

# New Stouffville high school principal happy to be back

Rod Leonard is no stranger to the York Region Board of Education or to Stouffville District Secondary School. The new principal has taught with the board for 28 years, and also attended Thornhill High School.

He began his own career at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School in Aurora, then moved to Aurora High School when it first opened four years later. "Opening a new school was a really good experience, and I was there for 13 years before I left in 1985 and came to Stouffville as vice principal."

He held that post until 1989, when he was offered the job of principal at King City. "I was there for six years and I learned a lot during that time. Despite what people believe, (King City) is not a community school, we bring in students from a very large area and that creates certain unique problems."

If students and parents were surprised to learn, in the summer vacation, that former SDSS principal Alan Dickson was leaving, they were not alone, said Leonard. "Alan and I

were both prepared to return to our own schools this year, but a superintendent left the board and the principal at (Alexander) Mackenzie was promoted to that position."

The resulting shuffle saw Dickson move to Mackenzie and Leonard to Stouffville. "Principals are moved about every six years, but we both thought we had one more year. Although he is happy with the move, I would like people to see me as the new principal, not the old vice principal coming back

I've changed and I've learned a lot in the six years I was at King City and I'd like to think I can apply the things I've learned to my new position."

Leonard regards SDSS as a perfect example of a community school. "It's the school in the centre of town with a student body that's mostly made up of sons and daughters of families living in the town."

The physical environment at the school is generally good, he noted, with reasonable facilities and a

staff which includes a good blend of experience and youth. He is a strong proponent of community involvement and has already had meetings with representatives from the town and the library.

"Another area I would like to look at is co-op education and I've met with my co-op head. We already have a good program, but I want to share a strong partnership with one of the bigger businesses in the general community."

He would like the school to join the Chamber of Commerce so that students can attend meetings and listen

to guest speakers. Leonard also intends to get involved in all school events. "As a principal, I will be actively supporting our teams and activities."

By 1996, he said, schools in the region will have parent councils in place.

"I have already met with the president of our parent liaison group and I would like to think from that group, and other people in the community, we will be able to put together an effective parent council that will act as advisors to help us in the running of the school."

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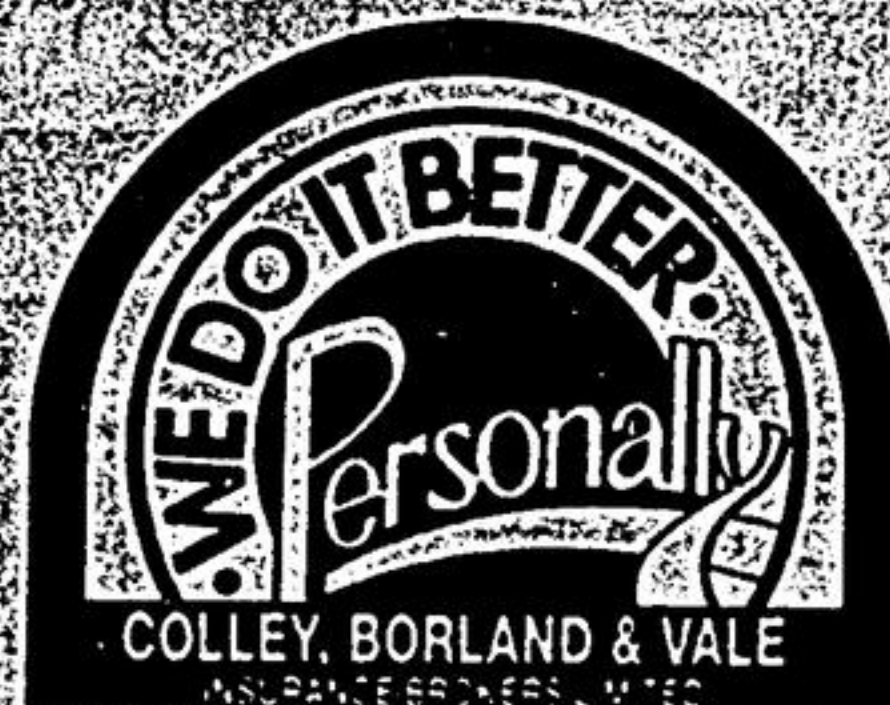
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