

MINUTES from Bendale BTI School Council Meeting **March 5 2019**

Present: Doug Wylie (Chair), Val Lusted (Community Rep/Recorder), Michelle Wylie (parent), Diane Mortimer (parent), Falconer Abraham (parent), Colin Dye (Principal)

David & Mary Thomson Collegiate Guests: Tim James (ACL-?), Effie Takas (ACL-Student Services), Jacob Barghart (ACL-English & Literacy), Ken Lawrence (ACL-Special Education/Academic Resources), Bill Papaconstantinou (Principal-Lawrence/Midland Project), Michel Lachance (parent), Shelley Inward (parent), Khadija Alrais (parent)

1.0 **Welcome/Introductions/Updates**

2.0 **Minutes of Last Meeting (February 5, 2019) - Approved**

3.0 Principal's Report - Colin Dye reported that the literacy test will take place March 27th for Gr. 10 students. Parent/teacher interviews are scheduled for later this week. Young Women on the Move Conference takes place tomorrow. A badminton tournament takes place later this month. It is noted that in addition to accessing relevant updates of school happenings (included Council minutes posted) on the website, students/parents can access Twitter and Instagram. The latter is a student lead communication tool.

4.0 Chair's Report - Doug Wylie reported that he and Michelle attended Thomson's School Council meeting last week as their guests. They noted that parents were welcoming and are keen to move forward on working collaboratively with the Bendale parent community in fostering successful transition into the new school. The Chair informed those present that he recommends cancellation of the April 2, 2019 meeting of Bendale's Council.

5.0 Q&A with Bill Papaconstantinou - Bill introduced himself and provided some background information. He has been a Scarborough resident for most of this life and has many years of experience in education roles with Northern CI, Winston Churchill CI, Bendale BTI, where he was Vice-Principal, and the past five years as principal of David and Mary Thomson CI.

He feels that all of these experiences have equipped him well with the necessary knowledge for taking on his new role as Principal of the Lawrence/Midland Project. He is very familiar with the cultures of both Thomson and Bendale, including issues of safety, academic, extracurricular and special education. He is excited by the 'bricks & mortar' benefits and technology which Lawrence/Midland students will be able to access. He highlighted that the new school will have six classes of Developmental Delay students who will be fully integrated in parts of their school day. Thomson's current School Council has had members ranging from 10-40 parents at their meetings this year. Thomson teachers have been taking Special Education training ongoing over the past few years. He assured those present that there will be a layering of support for all students, within the context of Ministry of Education budgetary constraints with the current provincial government.

The Transition Plan, previously distributed to Bendale parents and students is "on track" in terms of timelines. Every transferring student will be interviewed to ensure their curriculum choices, options and support service planning is in place. Next steps include inviting Colin Dye and some of the Bendale students over to Thomson to discuss/explore their ideas about how to support transition preparedness. Current stressor is to get the new school to be in a 'move in' condition by mid-August.

Some questions posed tonight included:

a) What's going to happen to Gr. 11 students at Bendale that are taking co-op next year (especially students in the discontinued Auto & Machine shop programs) when there will be no Guidance and Co-op teachers from Bendale at the new school?

-Background: Thomson's current co-op department has multiplied in size; staffing process was reviewed - Thomson staff moving into the new building as Bendale was designated as the closing school, new school will have to meet 200 + new students; these demands will determine the additional staffing; Bendale Teachers will be invited to apply for positions

-will continue to work closely with other internal/external resources/relationships (e.g. Mr. Kramer, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Ball, etc.) to foster suitable co-op placements, including students in auto and machine shops

-contact Ken Lawrence Special Education Head at Thomson, if needed

-cited the ongoing practice of Bendale and Thomson "blending" activities, as this benefits students of both schools

-if a student wants to continue with courses in auto specifically, could offer a blended schedule (i.e. with new school plus neighbouring school for auto)

b) My son is going into Gr. 10—there are a lot of programs that will not be offered at the new school—are you saying he can travel between schools if he desires those curriculum options? (i.e. Welding/Plumbing-Central Tech)

-hypothetically, split timetable scheduling can be explored/negotiated for any student of the new school

-new school will have a broad based trade curriculum for Gr. 9 & 10; if after this phase, student wants to ‘specialize’ in courses not offered at the new school, speak to Guidance to find out more about your options

-electrical offered at new school

c) The push towards Inclusive Education is a welcome initiative of the TDSB, given the win-win results that research promises, *if* special education students’ needs are adequately supported. **Q: Can you comment on how the new school’s culture (in terms of staffing, classroom size, special education qualifications of the teachers, etc.) will be able to provide adequate supports to the influx of IPRC students from Bendale BTI? How will you, as Principal, advocate and ensure that these supports are enshrined in the culture of the new school, especially within the context of recent and pending education cuts announced by the Ford Government?**

-can’t control what is mandated by the government; can only advocate as able

d) What will you do as Principal of the new school to support timely and successful labour negotiations with the various unions whose collective agreements all come due at the same time (late August), coinciding with the transition(s) facing David and Mary Thomson and Bendale BTI students?

-Dealt with at a higher level of the TDSB and the Ministry of Education; I work with people and relationships and have a proven track record as described above

e) What transition activities are planned for students of both schools? How can interested parents get involved in the planning of these activities?

-to be determined; Bill will be attending Bendale’s next school council meeting Tuesday May 7, 2019. Transition activities will help to alleviate some of the anxiety felt by some of Bendale’s students.

Other general discussion amongst those present:

-envision new school to continue Thomson’s current literacy emphasis

- Bill described how a recent violent incident between Thomson students was addressed by the school and how the school showed resilience by going ahead with a planned sporting event after school.

-trying to get more students to take academic/applied English courses through tools such as the JETS program—Joy & Empathy Training Program which allows for more flexibility in curriculum—i.e. buying books that appeal to individual students’ interests as not everyone wants to read Shakespeare.

- Despite best efforts, sometimes students who cannot cope will have to be offered alternate school placements if the school cannot offer the type and/or intensity of support needed;

- hoping with a larger school population and environment, more options will be available, thus allowing an enhanced ability to accommodate more special education students

-“We will work with what the Ministry of Education gives us, [noting some uncertainty re Ford government’s proposed changes—e.g. classroom sizes (workplace versus applied/academic streams)]”-parents/teachers/students at both schools can continue to foster “good citizens’ attitude” to combat us/them attitude and promote positive problem solving and collaboration

6.0 Round Table - did not take place due to time constraints

7.0 Next Meeting - with the cancellation of April’s meeting, the final Bendale BTI School Council meeting will be May 7, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the staff lounge.
