



P062, Alternative Schools Policy Review

To: Governance and Policy Committee

Date: 27 April 2022

Report No.: 04-22-4281

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Create a Culture for Student and Staff Well-Being
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students
- Allocate Human and Financial Resources Strategically to Support Student Needs
- Build Strong Relationships and Partnerships Within School Communities to Support Student Learning and Well-Being

Recommendation

It is recommended that the revised Work Plan for review of the Alternative Schools Policy (P062), as presented in this report, be approved.

Context

The Alternative Schools Policy (P062) (the “Policy”) (see Appendix A) was adopted on June 27, 2007 and most recently revised in March 2012. A Policy Review Work Plan was presented at the Governance and Policy Committee on April 24, 2019 and the Board of Trustees on May 22, 2019.

In relation to alternative schools, at the May 26, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board also adopted the following resolution:

- (a) That the Director conduct a review of the application and admission procedures across all elementary alternative schools to ensure that they are consistent and equitable;
- (b) That the following be referred to staff for a report on its feasibility in the fall 2021 cycle of meetings:
 - i) that the Director consider creating one universal elementary alternative schools application form, as well as one set of clear and detailed

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admissions procedures for all elementary alternative schools to ensure consistency, equity and remove potential barriers;

- ii) That the application process be clearly posted on the TDSB website to make it easily accessible to the schools and the general public for reference.

In consideration of the above resolution and relationship to the TDSB's ongoing Secondary Program Review including the Out-of-Area Attendance Policy (P013), staff recommends revisions to the Policy Review Work Plan. While the policy review was paused until 2022/23 in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule, staff recommends expediting the review during the 2021/22 school year.

A revised Policy Review Work Plan (see Appendix B) is presented for Committee's consideration and approval.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Subject to the Governance and Policy Committee and Board directions, staff will implement the review of the Policy in accordance with the revised Policy Review Work Plan. The revised draft Policy is expected to be presented to the Governance and Policy Committee for consideration in October 2022.

Resource Implications

N/A

Communications Considerations

The Policy will be communicated in accordance with the revised Policy Review Work Plan.

Board Policy and Procedure Reference(s)

- Alternative Schools Procedure (PR584)

Appendices

- Appendix A: Alternative Schools Policy (P062) - current
- Appendix B: Revised Policy Review Work Plan

From

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Toronto District School Board

Policy P062

Title: **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS**

Adopted: June 27, 2007

Revised:

Reviewed: 2009, March 2012

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To identify the Board's commitment to alternative schools that provide unique pedagogy, forms of governance (see 4.4 below) and staff involvement, and strong parental and/or student involvement.

2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Director Strategy and Planning

3.0 DEFINITIONS

Alternative school Sites that are unique in pedagogy, forms of governance (see 4.4 below), and staff involvement, and have strong parental and/or student involvement; environments vary and provide an educational experience suited to individual learning styles/preferences and/or needs

New alternative school A stand-alone school with a Ministry-issued Board School Identification Number

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1. The Board is committed to developing and promoting alternative schools as viable pathway and program choices.
- 4.2. The Board recognizes and values the unique contributions of students, parents and staff in the success of alternative schools both at the local school level and at a system level and is committed to fostering this involvement.
- 4.3. Alternative schools, while retaining their unique nature, shall operate in a way that is reasonably consistent with the operational practice of schools within the Board and in compliance with the *Education Act*, regulations, and Ministry of Education guidelines.

- 4.4. Alternative schools shall develop clear mission statements and governance¹ models that support and define the role of student and parental involvement in each school and that define the fundamental philosophical underpinning of the school. Related support for students, parents and staff shall be provided.
- 4.5. Before enrolling, parents and students, shall make a commitment, in writing, to acknowledge and support their chosen alternative school's philosophy, mission, mandate, and unique pedagogy.
- 4.6. A process for philosophical reaffirmation, including a review of the unique needs of students, parents and the community, shall be undertaken by each alternative school no less than once every five years.
- 4.7. A procedure for the evaluation of requests for new alternative schools will be clearly articulated as a Board procedure.

5.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Operational Procedure PR584, Alternative Schools

¹ An alternative school's governance model must be developed in recognition of the roles and responsibilities of the Board and its employees as ordered by legislation such as the *Education Act* and its regulations, and by the Board's collective agreements with its employee groups.

POLICY REVIEW WORK PLAN - REVISED

Date: [April 22, 2022](#)

All policies will be reviewed and/or developed to ensure consistency with the TDSB's Mission, Values and Goals Policy (P002), the Equity Policy (P037), and the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

POLICY INFORMATIONPolicy Title and Policy Number: [Alternative Schools \(P062\)](#)

Review during fiscal year: 2022

Last reviewed: [2012](#)Executive Council member responsible for this Policy review: [Executive Superintendent, Human Rights and Indigenous Education](#)**Phase I. PLANNING AND OBTAINING TRUSTEES' DIRECTIONS**

This Policy Review Work Plan has been discussed with the Policy Coordinator:

 Yes NoThis Policy Review Work Plan will be discussed at the Governance and Policy Committee meeting held on: [April 27, 2022](#)**Phase II. REVISIONS****Formatting Changes**

The Policy will be reformatted to ensure alignment with the current Policy Template (Operational Procedure PR501, Policy Development and Management, Appendix A):

 Yes No**Content Changes**

The Policy requires content revisions:

 Yes No

The content changes are due to the following reason(s):

- Legislation
- Government directives/policies
- Board decisions
- Multi-Year Strategic Plan requirements
- Operational requirements
- Simplify and/or update using plain language
- Alignment with Equity Policy

Detailed information on the proposed content changes, including findings of the policy equity assessment:

- Alignment with the Out-of-Area Attendance Policy (P013) as part of the TDSB's Secondary Program Review
- Ensure that the pathway to alternative schools programming is reflective of the principles of equity and inclusion as stated in the Equity Policy (P037).
- Consider revising Section 4.5: *Before enrolling, parents and students shall make a commitment, in writing, to acknowledge and support their chosen alternative school's philosophy, mission, mandate, and unique pedagogy.*
- As outlined in the May 22, 2019 previously approved Policy Review Workplan, consider:
 - Clarify the meaning of unique pedagogy and what makes an alternative school unique
 - Elaborate on the above provision by including staff and defining their responsibilities in supporting this pathway
 - Clarify the above provision to ensure equitable access.
- Include provisions related to the May 26, 2021 Board Motion regarding application and admission practices:
 - (a) That the Director conduct a review of the application and admission procedures across all elementary alternative schools to ensure that they are consistent and equitable;
 - (b) That the following be referred to staff for a report on its feasibility in the fall 2021 cycle of meetings:
 - i) that the Director consider creating one universal elementary alternative schools application form, as well as one set of clear and detailed admissions procedures for all elementary alternative schools to ensure consistency, equity and remove potential barriers;
 - ii) That the application process be clearly posted on the

TDSB website to make it easily accessible to the schools and the general public for reference.

- Include provisions related to secondary alternative schools admissions.

A review of leading practices for similar policies across jurisdictions has been completed and is included with this Work Plan.

Phase III. INTERNAL REVIEWS AND SIGN-OFFS

The draft Policy will include input from TDSB departments affected by the Policy:

- Business Operations and Service Excellence
- Equity, Well-Being and School Improvement
- Human Rights and Indigenous Education
- Leadership, Learning and School Improvement

In addition, the following departments will be required to sign-off on the proposed Draft Policy:

- Legal Services
- Policy Services
- Government, Public and Community Relations

Following internal reviews and TDSB departments' sign-offs, the draft Policy will be submitted to Executive Council on: [May 31, 2022](#)

A sign-off from the Director of Education will be obtained before proceeding with external consultations and/or Committee/Board approval.

- Director of Education

Phase IV. EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Are external consultations applicable to this Policy?

- Yes
- No (*Ministry of Education mandated policy or corporate policy without external stakeholders*)

Mandatory external consultations will include, at a minimum:

1. Posting of the working draft Policy on TDSB website for public feedback (45 days minimum) – [45 days, June 1-30, summer* and](#)

September 4-19, 2022

*Policy will remain posted over the summer but does not count for official consultation dates requirement.

2. Extending invitations for consultation to:

Student Senate

and

all Community Advisory Committees of the Board and conducting consultations with the Community Advisory Committees:

- 2SLGBTQ+ Community Advisory Committee
- Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee
- Black Student Achievement Community Advisory Committee
- Community Use of Schools Community Advisory Committee
- Early Years Community Advisory Committee
- Environmental Sustainability Community Advisory Committee
- Equity Policy Community Advisory Committee
- French-as-a-Second-Language Community Advisory Committee
- Inner City Community Advisory Committee
- Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- Urban Indigenous Community Advisory Committee

In addition to mandatory consultations, other external participants and projected dates of consultation(s) include:

- School Councils
- Professional Associations and Unions
- Other:

The following methods will be applied in the external consultations:

- Public meeting
- Facilitated focus group
- Call for public delegations
- Expert panel discussion
- Survey
- Posting on the TDSB website
- Other (e.g., electronic communication)

Phase V. COMMITTEE/BOARD APPROVALS

Following external consultations and revisions, the working draft Policy will be presented to the Governance and Policy Committee on the following date: [October 6, 2022](#)

Following recommendation by the Governance and Policy Committee, the revised Policy will be presented to the Board on the following date: [October 26, 2022](#)

Once approved, the revised Policy will replace the existing policy on the TDSB website.

Phase VI. IMPLEMENTATION

Following Board approval, the final revised Policy will be communicated through:

- Posting of the revised Policy on the TDSB website through the Policy Coordinator
- Sharing with staff through the System Leaders' Bulletin
- Informing departments at staff meetings and channeling information to the school principals through respective superintendents
- Implementation of a broad communication plan for internal and external audiences, include summary of policy revisions and expected outcomes

Policy implementation will include:

- Conducting information/training sessions to TDSB staff affected by the Policy

The projected time period for conducting information/training sessions to staff will be:

- Review of associated procedures: [Fall 2022](#)

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