

Toronto District School Board

Operational Procedure PR.584 CUR

Title: **ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS**
Adopted: June 27, 2007
Revised:
Authorization: Executive Planning and Priorities

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for the administration and establishment of alternative schools.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

Alternative school Sites that are unique in pedagogy, forms of governance and staff involvement, and have strong parental and/or student involvement; environments vary and provide an educational experience suited to individual learning styles/preferences and/or needs

Alternative Schools Advisory Council (ASAC) A group consisting of parents, students and staff from each alternative school within the Board

New school A stand-alone school with a Ministry-issued Board School Identification Number

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Associate Director

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Central Board Support

- (a) The Board will foster, support and promote student/parental involvement in Alternative School education by designating the System Superintendent of Education with central responsibility for Alternative Schools (SSOE), or a designate, to provide support for the Alternative Schools Advisory Council (ASAC).
- (b) The SSOE, or designate, will designate a staff liaison to support student/parental involvement in alternative schools.

- (c) The SSOE, or designate, will solicit input from local alternative school communities to ensure broad based consultation on matters pertaining to alternative schools.

4.2 Governance¹ Models

Students, parents, teachers and principals will collaboratively develop mission and values statements that clearly outline each alternative school's unique philosophical underpinnings. The process will ensure the importance of student and parent voices.

- (d) Students, parents, teachers and principals will collaboratively develop school governance models.
- (e) The SSOE or designate will provide support as requested.
- (f) Copies of all alternative schools' governance models will reside in the office of the SSOE or designate.

4.3 Enrolment

- (a) Alternative schools will accept students from across the City of Toronto, in accordance with Optional Attendance Policy P.013.

Alternative schools will, as part of their registration packages, include copies of their mission and values statement(s), educational philosophy and community expectations. This information will be available on school websites, school profiles and other appropriate venues.

Alternative schools will hold information sessions prior to student enrolment.

Parents/students will be encouraged to make an undertaking to support the philosophy, mission and values of their chosen alternative school.

4.4 Affirmation – Mission and Values

- (a) No less than once every five years each alternative school will invite their school community to a meeting where they will review, revise and/or reaffirm their school's philosophy and mission and values statement.

An up-to-date copy of each alternative school's philosophy and mission and values statement will reside in the office of the SSOE or designate.

The SSOE, or designate, will provide support if requested.

4.5 Process for Starting New Alternative Schools

- (a) Individuals or groups interested in exploring the possibility of starting a new alternative school will contact the SSOE, or designate, for preliminary discussions. Interested trustees may also be approached.

¹ An alternative school governance models must be developed in recognition of the roles and responsibilities of the Board and its employees as ordered by legislation such as the *Education Act* and its regulations, and by the Board's collective agreements with its employee groups.

- (b) Following initial discussions, should the proposal group wish to proceed, they will submit a formal “Letter of Intent” to the SSOE, or designate. The Letter of Intent will include:
- a primary contact name, address and phone number
 - a list of the individuals intending to submit a proposal
 - a brief overview of the philosophy, mission and values of the proposed school
 - benefits to students
- (c) With the assistance of the SSOE, or designate, as well as any interested trustees, the proposal group will develop a comprehensive proposal. This proposal will include the:
- school objectives
 - educational philosophy, mission and values
 - proposed curriculum and program
 - governance model
 - rationale for the generation of students
 - admission procedures

The SSOE, or designate, will provide a template to guide completion of the formal proposal.

The completed proposal will be delivered to the SSOE, or designate, by September 30th of the year preceding the proposed start-up year for the school.

- (d) Upon receipt of the completed proposal the SSOE, or designate, will convene a Local Feasibility Team (LFT) meeting including:
- Program staff
 - Facilities staff
 - Proposal group representatives
 - Other appropriate stakeholders, including interested trustees

This group will discuss issues pertinent to the viability of the proposal and identify any additional information required. Equitable distribution of alternative schools across the Toronto District School Board will be one factor considered in determining the location of any new alternative school.

- (e) The SSOE, or designate, will take a report forward to the Board’s Central Feasibility Team (CFT) summarizing the results of the feasibility team meeting. These results may include:
- a request to have additional issues addressed;
 - a recommendation to proceed with a request to Board for a Program Area Review Team process (PART);
 - a reason(s) why the proposal is not deemed feasible.

The SSOE, or designate, will communicate the results of both the LFT meeting and the CFT meeting to the proposal group.

- (f) Following CFT's recommendation to request that the Board approve a PART process, the SSOE, or designate, will draft a report for inclusion in the Board's committee process:
- Executive Priorities and Planning (EPP)
 - Programs and School Services Committee (PSSC)
 - Board

At each stage of the process the request may be:

- approved;
 - referred back for further information;
 - formally rejected.
- (g) Following Board approval, the SSOE, or designate, will arrange for a PART process to take place as soon as possible.
- (h) The SSOE, or designate, will take forward the results of the PART process via the Board's committee process.
- (i) Thirty days following Board approval, the proposal group will submit to the SSOE, or designate, a list of students who wish to formally register for the new school including names, addresses, telephone numbers/email addresses and current schools, if any.
- (j) An updated list will be submitted monthly until the end of June of the school year preceding the start-up school year for the new school.
- (k) Following Board approval the new school becomes the responsibility of the appropriate Superintendent of Education.

4.6 Promoting Student Choice

- (a) The Board will actively engage in initiatives that will increase the awareness of alternative schools as viable pathways for all students. These initiatives will include:
- an up-to-date presence on the Board website
 - preparation of brochures, flyers and other promotional materials as well as seminars
 - information evenings and local school orientation events.
- (b) The SSOE, or designate, will ensure that up-to-date information is available centrally.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Board Policy P.062: Alternative Schools