



2023–2024 ANNUAL REPORT
**ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



OTTAWA-CARLETON
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD



Committee Members

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver members: Emily Addison, Carolyn Webb, Laura MacKenzie, Marianne Mader, Julie McIsaac, Olanna Barnet, Julie Demole, Steph Futterer, Pamma Watson, Bob Gordon, Keara Dean, Ananda Kelly, Janet Farina (past parent & retired teacher), Taunia Curtis (past parent), Shabana Beg, Amanda Case, Sabha Sabet, Jessica Ward-King, Denyse Twagira + other parents/guardians/caregivers are on the ASAC email list.

OCDSB Staff members: Amy Hannah, Vanessa Ogungbemile, Derek Rhodinheizer, Tara Wild, Kim (Rae-Anne) Esdaile, Isabelle Bourdeau, Eleri Morgan, Caroline Sparling, Tiffany Chant, Dave Farley, Danielle Fontaine (retired).

Trustees who attended regularly: Amanda Presley (ASAC's official trustee), Suzanne Nash, & Donna Dickson.

Chairs:

Emily Addison & Carolyn Webb

Activities and Achievements 2023-2024

ASAC had ambitious plans for this school year. Our workplan at the start of the year included to:

- Develop recommendations for the Board of Trustees on how OCDSB can further support the program.
- Continue investigation into potentially changing the name of the program. (This was an idea that Trustee Lyra Evans suggested we examine when we presented to COW in spring 2023. We wanted first to understand what the process might be and then gauge community interest in the idea.)
- Pursue the implementation of a number of initiatives to better raise awareness about and promote the Alternative program (e.g., organize information nights so that families with any age of student can learn more about the program; create a flyer about the program).
- Work with the Superintendent and staff and school councils to improve communication and collaboration across the Alternative schools (e.g., staff collaboration events).
- Explore clarifying/strengthening the language in the Alternative tenets.
- Look at taking action on other items identified in the Spring 2021 Community Consultation.

We began much of this work in late October at our first meeting. That work continued through until mid-April when we had to put most things on hold in order to focus on the OCDSB Elementary Program Review. Here are some of our activities and accomplishments outside of informing the review:

- Confirmed that all K-6 Alternative schools were using the newly created shared principal profile for Alternative schools.
- Began drafting recommendations to present to COW in spring 2024. (Members of COW had requested recommendations when we had appeared in spring 2023). These draft recommendations have been amalgamated into ASAC's interim report regarding the Elementary Program Review.
- Developed a process for clarifying and deepening the wording of the tenets and began to implement the process. There were some delays in order to facilitate communication among all Alternative school principals. However, we were able to implement a first phase of community consultations with staff and families in order to collect initial ideas on how the language of the Alternative tenets could be updated. We then had a core team of parents and retired teachers work on creating a first draft. We have started making plans with Superintendent Hannah on how to continue this work in the fall with further input from students, staff, and families.
- Met with Superintendent Duah to discuss some Alternative program topics specific to the Grade 7/8 at Summit.

- Brainstormed language on key messaging for communications-promotional material for the program.
- Organized and shared ASAC's historical documents with ASAC members and the Board.
- Began to plan Alternative program events (i.e., staff collaboration event; webinar featuring best practices from Alternative schools). These were both set aside given the need to refocus on the program review.
- Although not ASAC work, Superintendent Hannah met semi-regularly with the Alternative school principals moving along important conversation at the school level that related to our work.
- Ensured inclusion of the Alternative program within the kinder information night presentation.
- Made the decision not to change the Alternative program name at this time because it was felt that we would try to raise understanding about the program through stronger communications first, and also given other pressing issues to focus on. We are considering the idea of adding a tag line to the name to provide additional clarity.
- Worked with Superintendent Hannah to set up an internal Alternative School Conference for all Alternative school staff. (This should be in place in Fall 2024).
- Received a presentation from Peter Symmonds (Superintendent of Learning Support Services) on special education supports and resources in Alternative Schools. We are curious about exploring this topic further.
- The co-chairs visited the three alternative schools in which they do not have their own children. At those visits, they toured the schools to see the programs in action and had meaningful conversations with all three principals.

Regarding the review, ASAC has actively been working with Superintendent Hannah and Director of Education Buffone to learn about the program review and how best ASAC can support the work of the Elementary Review Project team. To that end, the bulk of our work between April and June has been on preparing an extensive report to inform the review that we will be submitting by June 28th 2024.

Plans for the 2024-2025 School Year

Over the 2024-25 school year we will:

- Continue to engage with OCDSB Elementary Program Review to support staff and trustee decision-making.
- Complete the work on clarifying and deepening the language of the tenets.
- With support from OCDSB Communications department, implement plans on key promotional material (e.g., video, information night, flyer).
- Continue work with Superintendent Hannah, principals, staff, and school councils on collaboration across schools to strengthen the alternative practices.
- Follow up with COW on ASAC recommendations that we put forward in our report regarding the Elementary Program Review in order to support a thriving Alternative program into the future.

2024-2025 Meeting Dates

The schedule currently references the following dates:

September 23, 2024
 October 28, 2024
 November 25, 2024
 January 27, 2025
 February 24, 2025
 April 7, 2025
 May 12, 2025

Attachments/Links

Election of the Chair - See June 6 2024 meeting minutes (attached)

Membership Campaign Details:

- ASAC maintains an email list that any parents, staff, trustees, or community members interested in the work of ASAC can be added. When new people show up at our meetings, we ask them if they want to be added to the list. We also promote the email list through principals and school councils.
- For each meeting, we email everyone on the ASAC email list, we also send a courtesy invite to all trustees, and Marlie Spearman arranges for the ASAC notice of meeting/agenda to be posted on the Board website.
- We have also worked with principals and school councils to actively promote the existence of ASAC, our work, and the fact that everyone can join through the weekly principal updates, and other channels available through schools (e.g., social media).