**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Committee Name: Alternative Schools Advisory Committee (ASAC)

Date: September 27, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

Present: Prafulla Prabhu (Parent Co-Chair), Trustee Jennifer Story, Paul Leonard, Kelly Dyment, Rebecca Holzman, Amelia Golden

TDSB: Manon Gardner, Liam Rodrigues (Sec. Teacher Co-Chair), Kowthar Omar (Elem. Teacher Co-Chair), Denis Lopes, Michael Gurgol, Grant Fawthrop, Manny Moura, Kathy Keroglidis, Ian Esquivel, Jason Smit

Regrets: Trustee Ausma Malik (Co-Chair), Caillie Feldmann (Student Co-Chair)

Teleconference: Fredrick Peters

Recorder: Dawn Mugford-Guay

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| **ITEM** | **DISCUSSION** | **ACTION ITEMS** |
| Welcome & Introductions |  |  |
| Call to Order/ Confirmation of Quorum | Meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm  Quorum was achieved |  |
| Approval of Agenda | Motion to approve agenda by Rebecca Holzman, seconded by Fredrick Peters. |  |
| Approval of Minutes – May 17, 2016 | Motion to approve agenda by Rebecca Holzman, seconded by Fredrick Peters.  Note: concern regarding possible overlapping meeting dates with PIAC as well as the lack of content in previous minutes. |  |
| Declarations of Possible Conflicts | NIL |  |
| Update on Alternative Education | *Motion, June 2016*: Trustee Jennifer Story brought the motion forward to PSSC in May 2016 and it was approved at the June 8, 2016 Board Meeting.  Manon Gardner advised that the intent is to review/report early in order to meet staffing timelines if at all possible; The review will look at the current pathways, the potential need to open additional alternative schools (content, site location, review of LTPAS to help determine equity of access), in-depth professional learning for elementary administrators (in order to assist them in the hiring process), as well as a more in-depth understanding of the needs in alternative schools.  The report to board will most likely come with recommendations and timelines. Discussion re: engaging a focus group via various methods for data collection in order to engage with the community. Methods to include research, student voice, surveys, TDSB website, Twitter etc. Possible exit survey/discussion in order to determine what works and what doesn’t.  ASAC members to reach out to Alternative School Parent Councils to advise of the Review (standardized tool would be required).  Trustee Story suggested working with Superintendents to obtain current Parent Council contact information as well, noted that she will share the information with Trustees.  *Membership*: Additional parent representatives are required as the current membership consists mainly of staff.  Five formal meetings have been scheduled for the year.  An election will be required (as per May minutes) as current co-chairs have held the responsibility for over two years. Election to be advertised and held following December Organizational Board Meeting. 8 positions to be advertised (with summary of expectations).  *Enrolment update (Alternative Schools) as of September 23, 2016:*  Elementary - 1974  Secondary - 1871  **Total - 3845**  *Rep for each school*: In an attempt to increase membership as well as to provide information regarding the review, a request for a representative for each alternative school will be made.  Teleconferencing details will now be included on the formal meeting agenda. | Recommendation for a Review Steering Committee – membership to include parents, Trustees, Superintendents, Principals, Vice-Principals, staff, ASAC members, Research Analyst.  Recommendation for the Steering Committee to move forward with a focus group; including student voice (elementary and secondary), community representation from the north east/west area of the city, as well as include those who have brought requests for new schools forward.  Parent Council contact information to be forwarded to Kelly Dyment/Rebecca Holzman.    Dawn will forward an email to all Alternative schools requesting a representative. |
| Promotion and Profile: Marketing | Discussion regarding an Alternative Schools Fair or promotional End of Year event (noting that alternative schools are often not viewed being part of the system).  Rebecca Holzman will reach out to PIAC as an ASAC rep to discuss possible participation in their upcoming fair.  Mike Gurgol will look into drafting a brochure outlining options which would be available to secondary students when completing Optional Attendance forms.  Stacey Lewis is the Communications Officer assigned to work with Manon Gardner.  Noted that it was important to provide potential students with a ‘take away piece’ (i.e. flyer/pamphlet) and to get the word out via social media channels.  Grant Fawthrop advised of the successful marketing campaign used for the West Alternative Schools; Alt9 website (receives approximately 2000 hits per month), booklet that is provided to all schools, advertisement in HotDocs.  The challenge remains that alternative schools rely on recommendations from the guidance office and other colleagues and given declining enrolment, students are often accommodated at the local schools.  With regards to declining enrolment, it is important to create a campaign as well as identify resources to get the information out. Manon Gardner advised of the TDSB’s marketing strategy to support the enrolment issue (discussed at last week’s Budget and Enrolment Committee meeting). | Promotional Committee membership to include Fredrick Peters, Rebecca Holzman and Kowthar Omar (on hold until further discussion in November).  Manon to invite Stacey Lewis to attend November meeting.  [www.alt9.ca](http://www.alt9.ca)  Manon Gardner to contact Garth Breit, Manager of Marketing to discuss the possibility of identifying Alternative School programs within TDSB’s marketing strategy. |
| Challenges in All Schools | *Equity in Elementary Alternatives*: Discussion regarding the challenges in elementary schools and the impact it is has on how we move forward. Concern regarding the admissions lottery which is held by some elementary alternative schools.  Enrolment is often capped due to physical space within the site. Manon Gardner advised that this would be looked at during the Review.  *Mental Health*: Many alternative school sites have students with special education needs as well as students with mental health issues. Students with such issues often choose smaller school settings however there are concerns regarding access to the necessary resources to support them.  2 Mental Health nurses are assigned to East/West Alternative Schools (6 nurses in total for the Board). As well, the demand on social work has transformed with regular counselling required as opposed to referrals.  Discussion re: developing a collective strategy to support communication, provide better service by identifying needs and providing resources (in and out of school). Noted that many secondary students rely on school staff to advocate on their behalf (advocacy appears to be greater from parents at the elementary level).  Liam Rodrigues noted that public health nurses are assigned to the wards within the City and can support older students in crisis. Possibility of the nurses visiting the schools at the beginning of each semester (make student aware of the resources available to them).  <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/ModelSchoolsforInnerCities/communityresources.aspx> |  |
| Other Business | Is there recognition from the TDSB that alternative schools have a unique character and mandate and as such, how is this being reflected in staffing and class size requirements?  Trustee Story noted that mental health issues are being dealt with at all sites however; it’s important to understand that we are under-funded and that these are the supports that are often cut (therefore advocating for sparse resources). The stigma around mental health is slowly lifting and awareness is key in order to advocate for a proper funding formula.  Approximately seven years ago, there was no to limited support in alternative schools for Special Education students. Advocacy has brought forward some staffing allocation though it’s important that we continue to advocate for the needs of students and show that supports are required. Discussion re: implementing of IEP.  Trustee Story advised that the Director has initiated an Integrated Equity Framework Action Plan (equity review) and that there is an opportunity for the community to voice their needs, address issues, and make tangible suggestions. The seven focus areas are: Policy, Budget, Access and Secondary Program Review, School Improvement Process, Leadership Capacity Plan, Inclusion and Special Education, Employment Equity.  <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/community/publicconsultations/equity.aspx> |  |
| Next Meeting Date | November 8, 2016 @ 7:00 pm  \* Informal meeting to be held on October 27 @ 6:00 pm – SEED | 2016/17 formal meeting times to be changed to 7pm. |
| Adjournment | Adjourned at 9:02 pm |  |