

Whole Child School

Proposal for an Alternative Elementary School

For submission to the Toronto District School Board

September 30, 2007

Whole Child School

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	
Purpose.....	4
Definition of Holistic Education.....	4
Definition of a Whole Child.....	4
Background.....	4
The Need for Whole Child School.....	6
Objectives.....	6
Strategies.....	7
VISION	
Vision.....	10
Guiding Philosophy.....	10
Values.....	11
GOVERNANCE	12
External Holistic Education Authority.....	13
External Advisory Board.....	13
Specific Governance Model.....	15
CURRICULUM	17
Curriculum Research.....	17
Development of The Holistic Curriculum.....	17
Ten Key Principles for Development of WCS Curriculum.....	18
COMMUNITY	
Staffing.....	20
Training Opportunities.....	21
Students of Whole Child School.....	23
Projected Enrolment Model.....	24
Admission Process.....	25
SUMMARY	26
SPECIAL RECOGNITION	27

List of Tables

Table 1 - Minimum Projection Scenario.....	31
Table 2 - Target Projection Scenario.....	31
Table 3 - Maximum Projection Scenario.....	32

Introduction

Purpose

This document sets forth the proposal for the creation of Whole Child School (WCS) in Toronto-Danforth, Ward 15 within the Toronto District School Board's Alternative School Policy for the 2008-2009 school year. Whole Child School is a holistic elementary school that focuses on the development of the whole child.

Definition of Holistic Education

Ron Miller, founder of the journal *Holistic Education Review*, and among the best-known interpreters of the holistic education movement, defines Holistic Education as follows:

Holistic education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace. Holistic education aims to call forth from people an intrinsic reverence for life and a passionate love of learning. This is done, not through an academic "curriculum" that condenses the world into instructional packages, but through direct engagement with the environment. Holistic education nurtures a sense of wonder. The art of holistic education lies in its responsiveness to the diverse learning styles and needs of evolving human beings.

Definition of a Whole Child

According to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), a whole child is:

- intellectually active
- physically, verbally, socially, and academically competent
- empathetic, kind, caring, and fair
- creative and curious
- disciplined, self-directed, and goal oriented
- free
- a critical thinker
- confident
- cared for and valued

Background

Whole Child School was initiated by a group of educators and parents who share a common interest in establishing a holistic elementary school within the

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) (see Appendix I for list of WCS Executive Committee members). It is firmly believed that a holistic school which focuses on development of the whole child will deliver both a highly relevant educational model and fill a significant need within the Toronto public system.

There exists a high demand for a school that offers a holistic education, as evidenced by a tremendous community response to our initiative. Whole Child School's initial website, launched last fall, received 250 names of interested families within its first two months. This interest grew solely through word-of-mouth. At present, over 300 families have expressed interest in Whole Child School, 48% from the Toronto-Danforth area.

Holistic education is a progressive model of education currently gaining significant recognition globally. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the world's largest professional association of educators, has identified the Whole Child as its single priority for educational change. Through the convening of a formal Commission, comprised of leading thinkers, researchers and practitioners from a wide variety of sectors, they are calling for significant change in the educational landscape and that utmost priority be placed on education of the whole child. They have set out to "recast the definition of a successful learner from one whose achievement is measured solely by academic tests, to one who is knowledgeable, emotionally and physically healthy, civically inspired, engaged in the arts, prepared for work and economic self-sufficiency, and ready for the world beyond formal schooling." ASCD Executive Director Gene R. Carter states: "ASCD convened the Commission on the Whole Child because we believe that the success of each learner can only be achieved through a whole child approach to learning and teaching."

This movement is also evidenced at the professional academic level, with the growing offering of university courses on holistic education, university conferences on holistic education, and several books and journals, including *The Holistic Curriculum*, authored by John P. Miller, renowned professor at The University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

For the most part, real-life application of holistic education has been primarily instituted in the private sector. There are a handful of highly successful examples of private holistic pedagogies including Waldorf and Montessori; Waldorf, perhaps, being the most relevant to our application. As the fastest growing independent school movement in the world, Waldorf education is an exemplary model of holistic education with more than 2,000 Waldorf schools in over 46 countries.

Still relatively limited, however, is the application of holistic methodologies in the public system. The few that have emerged have become highly 'in demand' schools, often transforming inner city, lower-income communities and turning

around struggling educational systems. Waldorf methodology has been embraced at over 30 public schools in North America, 4 of which are in Quebec. Their collective success is outstanding; schools rank consistently among the top in their districts on test scores. Other public schools such as Hand Middle School in Columbia, North Carolina have incorporated elements of holistic education in their curriculum. As these examples demonstrate, holistic education can be successfully integrated into the public system, and furthermore, we believe it should be accessible to all children, irrespective of social or economic situation.

The Need for Whole Child School

To demonstrate the need for holistic education, and specifically Whole Child School, we will reference ASCD's *Report of the Commission on the Whole Child* (Appendix II). This leading organization, known throughout the profession for identifying educational trends, states that "a one-size-fits-all" education has marginalized the uniqueness of our children and eroded their capacity to learn in whole, healthy, creative and connected ways."

The Commission implores:

"Educators and the public have long agreed that education must both include and go well beyond the academics of reading, writing, and mathematics. Yet for our educational system and communities to develop whole children, we must act, not talk; act in fundamentally different, not marginally different ways; and act as schools, communities, and nations to ensure a deservedly brighter future for our children.

We are calling for a simple change that will have radical implications: put the child at the center of decision making and allocate resources - time, space, and human - to ensure each child's success. We call for a shift in how schools and communities look at young people's learning. Lay aside the perennial battles for resources and instead align those resources in support of the whole child."

Objectives

The objectives for Whole Child School are:

- 1) To nurture, inspire and educate the Whole Child.
- 2) To establish a holistic alternative public school offering kindergarten to grade 8 (graduated start with grade 6 in first year, grade 7 in second year, and grade 8 in third year) in Toronto-Danforth, Ward 15 for September 2008.
- 3) To found a landmark public holistic school within Canada. To create a prototype elementary school that becomes a leading benchmark for public holistic education.
- 4) To directly respond to ASCD's priority of focus on the Whole Child and fulfill the overwhelming community demand among TDSB parents and students for a public school dedicated to holistic education.

Strategies

The primary foundation elements of the School's strategy are:

Vision:

- 1) Develop a vision that underpins all further strategies and informs all actions undertaken in the development and implementation of the school. The vision is the school's backbone that instructs all else.

-The major aspects of vision include:

- Formulation of a core vision that inspires and motivates stakeholders -students, parents, teachers and community -- and serves as a constant guidepost to implementation of stakeholder actions
- Articulation of a guiding philosophy and core values that set the standards for the school's approach

Governance:

- 2) Establish a governance framework in accordance with the TDSB Alternative School Policy and Operating Procedures that formalizes and oversees implementation of the direction and vision for Whole Child School. Utilize the existing expertise on holistic education available across North America, benefiting from key learnings and best practices of established institutions.

-The major aspects of governance include:

- Constitution of an external Holistic Education Authority to establish standards and grant credentials
- Constitution of a working external Advisory Board of leading holistic education experts to guide planning, development and launch
- Development of a collaborative process for the creation of a governance model among four constituencies: students, parents, teachers and principals.

Curriculum:

- 3) Develop a customized holistic curriculum specific to the public system that synthesizes the best practices of holistic education available today, and is in accordance with Ontario Ministry guidelines.

-The major aspects of curriculum development include:

- Researching leading holistic methodologies such as Waldorf education, Montessori, and Reggio Emilio as well as those employed at current alternative schools, International Baccalaureate (IB) schools and other holistic schools

- Adoption of a holistic education framework that provides a superior structure and philosophy for the development of a customized curriculum
- Establishment of a curriculum development committee that will guide the curriculum development process in consultation with the WCS Advisory Board

Community:

- 4) Build an outstanding community of teachers, parents, and students that becomes the evolving, organic life force of Whole Child School.

-The major aspects of community building are:

- Attraction and hiring of a principal and teachers who have the motivation and skills to contribute to a vibrant school community, and can create a transformative, enriched learning experience.
- Implementation of an extensive outreach initiative that targets a diverse community of families, draws students from home-school and private school populations, and retains dissatisfied public school students considering leaving the system.

VISION

For Whole Child School, we envision:

A school that embraces the new educational culture emerging in North America, and expertly employs it through the right blend of vision, governance, curriculum and community. A school that stands out in the community, with a vibrant, organic culture that fully embraces and honours the whole child above all else. A school that employs exceptional teaching methods and a customized holistic curriculum, building on the best practices in holistic education available today. A school where all teachers and students are motivated and excited to be there. A school that draws wisdom and guidance from a skilled Advisory Board, comprised of leading experts and thinkers in the holistic field, ensuring a clear focus and integrity are consistently maintained.

Guiding Philosophy

“Everything we teach children should be so alive it can grow with them. Waldorf schools consider it their job to prepare people for the great school of life, which will itself ultimately bring them to maturity. In fact, schools shouldn’t focus on providing perfectly accomplished educations; they should prepare children to take possession of their lives.”

-- Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf education

“In linking their curriculum and schooling to the children’s developmental stages, Waldorf schools seem to have a unique sense of what children are ready for.... [They] promote creativity and critical thinking in an exemplary fashion....exactly the direction public education needs to move.”

-- Jack Miller, professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

At its core, WCS’s philosophy is to create a teaching and learning framework that inspires, educates and delivers a complete, holistic environment for children and teachers to thrive and grow. To truly educate a child, not only must the mind be engaged, but also the heart and the will.

Our mission is to develop healthy, responsible and creative human beings who realize the fullness of their potential in terms of creative expression and active participation in our civil society.

To educate the whole child we believe that:

- Learning occurs on many levels (physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual).

- Learning occurs in many ways.
- Effort, play and wonder are all part of learning.
- Learning is inspiring and engaging when the arts are integrated throughout the curriculum.
- Learning is brought to life by active participation in hands-on learning experiences.
- Learning is more meaningful when it is related to real-life contexts.
- Learning is facilitated in safe, nurturing, positive, and respectful learning environments.

Values

If we were to place a plaque on WCS's walls to remind us of what we're about, this is what it would read:

We care about children. We care about their academic work. We want them to see the unity of knowledge. We want students to see how subjects relate to one another and to the students themselves. We find that the arts, or more generally an artistic sense, can facilitate connections between subjects.

We care about how children think, and in particular, we try to encourage creative thinking. We want the students to be able to solve problems and use both analytical and intuitive thinking in the process.

We care about the physical development of the student. We devote part of the curriculum to activities that foster healthy bodies so they feel 'at home' with themselves.

We care about how students relate to others and to the community at large. We focus on communication skills, and as the students develop we encourage them to use these skills in a variety of community settings. We encourage the community to come to the school, particularly artists who can inspire students' aesthetic sense.

Most of all, we care about the students' being. We realize that the final contribution that they make to this planet will be from the deepest part of their being and not just from the skills we teach them. We can try to foster the spiritual growth of the student by working on ourselves as teachers, parents and community to become more conscious and caring. By working on ourselves, we hope to foster in our students a deep sense of connectedness within themselves and to other beings on this planet.

.

School Governance

It is important to acknowledge that the governance of Whole Child School is happening within the context of two higher levels of authority and governance. First, we must acknowledge the legislation and regulations of the Ministry of Education as it relates to primary school education in the Province of Ontario. Second, we must acknowledge the authority, policies and procedures of the Toronto District School Board. The delegation of authority from MEDU to TDSB and the accountability reporting from TDSB to MEDU must be respected as part of the status quo governance model at these two higher levels. Our intent is to ensure that the governance model for Whole Child School is aligned and integrated to the two higher levels.

The new TDSB Alternative School Policy and Operating Procedures provide guidance with respect to the development of a governance model for new alternative schools. Specifically, the Operating Procedures state:

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

The Executive Committee for the Whole Child School understands the importance of having a functional governance model for ongoing school operations and this section of our proposal will lay out our thinking in this regard. We also believe it is important to have guidance and supervisory oversight during the planning, development, and launch stages prior to the opening of Whole Child School. With this in mind our proposed governance framework has three major aspects:

1. The establishment of an external Holistic Education Authority that sets standards with respect to holistic curriculum, holistic teaching, and holistic teacher development. The Authority would be an independent organization with the capability of assessing a school's compliance with the holistic standards and would act in the capacity of a certifying or credentialing body.
2. The formation of an external Advisory Board with membership drawn from the community of holistic education experts. The Advisory Board

- will guide the Executive Committee during the planning, development and launch stages of Whole Child School.
3. The formation of a specific Governance Model for Whole Child School that reflects the five principles of good governance established by the United Nations Development Program:
 - Legitimacy and Voice
 - Direction
 - Performance
 - Accountability
 - Fairness

Each of these aspects is described in the following sections:

1. External Holistic Education Authority to Establish Standards and Grant Credentials

Our research has shown that one of the key challenges faced by alternative schools within TDSB is maintaining their focus on their original educational vision and mission. Often the original focus for alternative schools becomes diluted over time and the direction and vision for the school begins to drift. We intend to mitigate this problem from the outset.

Having studied the accreditation of private Waldorf schools as well as the IB Programmes offered in schools around the world, we are convinced that Whole Child School needs to be subject to an independent authority in holistic education. The independent authority would establish standards with respect to holistic curriculum, holistic teaching, and holistic teacher development. The authority would assess schools with respect to the established standards and where the standards are met would act in the capacity of a certifying or credentialing body. At present, we are aware of no such body or organization that can play this role for holistic public schools in general and WCS specifically.

We believe that by establishing the independent authority and subjecting WCS to assessment and certification we will ensure the highest quality of holistic education possible. We recognize that establishing an independent authority is an ambitious goal that will take significant time and resources to realize. However, we believe it is a necessary objective to ensure the long-term success not only of Whole Child School but other holistic primary schools that wish to follow this pattern. The independent authority on holistic education will assume a similar form to other central credentialing bodies, such as those that guide the IB Programme and Waldorf system.

The absence of an independent authority in holistic public education led us to develop the concept of an External Advisory Board.

2. External Advisory Board to guide Planning, Development and Launch

The Advisory Board is intended to be a functioning board that provides ongoing advice and guidance to the Whole Child School Executive Committee as we:

- Complete the planning phase for Whole Child School
- Enter the development phase for the Holistic Curriculum
- Move through the TDSB approval process for new alternative schools
- Launch the Whole Child School as a holistic primary school in 2008

The purposes of the Advisory Board are to:

1. Provide interim supervision to Whole Child School until such time as an independent authority can be established. The interim supervision and oversight role (and associated responsibilities) would be described as an element in the school governance model under the new TDSB alternative school policy.
2. Provide thought leadership and practical guidance on matters related to whole teaching. Advice with respect to appropriate instructional approaches and how individual teachers can adapt them into their own rhythms, inclinations and subject matter.
3. Provide thought leadership and practical guidance on matters related to the whole school environment (the physical environs - lighting, materials, colour schemes, etc.)
4. Provide thought leadership and practical guidance on matters related to holistic curriculum. This would include review and critical assessment of the Whole Child School curriculum to ensure it meets a “minimum, provisional standard” established by the Advisory Board for holistic curriculum.
5. Assist in the development of an independent authority that will establish full and authoritative standards for holistic curriculum, holistic teaching, and holistic teacher development.
6. Provide leadership and guidance to the teacher development process - specifically, to provide insight on the most appropriate methods for:
 - a. Assessment of existing TDSB teaching staff with respect to their ability to teach holistically
 - b. Identifying skills development and enrichment programs that will enable TDSB teaching staff to develop as holistic educators
7. Other purposes as determined by the Advisory Board and as approved by the WCS Executive Committee.

At present time, the Executive Committee of Whole Child School is delighted to be working in partnership with a fully constituted Advisory Board of leading professionals and educators in the holistic field. WCS is honoured to be

collaborating with Professor John P. Miller of the Department of Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Prof. Jack Miller is a highly recognized expert in the subject of holistic education; and, as a member of the WCS Advisory Board, he has assisted us in identifying and inviting other leading experts to join this initiative. The criteria for Advisory Board membership has been designed to provide the best possible mix of holistic education skills, expertise, and experience.

Please see the following table for a list of Advisory Board members:

Name	Organization
Jack Miller	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Farzaneh Peterson	Roger White Academy
Rina Cohen	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Dianne Edwards	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Kirby Mitchell	Public School Teacher
Marguerite Campbell	York University
Ana Neves	Hawthorne II Bilingual Alternative Public School
Wendy Agnew	Arts Educator
Sally Kotsopoulos	Ryerson University
Elisabeth Chomko	Waldorf and Public School Teacher
Diva Anderson	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
Marisa Ferrera	Discovery Private School

The Advisory Board reviewed and endorsed the substance of the Whole Child School proposal prior to submission to TDSB.

3. Specific Governance Model for Whole Child School

The guidance provided in the Operating Procedures for the new Alternative School policy clearly indicates the need for a collaborative development process for the governance model. Four constituencies are to be involved in the collaborative process: students, parents, teachers and principals. At this stage of the proposal process, the Whole Child School Committee has established relationships primarily with the parent community and through them the prospective student community. At this stage we have no access to either a principal or a teaching team. Consequently, we can only lay out our approach and process for the development of the WCS governance model.

Our approach incorporates the five principles of good governance identified earlier:

- Legitimacy and Voice
- Direction
- Performance

- Accountability
- Fairness

Legitimacy and Voice: To ensure the legitimacy of the governance process, it is necessary that all stakeholders have a voice in the decision-making process. To that end we shall ensure the participation of parents, students, teachers, and principals in the operation of Whole Child School as it relates to major decisions. Each stakeholder group will be represented by its own council and each council will operate on a consensus decision-making basis. Each council will be responsible for reaching a broad consensus on what is in the best interests of the group as it relates to the vision, mission, and goals of Whole Child School. Where appropriate, councils will be included in the development of policies and procedures for the operation of Whole Child School. The following councils are currently planned and may be constituted by the end of the governance model development process:

- Student Council
- Parent Council
- Teaching Council

In addition to these three councils, we envision a School Council for Whole Child School. Representatives from each of the four councils will be included on the School Council. The School Council will be responsible for ensuring the vision, mission, and goals of Whole Child School are stewarded appropriately when there are competing or conflicting recommendations arising from the stakeholder committees. Again, the School Council will use a consensus decision-making approach and will seek to find the best path forward taking all stakeholder interests into consideration.

Direction: Although the strategic vision for Whole Child School is already in place, it will be important for all stakeholders to bring their influence to the setting of the strategic direction for the school. We are confident that good and right leadership will emerge on both the councils and the School Council. The governance model and process for Whole Child School will ensure that leadership can emerge and that council leaders can influence the strategic direction for WCS.

Performance: The principle of performance speaks to responsiveness and the fact that WCS governance processes be responsive to, and serve the needs of, all stakeholders. It also speaks to effectiveness and efficiency, and the responsibility to make the best use of resources that are available. In the development phase of the governance model and process for Whole Child School, we will identify the specific indicators that best measure the performance of Whole Child School.

Accountability: The School Council will be accountable to the Whole Child School stakeholder groups (councils) for all significant decisions that are made. The School Council will make a full report of all significant decisions and the major factors that influenced them. The School Council will be transparent in its operations and will ensure a free flow of information about its activities and deliberations. Information will be made accessible to all stakeholders and it will be presented in plain language such that all stakeholders can understand them.

Fairness: All representative groups shall have equal opportunity to influence the governance of Whole Child School. The governance model and process that is finalized through consultation with all stakeholders will be fair and enforced impartially.

Developing the Governance Model and Process for Whole Child School

The governance model and process for Whole Child School will be developed as early as possible prior to school operation (i.e. as soon as representatives from all four stakeholder groups can be engaged). The governance framework presented here will be used as a “straw model” for the development process. We imagine that it will require a series of facilitated workshops with all

stakeholders engaged to finalize and approve the governance model and process. We also envision the Advisory Board will play a crucial role throughout the development of the governance model and process.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum Research

In the early development stages of Whole Child School, we did extensive research to determine the best holistic curriculum approach to implement at the school. Based on our committee's own collective experiences, working at Waldorf schools, IB schools, and public schools, as well as personal interviews with many others (including several alternative schools and private schools), it was concluded that the adoption of a single, defined approach was the ideal model. This provides a solid, established framework that eliminates ambiguity and vast differences in teacher interpretation. It provides a core philosophy upon which to build a successful school. We looked extensively at the Waldorf model, and its success at consistent application in over 2,000 schools around the globe; as well as its use in over 30 public schools in North America. Waldorf education has experienced phenomenal growth worldwide in recent years, demonstrating the growing relevancy of its approach. However, while highly resonant with our values, the Waldorf model alone didn't fully meet our vision. Aspects of other holistic pedagogies were equally attractive and valid for us to incorporate.

It was at this juncture that we began discussions with Jack Miller regarding use of his book, *The Holistic Curriculum*, and forging a formal relationship in support of Whole Child School. *The Holistic Curriculum* provides an excellent curriculum framework, combining the best practices of numerous approaches, and is an ideal template for the development of a holistic curriculum specific to Whole Child School. (See Appendix III for Principles of Whole Child School curriculum.)

Development of The Holistic Curriculum

Over the next year, a curriculum development committee comprised of a team of experienced educators, with the guidance and consultation of the WCS Advisory Board, will develop a WCS Holistic Curriculum that complies with the guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education. Each grade level and subject area will be addressed, providing teaching templates, resources and suggestive approaches. This curriculum will integrate the best practices of renowned holistic pedagogies and set a new standard for public holistic education in Canada.

Once in operation, Whole Child School will establish a curriculum resource room and database that will house supplementary teaching resources to support ongoing curriculum development at the school. Reflective of the school's team environment, support will also be provided to teachers through

optional workshops, information sessions, and peer groups with the aim of sharing ideas and resources to assist in the implementation of the holistic curriculum.

Ten Key Principles for Development of Whole Child School Curriculum

Whole Child School's holistic curriculum will be based on 10 key teaching and learning principles that are central to our holistic approach:

Arts-Integrated Education: Artistic, hands-on projects will be integrated into academic subjects in a way that engages the whole child - head, heart and hands - all at once rather than independently. Research shows that children learn best through a combination of artistic and aesthetic education.

Experiential Education: Hands-on activities are engaging and fun for children to explore and grapple with new concepts. When children are provided with open-ended, hands-on experiences they have the opportunity to discover the concept on their own and take ownership of their learning.

Community Learning and Teaching: Whole Child School will use the "class teacher" model, in which one teacher stays with the same group of children for two or three years. This structure helps create continuity and gradual transition from home to school community. Whole Child School will also work outside the classroom to build our larger student/parent/teacher community through community events and festivals.

Subject Connections: A natural connection will be made between school subjects producing an integrated curriculum. Teachers present new academic material during the "main lesson" at the beginning of the day. Several subjects are integrated around a broad theme with one subject being the main focus of a three to four week lesson block. The teaching and learning of academic material is built from one day to the next and the understanding of the subject gradually deepens over the course of the lesson block. Central to each main lesson block are the arts, as it is the artistic sense that helps to connect the different subjects.

Teaching through Narrative: Throughout all the grades, stories are told to the children in a storytelling format. Using narrative provide children with a conceptual framework within which they can orientate themselves and understand their experiences. Teachers will primarily share content in oral form, especially in the earlier grades. Teachers will inspire students to identify with historical characters in stories historic simulations, drama, role-playing and storytelling.

The Use of Imagery: Using imagery ("mental pictures") is an essential element of the Whole Child approach. When presenting facts teachers will strive to present information with both pictorial and emotional elements. Our goal is to present learning to children in a way that fills them with wonder and enthusiasm. We will employ several visualization techniques to help facilitate

cohesiveness in the classroom, motivate student interest, and support creative writing. The use of metaphor will encourage the student to draw connections between ideas and subject matter; it will encourage the student to see patterns, provoke inquiry and stimulate the creative process.

A "Living" Classroom: Teachers and students, together, will create learning experiences from a variety of sources. Teachers will use a wide variety of materials and resources, including prepared worksheets, texts, maps, diagrams, drama, music, poetry, multimedia and living things. Students will use blank journals to write and illustrate what they have learned and observed.

Earth Connections: Students reawaken to the natural processes of life by connecting to the earth. The curriculum will teach students not only about environmental problem solving, but more importantly, how we are fundamentally embedded in the natural processes of the earth. We will provide hands-on experiences with the earth's processes through activities such as a community garden. Ecological literacy will help students see the connections that are inherent in the environment, learn the basic laws of ecology and its impact on our day-to-day lives.

Community Connections: Fostering community will be a significant priority in WCS's curriculum. In the classroom, we will use cooperative education, the use of small groups in which students learn to trust each other and work together, to encourage community. Positive interactions and conflict resolution will be taught, supporting students to provide positive feedback to each other, make decisions and solve problems. Students will also connect to the surrounding and global community through community service activities or social change programs.

Body-Mind Connections: The curriculum will stress a natural connection between body and mind. Students will be encouraged to explore the connections between their body and emotions, and to develop a sense of what their bodies have to say. A priority will also be placed on healthy, positive communication and mindfulness in all actions - being aware of what one is doing, while doing it. Techniques employed to stimulate the mind-body connection in the classroom will include drama, creative movement, dance, performance and role-play, yoga, meditation and relaxation.

COMMUNITY

Staffing

“The holistic curriculum is rooted in the presence of the teacher. If we recall the teachers who have had an impact on us, it is often not their teaching techniques that we remember but their ‘presence’ that somehow touched us.”
--Jack Miller

Critical to successfully implementing the School’s strategy is the right team of people. The staff are the leaders of the school; they must possess the appropriate skills, experience and inclination to set the defined environment and successfully implement the holistic curriculum. The following profiles outline the desired attributes for the staff.

Principal Profile

“The principal takes risks and thus encourages risk-taking in teachers; she does this by being open and vulnerable....by not being afraid.”
--Jack Miller

Whole Child School’s principal will have a personal commitment to and interest in the application of holistic education. The principal will have a holistic vision, and will support teachers in their efforts to develop and use the holistic curriculum. The principal will care for the staff, and be fully present to teachers, in the same way that teachers will be fully present with their students. He/she will be a strong team leader, with a desire to work collectively with a highly dedicated staff and supportive parent committee. The principal will recognize and welcome organic change, and the evolving nature of the growth of a holistic school.

An entrepreneurial spirit will welcome the challenges inherent in the start-up stages of a new school, while strong organization skills will ensure the effective management of the daily needs of the school’s operation. Above all, he/she will feel inspired to be a part of an exciting new collaborative venture, ready to share in the development of the highest standard in holistic public education.

Teacher Profile

“The holistic curriculum has its roots in the consciousness of teachers who are authentic and caring.... The curriculum [in a holistic school] is important; but a holistic curriculum in the hands of a transmission-oriented teacher will become a transmission curriculum.”
--Jack Miller

It is said a school is only as good as its teachers. At a holistic school, where all are viewed respectfully in a collective process of creating a whole, this is even truer. The selection of teachers for Whole Child School is paramount to the success of the school.

Whole Child School teachers will be certified by the Ontario Ministry of Education and included on the eligibility list for TDSB. They will share a strong affinity for holistic education; personal interest and/or experience in holistic education would definitely be an asset.

Similar to the Waldorf model, teachers will possess a keen willingness to learn and grow themselves. Commitment to individual self-development and self-awareness is a primary tenet of holistic education. Teachers do not operate separate from their students; but are viewed in a wholly relational context. This also translates to fellow teachers. A community energy will be created at the school, with teachers drawing intellectual, philosophical, and personal support from each other. Teachers will come together as a whole, each recognizing their specific contribution to the mandala of the school environment.

At present time, Whole Child School has a list of over 15 board certified educators who have expressed firm interest in becoming a part of this school. This diverse group of educators shares a common commitment to holistic education and the philosophies of Whole Child School. Given this overwhelming interest, it is clear we have the quality of teachers ready to embrace a new culture, and eager to participate in a significant personal growth opportunity. It is this level of desire and motivation on behalf of teachers that will cement the success of the School. To fully support this creation of a true holistic school, WCS's Advisory Board will offer assistance, as needed, in the assessment of staff applicants with respect to their ability to teach holistically.

Training Opportunities

For those teachers that desire additional training¹ for their experience at Whole Child School, several opportunities will be offered. First, Whole Child

¹ While we recognize and agree that all additional training will be fully optional, in accordance with union requirements, it is anticipated that virtually all staff will embrace the opportunity for professional development and enrichment. The WCS Executive Committee undertook extensive research to better understand the cultures and workings at "special status" schools within TDSB such as those that employ the International Baccalaureate curriculum. Each school shared similar experiences – unanimous commitment to further training. Teachers seem to be universally delighted to be a part of such positive school environments and they voluntarily welcome opportunities to expand their growth.

School's Advisory Board will provide customized teacher training, specific to Whole Child School educators. This group of highly qualified thought leaders, professionals, and educators are eager to support and nurture the development of holistic educators within the public school system. Intrinsic to the Board's involvement with WCS is their commitment to share wisdom and knowledge in the development of staff competency in holistic education. Along with initial training sessions, special workshops will also be held periodically at the school, continuously providing teachers with an opportunity to enrich their classroom experience.

Second, the Rudolf Steiner Centre in Thornhill, which trains Waldorf teachers, has agreed to offer special opportunities for public school teachers to gain Waldorf training. This process will be modeled after the Public School Institute at the Rudolf Steiner College in California. The Public School Institute runs specific training courses for public school teachers to learn the Waldorf model. Educators learn how infusing a standard curriculum with the arts and Waldorf methodology can lead to an empowering, transformative educational experience for both teachers and students. More than 1,000 teachers have attended the Public School Institute in the eleven years since it was created.

Third, additional training and support will also be made available through the Centre for Teacher Development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. OISE offers graduate level courses on holistic education; holds biannual conferences focused on holistic education, and hosts regular meetings of the Holistic Learning and Spirituality in Education Network. This group aims to foster communication and networking among educators interested in Holistic Learning.

The Students of Whole Child School

Whole Child School's Committee has conducted an outreach campaign to inform the community of our initiative, and reach out to potential families. Through a website (www.wholechildschool.ca), email communications, and posters, we have communicated our initiative to families across Toronto, with emphasis in the east end. Through these efforts, we have collected a significant list of supporters and prepared the ground for school registration.

Student Profile

To better understand the makeup of our potential school population, we conducted a survey with our list of supporters. From this, we gained the following key learnings (Appendix IV for results chart):

- Toronto families are looking for alternatives for their children's education. 96% of respondents indicated they were either very (80%) or somewhat interested (16%) in Whole Child School.
- Whole Child School will primarily draw from the Toronto-Danforth (48%) and Beaches-East York (25%) Wards, with a combined 73% of respondents from these two wards.
- One third of Whole Child School students will come from outside the Toronto District School Board. Whole Child School will attract students from the home-schooling population (13%) and private schools (17%). 70% will come from within the public system, many who are dissatisfied with their current situation and are considering alternatives.
- Over 300 families representing more than 500 children are interested in WCS. Of these, 182 children will be of school age for the school's first year. The remaining 300+ children are of preschool age, and will be eligible for enrolment in JK over the next three years. Please refer to the detailed survey results in Appendix IV.

In summary, based on these first survey results, Whole Child School is a highly engaging proposition for families in the east end of Toronto, many of whom are currently outside the public system. This fall we will be holding our first General Meeting (October 16, 7:00 p.m. at Ralph Thornton Community Centre) to meet the parent body in person, answer any questions, and provide more detailed information on our vision.

Projected Enrolment Model

Based on the above survey results, we have developed a projected enrolment model for Whole Child School. Our model describes three possible scenarios for enrolment projections: minimum, target and maximum.

Scenario 1: Minimum Projection

In the minimum projection scenario, we estimate a total of 100 students would enrol in Whole Child School in the first school year. The following table describes the minimum projection.

Table 1 - Minimum Projection Scenario

Class Type	Number of Classes	Max Class Size	Percent Full	Est. No. of Students
JK - Half time	1	20	75%	15
SK - Half time	1	20	75%	15
Grade 1	1	20	75%	15
Grade 2	1	20	75%	15
Grade 3-4	1	30	67%	20
Grade 5-6	1	30	67%	20
Total Students				100

In this scenario we project only one class for JK and SK. We also project a 67 - 75% fill rate for each grade level. We project that grades 3 and 4 are a combined class. We project that grades 5 and 6 are a combined class.

Scenario 2: Target Projection

In the target projection scenario, we estimate a total of 132 students would enrol in Whole Child School in the first school year. The following table describes the target projection.

Table 2 - Target Projection Scenario

Class Type	Number of Classes	Max Class Size	Percent Full	Est. No. of Students
JK - Half time	2	20	75%	30
SK - Half time	2	20	75%	30
Grade 1	1	20	75%	15
Grade 2	1	20	75%	15
Grade 3-4	1	30	70%	21
Grade 5-6	1	30	70%	21
Total Students				132

In this scenario we project two JK and SK classes. We also project a 70 - 75% fill rate for each grade level. We project a combined grade 3 and 4 as well as a combined grade 5 and 6.

Scenario 3: Maximum Projection

In the maximum projection scenario, we estimate a total of 162 students would enrol in Whole Child School in the first school year. The following table describes the maximum projection.

Table 3 - Maximum Projection Scenario

Class Type	Number of Classes	Max Class Size	Percent Full	Est. No. of Students
JK - Half time	2	20	90%	36
SK - Half time	2	20	90%	36
Grade 1	1	20	90%	18
Grade 2	1	20	90%	18
Grade 3-4	1	30	90%	27
Grade 5-6	1	30	90%	27
Total Students				162

In this scenario we project two JK and SK classes. We also project a 90% fill rate for each grade level. We project a combined grade 3 and 4 as well as a combined grade 5 and 6.

We recognize there is considerable variance between the minimum, target, and maximum enrolment projection scenarios. We plan to reduce the variance in our projection scenarios by conducting a second survey of the parent community. Our second survey will be a more precise instrument that not only measures the number of school age attending children but also the degree of commitment to attendance on behalf of the parent community. We believe that our results from our second survey will allow us to refine our projected enrolment model so that it is more accurate and has a higher degree of confidence. We expect to have the results of the second survey by late October 2007.

Admission Process

Whole Child School's Principal and governing School Council will establish admission criteria for the school. As a TDSB alternative school, an Optional Attendance Policy will be followed. Our admissions process will include a mandatory Open House where we will present the philosophy and approach of the school to potential students and their families. We will also provide an application form to allow prospective families to communicate their interest in

Whole Child School. Finally, a personal interview and tour of the school will be held with each applicant.

Summary

Whole Child School has the potential to be a leading prototype school within the Toronto District School Board. We possess all the key cornerstones for the success of a school: a strong, clear vision that resonates with our communities, a governance model backed by solid industry expertise, a curriculum geared specifically to our school, and tremendous support from all stakeholders in our community.

The concept for Whole Child School belongs in the public school system. Holistic education is no longer a niche interest - it is for every child, everywhere. The largest professional association of educators in the world has identified holistic education as their top priority - evidence that the mainstream has embraced this fully. Whole Child School is perfectly timed to bridge the emerging theory and the community demand to create an exemplary school.

We have:

- Tremendous community support. Over 300 families representing over 500 children with firm interest in attending the school.
- A committed, skilled, working executive committee, along with an extensive volunteer support base to assist with the launch and operation of the school.
- A supportive neighbourhood community in Toronto-Danforth that would welcome us and endorse our philosophy.
- An enviable Advisory Board of leading holistic educators that will guide the vision, direction and realization of WCS.
- The development of a customized curriculum that will build on the best practices in holistic methodologies available today.
- A list of board certified teachers who have expressed interest and enthusiasm in becoming a part of Whole Child School's teaching staff.

To sum up, we strongly believe we have all the components we need to not only succeed but to become a landmark holistic school within the Canadian public educational system.

In closing, we would like to leave you with a quote - one that has called on us as educators and parents to introduce Whole Child School, and one that the ASCD in fact chose to introduce their Report on the Whole Child:

"Each moment we live never was before and will never be again. And yet what we teach children in school is $2 + 2 = 4$ and Paris is the capital of France. What we should be teaching them is what they are. We should be saying: "Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the world

there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed, there has never been another child exactly like you. You may become a Shakespeare, a Michelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel.”

--Pablo Casals

Special Recognition

The Whole Child School Executive Committee would like to provide special recognition to a number of key individuals who have had profound influence on the development of our vision.

First, we are indebted to Jack Miller for wholeheartedly supporting Whole Child School, for leading the formation of our Advisory Board, and for permitting WCS to use his book as the foundation for our holistic curriculum. His vision for holistic public education is outstanding, and he has provided an exceptional blueprint for this initiative.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the Waldorf community in Toronto. In our very early development stages, our committee met with a number of people from this community.

WCS will join the ranks of many other outstanding alternative schools in TDSB. We are grateful for the time several of them took to share their challenges and their successes.

We also spoke extensively with many IB schools across Toronto to better understand the application of a special curriculum within the Board. They were most willing to support us, and provided a highly positive and encouraging viewpoint of the phenomenal results a little ‘out of the box’ thinking can deliver.

In addition, we would like to express our deep thanks to our local team of stakeholders - Cathy Dandy, School Trustee, Jill Worthy, TDSB Superintendent, and Sandra Best, Alternative Schools Liaison Development Manager. Each of the meetings we had with these individuals provided a wealth of knowledge and information for us. Through their feedback and guidance we were able to better understand the priorities of TDSB and refine our vision. Their help has been immeasurable.

Further, our team of dedicated volunteers extends well beyond our Executive Committee of 12 individuals. We have had many committed parents and teachers contribute to the actualization of this proposal - from hanging posters, to developing our website, to researching curricula, to meeting with schools, to attending countless meetings and so on. If the Executive Committee has been the driving force behind this initiative, it is this larger group of volunteers that has provided for an efficient delivery.

And, finally, we’d like to acknowledge the broad base of supporters that Whole Child School has attracted. It can no less be described than an ‘outpouring’ of fervent support from the larger community. Since the launch of our website, October 2006, not a day has gone by when we haven’t received an email full of

accolades and offers of support for our initiative: “What can I do to help?” “This is exactly the type of school I want my kids to go to.” “Where do I sign up?” “How can I teach here?” “How do I petition the Board?” and on and on. It was clear from day one that Whole Child School touched many - it resonated at a deep level for those looking for more for their children, for an education that truly recognizes, nurtures, and inspires the Whole Child.

Appendix

- I List of Whole Child School Executive Committee Members

- II ASCD Report of the Commission on the Whole Child
www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/WholeChild/WCClearning

- III Principles of Whole Child School Curriculum

- IV Parent Community Survey Results

- V Educational Leadership publication, *Engaging the Whole Child, Summer 2007*
www.ascd.org

- VI Articles on Waldorf Education: The Wisdom of Waldorf, Education for the Future
Taking a Risk in Education

Appendix I - List of WCS Executive Committee Members

Name	Role
Deborah Adelman	Co-chair/Curriculum Lead
Stephen Davies	Co-chair /Executive lead
Hope MacLeod	Proposal Lead
Anthony Gonsalves	Treasurer
Kelly Drennan	Communications/Outreach Lead
Alusha Morris	Secretary
Winston Neutel	Website/Survey Lead
Robyn Steven Matamoros	Waldorf Liaison
Louise Zimanyi	TDSB Liaison
Tamara Brodey	Curriculum Research
April Nicolle	Research/Events Lead
Genevieve Lennox	Creative Lead

Appendix III - Principles of Whole Child School Curriculum

According to Jack Miller in *The Holistic Curriculum*, holistic education is founded on three principles: balance, inclusion, and connection. Whole Child School will base its curriculum on these three overarching principles.

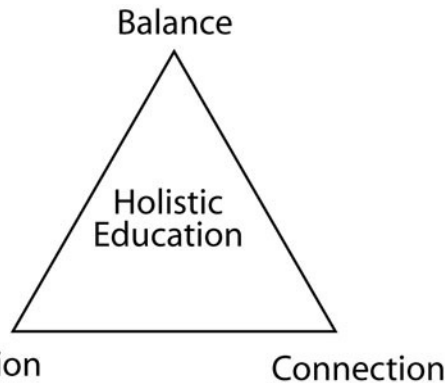


Figure 1 - Three Overarching Principles

BALANCE

The philosophical roots for balance come from the Tao and the concepts of *yin* and *yang*, which are seen as complementary and interconnected energies. The yin and yang need each other for there to be health in the cosmos, the earth, cultures, institutions, and the individual. Some examples of yin and yang in the classroom are the following:

Yin

Group
Process



Imagination
Qualitative Assessment
assessment
Instruction/learning
Program
Vision

Yang

Individual
Content

Knowledge
Quantitative
Assessment/evaluation
Technology
Techniques/strategies

We will continuously revisit the balance between these yin and yang elements in the classroom. For example, in the early years a greater emphasis may be

placed on cooperative learning rather than individual achievement and competition. In this context, the teacher may decide that qualitative assessment in the form of portfolios is more effective than marks and testing. However, at a later date the teacher may decide to assess the students through a test.

INCLUSION

Another way to look at holistic education is to link together various educational orientations. The three educational orientations are: *transmission*, *transaction*, and *transformation*. At WCS we will aim to teach mainly from a transformation position.

Transmission

In transmission learning the student acquires and accumulates knowledge and skills. Knowledge is seen as fixed rather than a process, and is usually broken down into smaller units so that students can master the material. Transmission learning is common when we begin to learn a particular skill. The relationship between the curriculum and child is illustrated in the following diagram:

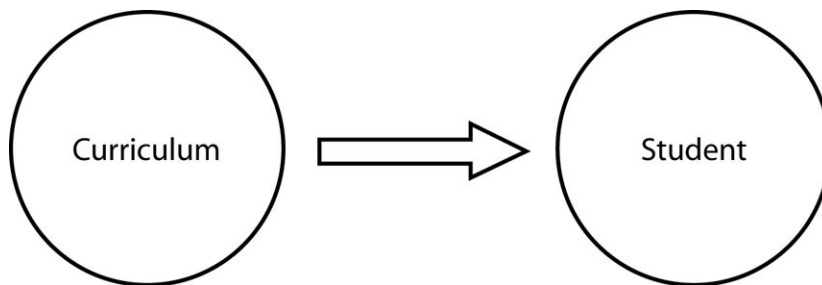


Figure 2 - Transmission

Transaction Position

Transactional learning is more interactive, although the interaction is mainly cognitive. The transaction position can be characterized by an emphasis on dialogue between the teacher and the student. However, this dialogue stresses cognitive interactions since analysis is stressed more than synthesis and thinking more than feeling. Teaching models that are based in the transaction position usually have some set of procedures for inquiry and problem solving.

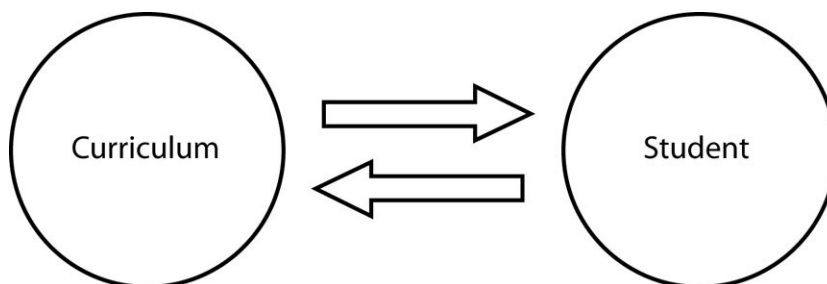


Figure 3 - Transaction

Transformation Position

Transformational learning acknowledges the wholeness of the child. The curriculum and the child are no longer seen as separate but as connected. The teacher working from this position will use strategies such as creative problem solving, cooperative learning, and the arts, which encourage students to make various types of connections. These connections make learning personally and socially meaningful to the student.

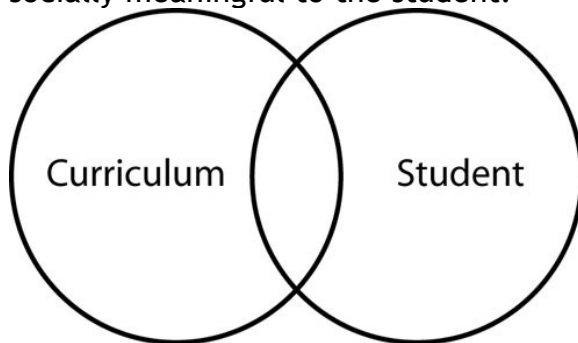


Figure 4 - Transformation

In the transformation position we are also concerned about the links with the other forms of learning as shown in the following diagram. Here the transmission position is the smallest while the transformation position is the most inclusive.

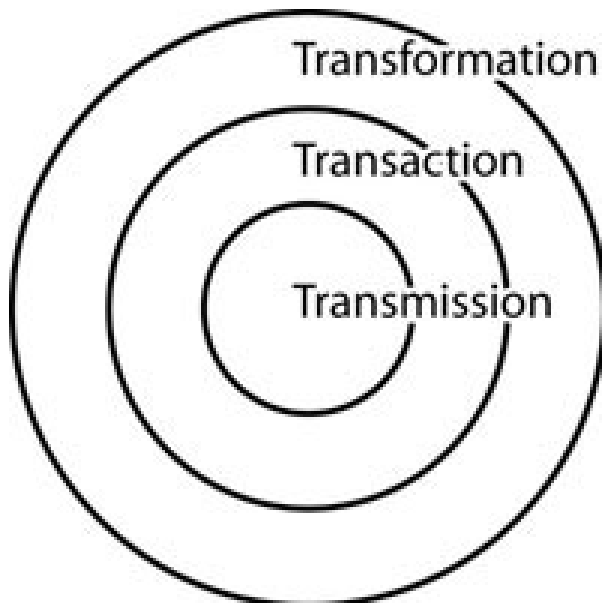


Figure 5 - Holistic Stance

CONNECTIONS

The focus of holistic education is on relationships or connections: our relationship between linear thinking and intuition, our relationship between mind and body, our relationship among various domains of knowledge, our relationship between the individual and the community, our relationship to the earth, and our relationship to the soul. In the holistic curriculum the student examines these connections so that he or she gains both an awareness of them, and the skills necessary to transform the relationships where it is appropriate.

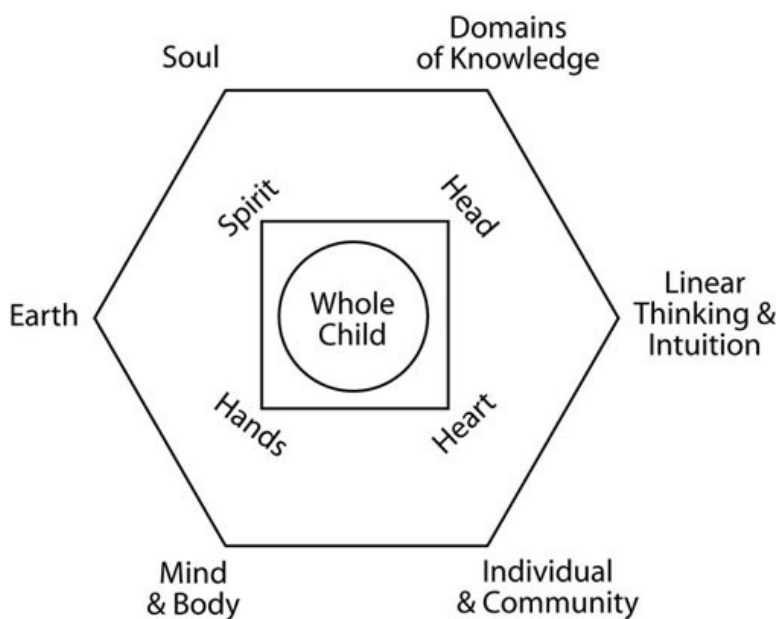


Figure 6 - Connections

Intuitive Connections

The curriculum will address a balance between linear thinking and intuition. Intuition is a direct knowing. In contrast, linear cognition involves a sequential observable process. If our thinking is dominated by one mode, it is much less effective. If the emphasis is on linear, analytic thinking, we can become plodding in our approach and lose our spontaneity in dealing with problems. If we only stress the intuitive, then we can lose our ground. While there is much evidence that intuition is integral to creativity, it is unfortunately largely underemphasized in traditional schooling.

Two of the main methods of developing intuition in the classroom are: *visualization* and *metaphor*.

The WCS Curriculum will employ several visualization techniques to help facilitate cohesiveness in the classroom, motivate student interest, and support creative writing. The use of metaphor will encourage the student to draw connections between ideas and subject matter; it will encourage the student to see patterns, provoke inquiry and stimulate the creative process.

Body-Mind Connections

The curriculum will stress a natural connection between body and mind. Students will be encouraged to explore the connections between their body and emotions, and to develop a sense of what their bodies have to say. A priority will also be placed on healthy, positive communication and mindfulness in all actions - being aware of what one is doing, while doing it. Mindfulness and a focus on breath encourage the student to slow down and be present with one task at a time.

Techniques employed to stimulate the mind-body connection in the classroom will include drama, creative movement, dance, performance and role-play, yoga, meditation and relaxation.

Subject Connections

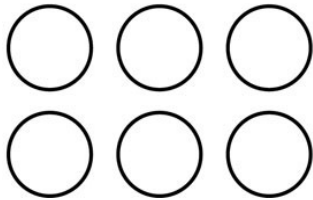
A natural connection will be made between school subjects at WCS, producing an integrated curriculum. This will occur at a number of levels, with a strong focus on transdisciplinary teaching.

At the *multidisciplinary* level, the curriculum retains separate subjects but establishes linkages between them. For example, the history teacher might reference the literature and art of a specific historical period and explore how the art was representative of that period.

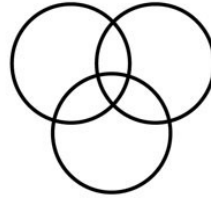
At the *interdisciplinary* level, two or three subjects are integrated around a theme or problem. For example, in examining the problem of city traffic and other problems of urban planning, subjects such as economics, political science, design technology, and mathematics can be brought together and integrated.

At the *transdisciplinary* level, several subjects are integrated around a broad theme. Waldorf education is a good example of the *transdisciplinary* model. In a Waldorf School, the morning's instruction begins with the main lesson, which runs from approximately 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. The main lesson brings together English, mathematics, geography, history, and science. Central to each main lesson are the arts, as it is the artistic sense that integrates the main lesson.

Multidisciplinary Level
Transmission



Interdisciplinary Level
Transaction



Transdisciplinary Level
Transformation

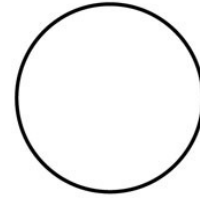


Figure 7 - Subject Connections

Community Connections

Fostering community will be a significant priority in WCS’s curriculum. In the classroom, we will use cooperative education, the use of small groups in which students learn to trust each other and work together, to encourage community. Positive interactions and conflict resolution will be taught, supporting students to provide positive feedback to each other, make decisions and solve problems.

A deep sense of school community or “sanctuary” will be created throughout the school. In a sanctuary, both teachers and students look forward to being at school, as they feel nourished by the environment. This environment is one of respect, caring, and even reverence.

Students will also connect to the surrounding and global community through community service activities or social change programs.

Earth Connections

Students reawaken to the natural processes of life by connecting to the earth. The curriculum will teach students not only about environmental problem solving, but more importantly, how we are fundamentally embedded in the natural processes of the earth. We will provide hands-on experiences with the earth’s processes through activities such as a community garden. Ecological literacy will help students see the connections that are inherent in the environment, learn the basic laws of ecology and its impact on our day-to-day lives.

Soul Connections

Finally, the WCS curriculum will strive to connect students with their inner lives, or souls. The soul is defined here as a vital and mysterious energy that gives meaning and purpose to one’s life. Connection to the student’s inner being will be nourished through narrative and storytelling. Storytelling calls on the imagination. In Waldorf education, storytelling is an integral part of most lessons. For example, the four math processes (multiplication, division,

addition, and subtraction) are taught through an imaginative story. WCS will also develop the moral imagination through literature, fairy tales, and mythology. To support an awareness of inner peace, WCS will create a sacred and calm space to explore meditation and centering practices, such as breathing and visualization.

Appendix IV - Parent Community Survey Results

Whole Child Survey Results - As at September 18th, 2007

Childrens ages

Age	#	%
<1	112	22%
1	63	12%
2	96	19%
3	58	11%
4	42	8%
5	39	8%
6	24	5%
7	15	3%
8	17	3%
9	21	4%
10	12	2%
11	12	2%
12	2	0%
Total	513	

Projected Class Sizes 2008

Grade	#
JK	42
SK	39
1	24
2	15
3	17
4	21
5	12
6	12
Total Students	182

Wards Represented

Ward	#	%
Toronto-Danforth	153	48%
Beaches-East York	80	25%
Trinity-Spadina	22	7%
I Don't Know My Ward	13	4%
Davenport	13	4%
Toronto Centre-Rosedale	8	3%
Eglinton-Lawrence	6	2%
Don Valley West	5	2%
St. Paul's	5	2%
Don Valley East	5	2%
Scarborough Southwest	4	1%
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	4	1%
Scarborough East	2	1%
Total	320	

Interest Level

Level	#	%
very	270	80%
somewhat	53	16%
unsure	16	5%
Total	339	

School Types

Type	#	%
public	141	69%
private	34	17%
homeschool	26	13%
catholic	4	2%
Total	205	