Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee
2020-21

1. OVERVIEW

Alternative Schools Community Advisory Committee (ASCAC) has existed in various forms since 1968. The current iteration of ASCAC was founded in 2008, consistent with Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Policy 062.

2. MANDATE

A. To facilitate effective and meaningful engagement with new, existing, and potential elementary and secondary alternative schools' parents/ guardians, students and staff.

B. To support the improvement of the well-being of elementary and secondary alternative schools' parents/guardians, students and staff while enhancing the accountability of the education system.

C. To support and advocate on behalf of each TDSB alternative school's individual pedagogy and unique community.

D. To consult, collaborate and make recommendations on any matter specifically referred to it by the Board or a standing committee.

E. To advise the Board on matters of its own choosing, within its mandate as established by the Board when it was constituted.

F. To exercise an advocacy role. It may indicate to the Board a preferred position on an educational issue under consideration by the Board with the understanding there is no obligation on the part of the Board or its staff to act on ASCAC recommendations.

3. MEMBERSHIP AND COMPOSITION

The ASCAC Executive is composed of elected[1] parents/guardians and students currently enrolled in TDSB alternative schools, as well as Board approved staff. Executive members are required to attend a minimum of 50% of ASCAC formal meetings. Only Executive members may vote on matters presented at ASCAC formal meetings. The Executive should strive for the broadest possible representation from both TDSB elementary and secondary alternative school communities.

Ideally, the ASCAC Executive will include:

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[1] For details on the ASCAC Election Process see Section 5.

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- One (1) elementary parent/guardian Co-Chair,
- One (1) secondary parent/guardian Co-Chair,
- One (1) elementary Student Representative,
- One (1) secondary Student Representative,
- Approximately five-seven (5-7) Members at Large who are currently parents/guardians in elementary and/or secondary alternative schools,
- One (1) Board-approved TDSB Trustee.

If this is not possible, the minimum requirement for the ASCAC Executive will be five members:

- One (1) parent/guardian Chair,
- Three (3) other members either all parent/guardians or a combination of parent/guardians and students, (with at least one other parent/guardian other than the Chair),
- One (1) Board-approved TDSB Trustee.

The best organizational practices[2] recommend that an Executive be no larger than 12-15 members. This number has proven to accommodate diversity of views while making reaching quorum at formal meetings more achievable (i.e. mandatory 50% of the Executive plus one additional Executive member in attendance). A lack of quorum at a formal meeting will result in all ASCAC agenda items being delayed to the next formal meeting (i.e. sometimes up to two months). ASCAC should always consider the implications of creating a larger Executive. The larger the Executive, the more challenging it may become to reach quorum at formal meetings. It could potentially inhibit ASCAC from being able to achieve its mandates.

Executive Members Are:

- Elected parents/guardians of students enrolled in TDSB elementary and secondary alternative schools

- Elected students currently enrolled in elementary and/or secondary alternative schools

- Board approved TDSB Trustee(s)

All non-elected parents/guardians and students, as well as non-Board approved staff, plus community advocacy groups, may participate in ASCAC sub-committees or through the formal meeting delegation process; however, they may not vote on matters

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[2] Based on several decades of TDSB Community Advisory Committees past experiences.

presented at the formal meetings.

ASCAC also includes a Board-assigned Staff Resource Person and Committee Assistant who support the Committee and liaison with the Board as required. Neither individual may vote at ASCAC formal meetings.

4. TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP

A. The ASCAC Chair/Co-chairs will be in the role for two years with the opportunity of bi-annual renewal. Ideally, there will be a new Co-chair voted in annually. This will result in a one-year overlap between the two Co-chairs (new and existing). This process will ensure stability and a knowledge transfer for ASCAC as the Co-chairs' transition in/out of their roles.

B. Student Representatives will be in the role for one year with the opportunity of annual renewal.

C. Members at Large will be in the role for one year with the opportunity of annual renewal.

D. Executive members are required to commit to participate and attend a minimum of 50% of formal ASCAC meetings dates and attend the full length of the meeting. This is to ensure quorum may be achieved at every meeting.

E. Executive members who miss 50% of formal meetings will no longer be on the Executive due to inability to meet the Terms of Membership.

5. ELECTIONS

A. ASCAC will hold its annual election at the first formal meeting held in October.

B. The election will be promoted by the Staff Resource Person to all TDSB elementary and secondary alternative schools' parents/guardians and students ideally a minimum of 14 days prior.

C. All parents/guardians and students currently enrolled in an elementary and/or secondary alternative school are welcome to nominate themselves for the ASCAC Executive. Self-nominations will be accepted right up until the elections are held. Individuals interested should submit an online/printed self-nomination form prior to the elections or they may make their self-nomination intentions known when the Chair calls for last minute self-nominations right before holding the vote.[3]

D. Elections will occur at the first formal ASCAC meeting held in October. Voting may be done by any of the following methods if available: printed secret ballot,

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[3] Printed forms will be made available at alternative school front offices upon request only. Completed printed forms may be returned to alternative school front offices who will submit it to the ASAC Community Assistant on behalf of the individual.

phone and/or online poll.

E. If there is a tie vote, a new election will be held at the same meeting between the tied candidates only to determine a winner.

F. If there are no or only a few ASCAC election nominees, appointments may be made without holding a formal election.

G. Non-electronic votes should be counted by the Staff Resource Person and at least two other people who are not candidates and are preferably not TDSB staff.

H. All candidates must attend the full election meeting in-person, by phone or online depending on the formats available. Candidates who do not attend the meeting, will not be eligible for election.

6. QUORUM

A. Quorum shall be a minimum of 50% of the Executive members, plus one additional Executive member.

B. The Chair/Co-chair(s) should convene the meeting as soon as enough ASCAC Executive members are present to achieve quorum, but not before the scheduled meeting start time.

C. If quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time, the formal meeting is cancelled. The Committee may choose to discuss agenda items, but no votes, nor official minutes are recorded; however, notes of the discussion should be kept for the benefit of members who were not present.

D. Decisions will be made by conducting an Executive vote at formal meetings on any matters presented.

7. MEETINGS

A. At least, four (4) formal meetings will be scheduled and shared publicly each academic year.

B. Attendance at meetings may be in person, by telephone and/or virtual.

C. The Committee Assistant will attend meetings, help create and distribute the meeting schedule and agendas, take minutes and prepare CAC reports to the Board, as well as facilitate communications between ASCAC and TDSB elementary and secondary alternative schools' communities.

D. During the meeting, the order of items on the agenda may be changed or new items added if the majority of Executive present at the meeting agree by vote.

E. Notice of meetings, meeting agendas and meeting minutes should be circulated by the Committee Assistant no later than one week in advance of the formal meeting.

F. Individuals who wish to speak at an ASCAC formal meeting should contact the Committee Assistant to request to be added to the meeting agenda as a "delegate". Ideally, delegate requests will be made a minimum of two business days prior to the meeting. This provides enough time for the Committee Assistant to update, redistribute and republish the meeting agenda accordingly. However, the Community Assistant will strive to accommodate last minute delegate requests when possible. If time permits, ASCAC will also try to keep the last five to 10 minutes of formal meetings for Open Floor sessions where anyone may raise any topic for discussion.

G. Delegates listed on the meeting agenda will have up to five (5) minutes to present. The Chair/Co-Chair should inform the speaker when 30 seconds of speaking time remains and ask the speaker to conclude when their allotted time has been reached.

H. After a delegate has finished, the ASCAC Executive may ask questions for further clarification. If the ASCAC Executive determines that a topic requires further exploration and extensive discussions, a Sub-Committee will be set up to focus on that topic. The Sub-Committee will provide a report of their findings at the next formal meeting. Anyone may volunteer to participate on any ASCAC Sub-Committee, including non-voting parents/guardians, students and TDSB staff.

I. Sub-Committee meetings may be scheduled at any time and are open to anyone.

J. Sub-Committees should take notes of their meetings and provide them to the Committee Assistant for future reference and to ensure transparency and accountability.

8. EXECUTIVE VOTING

All discussions must occur prior to a vote being called. There is no discussion during the taking of a vote. Conducting a vote involves five (5) basic steps.

1. The Chair/Co-Chair calls for a seconder to support the motion prior to calling a vote.

2. The Chair/Co-Chair states that a vote will be taken by saying, "We will now vote on …" and repeats the substance of the motion.

3. A motion is carried if it receives the support of the majority of Executive members present. The Chair/Co-Chair asks for a vote for "Those in favour? vs. "Those against?" by a show of hands, online poll or phone statement depending on meeting formats available.

4. The Chair/Co-Chair announces the outcome of the vote... "The motion (or amendment) is carried", or, "The motion is defeated." The declaration of the Chair/Co-Chair is accepted. Votes should not be retaken.

5. If the vote is tied, then the motion does not pass.

9. REPORTING

Motions/amendments made, and the outcomes of voting will be reported to the Board through the Program and School Services Committee.

10. CODE OF CONDUCT

The Committee will abide by the Code of Conduct established by the Board.

11. NETWORKING

The Committee is free to establish its own communication network among itself and to participate in joint or collective activities relevant to its role.