**TDSB Task Force on the success of Students of Somali Descent**

**Meeting Minutes - Monday May 16, 2013**

**Time:** 6:00PM  
**Location:** 5050 Yonge Street – Cafeteria


**Guests:** Maymuna Abukar-TDSB Intern, Khadija-TDSB Intern and Chris Glover Ward2-Etobicoke Centre, Anneli Jarvel-TDSB Equity Communications Officer.


**Minute Taker:** Zahra Hassan

### AGENDA ITEMS

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2. **Welcome and approval of May 13th meeting minutes**
   - Minutes approved as amended
   - Agenda amended
   - Ali Mohamed and Haweinya Egeh co-chairing the meeting
   - Meeting called to order at 6:40PM

**Items Arising:**

**TIMELINE Discussion**
- Push back report deadline to early August
- Do not believe we can make a measurable recommendations in one week
- We do not have ground-breaking recommendations and deliverables at this point
- Need to take time to make recommendations and demand things that have been promised to our community

**Proposed structure by the Research Committee**
- Have recommendations that are measurable, deliverable and can be evaluated
- Have one page of appendix for each recommendation that shows the rational, how it supports the mandate, and how success looks like
- Take time to look at deliverables, have community consultation, create a community of presume and a make a bigger deal about it. Meanwhile, leverage the media and invite them to the final community consultation
- Rise beyond the disagreements – cannot take things personally. Reach out to the community by sharing with them in a way that is substantial
- Recommendation should focus more on the curriculum
- Releasing recommendations in August crates energy for back-to-school
- From process perspective, we have not done adequate work – not sufficient
- We have the opportunity to pinpoint key areas/issues and come up with innovative ways to move forward
- Issues around traditional ways the education system is discussed, anything new we can bring shows our creativity
- Take advantage of our time and resources as members
TDSB Task Force on the success of Students of Somali Descent  
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- We are not all experts – if given one theme it would be a better way to use our resources, expertise and time
- There is a legal framework in front of us and we need to take it seriously when making recommendations- accountability issues
- This is a time to come up with another plan to maximize resources
- Need to hear from the head of Special Education and Dr. Brown to pinpoint specific schools –a bit of a problematic issue
- Important to have the recommendations back to the community and take feedback
- Need to hear from superintendents who’s schools have large struggling Somali students
- June 19th meeting –do we go back to the trustees for extension of deadline?

Group Discussion
- Push the deadline back until we are ready since August would not affect September implementation
- Issue with energy and Taskforce member’s time
- We are all in this in the long-term, if we need to push it back then we need to take our time
- We need to be clear from what we want from the TDSB and what we want for the kids in the long term and how TDSB can contribute
- Ways to express what tools parents can be given in order to be successful – the type of things we do not have time to reflect on with current deadline
- Politics of TDSB before us in terms of recommendations and deadlines. We need to reevaluate if we cannot make commitment-need to evaluate our own positions and where we stand
- None of us came to the table as experts – understanding out limitations is our best strength – we need to stay motivated
- Need to re-think the values we come to the table with
- Today we need to come up with ways to look at how we can move on-we have recommendations we can commit to but we want to take our time to enrich the process and have the support we need to put it through. We have a good product but just need to enrich it
- We need to make recommendation that have resources attached to it and some of them can be implemented in September
- Just saying “a lot of...” does not mean anything-what does a lot mean? Need to go back to see what it means and where it is coming from? We need to take our time to understand it
- If we prove these recommendations have worked in different jurisdictions, it will be easy to push them forward and implement them – they cannot be just ideological
- Think about your own believes
- Other taskforce had twice the timeline and we can negotiate the deadline
- Time changes things and supports from individuals and superintendents change. It is important to keep this in mind-people at the table that are supporting us now might not be there tomorrow
- Recommendations discussed last meeting are not groundbreaking. Need to look at the issues and how we can make them fit in a way to get maximum results
- We need to make realistic implementations-life of the student in the classroom is the most important
- We need to make the commitment to go back to the community and present summary of results and present the recommendations
- Suggestion: have the recommendation done by late august the latest – all in favor

Anneli Jarvel – Equity Communications Officer, Equitable and Inclusive Schools –might be coming to future Taskforce meetings
Interns Presentation

- Take and compile themes into working groups
- **How:** Try to divide into sub-committees
- **Question:** Does it sound like a good idea to split themes into sub-committee groups?
- **Process:** divide into 2 groups with x number of themes to discuss scope of issue and general mandate
- Cannot just confine into exiting community date – might have to do further research
- Need to build in monitoring process, targets, and reporting requirements
- Recommendations/research that will help entire student population and not just Somali students
- Issue around how do we validate community struggle – need to compile recommendations into digestible package but must not forget about the struggles that let us here

Trustee Chris Glover Ward2-Etobicoke Centre

- Sees progress of the taskforce and likes the format of the recommendations
- We know the problems and outcome but need to see the process
- If we do these recommendations in the schools, outcomes should be visible
- Should ask for evaluation process and outcome measurement of any activity
- **Request:** can Women for Change have a representative in the Taskforce? Also can we have a parent who does not speak English because they will present a different perspective?

Group

- The committee is already set and if you open up for one group then you have to open it to others who want to join
- The meetings are open – anyone is welcome to come and observe
- After the recommendations are established, the community will be consulted
- There was an open call to all community groups prior to the taskforce formation and current members were selected – there was a process
- Majority of the people who were consulted were mothers who did not speak English
- We tried to integrate the community into the decision making process and we are just facilitators of the community

Next Steps

- Research committee and inters come together in two weeks and come up with process of how to proceed forward - **all in favor**

3. Finish brainstorming

- N/a

4. Operationalize brainstormed recommendations

**How will the broad ideas discussed look on the ground?**

**What programs and/or initiatives will best address the broad recommendations?**

- n/a

5. Other Business

- n/a

**Next Meeting:**
- Tuesday June 4th, 2013
  - 5:30PM Dinner
  - 6:00PM-8:00PM Meeting

**ADJOURNED:**
- 8:50PM