



Thornlea School Council

Thornlea Secondary School
8075 Bayview Avenue, Thornhill, Ontario L3T 4N4
Council email: thornlea.ss@sc.yrdsb.ca

Meeting Details and Participants Meeting was in person

Date / Time	February 21, 2023 7pm to 8.30 pm					
Executive Committee And School Participants	✓	Myra C (Chair)	✓	Diana L (Communication)	✓	Mr. Foti (Principal)
	✓	Eva S (Co-chair)	✓	Claudia M (Secretary)	✓	Ms. V Johnson-Lee (Vice Principal) Ms. L. Patrick (Vice Principal)
	✓	Jim Z (Treasurer)	x	Sharon A (Extra curriculum activities)	✓	Mr. Ram (Teacher Representative) x Ryan and Michael (Student Council Representatives)
Members at Large	x	Lee Ann C	✓	Jennifer F.	X	Homeria S.
	x	Grace Y	✓	Amir S	X	Ian S
	✓	Aroon B	X	Ashraf C	x	Syed S
	✓	Jason C	x	Jady K		
Attendees	Lisa Cole Rosemary Lin					

Meeting

#	Topic	Lead	Time (mins)
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Land Acknowledgement, Virtual Norms	Grace L/ Myra C	2
2.	Administration Report -Changes in timetables for second semester are still on going. That is in part due to growth of students in the school- ESL classes are at capacity Ukrainian students are drawn to Thornlea since the school has a teacher that speaks their language and that makes them comfortable. Breakfast and lunches are offered as well. -Students started to pick their courses for next year -Boys basketball team reached the finals -Girls Volleyball team in semifinals -Black history month is being celebrated – Family cook-up event organized and around 150 people will participate - 15 recent graduates will visit the school to offer advice and share experiences with grade 12 students	Principal: Joe Foti	8
3.	Discussion with Trustee and Superintendent *	Chair: Myra C and Co-chair: Eva	80
4.	Adjournment		



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***Questions from community:**

Questions for School Trustee – Ms. Jenny Chen:

Q1. I was unable to find any information about you prior to or after the election. Can you please share your background, such as professional, community participation, school involvement?

Answer:

Ms Chen shared that she is from China and came to Canada 10 years ago. When 16 years old she was part of the student's council in her school and she was the first girl in such a function. She studied economics and literature. She run a non profit organization as beauty advisor.

Q2. As a newly elected trustee, what is your focus this year?

Answer:

Her goal for the first year in the trustee role is to know the parents, participate in school council meetings, be part of social networks/media if such exists for parents in different schools.

Q3. As a Trustee, how will you keep the parents informed and engaged? From my experience, the Trustee (from TDSB) will send out monthly Ward newsletters, organize in-person meetings for the parents with special speakers/ topics, have a Facebook page to share info (or tweet info).

Not answered due to no time

Q4. The MOE provided funding for Tutoring support to the school boards. How is YRDSB using these funds for our students? TDSB has engaged tutors but we have not heard what YRDSB is doing

Answer:

It was not responded due to no information prepared but will provide an answer the next meeting.

Questions for Superintendent – Mr. Grant Fawthrop:

Q1. Can you please describe what types of situations a parent can contact you to get you involved and get your support?

Answer:

Mr. Grant Fawthrop oversees 20 schools. He is looking into issues that cannot be resolved with or by the school, more like system issues.

Q2. How can you help expedite some of the requests that come from the School Council, such as the Green Room renovation, opening of cafeteria catering service?



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- Our school's cafeteria catering service is still not available. Other YRDSB high schools have their cafeteria catering opened (Sutton High School, Stephen Lewis Secondary). When will our cafeteria catering open? YRDSB has a contract, obviously this vendor is in breach of the contract.
- What capital projects or renovations are planned for Thornlea in the next 3 years? I believe the last "renovation" was 2012 (over 10 years ago). Thornlea SS is over 50 years old, and there are a lot of opportunities to bring our school into a more "digitally-enabled learning" environment. Are there any plans in the work/budget?

Answers:

The **cafeteria** contractor cannot hire necessary personnel due to limited transit option.

Parents and school staff disagree with this response: School is right off Bayview with plenty of transit connections.

Based on Mr. Fawthrop, school council could relay the information back to the Board's **Operations department** and challenge the situation. We could ask the review of the contract as it is felt that the contractor is not honoring the term given that no cafeteria service was provided for 5 months.

School could put in Vending machine if the legislation terms are followed. Also, could work with approved vendors like: Pizza Pizza.

In response to the status of the **Green Room** renovation the board mentioned that certain renovations were already done in 2012 at the school and they will review if the school can qualify for more funds. Parents and staff again disagree with the Board response. Myra and Eva asked Mr. Fawthrop to facilitate a meeting with the Board's **Planning department** in order to understand how the funds are allocated, how we can prepare and make the Green Room happen.

Q3. The Pre-AP Program at Thornlea will be discontinued starting September for incoming grade 9s, as the Board believes that AP is a form of de-streaming.

- Is the Pre-AP Program discontinued at Thornlea only, or is it Board wide? How is the Board going to address the academic needs of students who like to be challenged and learn advanced concepts or would like to write the U.S. College Board AP exams in Grade 12? The IB program is a form of streaming too – why isn't it discontinued as well?

- One of the priorities of the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan is to build collaborative relationships. Did the Board consult parents/guardians before deciding to discontinue the Pre-AP/AP Program at Thornlea? What is the Board's policy on parent consultation (when it's necessary to do so and when it's not)?

Answer:

Four high schools in York Region will discontinue **the Pre-AP program** in coming year. It is York Region Board decision not an Ontario wide decision-Toronto Board did not announce such decision yet. Parents would be interested to see the % of marginalized students and the data by schools that contributed to the board decision especially when taken without consulting parents in advance.



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Also-, parents were interested to know who to approach if they do not agree with the board decisions. Mr. Fawthrop advised to approach the Board's **Curriculum department**.

It is felt by several parents that the education standard is being lowered rather than raised with the decision of eliminating the Pre Ap program, and question remains on what impact will this have on students.

Pre-Ap program was largely available to all student and it is a program more flexible than IB.

Q4. Thornlea's utilization rate is currently at around 75%, while nearby Bayview Secondary is at 130% of its capacity with 8 portables. Would the Board consider re-drawing the school boundaries for specialized programs such as Gifted Program or adding an IB Program to Thornlea (while lowering new IB enrolment at Bayview Secondary or Milliken Mills) to "redistribute" students, so that resources/facilities are better utilized?

Answer:

There are pros and cons to bigger number of students. Thornlea could hold 1300-1400 students. One benefit would be the more flexible schedules due to lots of opportunities to accommodate students. The cons are the school would become too crowded and would make it difficult to move between classes. Also, that would reduce the possibility of knowing students by name and connect with each one of them.

A concern was raised that the utilization rate will likely go down with the elimination of the Pre-AP program.

An experience was shared and the Thornlea staff involvement and excellence were acknowledged. It is felt that they can drive performance in students even without Pre-AP program. Some other enhancements in the school like automation, green room etc. would also benefit the students.

Closing remarks:

The parent council will reach out to the Board to set up meetings with Planning, Curriculum-, Operations and Finance departments.