



**Alternative Schools Advisory Committee  
Minutes**

**Location: 5050 Yonge Street, Board Room**

**Date: Monday, October 28, 2013**

**Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Co-Chairs:**

Elementary Parent Co-chair: Taplin Milberry, Amanda (Equinox Holistic Alternative School);  
Elementary Teacher Co-chair: LeFort, Jean-Guy (Downtown Alternative School);  
Secondary Parent Co-chair : Cooper, Stephen (ALPHA Alternative Junior School);  
Secondary Teacher Co-chair: Rodrigues, Liam (SEED Alternative School);  
Secondary Student Co-chair: Braxton Wignall,  
Trustee Co-chair: Bolton, Chris (TDSB Trustee);

**Members:**

Holzman, Rebecca (High Park Alternative Junior School); Wheaton, Martha (The Grove Community School); Cichocki, Andrew (Inglenook Community School);  
Negi, Ravi (Inglenook Community School); Gill Worley (Community); Matharu, Pamila (SEED Alternative School); Prabhu, Prafulla (Spectrum Alternative Senior School);  
VanNeste, Teresa (da Vinci School); Brykczynski, Paul (Mountview Alternative Junior School); McIntosh, Bonnie (Contact Alternative School);  
Smit, Jason (Subway Academy II); Toye, Mitchell (Scarborough Village Public School); Pasternak, Elizabeth (da Vinci School);  
Leung, Peyton (da Vinci School); Thornley-Hall, Gillian (da Vinci School); Omar, Kowthar (East Alternative School of Toronto);  
Katsoras, Kristina (The Grove Community School); Lightbody, Trevor (The Grove Community School);

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:**

Fawthrop, Grant (TDSB-Principal, Alt. Second School-West); Gardner, Manon (TDSB - Superintendent); McCann, Gerry (TDSB – Vice Principal, Second Alt. School); White, Nancy (TDSB - Principal, Alt. Second Sch -East/Year Round Schools);

**REGRETS:**

**GUESTS:**

**RECORDER:** Manalo, John (Parent and Community Engagement)

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/ Recommendation
Welcome and Introductions	Meeting was called to order by Steve Cooper at 7:05 p.m. All members were welcomed by the co-chairs.	
Approval of Quorum (11)	Quorum was approved by consensus at 7:06 p.m.	
Approval of Agenda of October 28, 2013 And Minutes April 20, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The agenda was approved as outlined.</li> <li>▪ A motion to approve the draft minutes of April 20, 2103 was made first by Rebecca and second by Ravi. The minutes of Apr. 12, 2013 were approved as amended.</li> </ul>	
ASAC update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Amanda Milberry: updated on the Communications statistics: website and recruitment. Volunteers are welcome to help with communications work or spreading the word.</li> <li>▪ Hiring and selection of principals/vice principals is a continuing challenge.</li> <li>▪ Allocations of teachers and professional support around special education within alternative schools. Budget allocations within alt. schools. More PD for alternative teachers is needed. PD with other alternative school teachers would be great.</li> <li>▪ Concern that the TDSB may be looking at closing smaller high schools.</li> </ul>	
ASAC housekeeping: Election of Student rep/call for volunteers for steering committee/recruitment committee/conference committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A call for a Student representative of an elementary school is being made to join ASAC.</li> <li>▪ Steering committee volunteers are being recruited for ASAC.</li> <li>▪ Recruitment/communications committee is being established.</li> <li>▪ Conference committee is being established.</li> <li>▪ A call for volunteers to join the ASAC sub-committees is being made.</li> <li>▪ Speakers list suggested: Discussion around sharing best practices with Alternative Schools to continue working together and collaboratively. Malcolm Levin/Alt. Professor at OISE is being recommended, he was responsible for setting up first conversation with the Ministry about recognizing alternative school as different/distinct. Some discussion around specific qualification/certification or course for teachers who wishes to teach in an alternative school.</li> </ul>	

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
Trustee's Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trustee Bolton gave the update that the school board system needs stability and a process to find a director was being done last year. When Donna Quan accepted her role as Director this year, the current acting positions are left to be firmed up. Further news will be brought to ASAC after the Canadian government elections.</li> </ul>	
Superintendent's update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Manon Gardner mentioned her role and portfolio within the Alternative Schools system. She meets with curriculum leaders on student success and staffing. She is working with elementary co-chair on procedures and concerns to select an elementary principal. SSON procedure is open for discussion with the superintendents now that parent gave input on principal hiring via the School Statement of Needs (SSON).</li> <li>▪ Staffing of teachers involves unions.</li> <li>▪ Graduations rates were addressed by the principals of Alternative Schools in the east region and principals of Alternative Schools in the west region. There were 25 graduates last year at Alternative Schools in the east region; there were 2 graduations last years at Alternative Schools west region. Alternative Secondary schools belong to a Family of Schools area with other regular schools.</li> <li>▪ Oct 20, 2012, CAC review with recommendations will be presented this Wednesday to PSSC: A summary – PIAC and SEAC are mandatory committees as per Ministry of Education legislation; the other CACs will continue and all are welcome to attend the PSSC meeting on Wednesday 5pm.</li> </ul>	
All schools Issues	<p>Other Updates included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An informal meeting happened on October 17, 2013: some issues were collated, confusion between Sections schools and Community schools, Schools of Choice, Focus schools, NEEDS a language change within marketing, branding and advertising to sound more positive and accessible for students.</li> <li>▪ Elementary discussion has open issues; resource allocation around special educators and guidance. Most elementary alternative schools have waiting lists for student enrollment and currently they are looking for a new vision and new identity. Some relationship issues with host school.</li> <li>▪ Parent input on principal hiring via the School Statement of Needs (SSON); SSON to be completed every fall by the school council with parent input.</li> <li>▪ More information here: <a href="http://torontopiac.com/index.php/the-principal-and-you/sson-parent-user-guide">http://torontopiac.com/index.php/the-principal-and-you/sson-parent-user-guide</a></li> <li>▪ Principal Selection/Promotion: parent representatives are invited to sit on interview committees as part of the process for identifying vice-principal applicants: see "Principal Promotion at the Central Board Level" here: <a href="http://torontopiac.com/index.php/the-principal-and-you/principal-selection">http://torontopiac.com/index.php/the-principal-and-you/principal-selection</a></li> <li>▪ EQAO issues arise among various parent populations.</li> <li>▪ Teachers are looking at progressive pedagogy and creative teaching. York University had an Alternative Schooling Conference: another conference is being organized around career planning and transitioning. York is planning an institute of alternative studies and requires data to support it. Data is required if anyone wishing to</li> </ul>	

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/ Recommendation
	<p>volunteer their time to get the information available please e-mail Liam (member of ASAC).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop pathways for transitioning before students choose a school. It becomes an issue around programming. And funding from the Ministry of Ed. Pathways exist for gifted programs.</li> </ul>	
<p>Discussion by Separate Elementary and Secondary Panels</p> <p>a) Schools update</p> <p>b) Exploration of issues</p> <p>c) Decision on issues of note</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TEACHER PATHWAYS: The discussion remained in the boardroom on transition pathways working toward having teachers and parents on hiring committees for teachers who become principals.</li> <li>▪ STUDENT PATHWAYS: Different Alternative Schools of interest have differentiated transition pathways for students and some involve interview intake and lottery-based enrolments. Develop pathways for transitioning before students choose a school to prepare solutions to issues around programming.</li> <li>▪ There is a need for grade 9-10 programming, grade 6-9 transitioning senior/secondary schools; parents are in favour of lotteries. There are still issues with funding, newcomer accessibility, and arranging for space: Programming improves children's well-being, equity, access. How do we improve parent-teacher communication/collaborations?</li> <li>▪ There is a need for more grade 7/8 program offerings. Many Alternative Elementary Schools only go to grade 6; yet there are spaces in K-8 schools in those grades (e.g. HPAS); continuity of alternative education is a concern without any schools feeding into alternative high schools.</li> <li>▪ It was mentioned that for Specialized and gifted programs that are discontinued, guidance counselors should be given information of any program offerings to pass to potential students.</li> <li>▪ Some transition issues between elementary and secondary schools around programming.</li> <li>▪ Secondary discussion has open issues around transition programs, challenges with host schools because some schools are being pushed out of host schools; space for alternative schools is an issue; and sharing of Secondary Students between schools; Can the board find a way to make it easy for a secondary alt to share a student with another school? It is difficult to accommodate this request because schools get funding based on enrollment of students at that school.</li> </ul>	
<p>Reconvene and Conclusion/Next Steps-</p>	<p>The meeting remained in the Board room.</p>	

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
New Business	<p><b>CONFERENCE:</b>  York University had an alternative schooling conference: another conference is being organized around careership and transitioning. York is planning an institute of Alternative Studies and requires data to support it. Perhaps TDSB should have an Alternative Schools conference with student-led workshops, researcher-led workshops, teacher-led workshops, parent-led workshops. Volunteers are required. Support from ASAC would be welcome.</p> <p><b>CONFERENCE COMMITTEE:</b>  Conference committee was formed:  Teresa Vanneste, Braxton and Rebecca.  Would you like to help? If so, please email <a href="mailto:torontoasac[at]gmail.com">torontoasac[at]gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>COMMUNICATION with CLOUD-COMPUTING STRATEGIES:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. AcademicWorkspace (AW) is an electronic cloud-computing platform being used by students and teachers of Toronto District School Board as a connection point to have discussions and forums. ASAC is welcome to share at that point so that ASAC can work with students to work on a website. GoogleApps can be offered to ASAC and ASAC is welcome to meet with Peter Singh and Manon Gardner to set that up to have forums, share documents, and post learning resources.</li> <li>2. ASAC should be a source of information for Alternative Schools. Some schools struggle to maintain their Alternative School philosophies due to changes; some schools are in the process of redefining or reaffirming their philosophies.</li> <li>3. Teachers need private conversations with other teachers on AW. Outside of AW, parents are expected to talk to other parents: Parents requested ASAC to provide some clarification/support for parents. Teachers are expected to talk to other teachers. Guidance counselors are expected to talk to other guidance counselors. Students are expected to talk to other students: Working towards changing the negative stigma to alternative schools.</li> <li>4. ASAC requests for volunteers to do recruit and share information. Please share links with your school communities: ASAC has a new Facebook page, <a href="https://www.facebook.com/torontoasac">https://www.facebook.com/torontoasac</a>; a twitter account <a href="https://twitter.com/torontoasac">https://twitter.com/torontoasac</a>; a new email address <a href="mailto:torontoasac[at]gmail.com">torontoasac[at]gmail.com</a>, and a website is in the works, the domain name is <a href="http://www.torontoasac.com">www.torontoasac.com</a> a website using the wordpress platform is ready to go;</li> </ol>	<p>Conference committee was formed</p> <p>ASAC is welcome to meet with Peter Singh and Manon Gardner</p>

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
	<p><b>COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP:</b>  Communications working group volunteers: Pamila Matharu, Mauricette Howlett, Ravi Negi, Rob Rennick, Prafulla Prabhu, Rebecca Holzman, Ramna Safeer, Manisha Bensal, Mitchell Toye, Braxton Wignall, Amanda Taplin Milberry, Kristina  Would you like to help? If so, please email torontoasac[at]gmail.com  help high schools with marketing to Catholic schools, private schools, home schoolers, and cross boundary schools;  support high schools' flexible planning and the ability to share students</p> <p><b>STEERING COMMITTEE:</b>  On October 17, ASAC met informally and discussed the formation of a Steering Committee.  the steering committee will help outline the goals and direction for ASAC this year. Anyone is welcome to join the steering committee. If you'd like to join the steering committee, email torontoasac[at]gmail.com.</p>	<p>Communications working group was formed</p> <p>Steering Committee Was formed</p>
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned by Steve Cooper at 9:00 p.m.	

**Next Meeting:**

Jan. 29, 2014 Formal Meeting at 5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A, 7:00 pm

Jan. 15, 2014 Informal meeting at Equinox AS, 151 Hiawatha Rd, 7:00 pm