



**Alternative Schools Advisory Committee
Minutes**

Location: 5050 Yonge Street, Executive Room, 5th Floor

Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2014

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,

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:

Martin Long (Elementary Teachers Association);
Trustee Co-chair: Bolton, Chris (TDSB Trustee);

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. Voting will be 1 vote per school and by consensus.	Quorum will be discussed at next meeting.
Approval of Agenda of January 29, 2014 And Minutes October 28, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The agenda was approved as outlined. ▪ A motion to approve the draft minutes of October 28, 2103 was made first by Rebecca and second by Braxton. The minutes of October 28, 2013 were approved as amended. 	
Trustee's Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further news will be brought to ASAC after the Canadian government elections. 	
Superintendent's update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very few secondary alternative schools start at grade 9. There are a few elementary alternative schools with transition pathways for their students. Alternative Secondary schools belong to a Family of Schools area with other regular schools. There are many reasons for students choosing another secondary school outside the alternative school system. The difference between alternative secondary and specialized schools offering specialized areas of study is that alternative schools serve niches of diverse cultures (eg. social needs) and high-needs areas (eg. Credits, pedagogy, section programming, Sections schools and Community schools, Schools of Choice, Focus schools,), but the pathway from grade 8 to grade 9 is missing. 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. ▪ **Staff Undertaking: The Optional Attendance policy is currently being reviewed with a lens to improving pathway choices and staff will undertake to bring consultation to ASAC through PIAC. ▪ 	<p>Staff to consult with ASAC on Optional Attendance Policy.</p> <p>Staff to forward student transition facts to ASAC chairs.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ **Staff Undertaking: Manon Gardner will undertake to forward the facts and numbers to ASAC chairs. 	
Stakeholder Participating in hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents, teachers and students should be involved in the hiring and selection of principals for alt. schools. Hiring and selection of principals/vice principals is a continuing challenge. Working with elementary co-chair on procedures and concerns to select an elementary principal requires an SSON procedure is open for discussion with the superintendents now that parent gave input on principal hiring via the School Statement of Needs (SSON). It was suggested that students should have a separate form to give feedback for principal selection. It was suggested that parents should be approached by school to give input on principal selection. ▪ Parents, teachers and students should be involved in the hiring and selection of teachers for alt. schools. It would be nice if the practice was consistent. The Union for Teachers feels uncomfortable evaluating its own members, but the TDSB would welcome teachers being involved in the process. There is no policy or standard practice for the selection process. Allocations of teachers and Budget allocations within alt. schools remains a challenge. More Professional Development for alternative teachers is needed. Professional Development with other alternative school teachers would be great. In some alt secondary schools, the principals survey the students for course interests before making teacher selections. It is expected that parents and students give feedback on their needs for principals and teachers at Student and Parent School Councils. It is challenging for principals when teachers get bumped into an alt school even though the teacher placed wants another school. 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. ▪ ** HIRING Committee was started to share ideas and guidelines for hiring teachers and principals at alternative schools. Members are: Helen Truong ▪ **STAFF UNDERTAKING: Manon G. would be willing to bring the guidelines from Hiring Committee back to the department and senior staff. ▪ MOTION TO Board in discussion: ASAC recommends that an equivalent of an SSON for teachers and keep it optional. ▪ **Staff UNDERTAKING: ASAC recommends that superintendents make principals aware that SSON for teachers is part of their responsibility. 	<p>Manon G. would be willing to bring the guidelines from Hiring Committee back to the department and senior staff.</p> <p>Manon G. will remind superintendents to make principals aware that SSON for teachers is part of their responsibility.</p>
Centralized superintendents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why are 4000 students distributed over a few superintendents? ▪ All elementary alternative schools are under supervision by superintendents. There is a challenge with decision 	To be continued

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	making of the use of buildings during parent meetings.	at the next meeting
BrainFood Conference	<p>CONFERENCE: York University had an alternative schooling conference: another conference is being organized around career transitions. 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>On May 5, 2014; 9am to 8pm at SEED Alternative school, the conference is planned to have student-led workshops and there are about 15 workshop proposals that were submitted by students. There is also a Parent Forum from 6pm-8pm.</p> <p>Members will help promote the event. The website is brainfood.org to promote the event and it was announced at a previous TDSB Board meeting.</p> <p>**STAFF Undertaking: Manon G. will bring the website to the communication department.</p> <p>CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: Conference committee was formed: Teresa Vanneste, Braxton and Rebecca. Would you like to help? If so, please email torontoasac[at]gmail.com</p>	<p>Conference committee is actively planning</p> <p>Manon G. will bring the website to the communication department.</p>
Elementary and Secondary Updates a) EQAO Issues b) Beasties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A) EQAO – to be continued at the next meeting ▪ B) BEASTies (Brave Elementary Alt. School Teachers) – is A.W.forum for elementary school teachers to share best practices. Meeting on Feb. 19, 2014 at TBA. ▪ **Staffing Undertaking: Manon G will look for some PD funds to support the BEASTies meeting on Feb. 19. ▪ There is a new AW site up and running for Elementary Alternative School teachers: The BEASTies AW site. This is a place where we, the Best Elementary Alternative School Teachers (BEASTies) can share best practices, support each other, and organize gatherings. Please feel free to ask the community for support or share work that you are proud of. ▪ Find the site by following this link: http://aw.tdsb.on.ca/sites/wr07/thegrovecs/beasties/SiteHome.aspx ▪ Remember to mark the site as a favourite. 	<p>EQAO – to be continued at the next meeting</p> <p>Manon G will look for some PD funds to support the BEASTies meeting on Feb. 19.</p>

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<p>New Business A) Membership B) 4 year plan on Mental Health</p>	<p>A) Memberships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a good attendance for staff and principals, but parent attendance is lacking. Principal attendance is new for ASAC this year and is welcome. Any concerns with meetings involving teachers and principals in the same room can be brought to the attention of co-chairs to plan future meetings, but ideally it would be good if all stakeholders within the alt. school system are present. ▪ Communication for meetings is key for principals to send to parent and co-chairs of Parent Councils. ▪ ASAC requests for volunteers to do recruit and share information. Please share, links with your school communities: ASAC has a new Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/torontoasac; a twitter account https://twitter.com/torontoasac; a new email address torontoasac[at]gmail.com, and a website is in the works, the domain name is www.torontoasac.com a website using the wordpress platform is ready to go; ▪ ASAC has a blog, twitter and facebook accounts, but needs volunteers to work on those. ▪ Alternative Schools Advisory Committee on-line www.torontoasac.com ▪ on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/torontoasac ▪ on Twitter https://twitter.com/torontoasac ▪ Parents are encouraged to become involved in informal meetings. Students are too few to participate, but it would be nice to get their input at ASAC meetings either in person or on-line forums. <p>COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP: 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>**Staff Undertaking: Manon G will look for some funds to support the ASAC web hosting costs every month (\$25/month).</p>	<p>Manon G will look for some funds to support the ASAC web hosting costs every month (\$25/month).</p> <p>Communications working group was formed</p>

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	<p>COMMUNICATION with CLOUD-COMPUTING STRATEGIES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. 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. <p>STEERING COMMITTEE: 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>CESBA (Continuing educators...) – Alternative programs are being attached to community programs. A database is being made to compile the programs. It could be used to address the Ministry of Education about alternative schools on the basis of pedagogy instead of curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. <p>**MOTION for ASAC: ASAC to write a letter to Ministry of Education to support alternative schools as a pathway for students, consequently with staff and funding support.</p> <p>All in favour. Motion carried.</p>	<p>Steering Committee Was formed</p> <p>Invite a speaker from CESBA.</p> <p>Motion carried.</p>

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	B) 4 year plan on Mental Health to be continued at the next meeting	4 year plan on Mental Health to be continued at the next meeting.
Next Meetings	March 26, 2014	
Adjournment	Meeting adjourned by Steve Cooper at 9:02 p.m.	

Next Meeting:

March 26, 2014 Formal Meeting at 5050 Yonge Street, Committee Room A, 7:00 pm