



**Alternative Schools Advisory Committee
Minutes**

Location: 5050 Yonge Street, Executive Room, 5th Floor

Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Co-Chairs:

Elementary Parent Co-chair: Taplin-Milberry, Amanda (Equinox Holistic Alternative School);

Secondary Teacher Co-chair: Liam Rodrigues (SEED Alternative School);

Secondary Parent Co-chair : Cooper, Stephen (ALPHA Alternative Junior School);

Other Voting Members:

Holzman, Rebecca (High Park Alternative Junior School); Wheaton, Martha (The Grove Community School); Cichocki, Andrew (Inglenook Community School);

Negi, Ravi (Inglenook Community School); Gill Worley (Community); Matharu, Pamila (SEED Alternative School); Prabhu, Prafulla (Spectrum Alternative Senior

School); VanNeste, Teresa (da Vinci School); Brykczynski, Paul (Mountview Alternative Junior School); McIntosh, Bonnie (Contact Alternative School);

Smit, Jason (Subway Academy II); Toye, Mitchell (Scarborough Village Public School); Pasternak, Elizabeth (da Vinci School);

Leung, Peyton (da Vinci School); Thornley-Hall, Gillian (da Vinci School); Omar, Kowthar (East Alternative School of Toronto);

Katsoras, Kristina (The Grove Community School); Lightbody, Trevor (The Grove Community School);

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

Fawthrop, Grant (TDSB-Principal, Alt. Second School-West); Gardner, Manon (TDSB - Superintendent); McCann, Gerry (TDSB – Vice Principal, Second Alt.

School); White, Nancy (TDSB - Principal, Alt. Second Sch -East/Year Round Schools);

REGRETS:

Trustee Co-chair: Bolton, Chris (TDSB Trustee);

Elementary Teacher Co-chair: LeFort, Jean-Guy (Downtown Alternative School);

Secondary Student Co-chair: Braxton Wignall, Rodrigues,

Martin Long (Elementary Teachers Association);

GUESTS:

RECORDER: Manalo, John (Parent and Community Engagement)

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
1-Welcome and Introductions	Meeting was called to order by Steve Cooper at 7:05 p.m. All members were welcomed by the co-chairs.	
2-Approval of Quorum (11)	Quorum was approved by consensus at 7:06 p.m. Voting will be 1 vote per school and by consensus.	Quorum will be discussed at next meeting.
3-Approval of Agenda of March 26, 2014 And Minutes January 29, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The agenda was approved as amended. Seconded by Pamela, approved. ▪ A motion to approve the draft minutes of January 29, 2104 was made first by Kathleen Morris and second by Liam. The draft minutes of January 29 were approved as amended. 	
4-Trustee's Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ none 	
5-Superintendent's update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From Manon Gardner: Staffing, amidst stable enrolments within alt schools, review was requested to Employee Services on the needs of the alt schools. All the staffing allocations have been restored from before and no school is losing as confirmed by Employee services, but TDSB is still not meeting the student to teachers ratio according to the Ministry. Any questions are welcome. Q&A: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If the Ontario funding formula could be amended, how could it be recommended? The trustees have advocated to get the funding formula changed, but the Ministry is not responding with changes. 2) What is the communication between various components to receive an understanding of the alt system? Addressed in Item 11. 3) 700 teachers are accounted to a loss due to declining enrolment in sec alt school and the funding formula ratio benchmark. 4) What is the advocacy difference between the regular secondary school and alt secondary school? Guidance counselors are being trained to understand the alt sec school services. Students in alt sec schools are also a good source for promoting alt schools. Communication between grade 8 and grade 9 student-to-student is important for enrolment and attendance at alt schools to be maintained. ▪ ASAC thanked Manon G for her advocacy role for Alt schools 	<p>Staff to consult with ASAC on Optional Attendance Policy.</p> <p>Staff to forward student transition facts to ASAC chairs.</p>

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
6-Election of ASAC co-chairs for 2014-15	<p>Co-chairs Jean-Guy Lefort, Steve cooper, Braxton Wignall and Amanda Taplin-Milberry are stepping down this June. Co-chairs are elected every year in a staggered way to transfer the experience from year to year.</p> <p>Members who stepped forward (below) will be contacted by Liam Rodrigues. Elementary teacher co-chair: Kowther Secondary teacher co-chair: Elementary parent co-chair: Adam Fox Secondary parent co-chair: Secondary student co-chair: Ryan Nurse</p>	
7-Board support for ASAC/Beasties	<p>Steve C.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Website needs monthly costs covered: approx.. \$29 per month ▪ There is a new AW site up and running for Elementary Alternative School teachers: The BEASTies AW site. This is a place where we, the Best Elementary Alternative School Teachers (BEASTies) can share best practices, support each other, and organize gatherings. Please feel free to ask the community for support or share work that you are proud of. Find the site by following this link: http://aw.tdsb.on.ca/sites/wr07/thegrovecs/beasties/SiteHome.aspx 	<p>Add link on ASAC webpage to torontoasac.com page</p> <p>Manon G will look for some PD funds (\$29 per month) to support the BEASTies meeting on Feb. 19.</p>
8-BrainFood Conference	<p>Liam Rodrigues reported on the success of the Alt school Conference at the University last year. The idea to hold a similar conference within TDSB on May 5 to gather ideas from students and present ideas to the Ministry for future improvement to the alt school system.</p> <p>CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: Conference committee was formed: Teresa Vanneste, Braxton and Rebecca. Would you like to help? If so, please email torontoasac[at]gmail.com</p>	<p>Manon G. will bring the website to the communication department.</p>
9-EQAO issues	<p>Amanda T. M. handed out information on HOW TO BE EXEMPT FROM EQAO tests? -Is it possible to opt-out of EQAO? Staff mentioned that Students can go school and be exempt from writing the EQAO. Parent community are being told the principals differently that students who attend school must write the test.</p>	<p>Amanda will bring the concern to Gen-Ling Cheng o</p>

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
	<p>***Staff undertaking: Manon Gardner will advocate to Superintendents that there should be consistency on the communication from principals around optional programming for students attending school who opt-out of writing the EQAO test.</p>	
10-Pathways	<p>Co-chairs -The co-chairs drafted a letter to send to the Ontario Ministry of Education and the letter was read to ASAC members for approval. Transitioning between programs is challenging for students considering the lack of resources. - Liam is working on an Alternative Additional qualifications for teachers to open the pathways programmings and improve teacher hiring security.</p> <p>***MOTION: ASAC to send the letter to Student Success within Ontario Ministry of Education and Donna Quan for her feedback. First mover was Rob; second mover was Rebecca. Motion carried.</p>	Co-chairs will send the letter to ASAC members for review and feedback before sending to Ministry
11-Elementary and Secondary Updates	<p>Co-chairs Centralized superintendents: Parent/Community mentioned that Secondary Principals are dispersed across the system and the communication pieces are confusing between schools. Centralized superintendents would improve the communication for all the alt.schools. (principals at all elem, middle and sec alt schools). At elem level, principals are in charge of the building. Alt schools need principals who are familiar with the alt school system and become allied with the school so the sites that share space with the regular school with the alt school can work together. Principals at alt-schools become part of the community and deeply understand the culture of that school. Manon G. mentioned that TDSB is over its benchmark of VPs and Ps as a whole system, and suggested that the existing or newly appointed VP/Ps could be trained through PD sessions on the alt-school system coordinated with ASAC.</p> <p>***Staff undertaking: Manon G. will bring forward to the Leadership Academy to organize alt school PD sessions for newly appointed VP/P assigned to alt. schools, and extend the PD session to the other VP/P.</p> <p>Stakeholder participation in hiring: deferred</p>	Manon G. will bring forward to the Leadership Academy to organize alt school PD sessions for newly appointed VP/P assigned to alt. schools, and extend the PD session to the other VP/P.
12- Secondary staffing allocations	See Item 5.	
New Business	A) Some schools want to maintain a particular culture in the alt school, and it is difficult if the student incoming are with a different interest or focus.	

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
A) Explore Programming at Secondary alt school B) Working Group C) Introduction of Maureen Baskin who is running for Mayor.	<p>One of the challenges moving forward is with the staffing numbers. Students are coming with challenges. There will be a communication piece at the elementary alt. school level to promote transitions to sec alt. school (eg. Cityview school). It is requested that the communication be sent to parent councils, administrators and the TDSB website and the electronic versions.</p> <p>B) To strike a working group Strike a working group to focus on the funding formula and future policies from the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>C) Maureen mentioned that alt schools issues is a provincial matter not a municipal issue.</p>	<p>Manon G will look into the ASAC web hosting costs request (\$25/month).</p>
Next Meetings	<p>**May meetings two weeks apart – informal and formal in May 2014. -October, 2014 – formal meeting</p>	<p>wiFi access for guests/ASAC.</p>
Adjournment	<p>Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.</p>	

Next Meeting: tba in May

October, 2014 Formal Meeting at 5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A, 7:00 pm