

**BCI PARENT & COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
**MEETING NOTES for May 14, 2018**

**1. INTRO & WELCOME**

Agenda approved and minutes passed

**2. ATTENDEES:**

**Parents:** Karen Kane, Muhammad Nisar, Janet Webster, Julie Chan, Catherine Ford, Blanca Perez-Marin, Melinda Lo, Hoang Hong, Emily Paradis

**Staff:** Susana Arnott, Nora Rivaud    **Community:** Nahum Mann

**3. GRADE 8 WELCOME EVENT – THURSDAY MAY 24<sup>TH</sup>**

Event Format:

- Event start: 5:15 pm, parents & Gr 8's received for sandwiches/drinks. At 6:00 pm: parents will be divided into 4 groups and moved into classrooms, while gr.8's are occupied with activities.
- Presentations/question & answer for parents will be done by four groups – parent council, guidance & Spec. Ed., student council, and grade 9 teachers (English & Math)
- Purpose of Parent Council presentation – welcome parents, answer questions about school from parental perspective, recruitment of new parents to parent council. Catherine Ford requested volunteers to help for Question & Answer sessions. Blanca, Julie and Nisar volunteered.
- Catherine reminded the council how the spreadsheet with parent emails worked well at last year's Gr 8 Welcome Event, but that the list for the New Parent Welcome in September this year went missing. Has requested of Susana that the note be taken of where the file is saved this year. Nisar suggested a list of anticipated questions be written for the parents to prompt the conversation during the presentation.
- Susana will request teachers to talk about classroom curriculum and homework, students to talk about clubs, sports and social aspects, guidance to discuss prevention and care of student stress as well as special education.

Event Equipment & Materials:

- Susana assured Council that the banner would be ready. Catherine would like 'ASK ME' buttons for event. Susana Arnott said the button maker belongs to ALPHA II and that they have been unable to locate it recently. She committed to following up.
- The pamphlets have been revised by Catherine and sent to Tracy (admin) for to get printed. Glossy colour copies will cost \$130 for 500.
- The Parent Handbook has been printed. It was \$156 for 100 copies including taxes, done by the TDSB printer. This is a lot cheaper than the quote from Red Hot Printing, which was more than \$500, not including HST. They will be available for people who don't have Internet access, and will be left at the office for pick up if needed. The Handbook is otherwise available on-line on the parent council page of the BCI school website.

**3. TEACHER APPRECIATION POTLUCK – JUNE 8**

- Susana described how the potluck has traditionally run. Parent Council sets up food before teachers arrival in staff room. Teachers arrive at 11:40. Children can come to school with food and leave at office.

- Karen asked how to get the word out to parents for food donations. Catherine will send out an email to parents on its list, but this only includes a portion of the parents. She asked Susana if Tracy could send an email to parents asking for contributions, or use the automated voice caller. Susana stated that it would not be appropriate to ask parents to bring food using the automated caller. She was also concerned about using the school's email. Catherine said she would draft an email for Susana/Tracy making it clear that the request originates from the Parent Council. Instructions for food donations will also be included.
- Susana will arrange for sandwiches from the local SUBWAY.
- One parent suggested that we switch to Monday instead of Friday to give parents more time to prepare food on the weekend prior. Catherine checked calendar but there were scheduling conflicts with other dates.
- Catherine Ford will send out request for parent volunteers to help at the potluck.

#### **4. PRO GRANT UPDATE & DISCUSSION**

##### **June Presentation**

- **Leela Acharya** will be doing a second **Post Secondary 101** presentation on June 11<sup>th</sup> as her November presentation was very popular.
- The presentation will help parents support their children to think about and plan for the postsecondary process over the summer and into next year. Supplementary applications, for example, are time consuming and include questions such as 'tell us who you are' and 'tell us what you think you can contribute to this program?' Summer can be a time for students to think about their answers.
- Leela will also be speaking about the OSAP process, which wasn't covered in the last session as there wasn't enough time.
- As well, we will discuss the role of Bloor parents at the BCI university open house on Nov. 1.
- Julie asked if the November presentation was available on website yet. Currently the only way to get the information is to come to the presentation.
- Karen asked if the meeting was for all parents. Catherine stated that an email invitation would be sent out to all parents on the council's email list.

##### **Postsecondary Timeline and University Visit Discussion**

- Blanca mentioned that a timeline with deadlines for applications, supplementary application due dates, university fairs and open houses would be helpful. Catherine mentioned that several parents had volunteered when this was discussed back in the fall, but had since been too busy to help. A timeline has been discussed at previous meetings, but finding people/volunteers has been an issue. Blanca offered to help.
- General discussion ensued regarding visiting of universities – either during open houses or tours. Bianca explained that during an open house, the priority is generally to talk with professors as this is the only time they are widely available. It helps prospective students know more about the area they might wish to study. Seeing the residence or getting a general tour can pretty much be done on any day there is a tour. Tours are more widely available, while open houses only twice a year. She also recommended parents start visiting universities in Grade 11, as some are there can be many to see, and doing it all in grade 12 can add to the stress.

- Susana added that Bloor CI does take students to visit universities as well. Mainstream students are invited to Universities of Guelph and McMaster, while TOPS go to U of Guelph, typically in November.
- Julie asked how do parents find out about open House dates. [elInfo](#) has links to find individual university open house and tour dates for universities.

### **2017/18 PRO Grant Funds**

- Funds for 2017/18 haven't been spent. The theme for this year's grant is Post Secondary Education, with a secondary emphasis on Mental Health. Leela and Oscar did presentations for free, so money budgeted for speakers was not needed.
- The funds are lost at the end of the year if not spent. Catherine asked for ideas on how to spend money. She suggested some options for council:
  - book a speaker session for 2018-19 but pay a deposit in advance
  - buy new and/or replacement books for the parent council lending library
- If the first two don't work out, the last resort could be translation of the Parent Handbook into Chinese, as this is the school's most common written language after English. Catherine has checked costing of translating the Parent Handbook. The TDSB's Parent and Community Engagement Office (PCEO), which arranges for all TDSB translation, quoted over \$1,700 per language. Private translation firms, not on the TDSB's VOR, charge roughly \$1,100 per language. Susana stated that using the TDSB-approached providers are the way TDSB can ensure that materials and/or services paid for can be guaranteed safe or adequate.

### **2018/19 PRO Grant application**

- The application for the 2018-19 grant is due on June 5.
- Activities have to aimed at parent engagement and are not for students.
- The grant is for a maximum of \$1000 at any one school.
- Suggestions for themes for 2018-19 included:
  - Internet/app awareness. Council discussed and felt that parents more interested in this at middle school level, and were concerned that some speakers may not be that interesting.
  - 'Nutrition for Success'. Julie has a daughter involved in athletics, whose team consulted a sports nutritionist. Julie felt that principles of understanding when and how hydration or protein intake etc. could boost mental acuity and health. Concerns were raised that a specific focus on 'what to eat' can be a problematic for children with eating disorders. Sensitivity to families that may have difficulty providing adequate food for families also must be shown. This subject could be part of addressing the larger issues of mental wellness and stress
  - Susana Arnott suggested that the council invite a TDSB social worker. They can be local, and presentations would be free. Council could buy books that are relevant to the talk to hand out after the presentation.
  - Parent suggestions from last year's mental health workshop were highest for mental health and postsecondary issues. Mental health was not chosen as a lead for the PRO grant for this year as it had been done two years in a row. As well, the new category of equitable access to postsecondary was added by the province for the first time. It has been noted that PRO grant applications for this latter theme were likely to be successful.

## 5. OUTREACH & COMMUNICATION UPDATES

- Catherine will be sending out the new survey requesting input on how to parents want council to communicate with them and on subject matter for presentations.
- The revised Parent Handbook was circulated.
- Catherine revised the stickers that will be put on council's lending library books. Tracy (admin) says they can be done in house.
- Catherine has drafted a sign in sheet for next year. Attendees will fill in their names, child's name and contact info once, and then only have tick dates when attending additional meetings.

## 6. CO-CHAIR'S REPORT

### **Bloor Land Development updates**

- Nahum Mann and Emily Paradis from BUILD A BETTER BLOOR/DUFFERIN GROUP presented. Their organization is made up of families, artists and business in the local area concerned with the sale of the Bloor-Dufferin lands. Emily stated their concerns, which include the developers plans for 2,000 condos, no affordable housing, reductions in the size of the community hub with no clear funding sources, and the loss of green space.
- The BLOOR/DUFFERIN GROUP is trying to bring attention to neighbourhood and school, with the intention of mobilizing for local input into the development plans.
- The new school will not have an auditorium (as per the provincial funding formula) which will be significant loss for the student arts programs.
- Susana noted that the sale of the Bloor-Dufferin lands is a separate process from the building of the new school. The site of the new school is already owned by the TDSB, and the new build is not being paid for by the sale of the Bloor/Dufferin lands. The province and TDSB have already committed separate funding.
- The BLOOR/DUFFERIN GROUP wants to host a community meeting at the school. Nahum or Emily will reach out to Susana at a later point to arrange specifics.
- Catherine enquired how parent council might help, and suggested that council could forward on the group's emails on to parents.

## 7. WARD REPORT

- Blanca was unable to attend the last Ward meeting as she was away on business.
- Susana Arnott normally attends Ward meetings. It was noted that the boundary change meant that our Ward would be changing next year.

## 8. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT (Susana)

- **New school:** is no new business
- **Commencement:** The date has traditionally been on the Friday preceding the Thanksgiving long weekend. Challenges associated with having commencement in October include increased absences as many students attend postsecondary institutions outside Toronto, and universities may schedule exams or other mandatory activities on the same day.
- Susana has been looking at June dates, but a major obstacle is the high temperature in the auditorium due to the weather. The cost of renting another space is expensive. For example, Ryerson charges \$8,000 for the use of their auditorium.
- **Teacher numbers:** The estimated number for 2018-19 is 49.5, which is an increase of 0.5 FTE from the current number. Susana is pleased that the additional 5 FTE teachers

Bloor received in October 2017 have been maintained. There will be no similar disruption to classes next year as there has been this year due to increase in the number of teachers in October.

- **Student numbers:** The intake of new grade 9 students continues to be high, as families from catchment area that had traditionally opted for other schools through Optional Attendance are now choosing Bloor.
- **AP exams:** Karen asked why AP exams have been scheduled for an 8AM start. Scheduling and start times are dictated by the College Board, who runs the AP process. The College Board gives the time frame for when exams must start and how long the exams run, with considerations for students who will require extra accommodation. There has to be enough extra time after one exam is completed before the next scheduled exam begins.
- Susana mentioned that Amber Alerts and sirens have been disrupting exams.
- **Student competitions:** Various competitions and awards have been received by Bloor students for academic and extra curricular work.
- **Trips:** Mainstream Grade 10 go to three nights overnight camp next year to Camp Wanakita. Susana is pleased that mainstream students now participate in overnight stays, similar to TOPS students who have done so since the program began. It gives all students an opportunity to bond and have a great experience. There will also be a Grade 12 leadership trip.
- **Student Activity Council (SAC):** SAC has been undergoing a re-organization under the leadership of Ms. Surtees. The intention is to share each senior position between two students of different grades (junior = 9 & 10, and senior: 11 & 12), to facilitate learning and hand over. Susana would also like to create a junior leadership club that focuses more on civic issues rather than sports, as the leadership program currently does.

## 9. NEW BUSINESS

### Cannabis

- A parent raised issue of legalization of cannabis and enquired what the TDSB policy will be. Susana stated that the TDSB's position on medicinal cannabis use will likely remain the same. It is treated the same as other prescription medications. All schools are currently smoke- and alcohol-free spaces, regardless whether one is of legal age, and cannabis use will likely be the same.
- TDSB is to clarify its procedure for the medicinal use of cannabis by students in the near future.

No other new business.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM

**Next meeting:** June 11, 2018 at 6:30 pm in the library