



# 2022-2023 GDHS Parent Testimonials

# Ryan and Julie Hurley

## Parents of a Grade 9 GAEL

*“When discussing high schools in the final year of elementary school there actually was no option. Why wouldn’t you want to support your high school within our community that has so many offerings? You as the student may just need to work a little harder to find them.*

*Our experience with GDHS thus far has been an awesome transition. Our son has had the opportunity to make school teams, joined students’ council and has created awesome relationships with his mentors/teachers supporting him and helping him achieve his goals and create his space within the school for the next 4 years.*

*GDHS is a Gem; Smaller, Smarter, Stronger. We have 2 more to join in the next few years and we are so excited to see what their future holds.”*

Kelly Gagen

Parent of a  
Grade 10 and a  
recent graduate

*“Choosing to uproot your children and move in their high school years can be a big decision but for our family it was the best decision we have ever made. We are new to the community, and I have never felt more belonging in my life. We have been welcomed by neighbors, local business, strangers walking down the street and especially by everyone at GDHS. From my very first inquiring email to the day my nervous boys walked through the door, we have all been surrounded by kindness, understanding and people going the extra mile. I have worked in the school system for 23 years and I have never seen such an accepting place. Both the students and staff have guided my sons, befriended them and made them feel like they have been there for years. My youngest came from an elementary school of almost 900 children and was supposed to go to a high school of close to 3000 children. I was terrified for him. A small school is what he needed to be successful. GDHS has made him feel safe, included and cared for. What else can a parent ask for? How do I know we made the right decision moving from the city to the country - from the big high schools of London to GDHS? .... When my son says, “Mom, I’m so glad we moved here. The kids are all so nice to me. Like legit...all of them”.*

Eryn Cummings

Parent of Grade  
10 and Grade 12  
GAELS

*“Glencoe District High School is small but mighty. The involvement teachers and staff have with the students is outstanding. They know your kids and motivate them to be the best student they can be. Our oldest son is involved in the Specialist High Skills Major Tech Program, and we are thrilled with the experience he is having and what he is learning. He's had a successful Co-operative Education experience and has been certified in Basic Health & Safety, Working at Heights, Elevated Work Platforms, WHMIS, and Sector Specific Software and will be finishing his certifications with Standard First Aid and CPR later this month. He's on track to graduate with a Red Seal Diploma this year and just found out he was accepted into the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Level 1 Program! Our daughter is in Grade 10 and is really enjoying her classes, participating in school spirit events and playing on all the sports teams and has been given many leadership opportunities in the last two years. She's loving it! We also appreciate that GDHS is hands on in the community with students and staff participating in outside events helping students earn their volunteer hours. Thank you GDHS for all that you have to offer!”*



# Mike McEachren

## Parent of a Grade 11 GAEL

*“I was happy and proud when my son chose to attend G.D.H.S.. I, too, attended and graduated from G.D.H.S. (several moons ago). I enjoyed my high school experience, but it was only when I attended university that I realized that not all high schools provide the same level of instruction and opportunities for learning. I distinctly recall the day that the professor in my first year History class angrily announced, as he was returning our first essay assignments, “Most of you should go back to your high schools and demand your money back!” I don’t recall the topic of my essay, but I remember that I received an A-! My G.D.H.S. education served me well as I earned two university-level degrees.*

*Smaller schools like G.D.H.S. typically have smaller class sizes. Smaller class sizes permit more individualized instruction by teachers. They also make it more difficult for reluctant learners to escape the teacher’s attention when assignments have not been handed in/completed.*

# Mike McEachren ...continued

*In the same vein, smaller schools and smaller class sizes seem to facilitate better communication between teachers and parents. My wife and I often know what assignments my son has completed, and what assignments are still outstanding, because of open communication channels that have developed with many of the teachers at G.D.H.S.*

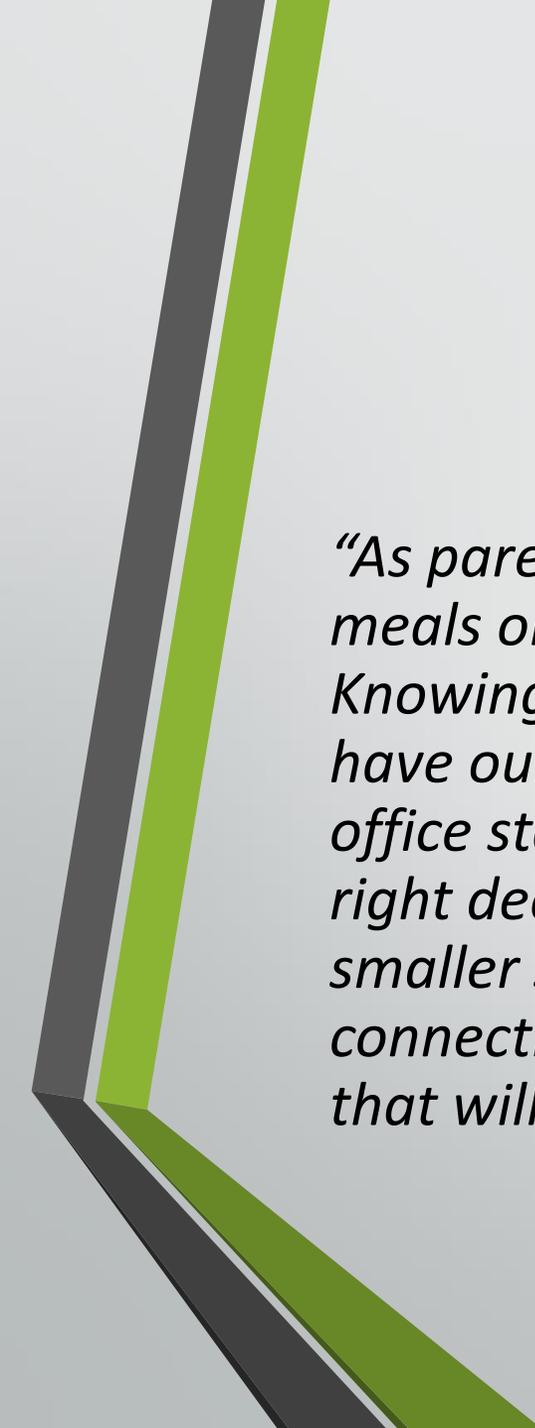
*The fact that my son attends high school in the same community as we live has many benefits. If my teenage son oversleeps, G.D.H.S. is only a few minutes' drive away. If he forgets something at home, the item can painlessly be dropped off. My son can walk, after school, to his part-time job. My son can be quickly picked up and hustled off to after-school sports events or medical appointments. We know - at a personal level - many of my son's classmates and their families. None of these scenarios would hold true if my son attended a school in another town or city.*

*Attending G.D.H.S. worked well for me and my son. You should strongly consider G.D.H.S. for your children."*

Jennifer Eckert

Parent of  
Grade 11 and a  
recent graduate

*“My girls transferred to GDHS mid COVID. Before that, they were at a very big high school. Their experience from a massive high school to a small high school has been very different. They were lost in the masses at their previous school, and much bigger class sizes. Transferring to Glencoe has been a blessing for my girls. One, they receive more one-on-one attention, Two, they are able to participate in ALL the sports teams (great for my youngest). Third, small class sizes can be quieter (great for my oldest). The staff and students embraced my girls, and even though they have only been in-person a very short time, they feel at home and part of the community. I have one in College and one graduating this year, and my girls are prepared and thriving! Thank you Glencoe District High School for making their transition seamless!!!”*



# Kim Roose

## Parent of a Grade 9 GAEL

*“As parents we try to make the best choices for our kids, whether it’s snacks and meals or where they will grow and develop into outstanding young adults. Knowing many Alumni in the community from GDHS, it was a clear decision to have our son attend there; from the smaller class sizes, to the warm and caring office staff. GDHS will be the choice of school for all of our children as it’s the right decision to choose for our small community – based in town. With the smaller school size it was our priority that our son is able to create personal connections – with friends, teacher’s, educational assistants and all other staff that will cross his path.”*

Mark and Jenn  
Jewitt

Parents of  
Grade 10  
GAEL

*“Glencoe DHS is a callback to an older time when classes were small and everyone in town knows each other. The excellent staff are always relatable and available and genuinely have an interest in the wellbeing and education of their students. The smaller class sizes allow for more individualized instruction and the friendly academic events brings both staff and students together in a spirit of cooperation. Its proximity to downtown allows for students to grab anything they may need as well as fostering a sense of community.”*

Andrea  
Buckland

Parent of a  
Grade 10 GAEL

*“Glencoe District High School is such an amazing school for so many reasons. Small class sizes mean your child gets the attention they need. Teachers and staff are very accessible to students and parents. Positive environment and supportive staff. Teachers seems to know all the kids by their first name. Guidance Counselor does regular check ins with kids throughout the year. Many upgrades to the school, new equipment in the weight room and upgrade tech equipment. For those reasons, my daughter looks forward to going to school everyday. As a parent I feel confident in the school and environment at GDHS.”*

Sarah  
MacGinnis

Parent of a  
Grade 12 GAEL

*“There are so many benefits of sending your child to GDHS – the obvious being small classroom size which gives amazing access to the teachers for increased educational purposes, but it allows them to learn more about their students and individualize advice, learning and guidance to their benefit. Our daughter has been sought out and suggested course selections based on her academic success and challenges, personally encouraged to join programs based on her strengths and interests and had the opportunity to participate in activities that have grown her leadership skills. What solidified our decision was post-secondary opportunities, and how our choice of high school would affect her future. Colleges and Universities take note of not just the percentage of successful graduates, but also how many of those graduates are successful in their post-secondary endeavours, and GDHS has an impressive success rate. We wanted our daughter to benefit from not just her abilities and efforts, but also the reputation of the school she attended, making GDHS the obvious choice.”*

Amanda Nevin

Parent of two  
Grade 12 GAELS  
and one Grade  
10 GAEL

*"I have three students at GDHS, two currently in Grade 12 and one in Grade 10. Glencoe District High School has given my children opportunities that I feel they wouldn't have been provided at a larger school. Being in a smaller school their class sizes are smaller. This gives students the chance to get more help if needed. It's like being in a private school without having to pay for it. They were also able to participate in sports that they may not have been able to in a larger school. The teachers know all the kids by name whether they have them in their class or not. They go out of their way to help them get the best marks they can get. By being in a local school there have been more opportunities for after-school extracurricular activities, or jobs. Kids at Glencoe don't get lost in the shuffle."*

Tracy and  
Steve Harvie

Parents of two  
graduates  
from GDHS

*“We are proud parents of two GDHS grads! They both felt safe, secure and well supported by their community while attending GDHS. Our oldest just received her Undergraduate Degree from Western University and is attending her first year of Teacher’s College. She’s very proud of her GDHS roots! She looks back on her high school career with fond memories of her friends and classmates and her connections to the entire staff. Our youngest daughter just graduated from GDHS in 2021 and is attending Brock University. GDHS prepared them well for post-secondary and they are both thriving in their chosen path. Both of our daughters enjoyed not only the academic part of high school but the sports and extra-curriculars that GDHS had to offer. There is a sense of pride and loyalty to your community when you attend your hometown high school which is something to consider when transitioning from Grade 8 to Grade 9. You’re sure to be successful when you have one-on-one support from your teachers and ongoing support from everyone around you.”*

Andrea Burdick

Parent of two  
graduates and a  
Grade 12 GAEL

*“GDHS is more than ‘the town school’. It’s small. It’s been here many years. My husband went to GDHS and a few teachers are still teaching there... In my opinion ‘this little country school’ has SO MUCH to offer! So very much more than a bigger city school. The beauty of this ‘little’ school is that it has HUGE SPIRIT. There are MANY spirit days and opportunities for your child to join in and be included in the fun! What school do you know of that provides the entire building with a full turkey dinner at Christmas? Or a chance to experience the GAEL Force team building experience? My kids have all talked about GAEL Force for years after they’ve attended. It’s definitely been a highlight of their school career here! The staff have been so supportive of all 3 of my children while they attended GDHS & after! When my oldest son lost a classmate to suicide, the entire faculty supported the kids in every way possible. And as a parent, that meant so much to see teachers rally around the kids & walk alongside of them to support them not only academically but emotionally as well. I’ll never forget that. The entire staff will know your child by name in the first week of school, regardless of whether they are in his or her class. This was important to me as a parent because I felt like MY child mattered. That MY child was not just a face in a sea of faces. But that the teachers care enough to make my child’s learning experience successful.*”

...Andrea  
Burdick  
continued

*It's been my experience that when asked for help (by my child or questioned by myself) every teacher HAS offered it and followed through. They really want your child to succeed and shine. The graduation rate at GDHS for many years has been well above 90%..unheard of in 'big schools.' The decision to attend another school out of boundary was never given a thought, as there are very few electives in the first 2 years of school, meaning, core subjects are the same no matter where you go. GDHS has unique programs that are NOT offered elsewhere, such as the much sought after Specialist High Skills Major Program. For my daughter who worked frequently after her Co-ops, living close to her school allowed her much more time to complete homework or earn money. Time not spent travelling on the highway, especially in winter. I love our 'little town school.' I support GDHS. The more kids that attend in the grade 9 & 10 years, solidifies teaching lines which means more electives can be offered. Keeping our kids in our local schools means keeping teachers employed HERE and schools will thrive. Kids that attend 'out of boundary' schools are disappointed when they try to sign up for classes and won't get the elective if there's a child that wants it from that town...your child is not priority there, in the sea of faces. At GDHS they are the PRIORITY!"*

Deb Dolbear Van  
Bilsen

Parent of two  
recent graduates

*“Lots of students look forward to 'moving on' from grade eight to high school with fear and trepidation, and that is totally normal! It's a huge step! There are the simple, yet obvious differences from day one. You get to leave behind 'lining up single file, putting your coats on hangers in the hall and indoor shoes on the shelf' to having your own locker and lock to yourself (oh btw - check the dimensions so your shelves fit - the first time! lol) - and the independence of tossing your stinky, sweaty phys. ed clothes in the bottom of your locker under binders and stuff OR duplicating your favourite Instagrammer's posts with pictures of your friends and selfies to remind you that life is a whole lot better with them smiling back at you! BUT if you're wondering if you will get the courses you need or if you will be prepared for college or university by Grade 12, the answer is YES x 2! Not only do you receive one-on-one support from your teachers, but you can participate in extracurricular activities like Students' Council, sports teams, clubs or the SHSM Program. All you need to do is show up and do the work! My favourite part as a GDHS parent is that GDHS is like an oversized family and this family spends time together! Sometimes that means good times and celebratory moments, other times it involves supporting one another in challenging moments or even tragedy - but the staff and students of GDHS are here to support you. If you want a SAFE and SECURE place to be then GDHS is it!”*

Jennifer Ryan

Parent of two  
graduates and  
a Grade 12  
GAEL

*“When people say, “it’s not the house that makes the home, but it’s the people in it”, most people tend to agree, that yes it is the people who are most important to making us feel safe, wanted and loved. After having three of my sons attend GDHS, I am of the same mindset of our hometown high school. It is the people in our school that make it such a great place for our children to attend. When my two older sons, who have both graduated GDHS, speak of their high school years it is most often about the teachers they had. “Do you remember when Mr. Broderick did....? Remember when Mr. Flegel said....? I remember when Ms. Grover.....”... all statements said with love and respect in their voices that came from being treated very well and having been led by teachers who cared for them very much.*

*I highly recommend students attend Glencoe District High School, not only for the quality education that your child will receive, but because they also learn how to be responsible and caring people because of the modelling from the educators around them. They see how to give back to their community from the School Soup & Chili Day lunch to the many acts of community involvement that students are encouraged to participate in.*

...Jennifer  
Ryan  
continued

*I love that the school motto is “Smaller, Smarter, Stronger” because that is what I feel the school offered to my sons. It is a smaller school, however my sons never felt like they missed out on any opportunities, as they recognized the opportunities that they did get being in a more intimate environment. They have all received educational experiences that are second to none because of the teachers in the building and those experiences cannot be replicated in a big school.*

*I, myself am a secondary school teacher in a small school in a different board, so I know the experiences that can be offered to students in our buildings and how we can look after the students who are in front of us every day. I am forever amazed at what has been done in GDHS through the teachers and what they offer to our kids. My family has been completely happy with the experience they have had and continue to receive at GDHS, and I know without a doubt it is the best place for your child to be.”*

Carrie and  
Derek  
McEachern

Parent of a  
Grade 11 GAEL

*"Smaller, Smarter, Stronger." GDHS truly embraces these three words. The first of our children is currently in Grade 11 and has had an amazing experience thus far. As a parent and educator, GDHS was the best option.*

*Smaller class sizes allow the students to feel comfortable to step out of their comfort zone and ask the questions that they might not feel as comfortable to ask in a larger class. It also allows the educators to give detailed, specific and individualized feedback that the students can use to grow. The ability to have teachers who are passionate about their teaching subjects and who genuinely invest in the success of their students is unmatched. Our son has felt the sense of community that GDHS has to offer, even in the midst of a pandemic. This would not have happened in a larger school. Even though the last two educational years have been anything but "normal", teachers have been in constant connection with both students and parents about all the safety protocol, learning expectations and changes in timetabling due to the pandemic. As parents, we have always been confident that GDHS is continuing to do everything possible to keep their students and staff safe."*

Erin Waller-  
Burnett

Parent of a  
Grade 11 GAEL

*“GDHS is a fantastic hometown school. With smaller class sizes the students get the attention and help needed! The teachers and staff are all incredible. The staff are all extremely welcoming and take the time to know the student’s names, even if they haven’t taught them before! The staff’s goals are always about providing quality education and leading them down the road to success. All while being fun, supportive and helpful!! The bonus...the school spirit!! It’s pretty rocking’ with all the school spirit days they have!”*



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