**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

To: Members of Alternative Schools Advisory Committee (ASAC)

Date/Time: Tuesday Feb 9th, 2016 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm (6:30 dinner, Committee Room B);

Location: Board Room, 5050 Yonge Street, 1st Floor

Committee Co-Chairs: Prafulla Prabhu (Parent), Caillie Feldmann (Student), Liam Rodrigues (SecondaryTeacher), Kowthar Omar (Elementary teacher)

Present: Chair Liam Rodrigues; Co-Chair Kowthar Omar; Prafulla Prabhu (Parent co - chair); Caillie Feldmann (Student); Rebecca Finlay(Parent); Sheena Taylor (Parent); Rebecca Holtzman (Parent); Kelly Dyment (Parent); Sonya Allin (Parent); Stephen Cooper (Community); Barb Gosse (Parent); Richard Penner (Parent); Louis Marrone (Parent); Ian Cauthery(Parent);

TDSB: Trustee Ausma Malik (Ward 10); Manon Gardner (staff); Grant Fawthrop (Principal, West Region); Mike Gurgol (Vice -Principal, Second Alt. School); Pamila Matharu (Secondary teacher); Moura, Emmanual (Principal)

Regrets: Denis Lopes (Principal, East Region); Adam Faux (Parent); Mark M’ Quillan (Parent); Beth Coleman (Parent); Jen Sagar (Parent); Susan Kroll (Parent); Moni Ghasmi (Teacher); Giselle Melillo (Teacher); Rob Rennick (Teacher); Bonnie Whitehall (Teacher);

Recorder: Vandana Bharti (Office Administrator, Parent and Community Engagement Office)

**MINUTES**

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| **#** | **ITEM** | **LEAD** | **MOTION/****RECOMMENDATION** |
|  | Welcome & Introductions | Co-ChairsIntroductions were done. | No |
|  | Approval of Quorum | Co-ChairsQuorum was achieved at 7:05 p.m.There was a discussion regarding the fact that at the November meeting where the Committee Assistant could not set up the teleconferencing because they did not bring the moderator code with them. As a result 2 members who had requested the teleconferencing in advance were unable to participate in the meeting.  | No |
|  | Declaration of Possible Conflict of Interest | Co-ChairsNone declared | No |
|  | Approval of Agenda | Co-ChairsAgenda was amended and the chair asked it be noted that they had sent Agenda changes to the Committee Assistant the week before the meeting and the changes were not made. **Changes to the agenda:** * After # 8 to add the Alpha presentation (**Presenter:** Sheena Taylor)
* A new #8 was added – The Alternative School/ Statement
 | Approved |
|  | Approval of Minutes - November 2015 | Co-Chairs Reviewed and approved with changes:* Move Adam Faux and Rebecca Holtzman from present to absent
* Correct the spelling of Giselle Melillo’s name.
 | Approved. |
|  | Parent Conference 2016 | Manon Gardner * TDSB is hosting a conference called the “Parents as Partners” - it is in collaboration with SEAC, PIAC & Model Schools
* Event is April 16th, 2016 and ASAC is invited to participate and also have a presentation table
* The conference is an opportunity to share and build awareness of the alternative school programs
* There was a discussion on marketing materials and how to best present alternative schools- a sheet with the external alternative school sites, a quick fact sheet highlighting alternative schools e.g. list of schools

Discussion took place on how will people identify the booth, signage, presence at the table. For further information about the day, please contact Superintendent Vicky Branco. * Report back after March Break for update at the next ASAC on April 12th
 | Information Received. |
|  | Superintendent's Updates | Manon Gardner1. Will be providing the co-chair with a one pager which lists the Alternative Schools by ward.
2. Manon provided information on our new TDSB Director, John Malloy. She mentioned that he was the former director of Hamilton Wentworth, that he had come to us from the Ministry of Education.

Manon mentioned that the Director was very much interested in Advisory Committees and will be attending some of the Committee meetings whenever possible. The chair added that 3 committees expressed concerns regarding communication to the CAC’s at the last PSSC. 1. Manon mentioned that she presented information about Alternative Schools at the last Executive Council

Summary of the update: * There are just under 2000 students in Elementary and 2000 students Secondary Alternative schools. There are 9 academies including Girls Leadership, Boys Leadership, Health and Wellness, Sports and Wellness, and Vocal Music Academies.
* Manon will provide a list of the schools at the next ASAC meeting.
 | Information Received. |
|  | Alternative Schools Statement  | Co-Chairs & Stephen Cooper Stephen read the alternative school statement: “An alternative school is a self-contained educational unit with curriculum, methods, and governance that are non-traditional and alternative to the mainstream. Some of these schools are rooted in a particular philosophical tradition: the Free School movement, libertarianism, unschooling, Montessori, Waldorf, constructivism, gestalt, experiential and whole child; while others are focused on keeping disaffected young people in school. Hence our alternative schools offer a wide range of philosophies, teaching methods and strategies. It is important to note that finding an alternative way for teachers, parents and students to relate to each other is as important as any other aspect of an alternative school. This extends to school governance: alternative schools experiment with novel ways of administering themselves, largely based on a non-hierarchical, democratic model which values the voice of parents, teachers and students in collaboration with administrators.”* Statement reflects that parents are looking for alternative methods to educate their kids.
* The mission statement is a work in progress and there will be a working group formed to finalize it.
* The Senior Staff suggested that they discuss the statement further and potentially bring it as a motion at an upcoming PSSC.
 | Discussion received. |
| 1.
 | Alpha  | Sheena Taylor The discussion was based around Governance. **Background:** the philosophy at the school is that there is equal input from Students, Parents and administration. Last year the school was informed that they were being assigned a temporary staff member. There were concerns that the staff member would not have an understanding of their programs and inclusive processes. The lead staff leans towards standardized administrative processes; and as a result the parents feel that they do not have a say in the changes and are being told how the school should be run. There was a letter that was sent to parents informing them that the temporary administrative staff will become their lead administrator. This is upsetting to the parents as it is another example of them not having an input on what happens in their schools and that the changes are in direct conflict of their educational philosophy. Trustee Malik suggested scheduling a meeting to discuss the concerns in further detail.  | Discussion received. |
|  | Alternatives and Equity; Strategies for providing Choice and access/ Planning for Alternative Relocation  | Co-Chairs* Expressed concerns about accessibility and the limited options for alternative schools. .
* Junior and intermediate parents have limited entry points.
* There were questions about the policies and how they fit with equity. Senior staff explained the staffing process and how the board reviews enrollment and allocates staff accordingly.
* The co – chair inquired as to communication among the elementary principals. It was explained elementary alternative schools are under the leadership of the local superintendents.
* The co- chair inquired if it was possible to have one superintendent dedicated to Alternative schools. The senior staff explained that this would be a change in role and that the committee may want to address this need through discussion, suggestion and motion.
* There was a discussion on how to address the needs to alternative schools and the entry points and as a conclusion a working group will be formed to formulate the motion
* Rebecca Holtzman would like to be added to the working group.
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|  | New Business   | * A parent from the Grove expressed concern that their school is K-6 and that choices for grade 7 alternative are limited.
* His request was to put his request on the next agenda for future discussion.
 | Information received. |
|  | Next Meeting  | Informal: April 7Formal: April 12  |  |
| 13. | Adjournment | Co-ChairsMeeting Adjourned at 9:07 p.m.: | Approved. |

Please visit TDSB Alternative Schools Advisory Committee website to learn more: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/HowtoGetInvolved/CommunityAdvisoryCommittees/AlternativeSchoolsAdvisoryCommittee.aspx>