



## Alternative Schools Advisory Committee

### Minutes

**Date: Thursday, January 19, 2012**

**Location: 5050 Yonge Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Executive Office**

**Time: 7:00 –9:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Teresa Van Neste (Co-Chair, Elementary); Marina Deluca-Howard (Co-Chair, Secondary); Rajiv Sivanesan (Delphi AS); Stephen Cooper (Alpha AS); Ravi Negi (Inglenook CS); Sarah O’Leary (SEED); Amelia Santos (SEED); Karen Grose (Coordinating Superintendent, Program Planning); Sandy Best (Manager, Alt Schools); Daniel Wesser (Student Co-Chair, Alpha II AS); John Atherton (Alpha II); Liam Rodrigues (SEED); T.J. Goertz (Communications Coordinator); Debra Pizel (Year-Round AS); Jenna Lech (NEYRAC); Nancy White (AS East & Year-Round); Hazel Lam (Vice-Principal, Special Project Support); Andre Lopez (The Student School); Mark Fischer (The Student School); Luke Edwards (Inglenook CS); Jason Smit (Subway Academy II); Tane Akamatsu (Inglenook CS); Vivian Meyer (Contact AS); Louise Azzarello (Oasis AS); Tricia Green (Da Vinci AS); Sylvia Kraus (Inglenook CS)

**Guests:** Lou Vavougious (Chief Employee Services Officer), Greg Chan (Officer, Staffing Information Systems) Esther Fine (Associate Professor, York University)

**Recorder:** Amanda Tiberio

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
<b>Call to order: Welcome and Introductions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m.</li> <li>All attendees were welcomed and round table introductions were made.</li> </ul>	
<b>Approval of Quorum</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quorum was approved.</li> </ul>	
<b>Approval of Agenda/Minutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agenda was approved with one exception. The planning of the upcoming informal secondary meeting was added to the end.</li> <li>The minutes of the October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved.</li> </ul>	
<b>Business Arising: Update - Staffing</b>	<p><u>Lou Vavougios, Chief Employee Services Officer discussed staffing allocation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presently, there is no Board commitment to the number of staff that will be allocated to any TDSB schools, including alternative schools and so it is premature to discuss exact staffing numbers at this time. The next step in the staffing process will be to take enrolment numbers to the March Board meeting, which will determine the support it will be given for staff allocation in 2012/2013. Lou gave an undertaking that Employee Services’ staff would meet with alternative school principals well ahead of any decisions being made to determine program needs for the upcoming school year. It was also mentioned that Gabi and Nanci always advocate strongly for the staffing needs of alternative secondary schools.</li> <li>Lou noted that secondary enrolment is down significantly across the Board and that the Board is facing an almost \$85 million deficit this year.</li> </ul>	

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	<p>Discussion ensued:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the past, staffing allocations in secondary alternative schools have remained relatively consistent despite the decline in student enrolment.</li> <li>• Concerns arose about how the removal of staff from alternative secondary schools has a greater impact than removal from a traditional school as removing one teacher from a school staff of 4 or 5 has a much greater program impact than removing 1 staff member from a staff of 30.</li> <li>• Concern was expressed that Penny Mustin said at the last ASAC meeting that the special education teachers assigned to alternative secondary schools in the past year came out of the alternative schools' supplement while the alt schools had previously been assured that they came from the overall number of spec ed teachers assigned for the system. This was clarified and Penny had been mistaken. Concern was also expressed re the effectiveness of the itinerant model that is being used for alternative secondary schools.</li> <li>• At some alternative secondary schools at-risk students in have many issues that are barriers to them becoming successful at school and they have not been successful in traditional school settings. These students need much more attention from teachers. Also, numbers fluctuate as students deal with their life issues but teachers still maintain contact with them during the school day so that even if they are not in school the teachers are still making time allowances for them.</li> <li>• Lou stated that across the TDSB school staffing numbers were being brought in line with enrolment as that is what generates funding for teachers. Questions arose about whether or not there was a possibility that staff allocations at alternative secondary schools will be brought in line with enrolment.</li> </ul> <p><b>MOTION:</b></p> <p><i>The Alternative Schools Advisory Committee direct the alternative schools principals to advocate as strongly as possible to maintain current staffing levels</i></p> <p>Moved by Steven and seconded</p> <p>Discussion on the Motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative schools consist of a very different population of students who require a greater staffing allocation. Principles urged to discuss how to maintain staff and retrieve staff that has been lost.</li> <li>• It was proposed that principles discuss if allocation may be postponed until schools have time to market and advertise.</li> <li>• It is important to raise TDSB staff's awareness of alternative schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Additional questions that were not addressed can be sent to co-chairs or Karen Grose to be forwarded to Lou Vavougios.</p>

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Update – Alt Schools Conference	<p>The motion unanimously passed.</p> <p><u>Esther Fine, Associate Professor, York University gave a brief update on the planning of the Alternative Schools Conference:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans for the conference are aiming for a fall 2012 date. They are currently looking for funding from various sources.</li> <li>The planning committee has recognized three tiers of organization: 1) current alternative schools and their contributions, 2) research, history, and understanding of alternative schools that are offered, and 3) Board administrative staff who are in a position to make decisions. The hope is to have all three tiers engage in discussion about the needs of alternative schools. The conference will be open to the public.</li> </ul>	<p>Suggestions for the conference can be forwarded to Teresa Van Neste, Sandra Best or Stephen Cooper</p>
Update - Diversity	<p><u>Co-Chair, Teresa Van Neste gave a brief update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The idea of cloning existing successful alternative schools was given in order to shorten wait times on the opening of new alternative schools and allow additional spaces for students that might allow for more diversity. There is no new information on the progress of the idea.</li> </ul>	
Update – Marketing	<p><u>Mark Fischer (The Student School) gave an update on the marketing initiative for secondary alternative schools:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Posters and post cards will be available for marketing alternative secondary schools. Barb Brown and her team will distribute to libraries and community centres and schools through their normal distribution channels. All materials will direct the audience to the website, which is close to completion. All schools will be able to link their school websites to the main TDSB website.</li> <li>The poster needs a “call to action” on it and Barb Brown had suggested that the week of April 23<sup>rd</sup> be picked and that Alt. Secondary Schools welcome visitors during that week or they are hoping that secondary alternative schools can have something publicized to demonstrate what their school is about. The next meeting of the marketing team is being planned for February 23<sup>rd</sup>.</li> <li>The web team is working to create a webinar for all schools to leverage Twitter or Facebook for marketing purposes. It will focus on how, why and what to promote and this will be available for alt schools.</li> <li>Spacing in the Choices Booklet was discussed, as alternative schools were only allocated a corner of a page for information. The booklets have already been distributed this year, so a change will be proposed next year.</li> </ul>	

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<p><b>New Business: Update – All Schools</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideas were discussed to draw in potential students. A link to the TDSB website on the Youth Employment Services website and videos on each school's website were proposed. The web team must be consulted to discuss Board regulations for websites.</li> </ul> <p>Marina asked if any schools had anything that they wanted to report.</p> <p>Teresa Van Neste indicated that at her school there were some concerns amongst some parents about the perception that administration was being unsupportive of the Waldorf inspired program and alternative nature of the school.</p> <p>General discussion ensued.</p> <p>Some reps were concerned that some administrators cite union rules and/or Board policies and procedures to set boundaries when the issue doesn't warrant it.</p> <p>Some reps were concerned that when a new alt elementary school begins that teachers often don't have experience teaching in alternative schools or a background in a particular school's teaching methods (e.g., Waldorf). Concern was expressed that the experience some teachers bring to the classroom may not match up with the level of support that alternative schools are designed to deliver to students</p> <p>New TDSB Academies. Discussion ensued about the new Academies that the TDSB is opening</p> <p>Full Day Kindergarten. The last roll-out of full day kindergarten is set for 2014 and there is anxiety among alternative school parents at some schools that this may mean their schools may be moved due to limited space when kindergartens double their existing size. Beaches Alternative Junior School is looking for advice about how to deal with the anxiety from schools that have already undergone the transition. Elementary representation was low and no advice was given. ASAC to find information for them. Staff indicated that the Board had a process in place should a move be required for any school and that as yet this had not been triggered. Beaches indicated that they just wanted to be proactive at this point.</p>	<p>ASAC to monitor situation.</p> <p>ASAC to support Beaches.</p>
<p><b>PD for Alt. Teachers</b></p>	<p><u>Stephen Cooper (Alpha AS) gave a brief overview of the P.D. day issue:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently all elementary teachers have their P.D. at the same time and place. They are working towards secondary teachers having this as well.</li> <li>The next informal Elementary meeting will be on March 1, 2012 at DaVinci</li> </ul>	

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<b>Planning of Upcoming Elementary and Secondary Meetings</b>	Alternative School at 7:00 p.m. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The next informal Secondary meeting will be on February 23, 2012 at Inglenook Community School at 7:00 p.m.</li> </ul>	
<b>Adjournment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The meeting was adjourned at 9:04p.m.</li> </ul>	

**Next Meeting:** April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012