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The Board of Education for the City of Toronto

**Alternative Schools,  
A General Policy**

November, 1982

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# I Introduction

As of September 1982 there are ten elementary and nine secondary alternative schools within the Toronto Board of Education. While the expansion and popularity of alternative schools has grown dramatically throughout North America, the Toronto Board remains a leader in both the number of schools and the variety of programs.

Allen Graubard, in an article "The Free School Movement" in the *Harvard Education Review*, distinguishes among four types of alternative schools.

1. The classical free school based on the Summerhill model.
2. The parent-teacher co-operative elementary school populated largely by young, white, liberal middle-class families and characterized by a significant amount of parental input into the decision-making process.
3. The free high school — actually a broad category including white, working class high schools for "drop outs" and "push outs", street academies for poor minority youth and small high schools for relatively radical white students of average or above means.
4. Community elementary schools controlled by dissatisfied, usually minority parent groups, and characterized by a somewhat conservative curriculum.

It is significant that Toronto has or has had alternative schools which fit into all four categories of Graubard's typology. As a result, alternatives have been able to meet the needs of a wide variety of students.

Parents and students can choose the type of program they believe is best for them. The Toronto Board appears to be unique in having a policy which permits parents, students and teachers to approach the Board for support in establishing new alternatives and in participating in all decisions regarding the operation of the schools, including such vital areas as budget and staffing.

Another trend which is appearing in elementary alternative schools throughout North America is a day care component within the school. Again, the Toronto Board is unique in taking the initiative to have day care within most of the elementary alternatives as well as in many regular schools.

Although Toronto's alternatives have received widespread acclaim, there are nevertheless many issues which cause difficulty and frustration for all those involved on a day-to-day basis.

While at times the larger community may perceive alternatives as "getting more" from the Board than regular schools, the alternative communities often feel that they receive less. This is particularly true in the case of new alternatives trying to find a "welcome space" in which to be housed or in trying to obtain necessary equipment, furniture, and supplies as well as proper facilities such as washrooms or gymnasiums. Even after they have been operating for many years, alternatives live with the continual threat of having to re-locate; an idea which can be demoralizing to a small school of 50 students.

<sup>1</sup> Allen Graubard, "The Free School Movement," *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 42, No. 8, August 1972. pp. 364-368.

Finally, alternative schools and their communities are fearful of any move towards centralization. The success of Toronto's alternatives has been largely based on the idea that each is unique and exists in order to meet the special needs of particular students. While it is necessary in writing a general policy to make recommendations which will help them to operate, to view all alternatives as the same and thereby centralize their function, is to ultimately defeat their purpose.

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## II Establishing A New Alternative School

Under the previous General Policy for Alternative Schools, the procedure entitled *How to Start an Alternative School* has generally worked well. The information is easily accessible to the public since it is contained in the Alternative Schools' Kit. Such groups usually have informal discussions with the Co-ordinator of the Alternative and Community Programs Department before deciding to proceed with a formal proposal. However, between the date when the letter of intent is put on the agenda of the Alternative and Community Programs Committee and when the final proposal must be acted upon by the Board, an extensive process of consultation must take place. It is during this period that a group must prepare their submission to the Board, with the assistance of the Co-ordinator. Sometimes consultation with other staff in the Curriculum and Program Division takes place. Frequently the initial small group must expand to ensure that there is a large enough constituency to support such a venture and to generate enrolment. This is done through community meetings where a consensus must be reached about the kind of new alternative which will emerge.

A longer period of time would ensure that all the necessary community meetings and consultation about program could take place before the proposal is written. The result would hopefully be a more substantive submission to the Board by a larger, more committed group.

### Policy

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1. *Those individuals (teachers, parents and other interested parties) interested in exploring the possibility of starting a new alternative school should arrange a meeting with the Co-ordinator of the Alternative and Community Programs Department to discuss Board policy for alternative schools.*
  2. *If following this meeting the individual or group decides to proceed with the development of a proposal to the Board, they must submit a formal 'Letter of Intent' to the Alternative and Community Programs Committee no later than December 1.*
  3. *With assistance from the Co-ordinator of Alternative and Community Programs, the individual or group should then proceed to develop a comprehensive proposal for presentation to the Board through the Board's Alternative and Community Programs Committee. The proposal should outline the school's objectives, educational philosophy, proposed curriculum and program, a proposed location, a governance model and a rationale for the generation of students for the school.*
  4. *Through the Co-ordinator of Alternatives, individual subject co-ordinators from the Curriculum and Program Division are available to provide consultative assistance to the group developing the proposal.*
  5. *The complete proposal must be submitted to the Alternative and Community Programs Committee early enough to permit the full Board to act on the proposal by a date no later than the last Board meeting in March. (This will likely mean a late February meeting of Alternatives.) A report from the Director of Education commenting on the feasibility of the application will accompany the proposal.*
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6. The Alternative and Community Programs Committee may recommend approval of the proposal to the next meeting of the School Programs Committee or it may:
- approve the application in principle subject to specific problems being resolved;
  - refer the matter back to the Director of Education for further study;
  - formally reject the application.

The above four options also apply when the proposal is considered by:

- the School Programs Committee;
  - the Board of Education for the City of Toronto.
7. Thirty days following Board approval, the group shall submit the following reports to the Co-ordinator of Alternative and Community Programs:
- A list of students who have been formally registered for the new school; name, address, telephone number, present school. An updated list shall be resubmitted monthly until the end of June.
  - A proposed budget for Board consideration covering such items as telephone, furniture, equipment, texts and supplies. The designated principal and the Alternatives Co-ordinator should assist in its preparation.
8. Following Board approval and after a suitable location for the program has been approved, the new school becomes the responsibility of the appropriate Area Superintendent.
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### III Space

When appropriate space for an alternative school is sought, there are many issues to be considered beyond the quality of that particular space. Some of the questions which must be addressed in any policy decisions about space are: who makes the decisions about where the space is located; what consultation has to take place; what kind of priority do alternative schools have; what facilities must be shared; and how do two schools with differing philosophies live with those differences?

Ideally, an alternative school's program should determine the nature of the space in which it is located. For example, a re-entry program for secondary students may be accommodated more suitably in an elementary school than in a large secondary school while an unstructured elementary alternative may be more suitably located in a secondary school. A program which uses community resources extensively would best be located in a non-residential area.

When appropriate space for a new alternative is initially sought, it is important that the staff and community understand the implications of the Board's policy on alternative schools. Frequently, there are misconceptions that alternatives are getting extra benefits which regular schools do not receive. There are concerns not only about losing space to the alternatives, but also facilities and administrative time. Sometimes there is a fear that an alternative with students at similar grade level will drain the regular school's enrolment, and that in fact the existence of the alternative is an implicit criticism of the regular school program. Alternative school communities often feel that they are shunted from school to school like unwanted tenants. They therefore reject the term "host school" with all the implications which surround its use. When two schools are housed in the same Board building, then surely a more appropriate term would be "shared school" or "shared facility".

Many of these problems can be alleviated through meetings between the two to work out differences. Visits to schools and discussions with staff and parents in other shared schools have proven useful. Often a regular school community which is undergoing declining enrolment begins to see that there are advantages to having an alternative located in their school.

While community meetings and visits are to be encouraged, it is essential that it is recognized that the final decision of what constitutes appropriate space is made administratively and that such a decision recognizes the legitimate needs of both school communities. Furthermore, alternative schools offering full time instructional programs have the same priority as other Board academic programs (French, Special Education) and take priority over non-instructional programs.

No hard and fast rules can be made as to which kinds of schools will be able to share space successfully, and which will not. There are many examples where a sensitive administration, staff and community groups have been able to work co-operatively to the advantage of both schools. Yard duties are shared, clerical staff work together, secondary students help in elementary classes; active parents have been able to start a new program such as day care or music which may be used by both schools. In these schools there is no mention of "we" and "they" or "hosts" and "tenants", but rather they are two schools located in one building, meeting their own individual needs and mutually supporting each other.



Policy

1. That wherever possible, the nature of the alternative school should be the determining factor in deciding on a location for the alternative school.
2. That every effort be made to find appropriate space on Board premises. (Continuation of 1977 policy)
3. That it be the responsibility of the appropriate Area Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent of Alternative and Community Programs to find suitable space for a new (or relocating or reorganizing) alternative school, with due consideration being given to:
  - a) the fact that alternative schools are academic programs and therefore the Board has a responsibility to consider their space needs before considering the needs of a wide variety of non-academic users;
  - b) the space requirements of day care programs that are close to fruition and where the Co-ordinator of Alternative and Community Programs feels space should be reserved for this need.
4. That when a request by two or more users for vacant space cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the staff referred to in Recommendation three, then the said space be "frozen" until its use has been reviewed by a Space Review Committee.
  - a) That the Space Review Committee be composed of the following persons: the Associate Director (Operations); the appropriate Superintendent; the school principal; and one representative from each of the school communities involved.
  - b) That the Space Review Committee report to the Director of Education, who shall make recommendations to the Board.
  - c) That by June 1, 1983, the Director of Education report on the adequacy of this policy and make any recommendations he deems necessary.
5. That when space for a new alternative school is being proposed, the appropriate Area Superintendent arrange an information meeting with the staff and community of the two schools in:
  - a) explain alternative school policy;
  - b) hear concerns of either group.
6. That if requested the Co-ordinator of Alternative and Community Programs arrange visits for the two school groups to other shared facilities.
7. That if an alternative school is to be re-located, the same consultative procedures be followed as above.
8. That the term "host school" be avoided, and the term "regular school", "alternative school" and "shared facility" be used where appropriate.

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## IV Admission Procedures

Each alternative school is tailored to meet the particular needs of the students who attend. No two alternatives are alike; each has its own separate identity and its own approach to curriculum and program. There are independent study programs for students who are re-entering school, structured and unstructured programs and programs which expect a high level of commitment to the running of the school by students and/or parents. Each school is unique and each serves the needs of a particular student clientele.

As a result, staffs of alternative schools must spend a great deal of time in formal and informal discussions with prospective students and parents. In the elementary alternatives a visit to the school and an interview with parents is usually sufficient for the student to be enrolled, or at least placed on a waiting list.

At the secondary level procedures vary considerably from school to school. Some students are enrolled immediately following an interview. Two secondary alternatives require students to have a probationary period of three weeks; another requires 20 hours of attendance. If the student attends regularly and is punctual, formal enrolment takes place.

Another secondary alternative requires prospective students to meet with a school committee composed of a teacher, parent and student to discuss academic expectation and the kind of school commitment the student is prepared to make. If the committee recommends accepting the student, a contract is signed in which she/he promises to fulfil those expectations. If the student is not successful in the probationary period, she/he may re-apply after waiting three weeks.

If a student is not recommended by the committee, she/he may request a different interview team. Still failing to be admitted, students may appeal to the principal, Area Superintendents, Ward Trustees, or to the Alternative and Community Programs Committee.

Since many of the schools have waiting lists, application dates are kept so that students are admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis. Files are also kept of students who have registered for the probationary period. In the case of students being turned down by a school admissions committee, it is essential that documentation take place.

In the past, there have been few instances of students being refused admission. Because of the amount of time school staffs spend in interviews and counselling sessions, a self-selecting process tends to take place. Often, if a student is counselled that the placement may not be appropriate, they are still allowed to enrol; with the staff hoping to be proved wrong.

Alternative schools are under increasing pressure from social service agencies to take students who have had difficulty or have dropped out of regular school. The probationary period used at some alternative schools is essentially a way for a student who is re-entering to demonstrate her/his commitment to this school, particularly in terms of attendance. Because the schools tend to be small and less impersonal than regular schools, many students adapt well. On the other hand, because of their size, alternative schools face the danger of having to absorb too many "difficult" students too quickly.

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Policy

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1. *That alternative schools continue to set their own admission procedures, providing they conform to both Board and Ministry policy.*
  2. *That the principal of each alternative school submit to the Area Superintendent by April 30 of each year, the current admission procedures for that school.*
  3. *That schools keep a record of all formal admission requests including the results of of interviews.*
  4. *That where a student is refused admission, grounds for the refusal be stated in writing to both the applicant and the principal.*
  5. *That when a student is refused admission, the appeal procedure be clearly outlined to student and parents.*
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## V Staffing

Alternative schools attract a certain kind of teacher — one who enjoys parent involvement both in the classroom and in decisions involving the program; who feels comfortable with more decision-making by students and/or parents than is often possible in a regular school; who likes working in a decentralized administrative structure but is prepared to spend extra hours doing the work that this requires. While this provides a different kind of experience for teachers at a time when there is decreasing mobility in the system, it is not an opportunity that is appropriate for all. In fact, both in research and in the general literature on alternative schools, one finds agreement that it is critical to the successful operation of such programs that staff are chosen wisely and that they are committed to the goals of individual alternative schools.

It is also recognized that placement of surplus teachers may, in some instances, create difficulties for alternative schools. When a teacher who would otherwise not choose this environment is placed in an alternative, it often causes distress; not only to the teacher, but also to the other staff, parents, students and administration.

Given the complexity of collective agreements, there appear to be no easy solutions. In the elementary collective agreement, the current transfer procedure allows teachers on the transfer list to have a "shopping around" period. This enables principals to interview teachers who might be interested in an alternative school. However, this is not the case with the secondary panel. Both federations have agreed to provide a space on the transfer request form for teachers interested in alternative schools.

Many teachers within the system know very little about alternative schools or have never considered the possibility of working in one. An Alternative Conference would provide such an opportunity. If the Alternative and Community Programs Department were responsible for organizing such a conference in late winter, interested teachers might subsequently apply for a transfer to an alternative school.

### Policy

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- 1. That annually, during the month of January, the Alternative and Community Programs Department circulate to all schools an up-to-date information brochure on both elementary and secondary alternative schools.*
  - 2. That at the same time a notice be placed in the Weekly Circular requesting all principals to draw to the attention of their staff teaching opportunities in alternative schools.*
  - 3. That each Elementary and Secondary Transfer Application Form include a box where a teacher can indicate an interest in teaching in an alternative school.*
  - 4. That the list of teachers, elementary and secondary, who have applied for transfers to alternative schools, be made available to the Alternatives Advisory Council.*
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5. That principals and Area Superintendents be requested to assist teachers indicating an interest in teaching in an alternative setting to visit some of these schools.
  6. That teachers transferring to or assigned to alternative schools be given up to three days' release time to meet with the school-communities.
  7. That in the case of an administrative placement, every effort be made to place in alternative schools teachers who are interested in and suitable for such placements; and that such placements be made in accordance with criteria established by each school community and submitted to the Superintendent of Personnel through appropriate channels, and that a copy be sent to the appropriate federation.
  8. That the Alternative and Community Programs Department organize a winter conference to acquaint interested teachers with teaching opportunities in Toronto alternative schools.
  9. That the Director of Education review the clerical staffing formula\* for alternative schools.

- \* 1 - 6.9 teachers - .5 clericals
  - 7.0 - 13.9 teachers - 1.0 clericals
  - 14 + teachers - 70 clericals per 1000 teachers
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## VI Establishment Grants

The current practice regarding start-up grants for new alternatives has been for the Alternative and Community Programs Department to be responsible for providing such funds from its current budget, the amount given to each depending on the number of schools starting that year (amounts often vary from \$7,000 to \$14,000). New alternatives have submitted orders for furniture, equipment and supplies to the Alternative and Community Programs Department. After these have been approved by the Department, funds have been transferred to the Area Office. The process has been, to some extent, inequitable and arbitrary since the grants have not been so much based on the size and needs of the school as on the number of schools requiring start-up funds. It is also a circuitous process since orders are sent to the Alternative and Community Programs Department for costing and approval, and then returned to the Area Office for processing after the funds have been transferred. This report will recommend a budgeting procedure that will result in a budget proposal, under specific guidelines, being part of the final proposal of any new alternative school that must be passed by the Board prior to March 15. Such a budget would be based on the following guidelines.

- Furniture/equipment — to be established on a classroom basis
- Supplies-texts — based on enrolment
- Renovations — office area, teaching areas, playgrounds, etc. to be determined after consultation with the Buildings Division.
- Telephones — to be based on needs over and above what can be shared with the regular school.
- Library funds — to be established by the Library Department and transferred to the Area Office.

Assistance in ordering furniture, equipment and supplies can better be provided by staff in the Curriculum and Program Division. Often subject departments are able to help new alternatives find appliances and equipment which are not in use in other schools.

In addition, a sub-committee of the Alternative Schools Advisory Council is prepared to meet with new alternatives to provide assistance, based on their experiences.

### Policy

1. That start-up budgets for new alternative schools be developed under the following categories:

- a) furniture and equipment
- b) supplies (including textbooks)
- c) phones
- d) library
- e) renovations

2. *That a budget proposal be submitted no later than 30 days following Board approval of the school with a final budget being submitted through the school principal to the Co-ordinator of Alternative and Community Programs Department.*
3. *That after the proposal has been costed and approved by the Co-ordinator, funds be transferred to the appropriate Area Office.*

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## VII Curriculum and Program

Most alternative schools attract staff, parents and students who share a philosophy which emphasizes a decentralized administrative structure and an innovative curriculum.

The latter is often achieved in good part due to the small size of the school, the number of parents and community people involved, and the flexibility of timetables. Additional adults in an elementary classroom make it possible for teachers to take more field trips, have a variety of small interest groups and do more individualized teaching. Internship, co-operative education credits and partial credits are more easily achieved with the flexibility of timetables in secondary alternatives. Independent study programs enable students who have special talents or interests (music, sports, art, etc.) to spend long hours practicing while still obtaining school credits.

The growing interest in alternative schools is reflected in courses at the graduate and undergraduate level and in the number of visitors to Toronto alternatives.

One of the questions which is often asked concerns comparing achievement between students in regular schools and students in alternatives. There are however many other areas where research on alternatives could be done.

American studies on alternative schools have included research on such topics as (1) school size (2) teacher attitudes (3) student success (4) enhancement of self-concept (5) student decision-making (6) alternatives as a means of reducing vandalism, as well as (7) evaluation data on cognitive development. The number and variety of Toronto alternatives, and the fact that a student may now go from kindergarten to grade 13 in alternative schools would provide a basis for such research projects.

### Policy

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1. *It is recommended that the Director of Education report on the feasibility and cost of conducting research projects in Toronto alternative schools in areas such as:*
    - a) *teacher attitudes*
    - b) *parents involvement in curriculum and program.*
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## VIII The Alternative Schools' Advisory Council

The Alternative Schools' Advisory Council composed of staff, students and parents from each alternative school met every week from April 23 to June 16 to discuss issues which would be addressed in this report. In the course of providing valuable input, the members of the group found that these meetings provided an opportunity for information sharing and mutual support. The desire to continue the meetings, and to focus more attention on curriculum, was strongly expressed.

### Policy

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- 1. That the Alternative Schools' Advisory Council be recognized by the Board as a consultative group composed of a teacher and parent representative from each elementary alternative; and a parent, teacher and student representative from each secondary alternative.*
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## IX Administration of Alternative Schools

### A. The Toronto Experience

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Toronto's first alternative day school was S.E.E.D. (Shared Experience, Exploration and Discovery), established as a secondary school within the system in September 1971. S.E.E.D. was quickly followed by two very different elementary alternatives — ALPHA and LANEWAY, and by CONTACT Secondary School. All three stressed the importance of the individual over the impersonal nature of the organization. Therefore, decision-making must involve everyone: in elementary schools — staff, parents and students; in secondary schools — primarily staff and students. In many elementary alternatives, a Parent Board formulates general policy which is implemented by sympathetic, professional teachers. Certainly, the establishment of Toronto's alternative schools has been supportive of a basic Ministry and Board policy thrust during the 1970's — increasing parent and community involvement in public education.

In their proposals to the Board, each of the Board's first four alternative schools outlined patterns of internal decision-making and administrative authority which contrasted sharply with the administrative structure operating in regular schools. All emphasized a predilection for managing on their own with little reference to Board administrators. At S.E.E.D., the Superintendent of Secondary Schools was officially designated as principal. The Board solicitor stated that this procedure was only followed because the program was housed in rented accommodation and that when it moved into a school, it should come under the jurisdiction of a principal. At ALPHA, basic policies were to be set in weekly meetings of the whole community. The governing body was a staff-community council. The group did not want a principal to be appointed but later agreed to such an appointment as long as they were involved in the process.

LANEWAY also resisted such an appointment. CONTACT asked that direct contact with the Board be through the Director or through a superintendent designated by him/her.

### B. Issues

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The Toronto experience outlines the problems of governance in alternative schools. It would seem that five questions must be addressed in looking at a solution to these difficulties.

1. What are the responsibilities of a principal of an alternative school?
  2. Can a Board of Education delegate to a parent board or to a school staff the responsibilities of a school principal?
  3. Can a supervisory officer fulfill the role of school principal?
  4. What is the present situation in the governance of alternative schools?
  5. In light of all the above, what form of governance is most appropriate for Toronto's alternative schools?
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**QUESTION 1 Responsibilities of a principal of an alternative school**

On reading the relevant sections of the Education Act — 1974 and Ontario Regulation 704, one soon appreciates that the school principal is the fulcrum used by both the Ministry of Education and Boards of Education to ensure compliance with their respective policies and to facilitate accountability to parents and students.

Many would consider some of these responsibilities to be superfluous, others to be providential. However, to the majority of parents, the principal continues to hold a position of importance within each school community.

What follows is an outline of some of the specific responsibilities of the school principal as found in the Act and Regulations.

1. The appointment of a principal is not discretionary.

Every Board shall appoint for each school that it operates a principal . . . who shall be qualified according to this Act and the Regulations.

The Act — 146 (11) p. 134

2. The minimum responsibilities of a principal are not negotiable; they are those set out in the Act and Regulations. In addition, there are those assigned by the employing Board of Education and individual school communities.

A principal means a teacher appointed by a Board to perform the duties of a principal under this Act and the Regulations.

The Act — 1. — (1)39. p. 5

3. The longest list of responsibilities for a principal are the list of duties outlined for teachers, all of which apply to the principal.

It is the duty of a principal of a school, in addition to his duties as a teacher . . .

The Act — 230 p. 205

4. Today, for many parents, the management responsibility is of particular importance.

To maintain proper order and discipline in the school.

The Act — 230(a) p. 205  
Regulation 704, 12.(1); (2) (n)

5. The co-ordinating function, particularly in relation to the volume of new curriculum initiatives in the last couple of years, is important.

To develop co-operation and co-ordination of effort among the members of the staff of the school.

The Act — 230. (b) p. 205

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6. Regular attendance is a matter of concern in both alternative and regular schools.

To register the pupils and to ensure that the attendance of pupils for every school day is recorded either in the register supplied by the Minister in accordance with the instructions contained therein or in such other manner as is approved by the Minister.

The Act — 230.(c) p. 205

7. Both parents and the Board are increasingly concerned that adequate records be kept on all students and that they be handled correctly.

The Act — 230.(d) p. 206

8. The principal, in consultation with the staff, is responsible for the organization and timetabling of all classes and for ensuring that courses of study are followed.

The Act — 230.(e) p. 206

9. The principal is responsible for carrying out the Board and Ministry policies on evaluation and reporting of pupil progress.

The Act — 230.(f) p. 206

10. The principal has the final responsibility for promoting students to appropriate programs and levels.

The Act — 230.(g) p. 206

11. The principal is responsible for the preparation of all reports requested by the Board and the Ministry.

The Act — 230.(i) p. 206

12. In 1980-81 two activities relate particularly to this item; the Ministry review of curriculum implementation in the Board's schools and the Board's Performance Review Policy.

Supervise the instruction in the school and advise and assist any teacher, in co-operation with the teacher in charge of the organizational unit or program in which the teacher teaches.

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (a)

13. From a safety concern, the principal is responsible for ensuring that students are adequately supervised both at school and during field trip activities.

make provision for adequate supervision . . .

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (h)

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14. The evaluation of staff under the Board's present principal-of-record practice is a most perplexing and time consuming responsibility.

Report to his Board in writing, on its request, on the effectiveness of members of the teaching staff.

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (k)

15. Obviously teachers in alternative schools deserve the same opportunities for promotion as do those in regular schools. The recommendation of a principal-of-record, particularly if it comes from an off-site administrator, carries less weight than that of a regular principal in support of a teacher, regardless of the degree of excellence of the candidate.

Recommend to his Board:

(i) the appointment and promotion of teachers,

(ii) the demotion or dismissal of a teacher whose work or attitude is unsatisfactory, but only after warning the teacher in writing, giving his assistance and allowing a reasonable time to improve.

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (l)

16. The principal is responsible for seeing that teachers are provided with the learning material they require.

Submit to his Board an annual budget for supplies and equipment.

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (m)

17. The principal is responsible for developing good relationships with those who live and work in the school's immediate community.

Promote and maintain close co-operation with the residents and, where applicable, the industry and business of the community.

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (n)

18. The principal is responsible for ensuring the correct use of psychological tests.

Regulation 704, 12.(2) (o)

**QUESTION 2** Can a Board of Education delegate to a parent board or a school staff a principal's responsibilities?

In March 1972 the Board's Finance Committee asked the solicitor to report on the statutory obligations of the Board of Education in connection with the governance of alternative schools. His report stated that:

"a board may not make grants to or otherwise support schools which are not under its jurisdiction or charge and that a school under the charge of a board must be operated in accordance with the school acts including the regulations made by the Minister. A board may not delegate to committees comprising parents, teachers and others the responsibility for the selection of staff and for the establishment of policy."

Related to this question is item 146(11) from The Education Act, 1974, which requires that a principal be appointed for each Board school.

**QUESTION 3** Can a supervisory officer fulfill the responsibilities of a school principal?

In a letter dated January 28, 1977, L.E. Maki, Regional Director of Education, informed Duncan Green that the September School Reports of CONTACT and S.E.E.D. were in contravention of the Education Act. On June 13, 1980, a subsequent letter from John W. Storey stated:

"that the appointment of a Supervisory Officer as principal of an Alternative School contravenes section 250 (4) of The Education Act, 1974."

"Except as otherwise provided by this Act or the regulations, a supervisory officer shall not, without the approval of the Minister, hold any other office, have any other office, have any other employment or follow any other profession or calling, during his tenure as a supervisory officer.

The Education Act, 1974 — 250.(4) p. 217

**QUESTION 4** What is the present situation in the governance of alternative schools?

For a variety of reasons, most of the Board's alternative schools have preferred an arm's-length relationship with the system establishment.

One way of accomplishing this was the coining of a new administrative title, principal-of-record. One suspects that a person given this title was to be principal in name only and to be available to perform such responsibilities as signing requisitions and reports. In practice, the involvement of the principal-of-record has varied greatly from school to school.

Question two gives a legal answer to the use of supervisory officers as principals of alternative schools. This is supported by practical as well as political considerations. Practically, superintendents continue to experience the frustrations of not being able to spend sufficient time in schools monitoring curriculum and policy implementation and staff development. At least one school superintendent made more visits between January and June to one of his alternative schools than to any one of his 'regular' schools. June, 1982 was probably the most hectic June, as far as staffing is concerned, that the Area offices have experienced. In spite of this, one school superintendent spent 12.5 days in June monitoring the secondary transfer meetings because he was a principal-of-record. During those 12.5 days, he was unavailable to either the schools for which he was responsible nor to the Area Office.

In six of the Board's nine elementary alternatives, the principal-of-record is the principal of the shared facility and at the other three, they were selected and appointed by the Area Superintendent. In five of the eight secondary alternatives, the principal is a supervisory officer.

In all cases the principal was appointed by the administration. In appointing principals-of-record, most Area Superintendents have made a practice of consulting the alternative community involved prior to making the appointment.

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**QUESTION 5** In light of the information discussed in questions one to four, what form of governance is most appropriate for Toronto's alternative schools?

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Question one outlines in some detail the responsibilities of a school principal. If alternative schools are truly to be considered schools and not magnet or satellite programs, then principal duties cannot be carried out on a 'catch-as-catch-can' basis. Alternative communities are entitled to a better level of principal service than they can possibly receive under present Board practice.

Supervisory officers have particular responsibilities in relation to policy implementation and the Board's new Performance Review procedures.

Although some supervisory officers have enjoyed their association with the staffs of alternative schools, they are unanimous that, at this time, it is unwise for them to serve in two administrative capacities — that of principal and that of supervisory officer.

The conclusions that follow are based on the following:

- a) A review of the literature on alternative school governance.
  - b) Discussions with federation, both at the local and provincial level.
  - c) Discussions with many of the current principals-of-record.
  - d) Input from supervisory officers who are presently or have been principals-of-record.
  - e) Input from the Advisory Council, composed of students, parents, and staff from the Board's alternative schools.
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## Conclusions

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1. Alternative programs have grown and matured to a point where they should be viewed as schools, not magnet programs. As such, they should have the support of a school principal.
  2. Toronto's alternative schools are alive and growing. It is unfair to continue to expect classroom teachers to deal with all the administrative responsibilities that are normally handled by a principal, unless additional assistance is provided.
  3. Board members are frequently reminded that the Ministry of Education has produced more curriculum since 1971 than it had in the previous 50 years. The same could be said of the Toronto Board in both the policy and curriculum area.  
  
Performance Review began in 1982. Under Board policy and Ministry Regulation 704, 12.(2) (k), teacher evaluation is to be done by a principal. This principal will, of necessity, need to spend considerable time becoming knowledgeable about each teacher's program.  
  
The Provincial Policy Review of July 6, 1981 and subsequently the development of Board curriculum priorities, along with the Board's Curriculum Implementation Plan, will all necessitate a heavy time commitment from a school principal.  
  
An "at arms-length" principal is unlikely to be very useful to students, teachers or the Board.
  4. Contemporary alternatives believe that parents, students and teachers should be directly involved in the school's governance, usually through what is referred to as a 'community meeting'. Such meetings provide the opportunity to air grievances, socialize, express opinions and suggest improvements.
  5. It is essential that staff and community be involved in the selection of an alternative school's principal.
  6. An individual selected as principal of an alternative school should be acceptable to the school community, and knowledgeable about and sympathetic to the school's program and philosophy.
  7. Alternative school teachers generally enjoy more decision-making responsibility than their colleagues in conventional schools. Students also benefit from this increased involvement. It is essential that the Board and Administration encourage this involvement.
  8. The nature, intensity and style of involvement of the alternative school principal should be subject to negotiation among the staff, community, principal and school superintendent.
  9. In considering the recommended administration of a specific alternative school, the nature of the school and its program should determine the administrative structure.
  10. In January 1977 and again in June 1980, the Central Region's Director of Education requested that the Toronto Board refrain from appointing Supervisory Officers as principals of alternative secondary schools since it contravened section 250(4) of the Education Act, 1974.
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On March 26, 1982, the Board's legal counsel stated, in part:

"It is therefore our opinion that the Board of Education for the City of Toronto cannot appoint, without the consent of the Minister, a Supervisory Officer to the position of a Principal. The Supervisory Officer will be holding another office in addition to his office as a Supervisory Officer. This will constitute a violation of Section 256(4)."

On June 23, 1982, the Minister confirmed the above decisions but indicated that if the Toronto Board wishes to make an exception in a particular school(s), then "a separate application should be made to me through the Regional Director of Education . . . with a statement as to the percentage of time the supervisory officer will be in the school performing the duties of principal."

It is clear therefore that, without the consent of the Minister of Education, it is illegal for a supervisory officer to be principal of an alternative school.

It is recommended that the above list of conclusions be incorporated in the Board's policy on the Administration of Alternative Schools.

## Policy

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### D. Administration of Elementary Alternative Schools

1. *That when an alternative elementary school shares space with a regular elementary school, the principal of the regular school may also be the principal of the alternative school.*
  2. *That in this circumstance when the position of principal becomes vacant and is advertised, the following procedures will apply in the selection of a principal:*
    - (a) *The staffs of both the alternative and the regular schools will meet to consult and prepare a list(s) of criteria which they feel should be considered in the selection of a principal. These criteria shall be submitted to the Area Superintendent.*
    - (b) *The Ward Trustees will call a meeting of parents of the schools to obtain from the parents a list of criteria they feel should be considered.*  
*The Superintendent of Personnel is to advise the Ward Trustees of Board policy, the date by which the criteria are to be submitted and the date of the meeting to select the new principal.*
    - (c) *The Selection Committee will be composed of eight people:*
      - (i) *Vice-Chairman of the Board or Chairman of the Personnel and Organization Committee.*
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- (ii) *One Trustee from the Ward chosen by a majority decision of the Trustees of the Ward. (When the Trustees of the Ward are unable to reach agreement as to which of them would sit on the Selection Committee, the Chairman of the Board will decide on Trustee representation on the Committee.)*
  - (iii) *Director of Education or an Associate Director of Education, or designate.*
  - (iv) *Two representatives chosen by T.T.F who may represent each of the schools.*
  - (v) *The Superintendent of the Area in which the regular school is situated. (or delegate)*
  - (vi) *Two parents, representing each of the schools. (These representatives must be chosen at a formally constituted meeting of the parents who have students at the school.*
3. *That when a principal vacancy occurs in an alternative school that does not share space with a regular elementary school, the following procedures be followed in the appointment of a principal:*
- (a) *The parents, teachers and students prepare a list of criteria they recommend be considered in the selection of their principal.*
  - (b) (i) *After discussing these criteria with representatives from the alternative school, the Area Superintendent will select a principal who best meets these criteria and who is accessible, available and willing to fulfill all the principal's responsibilities.*
    - (ii) *Prior to proceeding with item (c), the Area Superintendent shall consult the Ward Trustees and the Chairman of the Parent Board of the alternative school.*
  - (c) *In accordance with Board practice, the Director of Education shall recommend to the Personnel and Organization Committee the appointment of Principals to Alternative Schools.*
  - (d) *Following the appointment, the Area Superintendent will arrange a meeting to discuss the appointment and the principal's responsibilities under Board policy. To this meeting shall be invited a staff representative, a representative from the Parent Board and the newly appointed principal.*
4. *That further to Recommendation one, an alternative school which shares space with a regular school may request through the Director of Education that its principal be appointed by the method outlined in Recommendation three above.*
5. *That it be understood that when a principal of an alternative school transfers within the same Administrative Area, that the principal may continue to be principal of the alternative school if both the Area Superintendent and the alternative school agree it is appropriate.*
6. *That the principals of alternative elementary schools be advised that their duties and responsibilities are those outlined in The Education Act, 1974, the Regulations and in the policies of The Toronto Board of Education.*
7. *That each principal of an alternative school negotiate with her/his particular alternative school community concerning the most appropriate way of carrying out these responsibilities.*
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3. That at the request of both schools, the Area Superintendent shall consider a proposal for the sharing of staff and resources and the utilization of combined staff in the generation of such positions as: vice-principal, librarian, etc.
9. That the administrative structure and principal selection process be included as part of any proposal for a new alternative school.

#### B. Administration of Secondary Alternative Schools

1. That when a secondary alternative school is located at or associated with a Toronto Board of Education secondary school, the building principal may be appointed principal of the two schools.
2. When a principal vacancy occurs in a school as outlined in one above, then in keeping with present Board policy, staff, students and parents of the alternative school may submit up to three sets of criteria which they feel should be considered in the selection of a new principal. (It is expected that in many alternative school communities, staff, students and parents will co-operatively submit one set of criteria.)
3. That a seconded secondary school principal on special assignment to the Office of the Director of Education have among her/his responsibilities, that of principal of some alternative schools. (See Appendix D.)
4. That where a secondary alternative school wishes a supervisory officer appointed as principal, it may request that the Director of Education submit a request to the Minister of Education, through the Regional Director of Education, according to the format outlined in the Minister's letter of June 23, 1982. This format requires that the Director detail in each application the qualifications of the proposed appointee, the rationale for the appointment of a supervisory officer as principal, and the percentage of time the supervisory officer will be in the school performing the duties of principal as required in section 236 of the Education Act and section 12 of Regulation 262. In the eventuality that the request is denied, then the seconded secondary principal would become principal of that alternative school.

#### C. Administrative Review Procedure

1. If a serious problem arises in the administration of a particular alternative school and the matter cannot be solved by the school staff and the principal, then the following appeal procedure would apply:
  - (i) the School Superintendent,
  - (ii) the Area Superintendent,
  - (iii) the Director of Education,
  - (iv) the Board through the appropriate standing committee.

2. *At each of the above steps, it is expected that the following would be involved:*

- (i) the Assistant Superintendent, Alternative and Community Programs,*
  - (ii) the Chairman of the Alternative Schools' Advisory Council,*
  - (iii) the Chairman of the Parents' Committee,*
  - (iv) students and staff.*
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