**TDSB Task Force on the success of Students of Somali Descent**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday June 4, 2013**

**Time:** 6:00PM  
**Location:** 5100 Yonge Street – Committee Room 1


**Guests:** Maymuna Abukar-TDSB Intern, Khadija-TDSB Intern and Trustee Howard Goodman Ward 8- Eglinton-Lawrence, Mahad Mohamood-Student.


**Minute Taker:** Zahra Hassan

### AGENDA ITEMS

1. **5:30 pm - 6:00 pm -Dinner**

2. **Welcome and approval of May 16th meeting minutes**
   - Minutes approved
   - Haweiyaa Egeh chairing the meeting
   - Meeting called to order at 6:08 PM

   - Haweiyaa welcomed Trustee Goodman to the meeting. Trustee Goodman was also in attendance at the Lawrence Heights community consultation
   - Trustee Maria thanked Trustee Goodman, who is the Vice-Chair of the Program and Services Committee, for taking the time to be with us

3. **Research Sub-Committee Report Back**
   - Proposed Plan of action (i.e. Working groups)
   - Group decided last meeting to take more time to talk about critical path moving forward
   - Research committee came back with plan of action to move the work forward
   - The Research Sub-Committee met twice since last meeting and came up with the following plan

**Research Sub-Committee report – Presented by Abdi Aidid**

- Create three working groups- all the recommendations out of the community consultations fall into the following three themes:
  - A. Identity and Representation
  - B. Curriculum and academic support
  - C. Interventions and alternatives including...
    - i. Special Education
    - ii. Discipline
    - iii. Streaming
    - iv. Career options
  - Within each recommendation include...
    - A. Scope of the issue
    - B. Working group mandate
    - C. Issues to Address
      - i. Rational
ii. Exiting TDSB Mechanism

iii. How does this support the Task Force Mandate

- At the end of the month, all the sub-groups come together and present recommendations for group input
- Next step: Have Taskforce members sign up for a working-group. Individuals can sign up for multiple groups but highly recommend each person sign up for only one group to maximize time and resources. Think of a working group that fits your interest and expertise
- Comment: Theme 1 and 2 overlap, curriculum falls within identity
- Each working group will not be finalizing the recommendations but rather suggestions
- Suggestion: Instead of using anti, use ‘pro’ and stay away from ‘anti’

What does the group think about the proposed plan by the research committee – any issues or suggestions?
- Seems fair – this brings us focus. It is a good way to move forward

Question: Are there individuals taking the lead for the working groups?
Answer: There was a discussion but it presented some concerns mainly regard the research sub-committee came up with the plan and taking the lead.

Question: Can individuals not in the Taskforce who are interested in the topics and have a lot to contribute join the working groups? How does the group feel about having outsiders, people who have contributions to provide, join the working groups?

**Group discussion:**

- There are no issues with having people who have expertise/interest in these areas to have them as part of the sub-groups
- Maybe have the chairs select the individuals
- How do we distinguish who we invite – people interested in contributing vs. people who just want to join
- It has taken us a while to reconcile with the TDSB and come together as group – it is important to not have people who will set us back and control group dynamics
- We are talking about people who can support us and not starting from scratch
- Need to clarify if we are a public body and have models of inclusivity. We are elected to be a part of this taskforce but we are not necessarily experts. Need to distinguish if we are public or private group and having different governing system that are inclusive. Also clarity around observers, what are their roles and responsibilities
- We are a public body but we are open. It would be difficult to invite new people because we are nearly done – we do not want to start from scratch and we worked hard to create systems and plans
- Do we have the knowledge in all the three areas? We have people in the community that are experts and have interest in these topics and how can help us with the recommendations
- We do not want to have “experts” dominating the group due to their expertise. We need to make it clear that they are invited here through special invitation
- We decided in our last meeting that we will come up with recommendations and go back to the community to consult- are we still going back to consult with the larger community? Inviting people with negativity will set us back. Also who are we to say who is an expert and how do we decide and what authority do we have to decide?
- It is a good idea to have knowledgeable people but we have had an open door policy from day one were people can send suggestions and input to the chairs
Decision: Have experts by special invitation and group consensus/chair approval—**all in favour**

4. Proposed Work plan for June-August

**Timeline and important dates:**
- There is no trustee meeting in August
- There is new TDSB census coming out this month – this is new data that can inform our work
- Suggestion: Do not bring the recommendations to the September meeting because it is a packed agenda and it will not receive the attention it deserves
- Question: Can you forecast any thing that can shape loss of support from the TDSB in the upcoming few months?
- Answer: The TDSB trustees and staff at Equitable/Inclusive Schools unanimously support the Taskforce. This process cannot be denied and we should move forward as planned

**Documents/Resources Request from TDSB (preliminary list):**
- 2013 Parent/Student census
- Safe school data
- Organization chart for Special Ed department
- Representative from programming and services - Jen Ling Chang – Chief Academic Officer, Teaching and Learning
- Representative from Special Ed including Chief Academic Officer Sandy Spyropoulos
- Representative from Safe Schools – Ted Libera-Central Coordinating Principal, Caring and Safe schools and Alternative Programs
- Superintendents of schools with large Somali populations (note: new superintendents being hired in two areas with high Somali population (North West and Downtown)
- Experts from the TDSB to present to the group around the three topics (as needed)

**Formats for upcoming meetings:**
- Meet as a large group and divide into working sub-groups
- Important everyone attends next meeting
- Document will be circulated by the chair for members to sign into a working group – deadline to sign up Sunday June 9th, 2013
- Come up with questions, pertaining to the working group themes, to ask superintendents, department heads and other TDSB staff

**Logistics**
- Karlo will attempt to book rooms at 5050 Yonge Street for working groups
- There will be limited TDSB staff, especially teachers, available in July and August

5. Other Business
- n/a

Next Meeting: Tuesday June 11th, 2013
5:30PM Dinner
6:00PM-8:00PM Meeting

ADJOURNED: 7:22PM