

**Name of Committee**: Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee

**Meeting Date**: 19 June 2023

A meeting of the Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee (ASCAC) members only convened on June 19, 2023, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm via Virtual Meeting (Zoom) with Jacob Leibovitch and Laurie McAllister (Co-Chairs) presiding.

| **Membership****Attendance**: | Sarah Bogatie (Student, Avondale Alternative Secondary School; Secondary School Student Representative); Diana Grimaldos (Parent, Mountview Alternative Junior School, ASCAC Member); Serge Guschin (Parent, Beaches alternative School, ASCAC Member); Joanne Huber (Parent, High Park Alternative JS, ASCAC Member), Olga Ingrahm (Parent, Alternative Scarborough Education 1, ASCAC Member), Shelley Laskin (Trustee Ward 8, ASCAC Trustee Co-Chair); Jacob Leibovitch (Parent, ALPHA Alternative Junior School, ASCAC Co-Chair); Laurie McAllister (Parent, Avondale Secondary Alternative School, ASCAC Co-Chair) |
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| **Staff Lead:** | Peter Chang (TDSB System Superintendent) |
| **Recorder:** | Anna Catalano, ASCAC Committee Assistant |
| **Special Guest**: | Audley Salmon (TDSB Associate Director - for second item on the agenda) |

| **ITEM** | **DISCUSSION** |
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| 1. **Land Acknowledgement, Welcome/ Introductions**
 | Laurie McAllister, Secondary Alternative School Parent Co-Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.  |
| 1. **Approval of Agenda**

**Declarations of Possible Conflicts** | The agenda was approved.No conflicts were declared. |
| 1. **Approval of Past Minutes**
 | * In the 2023-24 school year, approval of minutes will be added to the agenda
* Moving forward, Anna to ensure Approval of Minutes is a standing item on ASCAC agendas and will send the revised agenda template to Laurie and Jacob for the October meeting

Minutes from the October 17, 2022, meeting:* Correct Olga’s last name to Ingrahm
* ***Regrets Section***: Remove Dave Smith
* Minutes were approved unanimously

Minutes from the December 12, 2022, meeting:* Change Jeffrey to Jacob
* Correct Olga’s last name to Ingrahm
* ***Item 5: CoChair Updates, Secondary Alternative School Review Status Section***: Add Completed to the following Actions: Laurie to share the PPT once she updates some of the information; Peter to schedule a meeting with Diana to continue the discussions around before and after school childcare
* Minutes were approved (7 out of 8). *Note:* Diana Grimaldos was not present for this vote – was offline

Minutes from the February 2, 2023, meeting:* Change Jeffrey to Jacob
* Correct Olga’s last name to Ingrahm
* Minutes were approved unanimously

Minutes from the March 27, 2023, meeting:* Change Jeffrey to Jacob
* Correct Olga’s last name to Ingrahm
* ***Item 5: TDSB Board Updates, Learning Opportunities Index (LOI) Section***: third bullet - change the word *neediest* to *with the most external challenges*
* ***Item 6: Secondary Alternative Schools, Secondary Alternative Schools Program Review Section:*** remove the fifth bullet - *There is a need for secondary alternative school though the current structure does not work for everyone*
* Minutes were approved (6 out of 8). *Note:* Olga Ingrahm and Serge Guschin were absent from the March 27 meeting and could note vote to approve these minutes

Minutes from the May 29, 2023, meeting:* Correct Olga’s last name to Ingrahm
* ***Item 4: Secondary Alternative Schools Update:*** fourth paragraph add the year, 2023, to the date April 24\Sarah sent Anna her personal email address to ensure Sarah receives emails regarding upcoming ASCAC meetings
* Item 5: Centralized Elementary Admissions Error: sixth paragraph include the full recommendation that was presented at the May 15, 2023, FBEC meeting
* Minutes were approved unanimously
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| 1. **Business Arising**

Follow up on recommendations attached as Appendix A. | * Laurie’s understanding from the FAQs and what the Director said at the FBEC meetings, is that ASCAC committee would be involved in a review of the procedure prior to staff determining whether the EASCAP (Elementary Alternative Schools Centralized Application Process) was going to remain the same or if changes are required.
* For tonight’s meeting, Laurie would like to review the recommendations (see Appendix A).
* As background information to the recommendations related to a review of the process, Laurie read a couple of the [Elementary Alternative School Application Process FAQs](https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-Alternative-School-Application-Process-FAQ) from the Board’s website:
	+ ***Q:*** *How can communities trust the TDSB and its processes after this?*

***A:*** *(…) The Board will be undertaking a full review of the entire application process for elementary alternative schools. While the original error was technical in nature, we must determine if the process itself contains systemic barriers to our goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion.** ***Q:*** *Will the TDSB return to the school-level admissions process next year, given what happened?*

***A:*** *The Board will undertake a full review of the entire application process for elementary alternative schools. While the original error was technical in nature, we must determine if the process itself contains systemic barriers to our goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Decisions about the application process for next year will be based on the outcome of the review.** Peter suggested that the ASCAC review a Google doc he had prepared with questions for ASCAC’s feedback. If time runs out, Peter mentioned that the draft procedures have been made into a Google form, by section, and that he could send the link to the members for them to provide feedback.
* They will also be discussing with TDSB staff who have been doing work since the error occurred and EAS administrators – they were part of the conversations when the first draft procedures were written, additional conversations will be had as they also felt the impact from the error and the remedy that occurred.
* Jacob asked if the TDSB was looking at only ensuring that the technical error be fixed or are there any other pieces the TDSB would like to see corrected/ revised.
* If EASCAP had been successfully implemented, the TDSB was going to look at the data, i.e., students who applied to EAS, and continue to look at the students who are underrepresented. This data would be compared to the students who are currently in an EAS and compared to those who will be attending in the 2023- 24 school year. The goal is that once the underrepresented was proportional to the system, then we would look at other factors to see what other factors we should consider for admissions to an EAS. The data will be unpacked to determine the selection criteria for what the 2024-25 school admissions should be.
* Over the years, data will continue to be collected and reviewed and this will allow the Board to see the changes that are being made in the student population at the elementary alternative schools.
* Diana asked
	+ Is ASCAC consulting on the recommendations and will there be a next step to test the process? Diana mentioned that ASCAC was told about the process but were not involved in a practice test – need to have a practice test prior to the random selection process.
	+ That OAs (Office Administrators) be included in discussions because they are daily speaking to families, talking about the application process, etc. – Audley acknowledged that we had not thought of talking to the OAs and will look at including them.
* Laurie agreed that the focus tonight needs to define the review process, how ASCAC will be engaged, and what it will look like.
* Shelley mentioned that there are no Board Committee meetings over the summer months so any recommendations will need to go to a Board Committee meeting in the fall and then it needs to go to a Board meeting. If staff make a commitment this evening to bring to the first ASCAC meeting what they have learned because the review is just beginning then this should be sufficient.
* Shelley mentioned that there needs to be more transparency regarding how many seats are available at each school and grade. Families’ expectations are that there are seats available at each school/ grade though reality is that there isn’t and this needs to be made clearer to the families. Shelley gave an example that in FI there is no gender parity – it’s whoever applies and there is no guaranteed childcare. Therefore, there needs to be more conversations about what we will be doing and what we won’t be doing and need to be clear about what can and can’t be done
* Laurie maintained that the committee was not prepared to review the Google doc as the questions had not been provided in advance, the committee did not want to be limited to providing feedback on the questions that staff prepared, and expressed concern that if the committee reviewed the limited questions from staff tonight, then staff would later assert that ASCAC had been consulted. Clear guidelines for the consultation process and review are required, including defining equity and what an equitable process looks like.
* Serge’s expectation is that ASCAC be at the table; involved in the discussions with the people building the EAS application, troubleshooting, providing case scenarios, etc. Can ASCAC be involved in these discussions now?
* Peter mentioned that building the application process, testing, etc. is the role of TDSB staff. He also mentioned that prior to the implementation, ASCAC, and other stakeholders (including internal staff) were consulted on the EAS process.
* Laurie mentioned that at the May 15 FBEC meeting the Director said that staff will work closely with ASCAC for their feedback, make transparent to communities, while maintaining the privacy of students and families. Staff would be more diligent in undertaking the process and engaging families, staff, and ASCAC.
* Laurie mentioned that ASCAC has concerns because the Director made a strong commitment of deep engagement and listening and assured that nothing has ASCAC Oct 23, 2023 - Page 9 PAGE been predetermined until that deep engagement and listening happens. At the May 29 ASCAC meeting there was a disconnect – staff at that meeting advised ASCAC that “the process is the process” and that a review involving ASCAC may not be feasible from a timing perspective.
* ASCAC wants to know how we are moving forward, how will ASCAC be involved in the review, how will ASCAC be able to have input. They want to be involved and they believe the Director said this would happen.
* Diana mentioned that they want to be involved in the review to inform the final product and this has not happened; instead, they were told how the process will happen. The goal is to have equitable access for those who have been underrepresented and this is missing. At this evening’s meeting there needs to be clarity regarding ASCAC’s involvement so there can be meaningful engagement otherwise ASCAC would be facing the same roadblocks.
* Audley mentioned that Peter has a series of questions for ASCAC though he understands that ASCAC does not want to engage in conversation this evening as the members are not prepared. Audley recommended that the questions be shared with ASCAC and then discussions will be held at the next meeting.
* Audley stressed that staff do want to have ASCAC’s input and realizes that there were miscommunications regarding the purpose of this evening’s meeting. Since this is the last meeting of the school year, when would ASCAC like to meet again to start the consultation/discussions?
* Audley provided some background about the equity process – he mentioned that discussions were had with the Equity and Human Rights departments, there were also discussions with CSIP. There are some alignments with CSIP and there are some differences. TDSB is looking at all processes to see where there could be more alignment so that there is less confusion.
* The one decision that needs to be made at this meeting is when will the first consultation meeting be held. Needs to be soon because we need to ensure that timelines for the release of the EASCAP are met.
* Laurie and Jacob agreed though they want to ensure that they can speak to some of the gaps they found and not just the questions we prepared for them. Audley acknowledged that this is fine and part of the consultation process.
* To address Laurie’s question about what the consultation would look like…Peter showed a Google form that was developed
* Laurie mentioned that her question is not about what the consultation would look like but what the plan for a full review that the TDSB committed to is.
* Audley mentioned that the plan involves conversations with the primary stakeholders (i.e., EAS administrators, school OAs, ASCAC, third party vendor, our IT staff, etc.). Audley mentioned that he is open to additional ideas.
* Joanne wanted to provide clarity on ASCAC’s role in the consultation process. She mentioned that they are there as parents of students in an EAS. ASCAC’s role is to provide recommendations such as speaking to the OAs because they know all about EAS and ASCAC members know this because we are parents at an EAS (staff may not know this about the OAs). The level of consultation ASCAC should be focused on the process and how it is meaningful to families of EAS and the EAS community and students.
* Laurie mentioned that that is what she thinks is being offered but what has not been done is planning a path for the review.
* Peter mentioned that the Google form is a good starting point because it will allow the members to review the procedures line by line and provide feedback. Peter encouraged each member to review the Google form and provide input
* Next meeting will be held on July 5 at 7pm. Trustee Laskin is not able to attend but is fine if this is an informal meeting.
* Laurie will let us know in advance if additional materials are required for the July 5 meeting.
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**Appendix A**

**Re: ASCAC Agenda June 19, 2023**

The following recommendations were presented to ASCAC on May 29, 2023:

**RECOMMENDATION 1**

**WHEREAS** the elementary alternative schools admissions process must be transparent, and the TDSB has indicated that it will review the admissions process, including whether the process design was equitable, and will consult ASCAC with respect to any new process, therefore the Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee recommends that:

1. ASCAC be involved in a full-scope review of the procedure, the design process, and events that led to the administrative error;
2. the Board ensures that ASCAC is consulted in reviewing any new lottery process and procedure in consultation with school administrators;
3. review and consultation in relation to (i) and (ii) above should include independent third parties or community experts with demonstrated experience in equity in education, and that any new process will define equity criteria.

**RECOMMENDATION 2**

**WHEREAS** the TDSB has acknowledged the negative impact of the remedy to the admissions error and has committed to supporting elementary alternative school communities, the Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee recommends that:

1. the TDSB inform ASCAC of the detailed plan, including resources to be provided, intended to welcome incoming families and current student bodies of elementary alternative schools; and
2. the Parent Engagement Office and the Human Rights Office collaborate to deliver capacity-building opportunities focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging, open to all parents and caregivers; and mandatory training for all elementary alternative school councils, to create welcoming communities.