



**Equity Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC)**  
**Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 20, 2014**  
**6:30 p.m. - 9:10 p.m.**

**Co-chairs Present:** Christopher Penrose (Co-Chair, Success beyond Limits Representative); Kowser Omer (Co-Chair, Parent);  
**Other Voting Members Present:** Margaret Blair-Grant (Parent); Saida Sabrie (Somali Parent Liaison Coalition); Adwoa Gyasi-Nimako (Volunteer, Reaching Up); Derik Chica (Latin American Education Network); Nathan Gilbert (ICAC Rep); Ortega Tapambwa (YouthLeaps); Imam Abdul Hai Patel (Former Commissioner of Ontario Human Rights); Nelson, Josieann (EPAC Voting Member, Black Creek Community Health Centre ); Augustre Munro (Parent); Byron Gray ():

**Tele-Conference:** Maryan Hilowle (Chair of Firgrove Community Learning Centre Board of Directors & Parent);

**TDSB Staff:** Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos (TDSB, Equity and Inclusive Schools); Christine Dorcin (Teacher, Ogden Junior P.S.); Jyoti Khona (Teacher, TDSB); Andrea Williams (Teacher, TDSB) Libby Zeleke (Human Rights Office, TDSB) Christa Romaldi; Kayode Brown (Just Bgraphic); Diane DeiAmoah (Central Co-ordinating Principal, Equity and Inclusive Schools); Kevin Sutton (Equity and Inclusive Schools, TDSB);

**Guests:** Lindsay, Jabar and Metcalf, Laura (City of Toronto, Community Development Officers); Neilson, Sara (CALC, Student);

**Regrets:** Trustee Maria Rodrigues (Trustee, Ward 9); Byron Gray (Jane Finch Community Centre); Michael Kerr (Colour of Poverty); Saada Awaleh –God (Community Member); Almaz Reda (Chair of Jane/Finch's Caring Village Board of Directors); Lorraine Anderson (Coordinator for Firgrove Community Learning Centre & Parent); Carlis Dunbar (Parent); Aaron Woznica (Student Placement from City of Toronto, Community Development Unit); Vanessa Wiltshire (City Adult Learning Centre); Andrea Cross( Teacher, TDSB); Sharon Simpson (Urban Alliance on Race Relations);

**Recorder:** John Manalo (Committee Assistant, Parent & Community Engagement Office)

#	Item/Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
1.)	<b>Call to order-Welcome/ Introductions (Co-Chairs)</b> The Meeting was called to order at 6:40 PM. Roundtable introductions were made.	
2.)	<b>Approval of Quorum (Co-Chairs)</b> ***Nathan, seconded by Byron, moved to approve the agenda. All approved. Motion carried.	
3.)	<b>Approval of Agenda (Co-Chairs)</b>	Add LAEN Report to

	<p><b>***MOTION:</b> Nathan, seconded by Imam Patel moved to approve the agenda with the following amendments. All approved. Motion carried.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Move Item 8: to Item 6:</li> <li>- Defer Item 10: LAEN Report to next meeting</li> <li>- Add: Request from Derik Under Other Business – Strike Working Group – re: Student Councils in Schools</li> </ul>	April Agenda.
4.)	<p><b>Approval of Minutes Feb 13 2014 (Co-Chairs)</b></p> <p><b>***MOTION:</b> Derik, seconded by Margaret moved to approve the <b>Feb 13</b> minutes. All approved. Motion carried.</p> <p>-add Kowser Omer to Item 9.</p>	The approved minutes of <b>Feb 13</b> to be posted on the website.
5.)	<p><b>Communication</b></p> <p>-Chris mentioned that John Manalo joins EPAC as committee assistant in the interim.</p> <p>-Co-chairs of CAC were invited to PRC Review. EPAC was represented by Chris Penrose who explained the concerns around balancing the safety of children with promoting parent engagement.</p> <p>-PRC is a provincial legislation that the TDSB has to follow.</p> <p>-What recommendations can EPAC make around the implementation of clear communication, clear procedures so that it is not a barrier to parent engagement, student engagement, teachers, school council parents, and other</p> <p>Chair Recommends to EPAC a PRC working group to be struck to compile the views. Members: Kowser Omer, Derik Chica, Augustre Munro, Byron Gray</p> <p>A volunteer parent should not have to pay for PRC. The Ministry of Education should not implement a strategy that is a cost to the school board. Consider the PRC with “Don’t ask,Don’t tell” Policy.</p>	Committee assistant to send HRPLC dates to committee members
6.)	<p><b>Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (TYES)</b></p> <p><u>At the February 13 EPAC meeting:</u></p> <p>The TYES recommendations focus on City agencies and housing without a specific focus on the Board of Education. A task force was created with the Chair Bolton, TDSB and the City of Toronto for a conversation. There needs to be some clarification of the \$400,000 approved for the strategy.</p> <p><u>As a follow-up to the February 13 EPAC meeting:</u></p> <p>-Laura Metcalf and Jabari Lindsay delivered a presentation on TYES from the City of Toronto. They explained that the \$436,000 was moved as a motion by Councillor Matlow to enable the actions of the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy to be completed. The major focus of the initial implementation of the strategy is to create a interdivisional table focused on youth most vulnerable to involvement in serious violence or crime.</p>	<b>Staff within the TDSB Equity department would like to be partners in TYES and in analysis of data.</b>

	<p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <p>-Accountability is a major focus of the strategy. All of the 107 actions contain three elements for accountability and monitoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly identified lead program area with responsibility to implement</li> <li>Timeframe for implementation</li> <li>Identified progress measure(s) to track the status of each action</li> </ul> <p>-TDSB trustees and City Councillors will be engaged in the implementation process.</p> <p>-Three tables will be formed to deliver the strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A community table comprised of stakeholders in the neighbourhood improvement areas</li> <li>A interdivisional table made up six divisions and three boards; including a rep from the catholic and public boards</li> <li>A table comprised of subject matter experts with lived experience</li> </ul> <p>-The Toronto Youth Equity Strategy is slated to begin implementing the actions in May 2014.</p> <p><b>***Staff undertaking: Staff within the TDSB Equity department would like to be partners in TYES and in analysis of data.</b></p> <p><b>***Recommendation to PSSC from EPAC: That EPAC depute at the PSSC meeting to request that Trustees need to be engaged on programs particular to young people being underserved as the TYES strategy and appoint a TDSB staff to be a TYES champion at the table. All in favour.</b></p> <p><b>PSSC Next week March 26. 48 hours notice is required.</b></p>	<p>EPAC will depute at the next PSSC meeting on March 26.</p>
7.)	<p><b>Update -Black History Month Working Group to plan for 2014 and 2015</b></p> <p>Diane DeiAmoah gave a handout containing curriculum connections, print and video resources, speakers and performers from African Heritage Month.</p> <p>What actions and plans will the work group bring forward for 2014 and 2015?</p> <p>-mandates, objectives, reports at every meeting the minutes to the larger EPAC group; some systemic issues, and the Somali community not being considered, the group recommended that EPAC needs to pull together a committee consisting of various members to work as a Planning Committee for Black History Month. The committee will also do a feasibility study to prepare for next year. Members put forward the following motion:</p> <p><b>---***MOTION:</b> Kowser, seconded by Derik moved to request that staff support the creation of a working group to</p>	<p><b>BHM Working Group will meet next time and Saida will join the group when Kowser sends the meeting date to members.</b></p> <p><b>Diane DeiAmoah will provide the committee structure of Asian heritage Month committee to become an exemplar to BHM working group.</b></p>

	<p>include community organizations, Instructional Leaders, Parents, Students, Teachers, Community Members, Members from the Business Community, and Board Administration including Executive Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos to review Black History Month related activities provided throughout the year. All in favour. Motion carried.</p> <p>WG Members for BHM: Kowser Omer, Saida Sabri, Augustre Munro</p>	
8.)	<p><b>Transfer and Suspension Policies.</b></p> <p><b>Firgrove Community Learning Centre Presentation</b></p> <p>Representatives from the Firgrove Learning Centre and Caring Village attended the meeting to talk about the impact the Suspension and Transfer policies are having on their communities and to request EPAC support of their recommendations to the Ministry of Education to review and evaluate the policies. .</p> <p>Almaz Reda, Chair of the Jane/Finch Caring Village Board of Directors provided a brief history of the Firgrove Learning Centre and Caring Village. It is a grassroots organization that's been in existence for 20 years and was founded and run by parents, focussed on empowering children by involving parents. It is located in the Jane/Finch area. Some of the issues impacting the community include: children being transferred from grade 1 – 12 without actually meeting the grade requirements, and parents not being informed when their children are being suspended without a letter stating the reasons why. The organization has been advocating for these same issues for the past 20 years. Firgrove prepared a letter to the Ministry of Education with recommendations to review the validity and effectiveness of the Transfer and Suspension policies on the education of children. Firgrove is also requesting to know how many kids are being transferred, and are requesting that teachers be trained appropriately to work with issues affecting newcomers.</p> <p><b>*** Staff Undertaking: Superintendent Jim S. suggested that EPAC invite appropriate staff including (e.g. Ken Jeffers, Ted Libera, and Beth Butcher) to come and clarify the Transfer, and Suspension policies, and to invite Firgrove to come back to this meeting to hear the information to help strengthen their recommendations. Jim also suggested that someone from data be invited for conversation about why some children are more adversely affected and how policies intersect with the issues.</b></p>	<p><b>Staff will invite appropriate staff to come and clarify the transfer and suspension policies and process at a future meeting and to invite representatives from the Firgrove Learning Centre and Caring Village back to the April meeting.</b></p>
9.)	<p><b>Somali Task Force and Community</b></p> <p>Kowser asked Jim to clarify the background history of who initiated the Somali Task Force. In November 2011 Kowser met with Dr. Chris Spence. Dr. Spence asked her to write a proposal and meet with her in his office. She spent time talking and educating in-depth on specific issues that the Somali community is facing with Dr. Spence. Kowser met Jim in November 2012 in his office after a brief discussion that he said he needs to understand the answers of his three question how to address the needs of the Somali students.</p> <p>Jim requested Kowser to lend a hand to him to understand why Somali fathers are absent from their children, why Somali students have identity crisis in schools that they think they are not black and why Somali female student are succeeding at the TDSB schools. Kowser responded to great length: She said the goal of the Somali Task force was to help children and should be implemented at the school level. Kowser non-participatory during the process of the Task Force as there were too many conflicting stories/group dynamics happening. Kowser believes</p>	<p>Kowser and Jim to converse outside of EPAC.</p>

	<p>the fact that the TDSB encourages parent engagement and involvement, and their contribution should not only be acknowledged but credited as intellectual property.</p> <p>Kowser request that she be recognized as having initiated the Task Force in November 2011 inspite of Media reports indicating otherwise local politicians, TDSB superiors, Trustees and polarized community members.</p> <p>Jim S. has acknowledged that the TDSB Task Force Report is not the work of a single person and Kowser's contribution and initiation is important along with others at the TDSB who worked on the Somali Report.</p>	
10.)	<b>LAEN</b>	Deferred to next meeting
11.)	<b>Trustee Report</b>	Deferred to next meeting
12.)	<p><b>Staff Report</b></p> <p><b>Jim Spyropoulos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-March is Greek heritage month starting next year.</li> <li>-As result of the Jeffrey Baldwin inquest, there were recommendations directed to TDSB around poverty, child abuse and toilet-training. The TDSB trustees have received the recommendations at the March 5 meeting and have responded to these recommendations with staff training provisions as well as community feedback around implementation strategy.</li> <li>-The TDSB commits to participating in Pride Day and LGBT community, however, the TDSB ensures equity across all areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Focus On Youth (FOY)</b></p> <p>Students are applying for both March Break and the Summer. FOY hires more aboriginal and Black students than any other nationality. Students will require a Criminal Records Check. Members were asked to send Jim S. names of students by e-mail that may be interested in working during the March Break. The website has been open for applications since January 20<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>FOY sponsored a March Break program for the first time and hired 200 students, ages 16 &amp; 17, who each earned 400\$. Parents could be with their children for free in their programs.</p> <p><b>***Staff Undertaking: That staff report on budgets for every equity group that the Board supports to be presented to EPAC in future meeting.</b></p>	<p>Jim will bring FOY report next meeting.</p> <p><b>That staff report on budgets for every equity group that the Board supports to be presented to EPAC in future meeting.</b></p>
13.)	<p><b>Other new business</b></p> <p>Derik would like to strike a working group to the student leadership policy within for the school councils.</p>	

14.)	<b>Adjournment:</b> The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.	
15.)	<b>Next Meeting:</b> April 24 <sup>th</sup> , 6:30pm, Boardroom	