



Toronto District School Board  
**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Committee:** Alternative Schools Advisory Committee (ASAC)

**Date:** Thursday, November 6, 2014

**Time:** 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

**Members Present:** Kowthar Omar (Elementary Teacher Co-Chair, East Alternative School of Toronto); Liam Rodrigues (Secondary Teacher Co-Chair, SEED Alternative School); Sonya Allin (Parent Rep, ALPHA Alternative JS); Peyton Leung (Teacher Rep, da Vinci School); Rebecca Holzman (Parent Rep, High Park Alternative JS); Martha Wheaton (Parent Rep, The Grove Community School); Kelly Dymont (Teacher Rep, Inglenook CS); Caillie Feldmann (Student Rep, Inglenook CS); Craig Penney (Parent Rep, SEED Alternative School); David Fletcher (Teacher Rep, Subway Academy 1)

**Teleconference:** Lisa Ball (Beaches Alternative School)

**Regrets:** Stephen Cooper (Teacher Rep, ALPHA Alternative JS)

**Staff:** Executive Superintendent Manon Gardner (School Improvement/Operational Support), Anna Gemmiti (TDSB, VP of Secondary Alt Schools West); Briony Glassco (TDSB Trustee Ward 10); Denis Lopes (TDSB – Principal, Alt. Second Schools – East/Year Round Schools); Grant Fawthrop (TDSB – Principal, Alt. Secondary Schools – West)

**Guests:** Michelle Munroe, Central Co-ordinator, Parent & Community Engagement Office (PCEO),

**Recorder:** Linda Mendonca (Parent & Community Engagement Office)

ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/MOTION
1. Welcome and Introductions	Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Rodrigues at 7:05 p.m. All members were welcomed by the co-chairs.	
2. Approval of Quorum	Quorum was approved by consensus at 7:06 p.m.  For the formal meeting, quorum is achieved by consensus. Informal meetings have a different process. 7 members were present. Quorum achieved.  ASAC is heavy with Co-Chairs. Michelle Munroe is here to clarify co-chair	

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	requirements.	
<b>3. Declaration of Possible Conflict of Interest</b>	None declared.	
<b>4. Approval of Agenda</b>	The agenda was approved by consensus with minor amendments.	
<b>5. Approval of May 21, 2014 Minutes</b>	The minutes of May 21, 2014 was approved by consensus with minor amendments.	
<b>6. CAC Review Recommendations (Michelle Munroe)</b>	<p><b>ASAC Co-Chairs</b> In light of CAC review, we are reviewing all CAC Terms of Reference and aligning all processes. Co-chairs for ASAC have always been a staff of the Board; Co-Chairs must be a parent. This was recognized through TDSB staff e-mail address that current Co-Chairs are teachers and staff of the Board. The committee needs a Trustee Co-Chair, and parent Co-Chairs.</p> <p><b>Trustee Co-Chair</b> In regards to identifying a trustee to sit on a committee, Michelle contacted Board Services to determine the process. Monday, December 1, 2014 is the Organizational Board for the new Board of Trustees. Trustees will be informed of all Advisory Committees. There is no process to request a specific trustee. CAC's keep their Trustees from year to year until elections.</p> <p>Trustee Glassco informed members that they can speak to specific Trustees and ask if they'd be interested in being the Trustee to your committee. Ward 10 has the most Alternative schools. Ausma Malik is the new Trustee for Ward 10. If members are interested in having Ausma as their Trustee, Trustee Glassco can pass her contact info along.</p>	
7. Superintendent's Update	Superintendent Gardner said that it's crucial to have a Trustee who has a number of Elementary and Secondary Alternative schools. It will not be a problem to get one.	
8. Call for Parent Co-Chairs (Co-Chair Omar)	In reference to what Michelle Munroe shared, Co-Chair elections were held in May. We did not find out until September that staff could not be Co-Chairs. We can be considered Interim.	

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	<p>Kelly Dymant expressed that part of the frustration is that Adam Faux, a Lunch Room Supervisor; his role is minimal at this point as a Lunch Room Supervisor. Because of this, he cannot continue his role on the committee and as a Parent Council chair.</p> <p>Can the present Co-chairs remain on the Steering Committee? Yes, they can as members only, and not as Co-Chairs.</p> <p>Co-Chair Omar put forward a formal request for parent Co-Chairs. Martha Wheaton (Grove Community School) expressed that she would be willing to step forward if she could connect with current Co-Chairs about what the role involves.</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Co-Chair Omar to connect with Martha Wheaton regarding parent Co-Chair role.</p>	
<p>9. Sibling Policy in Some Elementary Schools</p>	<p>Co-Chair Omar shared that it was her understanding that the sibling policy in some elementary schools is being re-visited. This information was shared at East Alternative. Staff and parents have voiced their opinion to the Superintendent.</p> <p>Co-Chair Omar asked to know where the revision to the policy stands, and what the appeals process is.</p> <p>Executive Superintendent Manon Gardner expressed that she was meeting with the local Superintendent to review the policy and that there would be no impact to the registration for the 2015/2016 year. She will report at the next ASAC meeting.</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Manon will follow up regarding the revisions to the Siblings policy and report back at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>10. Gender Practice – Potential Amendment to Lottery System in Entrance to Schools</p>	<p>Co-Chair Rodrigues asked if the Gender Practice; Lottery System for Entrance into Schools is also being revisited?</p> <p>Superintendent Gardner, for example (i.e. CityView), where the premise is half female, and half male, it is not being reviewed right now.</p> <p>Liam said that for locally developed alternative schools, the official process</p>	

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	<p>(local and organic piece) has to conform to the larger structure. It's based on Parent movement, what parents want for their children based on a constitution. Liam asked if we are going to revisit and fight for what is locally grown.</p> <p>Martha asked whether gender independent kids and their families (trans, queer), are required to check of the box on forms? Superintendent Gardner said that most schools have their own forms.</p> <p>Co-Chair Rodrigues said that there are lots of questions regarding gender. Rob added that the challenge in the larger Board is that there are some guidelines – older regulations and laws that are difficult to manage in the larger stream.</p> <p>Trustee Glassco asked Co-Chair Rodrigues whether there has been a comprehensive review of their constitution applicable to your school. If Da Vinci had a 5-year plan, maybe there are ways to enhance and strengthen alternative schools.</p> <p>Co-Chair Rodrigues said that da Vinci has a very divided School Council. He was at a meeting. There are lots of concerns with having kids on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor bumping into kids from grade 6; there was resistance at different levels. They were bumping up against a lot of resistance. It took 3 years to re-write who we are. Constitutionally, we are different; pedagogies may not necessarily be child –centered, or Gestalt), and not the same as before.</p>	
<p>11. Revisit Ministry Response to ASAC Request for a Schedule D - AQ</p>	<p>Co-Chair Rodrigues expressed that Alternative Schools are unique. They are Board within a Board. They are parent, community and stakeholder born schools. We need to begin to protect these schools; as local schools are going after school programs with negative statements, and also to begin defending some of the teachers. It takes a lot of yeas to train a new teacher coming in. The letter asks OCT to reconsider Schedule D – AQ. The response from them was laughable. It takes \$3000 to be a qualified Alternative Schools Teacher.</p> <p>Next Step: to write a letter that lets them know that the response is not acceptable, and to target a Student Success contact.</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Co-Chair Omar will draft the letter</p>	

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	<p><b>***Action:</b> Manon will look into who ASAC can follow up with at the ministry and report back.</p>	
<p>12. Follow - Up – Question re: Single Alternative Schools Superintendent</p>	<p>Co-Chair Rodrigues asked about the possibility of having a single Superintendent for Alternative Schools, because with the current assignment of Superintendents, he believes the loyalty is going to fall with larger schools. There are 42 alternative schools, with approximately 4000 students.</p> <p>Executive Superintendent Gardner suggested that the ASAC submit a proposal to Academic Council to ask the Director to look at employing 1 or 2 people, identifying what the expectations of this person are? The proposal needs to flush out that it needs two people, as it is not physically easy to travel to from school to school.</p> <p>When we did the training on Aug 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup>, we worked with Rita Simmons. Alternative Elementary schools had no new principal. 8 or 9 Superintendents have elementary schools. There are 11 new Superintendents.</p> <p>Andrew (from Inglenook) who is studying policy and government volunteered to work with Kowthar and Liam on the proposal.</p> <p>Co-Chair Omar said she signed up for the workshop, understanding that there are not that many new hires. The information is to go out to all the principals and vice principals, and Trustees. She is wondering about the continuation of it?</p> <p>Manon suggested that ASAC could approach TSAA (Toronto Schools Association of Administrators). ASAC could share the needs of elementary and secondary alternatives schools by having a meeting or breakfast with them.</p> <p>There needs to be broader awareness of alternative schools to all principals.</p> <p>Anne and Kowthar will continue the work that was started last year. Manon suggested putting together a workshop, if you want your schools to be</p>	

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	<p>known, by getting some principals together from TSAA to get the discussion started.</p> <p>Members agreed that an Education Sub-Committee that gets together before the informal meeting to determine how to get Alternative Schools information out there.</p> <p>As of last year, we have presented to principal/vice principals, guidance counsellors, developed brochures, websites, and big promotional campaigns last year, and continued this year to Guidance Councillors in all 4 quadrants. Alternative schools enrollments are pretty healthy. In June, we have had Guidance Counsellors on a bus visiting all the schools. Met with Elementary Itinerant Guidance Counsellors early in the year.</p> <p>Social Workers meet with collective groups (Secondary – Grade 11/12 Senior Programmers). Looking to explore it even more with the Grade 9 program and pathways program. The list of schools that were visited was decided by Central Guidance. John McPhee did a Guidance Blast to east and west.</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Kowthar, Liam and Andrew will work on proposal regarding Superintendents for Alternative Schools.</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Elementary &amp; Secondary Bridge to bring to the next Informal Meeting.</p>	
<p><b>13. Launch of AlterEgo</b></p>	<p>Co-Chair Rodrigues asked whether ASAC would like to continue their connection with AlterEgo. AlterEgo is the brainchild of two alternative school students, who make critical observations around alternative education. It is vested in by students, parents, and stakeholders involved in Alternative Education. It's a people journal and would have a number of student parents to edit it. Members expressed that the students would need some proper guidance so as not to make things look bad unintentionally.</p>	
<p><b>14. New Business</b></p>	<p><b>EQAO Policy</b></p> <p>Members asked if there is some information that they can provide to parents about changes to the EQAO.</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Manon will look into whether she can get something in writing about EQAO policy changes and report back at the next meeting.</p>	

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	<p><b>Changes to Funding Formula</b>          Andrew asked whether members would be interested in doing a petition to the ministry to review and change the funding formula.          We need to concentrate on designation, and recognition. Trustees talk about it all the time. Andrew – petition the ministry to change the funding formula –</p> <p><b>ASAC Newsletter</b>          Trustee Glassco asked if ASAC has a newsletter, and suggested that it would be great way to share information with Alternative schools. The ASAC may want to investigate it – it can be a collection of very useful information and can be really effective. Members agreed by consensus that it would be a good way to communicate and promote alternative schools.</p> <p><b>Beasties</b>          A Trustee attended a Beasties meeting. It’s a best practice group of alternative educators. They got together at an Educators home and talked about the Parent Reaching Out (PRO) grant. The deadline had passed. –</p> <p><b>***Action:</b> Co-Chair Rodrigues to follow up on whether Beasties will go ahead.</p>	
<p><b>15. ASAC Meeting Dates</b></p>	<p>Members were given the list of meeting dates for 2014/2015. The dates will also be posted on the ASAC website.</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on January 21, 2014 at Blake PS, Library. The March and May meeting locations are to be confirmed. To confirm whether Beaches Alternative School will host these meetings.</p>	
<p><b>16. Adjournment</b></p>	<p>Members agreed by consensus to adjourn the meeting at 8:59 pm.</p>	