



2020-2021

Katherine Foecking M.Ed.

Principal, GBS

Dear Great Brook School Community Members,

I am honored to join the Great Brook Middle School (GBS) community as the new Principal. Throughout my fifteen years dedicated to education, I have focused on maintaining a learner-centered community that fosters social, emotional, and academic growth for all children. I look forward to working together with the GBS community to carry this vision forward. In my new role as principal of GBS, my first actions will focus on the following goals:

1. Develop my understanding of and appreciation for what is unique and important to the GBS Community.
2. Collaboratively develop and implement a strategic plan for continuous school improvement that incorporates relevant research and feedback from staff, parents, students, and extended community members (e.g., district personnel).
3. Establish a system for clear communication with families, students, staff, and community members.

In order to do this work, I have created an entry plan that outlines a sequence of activities that will provide me with opportunities to learn from individuals representing staff, parents, and students of the Great Brook School community, as well as some of Antrim's community leaders. As I meet with individuals, my intent is to listen with great care and attention in order to begin to learn and work collectively and cooperatively to ensure that the academic, social, and emotional needs of all students are met.

While my goal is to follow this plan, please understand that the current COVID-19 situation may require alterations to this plan. Thank you for your understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine Becky". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned at the bottom left of the page.

An Entry Plan is designed to slow things down in order to counter the external pressures and internal responses that inexorably lead to jump reflex problem solving....An Entry Plan enables three kinds of learning: learning about your new place, learning about yourself, and collective learning about the organization as a whole. The result is that, as a new administrator, you make better decisions that are genuinely understood and acted upon by the people who must implement them (Jentz & Murphy, 2005, p. 740).

Entry Plan

The purpose of this entry plan is to enable me to learn as much as possible. By slowing down and learning about the GBS community, I will be better prepared to make decisions that are genuinely understood by those who will be impacted the most. Although I have worked in four different schools in the Conval School District, I will seek feedback from a diverse set of individuals in order to develop a well-rounded and thorough understanding of what is unique and special about Great Brook School. After analyzing key information, I will be better able to help strengthen the school's ability to make better decisions and ultimately help *all* children learn and grow.

Goal 1: Develop my understanding of and appreciation for what is unique and important to the GBS Community

"The past is a rich resource on which we can draw in order to make decisions about the future."

-Nelson Mandela

To further enhance my understanding of our GBS community, questions will be asked to allow for a discovery process that highlights our school's strengths and past successes and areas of growth and need. This process will create an opportunity to seek out common themes that will enhance change within our community.

Opportunities for Qualitative Data Collection

Objective	Timeline	Action
Staff Conversations (3	June 2020	Wednesday June 3 ConVal Virbela

max)		Thursday June 4 ConVal VirBela Friday June 5 ConVal VirBela Monday June 8 GBS outside Tuesday June 9 ConVal VirBela Wednesday June 10 GBS outside Thursday June 11 GBS outside
Family conversations	July 2020	Weeks of July 13, 20, & 27 sign up through Sign Up Genius
Community Conversations	July 2020	Week of August 3 (exact date TBD)
Meet & Greet for Families/Community	August 2020	Tuesday August 4th 10:00 - 12:00am GBS Thursday August 13th 5:30 - 7:30pm GBS

Questions for Staff	Questions for Students	Questions for Families	Questions for Community Members
How would you describe GBS?		How would you describe GBS?	How would you describe GBS's role in the communities it serves?
In what areas do you think GBS excels?	What makes GBS a great school?	In what areas do you think GBS excels?	In what areas do you think GBS excels?
What would you most want to preserve at GBS?	If you went to a new school, what would you most miss about GBS?	What would you most want to preserve at GBS?	What are some of the best ways GBS serves the families and communities?
In what areas do you think GBS could improve?	If you went to a new school, what would you hope it has that GBS doesn't have?	In what areas do you think GBS could improve?	How could GBS improve its connections to the families and communities it serves?
What inspires you or motivates you in your	When you are working on	What about school motivates or	What opportunities do you think GBS

role as...?	something really hard, what do you do to keep going?	inspires your child?	could take advantage of that it is currently not?
What frustrates you in your role as ...?	What frustrates you most about GBS?	What about school frustrates you or your child?	What frustrates you in your role as ...?
What would help you to be even more effective in your role as...?	How could your school or teacher help you to be a better student?	How can the school make stronger connections with parents?	What would help you to be even more effective in your role as...?
What is the best way to communicate with you?		What is the best way to communicate with you?	What is the best way to communicate with you?
How can I help and support you in my role as principal?	Is there anything that you think I should know about you or GBS in order to be a good principal?	How can I help and support you in my role as principal?	How can I help and support you in my role as principal?
Are there other things that you would like to share with me that would help me to get a more complete picture of GBS?	Are there other things that you would like to tell me about GBS that I haven't asked?	Are there other things that you would like to share with me that would help me to get a more complete picture of GBS?	Are there other things that you would like to share with me that would help me to get a more complete picture of GBS and the communities it serves?
Are there other people that you believe would be beneficial for me to speak with? Perhaps someone with a different perspective or connection to	Can you think of anyone that you think I should also talk to in order to help me learn about GBS?	Are there other people that you believe would be beneficial for me to speak with? Perhaps someone with a different perspective or connection to	Are there other people that you believe would be beneficial for me to speak with? Perhaps someone with a different perspective or connection to

GBS?		GBS?	GBS?
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Goal 2: Collaboratively develop and implement a strategic plan for continuous school improvement that incorporates relevant research and feedback from staff, parents, students, and extended community members (e.g., district personnel).

“Parents, families, educators, and communities—there’s no better partnership to assure that all students pre-K to high school have the support and resources they need to succeed in school and in life.” —NEA President Dennis Van Roekel

A positive learning culture is essential to effect meaningful changes in schools. Our students deserve a commitment that we believe all must mean all and provide the opportunity for each and every student to reach his/her maximum potential. This requires our GBS community to work collaboratively as a team to get to know our students on a personal level. The following essential questions (DuFour, 2008) will drive this process:

1. What do we want students to know?
2. How will we know students are learning what we want them to know?
3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?
4. How will we extend learning for students who are already proficient?

Objective	Timeline	Action
Review of current practices	July 2020	Meet weekly with Assistant Principal to review documents in the following areas: Teacher Learning and Development Staff Professional Development Plans Quality Teaching Walk through data

		Teacher evaluations Safe Environment SWIS data Behavior Matrix/Bullying Policy Emergency management guidelines Student Handbook PTO Minutes Strategic use of Resources Budget (2018-2019; 2019-2020) School schedules and calendars Other School Board Minutes NWEA/NHSAS Data
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Robinson (2011)

Goal 3: Establish a system for clear communication

Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” -Steven R. Covey

The importance of managing communication effectively is critical and a two-way process. In this goal, I would like to establish a clear system for communicating with families, students, staff, and community members. All stakeholders should feel comfortable speaking with the Principal and therefore I should be available to establish and build upon positive relationships. Some guiding tenets of this process will be to:

- Adopt a listening attitude
- Ask clarifying questions
- Ask how I might help
- Restate what I think our stakeholders are sharing for clarification
- Check for underrepresented voices

Objective	Timeline	Action
Review current practice	June 2020	Meet with the GBS Administration to review methods of communications.
Gather information from stakeholders regarding communication	July 2020	Send out a survey to students, families, and staff regarding their views on communication, preferred methods, and preferences on types/levels of communication desired.
Analysis	August 2020	Analyze data gathered. Follow up with appropriate stakeholders.
Plan and Implementation	August 2020	In collaboration with Admin Assistants and Asst. Principal, create a GBS Communication plan and begin implementation.

Communication of Findings

After analysis of the data, I will present my findings and observations to the appropriate groups and individuals, focusing on the specific themes that arose from within each of these groups. As a community, we will work towards creating a strategic plan that focuses on aligning our current reality with our vision for GBS and the continued success of our students.

References

DuFour, R., DuFour, R. & Eaker, R. (2008). Revisiting professional learning communities at work: New insights for improving schools. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Jentz, B. C., & Murphy, J. T. (2005). Starting confused. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(10), 736-744.

Robinson, V. (2011). Student-centered leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.