**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY MEETING NOTES**

Committee Name: Alternative Schools Advisory Committee (ASAC)

Date: November 20, 2017

Time: 7:00 pm

Attendance: Prafulla Prabhu (Secondary parent co-chair) Boriana Karan (Elementary co-chair), Rebecca Holzman (HPAS by teleconference), Gisele Gordon (The Grove), Elaine McIntyre (the Grove by teleconference, Nicole Fritz (Mountview by teleconference), Natalia Djawadi(Beaches Alt), Bronwen Gill (Beaches Alt), Ann O’Connell (Horizon), Sheena Taylor (Delta), Anne Keary (Horizon)

TDSB Staff: Jennifer Story (Trustee, Ward 15 by teleconference), Abdul Patel (Trustee, Ward 21), Liam Rodrigues (SEED), Manon Gardner (Executive Superintendent), Grant Fawthrop (Principal, Sec. Alternative Schools West), Denis Lopes (Principal, Sec. Alternative Schools East), Rachel Rosen (SOLE), Ravi Negi (Inglenook), Mike Gurgol (Vice Principal, Sec. Alternative Schools West), Rob Rennick (Inglenook)

Regrets: nil

Recorder: Gillian Venning

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| **ITEM** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION ITEMS/ATTACHMENTS** |
| Welcome & Introductions |  |  |
| Call to Order/ Confirmation of Quorum | Called to order at 7:05 pm by Prafulla Prabhu. Quorum was achieved. |  |
| Approval of Agenda | Request to add item to Other Business by Natalia Djawadi: Gender Neutrality in the Admission Process.  Motion to approve amended agenda by Liam Rodrigues, seconded by Rachel Rosen. Approved. |  |
| Approval of Summary Notes –September 18, 2017 | Motion to approve summary notes by Liam Rodrigues pending one minor change: addition of Prafulla Prabhu as secondary co-chair under membership item. Seconded by Prafulla Prabhu. Approved. |  |
| Declarations of Possible Conflicts | NIL |  |
| Responding to the Enhanced Equity Task Force | Liam   * As a group, we are seeking clarity around what the report of the task force will mean for Alternative Schools in the TDBS   Rebecca   * There is a lot of discussion out in the schools and in various social media about how we can clarify the task force report as it relates to Alternative Schools - there is concern that this process could result in closures of Alternative Schools * A message from ASAC to the public/parents would be reassuring to let people know that we are aware of the task force; we would like to be more proactive as opposed to reactive   Manon   * The intent at this point is to provide Liz Rykert with as much information as possible about specialized programs and alternative schools to ensure a good understanding of enrolment and where students are coming from to attend these programs * A collective response from ASAC to the Enhanced Equity Task Force is recommended – note that the deadline is today at midnight, November 20, 2017 * The goal of this task force and report is to increase equity of access to specialized schools and programs * At this time it appears unlikely that this will result in any closures and we are anticipating that we will be asked to increase access wherever possible * Estimated timeline of events: Trustees will receive a report at the December Board meeting, which will most likely go back to staff for recommendations in late January and February, it is unlikely to impact staffing for fall 2018   Trustee Patel   * While it is difficult to explain to people that final decisions still have not been made, it is important to note that this report is still very much in draft form   Trustee Story   * Important to note that no one will be rushing into any major system change as a result of the recommendations in the report   Gisele   * Request to include in the collective ASAC statement our belief regarding how important it is that equity of access be supported strongly and that we look to the Board for solutions as to how we can best have representation from all in our Alternative Schools | Enhanced Equity Task Force website:  [www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Enhancing-Equity-Task-Force/Enhancing-Equity-Task-Force-Recommendations](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved/Enhancing-Equity-Task-Force/Enhancing-Equity-Task-Force-Recommendations) |
| Review of Alternative Schools Report | Manon Gardner   * Background: approved on June 6, 2016 to begin a review of Alternative Schools * Fall of 2016, the Integrated Equity Framework was approved at Board, which looks at increased equity and access – this led to the need for a review of access to secondary programs (student voice poll took place in 2016-17 and this year will be the staff voice portion) * This report was originally presented at PSSC (Program and School Services Committee) on November 7, it was well-received * This report is going to Board on November 22, 2017 * The report gives a summary background of Alternative Schools (20 elementary and 20 secondary), we serve just under 4000 students * Research Coordinator Rob Brown provides information on students who entered Alternative Schools years ago and where they are now * Focus questions for parents/staff/students looked at the conditions and relationships between students and staff in the Alternative Schools – this will be looked at more closely once census results are available * Important to note that we also serve students with special needs in our Alternative Schools * Requests for a campus model approach was noted in feedback received from parents/students * Another request was to add more locations (either elementary or secondary) and adding additional grades. Both of these plans could help to increase access   Questions/Comments to Manon from ASAC regarding the Alternative Schools Review Report:   * Q: Why has so much literature from the US been quoted throughout the report and was any European or Scandinavian literature reviewed or consulted? A: There is very little Canadian research to pull from on this subject, Manon will check on Scandinavian literature question and follow up for next meeting. * Q: What do you think the main challenges/strengths are that are coming out of this report? A: Equity of admissions is the most important to take away from this report – how can we select/invite/include a more diverse population, especially in our elementary alternative schools * Q: Did issues of curriculum ever come up through this process? A: This did come up in conversation relating specifically to the Grade 7 and up level. Conversation was mainly around whether or not curriculum requirements are in line with the philosophy of the Alternative Schools |  |
| Communication Strategy (update) | Liam   * Rob/Rebecca/Liam met to discuss in between last formal meeting and this meeting   Rebecca   * We have decided on a three pronged approach: Facebook, Twitter/Instagram, each would need more than one moderator in order to ensure continuity as ASAC membership changes * Through these outlets we can send out information to almost any population in word or photo form * The future plan is to share anything related to ASAC on these outlets (agendas/meeting dates/conferences/important information) * Call for volunteers to moderate these pages   Liam   * We’d like to have a webpage (external to TDSB)where parents can go to discuss pedagogy regarding Alternative Schools – external to the TDSB CAC sites and moderated by parents   Manon   * A call with Communications will be arranged for Wednesday, November 22 at 9:00 am * Prafulla   Liam   * Can we get access to contact information for school CLs and Chairs? This will help us in our advertising and information sharing. Manon to follow up on this question for next meeting. |  |
| Creative ties: Alternative Schools and Faculties of Education, Conference Event | Liam   * We need to make a stronger connection between Alternative Schools and the post- secondary institutions in Toronto; we would like to set up a conference. OISE seems to be the best fit for this event since they are currently showing lots of interest in Alternative Schools and we have a strong connection to the people there   Manon   * Suggestion to connect with some of the authors of this book to ask that they join us at an ASAC meeting and have some focused conversations about the book and Alternative Schools – perhaps turn it into an afternoon event with staff/parents/authors followed by a regular ASAC meeting | Information regarding book launch: |
| Discussion on ASAC Mandate and Terms of Reference | Manon   * ASAC has been operating without a Terms of Reference and Mandate for several years, unlike all other Community Advisory Committees * The purpose of this request is so that the Board has a better understanding of what we are doing at ASAC * Necessary templates will be sent to Co-Chairs following this meeting   Prafulla   * Willing to take on writing the terms of reference and will then share with other Co-Chairs |  |
| Other Business | Natalia: gender neutrality and admissions process (specifically regarding Beaches Alternative)   * As a school we have been asked to remove the question of gender completely from our intake forms this has led to quite a few difficult conversations even though we are very committed to moving in this direction * Main issue is that a single student of one gender ends up in a classroom with several students of the opposite gender * We feel as if we are on our own and would like to connect with other schools to see what they are doing in similar situations * Past practice dictated that we would have a certain number of male and female spaces per class but realize that we can no longer fill places based on this   Rebecca   * Will connect with Natalia to discuss further outside of this meeting   Manon   * Optional Attendance forms will no longer ask the question of gender starting next year |  |
| Next Meeting Date | January 15, 2018 |  |
| Adjournment | Move to adjourn at 8:41 pm |  |