



**Equity Policy Advisory Committee**  
**Informal Meeting Notes**  
**Date: Thursday, June 20, 2013**  
**Time: 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Michael Kerr (Colour of Poverty - Colour of Change Co-Chair); Christopher Penrose (Co-Chair, Success Beyond Limits Representative); Augustre Munro (Parent Representative); Karlo Cabrera (Equity & Inclusive Schools); Rahma Siad-Togane (Program Co-ordinator, Youth LEAPS); Marjolein Winterink; Derik Chica (Co-Chair, Latin American Education Network); Sharon Simpson; Christa Romaldi (For Youth Initiative); Ken Jeffers (Coordinator, GBVP); Abdul Hai Patel (Former Ontario Human Rights Commissioner); Lea Konforte; Jyoti Khona; Kowser Omer (teleconference - Parent, Co-Chair)

**Recorder:** Amanda Tiberio

Item	Information/Discussion	Action/Recommendation
1. Call to order-Welcome/ Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM.</li> <li>• Roundtable introductions were made</li> </ul>	
2. Approval of Quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quorum was not achieved</li> </ul>	
3. Approval of Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda was agreed upon by members, with a presentation from Manon Gardner and Bill Papaconstantinou about Africentric Schools before the other items.</li> </ul>	
4. Approval of Minutes from May 30, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minutes were not approved.</li> </ul>	Deferred to next meeting.
5. Confirmation of 2013/2014 EPAC Meeting Dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting dates were not approved.</li> </ul>	Deferred to next meeting.
6. Reports from Committees/Working Groups  7. Deputation re: Financial Literacy Curriculum Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>• The Financial Literacy recommendations were enthusiastically received by PSSC. There was a request to get the transcript of the discussion that took place in the workgroup. Superintendent Usih will be creating a workgroup. In the meantime, all Teaching and Learning departments are requested to create a monograph that looks at curriculum expectations for their departments, and how they can incorporate financial literacy into it. These will be for junior grades - the actual curriculum document created by the government targets grades 4-12. Another monograph will be created for grades 1 to 3. The first will be available in September</li> </ul>	

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<p>8. <b>EPAC 2013-2014 Priorities from the EPAC Equity Forum</b></p>	<p>2013 through Professional Learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A question was asked about what a monograph is. A member responded that it is a 1-2 page magazine-type article that addresses the particular topic in question.</li> <li>• A question was asked about how EPAC can be connected with the process to ensure equity concerns are being kept as a priority. A member suggested inviting Christopher Usih back to EPAC to report on how it is taking place.</li> <li>• A comment was made that CCPA staff are interested in contributing as well. If there is any way to have them enter the conversation, this should be a priority in the next school year. Curriculum creation is a long process. Not only is it written, but it must be determined how to bring the content into development-appropriate pedagogy.</li> <li>• Due to the richness of the presentations at the Equity Forum, they didn't get to a conversation about equity priorities going forward. Each of the presenters prepared PowerPoints; Karlo will distribute them to the EPAC membership.</li> <li>• IT was suggested that at the next meeting, EPAC put together concrete suggestions for priorities coming out of summer meetings.</li> <li>• Chris presented a number of priorities that were discussed between the co-chairs. These included: continuing to have updates on equity-related items such as Somali student workgroup, working on updating the TDSB's equity policy; acknowledging achievements that take place; focus on deputations to PSSC; focus less on internal business and more on issues of the Board and across the community; a potential need to be part of advocacy for the community (ie. an ombudsperson to report on education and budget); and engaging effectively in the budget process.</li> <li>• The following are suggestions for priorities from the members:</li> <li>• As per Trustee Rodrigues, advocating to trustees to formally proclaim December 10<sup>th</sup> as TDSB Human Rights Day. The Equity team doesn't have a day to congregate all the work they do. It may be hard to use the December date because of the Christmas season. Another date is April 17<sup>th</sup>, which is the anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This may be too late in the year. How they are used is critical.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with other equity groups from different organizations to develop a process to target the Ministry's funding formula. Now that the budget is done, Kathleen Wynne is now restating her conviction to education.</li> <li>• Have a larger youth voice in the group, and leverage social media to get others involved. They can meet briefly with a communications staff member to find out what they can and cannot do in terms of social media. They need a way to mentor leadership with students who are not already in leadership positions, and not likely to attend these meetings or engage in formal discussion. The Equity forum should also be designed in a way that has youth in mind, to actively engage them in participation.</li> <li>• When talking about curriculum, make sure it is not reflective of what the banks are saying about what should be taught in school. Education is not the great equalizer it used to be. There are great levels in unemployment. Studies done by big banks have shown this and are saying that the school system needs to focus on skills. What they really need to do is graduate students who are able to do critical thinking and not just apply a single skill. We have an outdated education system - the TDSB cannot adjust itself to meet the future needs of the economy when all it can think about is removing a deficit.</li> <li>• The same group of students is dropping out of school or failing. This applies to behavioural and gifted programs. The system is class-based; if a student reaches grade 8 and drops out, somebody has decided it's ok for that student to not need those skills. All students need to learn all things, not have those choices taken away from them in streaming by expectation of a career path.</li> <li>• Focus on conversations around the best opportunities available to all students, especially those the system has underserved.</li> <li>• The mindset that exists in the workplace is not conducive to young workers. They do not tolerate their work ethics or habits, and jump from job to job.</li> <li>• There is an agenda perpetrated by organizations - they have defaulted out of professional development and staff training, and want the educational system to do what they once did, and have students be able to hit the ground running when they enter the company.</li> <li>• Keep in mind what the factors are; when they are presented reports by somebody they should remember that they are not</li> </ul>	

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	<p>necessarily what should be done just because they sound good.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students suffer because parents do not know how to navigate the system. They look up to principals as gods and are afraid to speak out in fear that they will do something harmful to the child. There is a parent or guardian that has to stand up and advocate for every student. Unfortunately the parents have a lot of influence, but we don't know what is happening in the parents' lives.</li> <li>• Many parents see school as something that is not their business. Many have to work multiple jobs and don't have time for school issues. They expect black teachers not to discipline their black students, and as a result, black teachers feel like people expect too much from them and don't want to work in their communities. Sometimes they are afraid of repercussions, and get into conflicts with principals. They have to work together instead of fighting with each other.</li> <li>• It is beneficial to name the priorities to work out how EPAC will mobilize itself to respond to the issues. We must create an action plan and partner with different committees to address the issues.</li> <li>• It was suggested that a statement is created surrounding priorities. There are specific things on the radar year after year that are not being addressed. EPAC should be progressive but specific to issues in the Board.</li> <li>• We need to be something more than a committee, like creating subcommittees to target the specific issues. That should have happened today.</li> <li>• It was suggested to have Rob Little in Research give an updated presentation on the new data retrieved from the 2012 census.</li> <li>• It was suggested that a working group be created to meet in the summer and go over the various pieces discussed during the meeting. The plan is to come to the first EPAC meeting in September with clear options on the priorities for the year. The following members volunteered to be part of this committee: Chris, Christa, Derik, Rahma, Marjolein, &amp; Jyoti.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>9. Presentation re: Africentric Secondary Schools</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In November 2011, trustees made a decision to look into the pathway for elementary afrocentric schools. They were charged with finding an east and west location to accommodate grade 9 to 12 students. They identified an east site at Winston Churchill with the help of Trustee Smith but couldn't find a west site at the time.</li> <li>• Two Instructional Leaders worked with Bill to write the Africentric curriculum at the grade 9 level for all subjects. Last September,</li> </ul>	

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	<p>they were able to invited students to the Leonard Braithwaite program at Winston Churchill - only 6 students showed and they weren't able to keep the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the year, Bill's team was able to work on the curriculum for subjects at the grade 10 level, which they hope to complete by the end of June</li> <li>• In the meantime, the Director was approached to speed up finding a west site. Trustee Kaplan and Principal Maria Palermo at Downsview SS agreed to open a very small program there. There are many staff on board and they are looking to offer 4 subjects. An open house was held in April and many people came but only 1 student showed interest.</li> <li>• Right now, there are 18 students starting in September at Leonard Braithwaite, but none at Downsview. We have the curriculum and the space, so we may get some students by September. There is also a cohort graduating from grade 8 in an Africentric program next year, so hopefully they will contribute to enrolment.</li> <li>• Once the program was named, it got the momentum moving forward. It was introduced in April 2012. In September, 6 students from outside the school and 3 from inside showed interest. They were interviewed, and the 6 students said they did not want to be part of such a small cohort. At this stage, they are looking at 18 students but until they see seats in the chairs, they want to give the program as much life as possible.</li> <li>• All subjects are Africentric except Phys. Ed. And the hard technologies. It is a D-stream program with a layered curriculum. They are looking forwarding to seeing where students of different abilities to gravitate to.</li> <li>• A question was asked about what the outreach strategy is for the program. Bill responded that they invited guidance teachers to a meeting, have gone out to feeder schools and have solicited around the communities. They have been very cautious with the media.</li> <li>• There are many parents who seem interested but are skeptical and would like to wait until the following year to decide to send their children.</li> <li>• A question was asked about whether there are any statistics regarding the students that have been applying to the program, ie. Whether they were going into academic or applied stream. Bill responded that the majority are academic-based students. More</li> </ul>	

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	<p>information can be found on the website: <a href="http://www.lifeofchurchill.com">www.lifeofchurchill.com</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A question was asked about whether they have tried to recruit through Downsview's feeder schools. Bill replied that they have done a blitz through the guidance councillors through Teaching and Learning.</li> <li>• A question was asked about whether there is a possibility students could transfer into the program. Students feel disengaged and would like to see more black teachers and administrative staff. Bill responded that once the program is up and running the intent is to have different entry points.</li> <li>• A comment was made that it is concerning to see nobody registered for Downsview. If we know students decide where they will go to school in February, it doesn't seem like we're learning from the past. Bill responded that the initial intent was not to open the west site until 2014. They received a request to open it sooner, so they tried to get about 15 students to register. They are expecting what Churchill Experienced last year. They will work on it throughout the year so that there may be a cohort in 2014.</li> <li>• A comment was made that it is great to see that September is going to go through with 18 students at Winston Churchill. Many parents didn't know anything about the program, and the feeling was that the TDSB didn't even want it to happen.</li> <li>• A comment was made that a lot of youth ask parents to go to different schools and get told that they cannot. They are concerned that parents might view this as an alternative program with limited credits. The parents of the 18 students are going to be the best advocates for the program. There will be reservations about the program from parents who want to see what it will be like.</li> <li>• A question was asked about whether they handpick students for the program. Staff responded that they do, as they do with every program in every building.</li> <li>• A question was asked about whether the stigma piece has come up with parents. Staff responded that it hasn't come up much because they coined the program with the name they did. At this stage people have embraced it and principals have been very supportive. Students will find the subjects more attractive and engaging than the traditional way they are taught. Until chairs are filled there will be growing pains. They are holding a barbecue tomorrow night for the students and parents. the parents need to know supports are in place and their children will be taken care of.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A question was asked about whether they have considered going to student council. Staff responded that they are going for Supercouncil next year and they are also looking at parent councils.</li> <li>• A question was asked about how afro-latino has been incorporated into the curriculum. Staff responded that at this time, it is Africentric with as many branches as possible. They are looking at opportunities to tweak it, but it will be a living document for the next 4-6 years.</li> <li>• A question was asked about how one can get involved with curriculum development. Staff responded that they will be looking for writers once they know what funds will be allocated to them. Contact Bill if interested. The key is to make sure grade 9 is ready to go; grade 10 curriculum should be ready by next spring.</li> <li>• There is an opportunity for support for students who will be attending Braithwaite in September through a summer program. Speaking for the students at Churchill, those who have attended have shown great engagement.</li> <li>• They are looking to offer a fall leadership camp for a few nights for Braithwaite students.</li> <li>• A question was asked about whether they have looked into partnering with a journalist from Share magazine, knowing the blowback that can take place in traditional media. Staff responded that there was a full-pager in the magazine. They have tried many different venues to make it happen. The program is ready to go, it just needs the first year to really take off. The media may help then as well.</li> <li>• A comment was made that they should try to tap into parent clusters around Model Schools. They are not regular parent councils - they are more structured in theory.</li> <li>• A question was asked about whether the application for Downsview is the same as it is for Winston Churchill. Staff responded that it is the same idea.</li> <li>• A comment was made that many parents found the application too difficult and sent them back to guidance departments, where councillors helped the students complete them. The application is a turnoff.</li> <li>• A comment was made that it would be good to look at alternative programs that have had huge success. There is a strong desire to have curriculum that is reflective of reality and engaging. That</li> </ul>	

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	need exists, but there is something about the design and process that is not in line with the demand.	
<b>10. Report on Aboriginal Education Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deferred to next meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>11. Recruitment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lea would like to create a workgroup to focus on recruitment of members to EPAC. Members who are interested in joining are to connect with Lea.</li> <li>• Members should be committed to 2 hours of meetings and 3 hours of a workgroup per months. They would be responsible for quorum and actively recruit more members to EPAC.</li> <li>• If there are barriers preventing access to the application, applicants or a representative can connect with someone on the committee or staff support.</li> </ul>	
<b>12. Trustee Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deferred to next meeting.</li> </ul>	
<b>13. Staff Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deferred to next meeting</li> </ul>	
<b>14. Other Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No other business to report.</li> </ul>	
<b>15. Adjournment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 PM.</li> </ul>	