who can be an advocate and meet with the child to see what the concerns are. There are other intervention opportunities that are reserved for children who are really struggling (failing classes, etc.).

Q. How much parental involvement is there with homework? I want to give my kid independence and leave them alone, but I also don't want to see them struggle.

A. Andrew - I'd let the kid come to you. Becca Mink (mom) – My advice is with time management. Think about your schedule during the week and when things are due so you plan to do some work on the weekends, etc., and plan around those nights when you have sporting or other events that will make it impossible to get homework done that night. Lucy – I will do homework on my own but sometimes my parents do some reminding that I should get started on things and so on.

Q. Are the teachers really using the Schoolloop?

A. Bob – Most are but there are different levels of usage and proficiency. I expect to see a bigger usage of it in the next year.

Ramina Winton– It has also been valuable for my daughter to find someone organized in the class who she can call if she has questions.

Q. Any tips for the first day of 6<sup>th</sup> grade to help kids feel more prepared and less nervous?

A. Lucy – 2 days before school starts, there's a thing called Camp Cougar, run by older kids who help the 6<sup>th</sup> graders with lockers, schedules and so on. It was great because I was able to walk around the school and find the classrooms before the first day.

Q. What's it like when you talk to your friends who went off to private school? What kinds of comparisons do you make?

A. Lucy – I have a lot of friends who went to private school and at times I have felt little jealous when I hear they have things like having horseback riding after school, but now I feel lucky to have gone to Davidson because I have met so many different kinds of kids and have had lots of other experiences. Andrew – At the private schools, there is just one small set of kids and that's it. The same 15 boys in your class are the same 15 who are on the basketball team or other sports teams. At Davidson there are a ton of new friends you can meet.

Bob – Research says that kids who go to diverse schools tend to do better in college and do better with their careers due to that diversity. We do a lot of walking around at lunch time and you really don't see kids sitting alone, and if we do, we go check on them to see if they are ok and often it is because they just want a little alone time.

Q. Kim – One of the worries I hear from parents is that it is such a large school. How does it feel to you?

A. Andrew – at first it's a little overwhelming, but at first the 6<sup>th</sup> graders have their own lunch period other than Thursdays when you have lunch with the other kids. The class sizes do not seem overwhelming, as they are barely larger than at Glenwood, maybe 24 or 25 kids in a class.

Q. Do you feel comfortable asking teachers for clarification or help with asking questions?

A. Lucy – I always need things clarified and I have always just gone for it and asked the questions. People don't seem afraid to ask questions.

Q. How are the different levels of learning addressed, and the kids who are ESL?

A. Bob – There is a wide range of students, language abilities and so on. There is a stratified way of how the schedule is built. For example, for kids who are very new here and just learning English, they will be in special language instruction classes and then mainstream in where appropriate. There is a regular English class and another where you receive support if more is needed.

Q. What about advanced children?

A. Bob – there are two math pathways. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade they all come in and take Math 6. Based on grades in the semesters and a special test (diagnostic placement test), there are students that qualify for a compressed pathway, so in 7<sup>th</sup> grade the ones who scored higher will take 7<sup>th</sup> grade math and half of 8<sup>th</sup>, and then in 8<sup>th</sup> take 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 8<sup>th</sup> and pre-algebra. It is a fast pace. In English, the general classes are teaching to the top and there are other classes for other kids who aren't at the top. Lucy – I have never felt bored or unchallenged. They do teach to the top.

Q. How is bullying addressed?

Andrew – I haven't personally seen a lot of bullying at the school.

Lucy – I know there are systems in place if it occurs. There are counselors to talk to and a form that is reviewed.

Q. What do you do with a bullying report form?

A. Bob – We have a specialist who handles the forms when they come in. There aren't a lot fortunately. We use a similar tactic – conflict resolution. I take the form, call the student in and try to get as much info as possible, get names. Then I go right to the student allegedly causing the harassment or bullying. I explain the story to them and appeal to their better nature and let them know I will be checking in with them on a regular basis. I let them know the possible consequences that could occur. It is often the following up and checking in that helps keep it at bay. We don't always contact the parents; depends on the nature of the issue.

Bret Goldman – I work at a private school in SF and as a reality check, bullying happens at all schools at this age.

Bob – Social Media is something I want to address here. We deal with so many issues and spend so much time on "drama" and conflicts that start on social media and then go onto campus...please keep a watch on what your kids are texting and posting on social media. Kids can be nasty and it needs to be controlled.

Lucy - Peer support – There's a great community of kids at Davidson and kids really tend to jump in. Just as many kids get involved, even on text, if they hear something is being passed around, to tell the kids to stop.

Q. Is there going to be any additional effort made on the after school sports?

A. Bob – I agree there needs to be some clean-up with regard to the sports. We plan on hiring and paying someone to be an athletic director. Sports, band, the maker club are things that inspire a lot of pride. In the fall we have flag football and cross country, in winter wrestling, basketball, mountain bike club, volleyball. There's definitely room for improvement.

Q. How is Davidson in line for renovations?

A. Bob – Right now there aren't any field renovations planned, though the Little League did some baseball field renovations. Davidson has some projects – A/C going in, STEAM science wing, grassy area near the front that will be replaced by a 2-story building. We will be moving the teachers from the 20s wing into the new building.

Q. Are there any opportunities for parental involvement? As a parent, I found it surprising when I started that there weren't any opportunities for parental involvement. Is this an area for opportunity?

A. It is different than elementary school in that Davidson isn't looking for parents to get involved like they do here. It might be something to explore. Marin County School Volunteers (a County program) is a way to get involved. You can request Davidson and you can tutor, but it might not be in your child's classroom. We definitely need help chaperoning at the dances, however, so that is a great way to get involved.

Q. Are there any policies that the kids sign about not bullying on social media or anything like that?

A. Bob – No. No official policy on asking to look at phones. If we have reasonable suspicion, however, we can search phones, backpacks, and lockers.

**Thank you Bob, Andrew, and Lucy for all your help and time!**

**Inducting of new member:** Christina Ramos – Congratulations!

**VP Updates:**

Thrive - John Dasher - We are at 83% of the \$190,000 goal our Thrive goal. We are targeting parents who haven't yet donated and are hoping for another 8-10k. We are right around the amount we were at last year. Our goal was higher this year.

Events - Suzanne Maloney – The auction grossed around \$150,000. We are still getting some expenses in. Last year at Peacock it cost \$36,000. This year at Embassy it cost \$24,000. Overall, total income was targeted to be at \$342k so we are a little short, but we have some other income to account for before the end of the year.

Community Building – Caroline Jensen – We recently held the Daughter's Dance and Son Fun Night which were both great. Food and drinks were all donated for the Daughter's Dance. An idea for boys is dogs/burgers by Dads' Club as the line for the food truck was long. Spring Sing is up next, May 20, and is a wonderful event. There will be two sets with an intermission, some solo performances, and there will be food trucks. Mr. Duffy has some wonderful things planned.

Reily Urban – Book Fair – We are still looking for volunteers for the Book Fair, which will be the Tuesday-Friday the week after Spring Sing. Especially looking for parents for help take it down on Friday afternoon when it's over. It's easy and social. Please help spread the word, and we will be sending out flyers. It is a partnership with books from Book Passage and they give us 15%.

**President's Report:**

**Nominations for Board for 2016-2017 school year -All positions are open for nominations** - President,, VP of Fundraising, - this year it was split into Thrive and events, School Programs, Dad's Club, Secretary, VP Finance, VP Communications. Can have co-VP's as well. **ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE JUNE MEETING.**

Nominees from tonight's meeting:

President – John Dasher

VP Fundraising – Suzanne Maloney, Nicole Klock

Secretary/ Parliamentarian – Sondra Lewis

VP Finance – Karen Russillo, Stephen Roth, Andrea Small

VP Communication – Sarah Brewer

Community Building – Tami Mc Call, Jaclyn Guelfi

School Programs – Wilhelm Klesius

Dad’s Club – (not an official position on the Board) - OPEN

**Year-end BBQ**, will be held the last day of school at 5pm at Peacock Gap Park. We already have all the volunteers we need.

**Meeting adjourned 8:35 p.m.**

Submitted by Sondra Lewis, Secretary