

School Address

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Director of Education

Chris Spence

OUR SCHOOL

Welcome to **Avondale Secondary Alternative School !**

For more than 30 years *Avondale* has offered an alternative vision of secondary education in the public system to students throughout Toronto. Located in a tree-lined, established community, just a ten-minute walk from the Sheppard Subway Station and a five-minute walk from local bus routes, *Avondale* is a small, safe, family-like school with an intimate and personal feel. At *Avondale*, students learn in a small, rigorous academic setting where close working relationships with staff and students are valued and celebrated.

So what's **alternative** about *Avondale Secondary* ?

We offer a variety of non-semestered *academic* courses, designed to prepare secondary students for post-secondary education. At *Avondale*, small classes meet in challenging, intensive study, lab and discussion formats (typically two to three sixty-minute classes per subject.) Students also meet regularly with their teachers in tutorial groups and one to one sessions to extend and deepen classroom experiences. Significant emphasis is placed on the development of personal independence and accountability.

Collectively, staff and students share the commitment and responsibility to build/maintain an emotionally, intellectually and physically safe learning environment. We engage in community-wide decision-making through student governance initiatives, such as weekly 'town hall' meetings and an enthusiastic and creative student council.

Avondale is what we all believed school *could* be.

Special Features

- ✦ we offer an exciting range of non-semestered academic classes, grounding rigorous theory and practical application across subject areas
- ✦ we offer personal, collaborative working relationships between staff and students on a first name basis
- ✦ we offer multi-media courses taught both by working professional artists and TDSB arts teachers; students can participate in Earl Haig Secondary School co-curricular theatrical performances and sports teams
- ✦ we offer an extended physical education program at the Bayview YMCA (including squash, fitness training, basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer)
- ✦ we offer a strong orientation towards social justice and activism, reflected in culminating events/activities such as this year's "Raise Your Voice!" conference on Africa

OUR STUDENTS (As of spring 2008)

	No.	Percent
✦ Total number of students:	82	
✦ Gender:		
Female	46	56%
Male	36	44%
✦ Primary language other than English:	22	27%*
✦ Students born outside of Canada:		
Students living in Canada for 2 years or less	1	1%
Students living in Canada for 3 - 5 years	4	5%

* Calculation does not include students for whom language information is missing.

THE SCHOOL BOARD PROVIDES:

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB), in partnership with students, parents, teachers and all our communities, is committed to taking responsibility for continuous improvement of schools. This is achieved through:

- ♦ **Relevant Curriculum**
- ♦ **Equity**
- ♦ **Accountability**

Regular Instructional Programs

In addition to the regular instructional program mandated by *The Ontario Curriculum*, our school offers optional programs. Details of these programs can be found in the Choices document available on the TDSB web (TDSB.on.ca). A hardcopy is provided to students and parents in January of each year to assist them in choosing courses for the following school year.

Special Education Programs

A variety of special education programs and services are offered to meet the needs of all students, including students with exceptionalities, such as behavioural, communication, intellectual, physical and multiple learning disabilities. Students' exceptionalities are identified through a formal review process undertaken by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).

OUR SCHOOL ALSO OFFERS:

Co-Curricular

Arts Programs

- ♦ Dance:
Concert & Performances
- ♦ Dramatic Arts:
Drama Workshops, Live Production/Play
- ♦ Integrated Programs:
Learning through the Arts
- ♦ Music:
Excursions, Guitar, Music Concerts / Performances
- ♦ Visiting Artists:
Music, Visual Arts
- ♦ Visual Arts:
Ceramics, Excursions, Film/Video Workshops, Photography, Visual Arts Workshops

Clubs

- ♦ Chess
- ♦ Environmental

Leadership

- ♦ Student Activity Council:
Student Council
- ♦ Student Leadership:
Social Justice Committee

Community, Culture and Caring

Community - Mentoring

- ♦ School Based:
Peer Mentoring

Information about the success of our programs comes from a wide variety of student assessments. These assessments are based on clear expectations for all learners, consistent with those described in *The Ontario Curriculum*.

The primary purpose of student assessment is to improve learning. Assessment has the greatest potential to improve learning when it is an integral part of classroom activities. Teachers assess student progress towards achieving the expectations on an ongoing basis by using strategies such as projects, class presentations, homework assignments, classroom observations, portfolios of student work, and tests.

Schools use assessment information and information from other sources to make informed decisions for school improvement planning. Schools identify areas of strength as well as areas that require improvement. Input is obtained from a variety of sources such as student assessments, teacher feedback, parent feedback, and community surveys. In this way, schools monitor, celebrate and improve their efforts in providing a supportive and challenging learning environment for all their students.

WHAT OUR SCHOOL IS PLANNING FOR THIS YEAR

Exciting secondary initiatives for 2007-08

The staff at Avondale Secondary Alternative School are excited to offer another terrific selection of engaging courses in the sciences, arts, humanities, languages, and maths. This year, teachers will offer either three sixty-minute classes per subject, or two sixty-minute classes and sixty minutes of tutorial time (to be arranged by students in consultation with teachers.) Our goal is to encourage greater student independence and engagement, while preparing students to advocate powerfully for themselves at the college and/or university level. Avondale graduates typically make a seamless transition to post-secondary institutions, often securing scholarships and grants at the school of their choice.

We are very excited to offer an annual social justice symposium in May: this year's theme is "Raise Your Voice!" centered around Africa and Darfur. Student presentations and colloquia will engage salient issues on this topic. This symposium supports our mission to broaden students' understanding of literacy as relevant not only to the humanities but also to the sciences, arts, and maths.

In the arts, Avondale students initiate, plan and supervise a number of school events, including concerts and 'Coffee Houses' (featuring home-grown talent and special guest performers from the GTA music scene), community pot-luck 'international lunches', and independent film screenings (featuring the culminating work of our film/video students.) We will also continue to extend our "catalyst" arts programs into real-world applications and settings, e.g. use of professional editing facilities at Charles Street Video studios; expansion of photography course to focus on digital formats; New York City/Montreal trip, focusing on museums, galleries and theatrical productions.

A central School Improvement Plan initiative for 07-08 is the continuing development and support of our dynamic science program, featuring hands-on labs and critical problem-solving in a highly collaborative and dialogue-based environment. This approach to science complements the Avondale commitment to, and promotion of, critical thinking and dialogue across subject areas. We are also integrating SmartBoard technology throughout the program areas, beginning with mathematics, science, and computer applications.

as central themes: everything we do is both grounded in and striving towards the growth of these two central values.

For application information, throughout the school year, please contact Kathy Donachie, Nancy McIlmoyle, or Chris Mitskinis (guidance) at 416-395-3130.

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Parent And Community Involvement

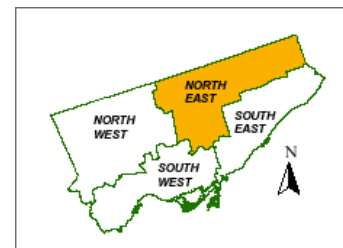
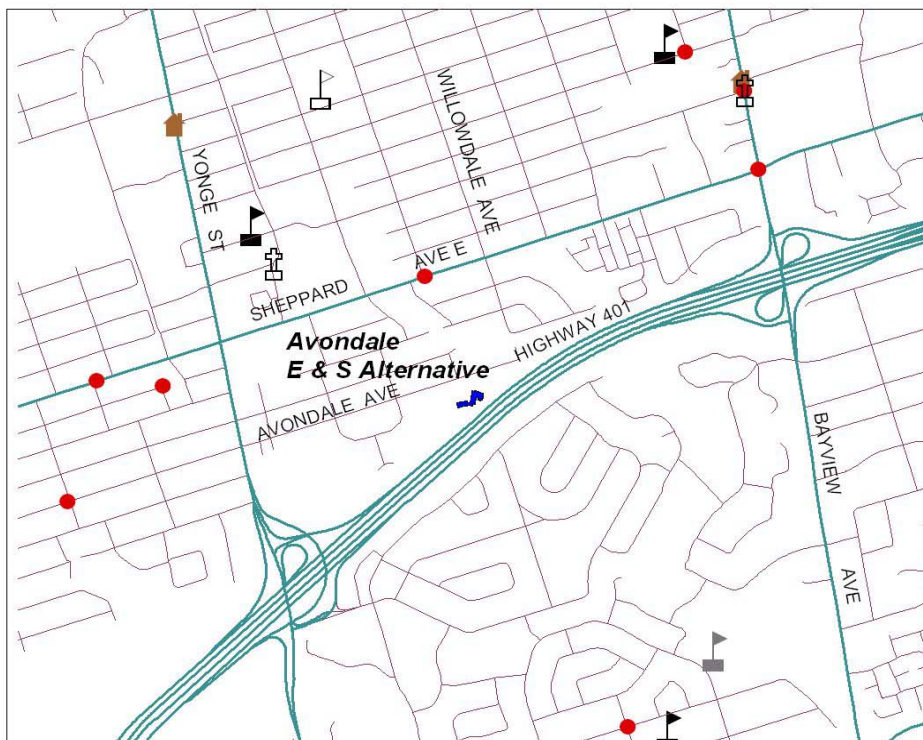
Parent Involvement:

- Parents and community members are always welcome at Avondale Schools! We invite the community to share their wealth of experience and skills, both as a supplement to our programming and to help build the Avondale 'vibe'.

Community Links:

- Avondale traditionally works with a variety of local and city-wide community partners. We have been a thriving part of the growing Willowdale community for thirty years, and we welcome new families and businesses to the area: let's get together!
- Avondale's academic programs extend into the community, for e.g. full use of YMCA facilities for physical education; use of Charles Street Video for film/video class.
- We have an agreement with Earl Haig Secondary School whereby our students can compete for placement on their co-curricular sports teams or in their theatrical performances.

OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



- OUR SCHOOL
- TDSB Elementary School
- TDSB Junior High School
- TDSB Secondary School
- Separate School
- Daycare/Nursery School
- Family Resource/ Parenting Centre
- Community/ Recreation Centre
- Public Library

0 0.5 1 Kilometers

Notes: The map shows the locations of local schools, community and social service facilities. For more information about these locations please contact the school. Sources: TDSB - Academic Accountability, Facility Services; City of Toronto - Children's Services, Toronto Land Information Services.



The mission of the Toronto District School Board is to enable all students to reach high levels of achievement and to acquire the knowledge, skills and values they need to become responsible members of a democratic society.