



**Equity Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC)**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, January 16, 2013**

**6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

**Present:** Margaret Blair-Grant (Parent); Augustre Munro (Parent); Christopher Penrose (Co-Chair, Success beyond Limits Representative); Kowser Omer (Co-Chair, Parent); Saida Sabrie (Somali Parent Liaison Coalition); Adwoa Gyasi-Nimako (Volunteer, Reaching Up); Derik Chica (Latin American Education Network); Kayode Brown (Just Bgraphic); Nathan Gilbert (ICAC Rep); Sharon Simpson (Urban Alliance on Race Relations); Joesiann Nelson (Black Creek Community Health Centre)

**Tele-Conference:** Liban Abokar (YouthLeaps); Saada Awaleh –God

**TDSB Staff:** Diane DeiAmoah(Central Co-ordinating Principal, Equity and Inclusive Schools); Superintendent Jim Spyropoulos (TDSB, Equity and Inclusive Schools); Libby Zeleke (Human Right Investigation Office, TDSB); Kevin Sutton (Equity and Inclusive Schools, TDSB); Christine Dorcin (Teacher, Sherry Street Public School); Andrea Cross( Teacher); Ramon San Vicente (Instructional Leader, Equitable and Inclusive Schools, TDSB; Pardeep Singh Nagra (Manager, Employment Equity Office); Jyoti Khona (Teacher, TDSB)

**Observers:** Sharon Kerr (PIAC Rep)

**Regrets:** Imam Abdul Hai Patel (Former Commissioner of Ontario Human Rights); (Kenneth Jeffers (Co-ordinator, GBVP); Christa Romaldi; Trustee Maria Rodrigues (Trustee, Ward 9); Byron Gray (Jane Finch Centre)

**Recorder:** Linda Mendonca (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 6:45 PM. Roundtable introductions were made.	
2.)	<b>Approval of Quorum (Co-Chairs)</b> Quorum was achieved.	
3.)	<b>Approval of Agenda (Co-Chairs)</b> <b>***MOTION:</b> Nathan, seconded by Derik moved to approve the agenda with the following amendments. All approved. Motion carried. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provincial Advocate Presentation</li> <li>2. CAC Review Recommendations – Possible Deputation</li> <li>3. EPAC Training – Function of Advisory Committees with Michelle Munroe</li> </ol>	

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	<p>4. Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (TYES) – Possible Motion</p> <p>5. No Trustee Report Today - Regrets from Trustee Rodrigues –Due to Death in the Family</p> <p>6. Black History Month Working Group</p> <p><b>Agenda Item - February Meeting</b></p> <p>Firgrove Learning Centre Presentation re: Transfer Student Policy is approved to be added to the February agenda.</p>	<p>Add Firgrove Learning Centre Presentation to February Agenda</p>
4.)	<p><b>Approval of Minutes October 24 13 (Co-Chairs)</b></p> <p><b>***MOTION:</b> Nathan, seconded by Derik moved to approve the October 24<sup>th</sup> minutes with some minor amendments. All approved. Motion carried.</p> <p>Members reviewed the Informal Meeting Notes from the November and December meeting and suggested some minor amendments. No formal approval of the notes was required as EPAC did not achieve quorum at the Nov &amp; Dec meetings.</p>	<p>The minutes of October 24<sup>th</sup> will be posted to the website.</p>
5.)	<p><b>Provincial Advocate Presentation</b></p> <p>The Ontario Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (OPACY), Irwin Elman, was present at this meeting to begin what is the first of many conversations with EPAC. Irwin is a teacher by training through OISE, and taught for TDSB. The purpose of the Provincial Advocate office is to partner with Children and Youth connected to care (i.e. Child Welfare, Youth Justice, and Mental Health Services) and to help elevate them. The office also does system work around education (i.e. Review of Roy McMurtry Youth Centre), however, does not have the mandate to review individual schools. The Education Act has a particular interest in First Nations, and youth and children with Special Needs. The Act does not mention family and parents; only children and youth. Young people can call the office to have voices heard. The office made a deputation regarding the City of Toronto’s Youth Equity Strategy. Other key points shared by Irwin and members are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Young people wrote a book with the Provincial Advocate’s office called “My Real Life” – only 40% of children in care actually graduate from high school. They are now overrepresented in the Youth Justice system.</li> <li>▪ Quote from the “My Real Life” book - “School I thought was a place of model of what society should be, but that wasn’t what it was for me”. I want to learn how to contribute and belong.</li> <li>▪ March 24<sup>th</sup> – March 28<sup>th</sup> – Feathers of Youth Forum - Youth from different communities to provide report based on youth recommendations will bring decision makers around them. Visit website for more information: <a href="http://provincialadvocate.on.ca/foh/">http://provincialadvocate.on.ca/foh/</a></li> <li>▪ An equity issue for 5 years – 80% - black children and youth are overrepresented</li> <li>▪ The office is receives calls from across the Province from TDSB parents at wits end trying to access resources not knowing how IEP’s, IPRC’s work. Their children are getting lost in the system.</li> <li>▪ African Canadian Legal Clinic Forum – Director Quan spoke at the forum – 50,000 students within TDSB are designated as Special Needs</li> <li>▪ The Provincial Advocate’s office has been working the Canadian Council of Refugees to work with undocumented and newcomer students who want to attend secondary school. The legislature passed a motion to extend the Age of Protection from 16 to 18. If it passes, it would affect some of those students. Students can phone the office.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One of the challenges at the legislature is that change is hard. It's best to use moral persuasion, and shame to embarrass them. You will get a reaction if things are reported in the Newspaper, or a book like "My Real Life" which says "you brought us into care, and only 40% of us are graduating". This resonates stronger with the Ministry of Education. This creates change for the young person, for people around them, and creates systemic change. Change also needs to happen at the local school level.</li> <li>▪ The Definition of First Nations in the Education Act includes Inuit and Metis</li> <li>▪ African Canadian Legal Clinic has been at the table – a push by the Provincial Advocate's office to make that happen. They need a strategy to improve children coming into care. The MOE is going to have to link with the Boards. Irwin is very open to meeting with EPAC to work out a strategy.</li> <li>▪ EPAC can call the MOE to ask for stats on calls from children and youth with Special Education needs</li> <li>▪ Best piece of advice for TDSB - is to ask young people and listen to them.</li> <li>▪ There is racism, and poverty linked to racism; money and poverty are at the root of it.</li> <li>▪ Need to think seriously about access and some of the resources.</li> <li>▪ When it comes to issues of education, the Provincial Advocate's office can count on having someone from EPAC as part of Working Group as an ally.</li> <li>▪ EPAC members can phone a Deputy Ministry with questions regarding equity and have access to more resources for advocacy.</li> <li>▪ OPACY said his office can offer EPAC access to decision-makers and resources for advocacy.</li> </ul> <p>For more information, members can visit <a href="http://www.provincialadvocate.on.ca">www.provincialadvocate.on.ca</a> or e-mail Irwin at <a href="mailto:irwin.elman@provincialadvocate.on.ca">irwin.elman@provincialadvocate.on.ca</a>.</p> <p>To begin the dialogue, members may contact Irwin by e-mail at <a href="mailto:irwin.elman@provincialadvocate.on.ca">irwin.elman@provincialadvocate.on.ca</a> or via Twitter : <a href="https://twitter.com/ontarioadvocate">@ontarioadvocate</a></p>	
6.)	<p><b>Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (TYES)</b>  A TYES Working Group was struck to review the TYES Report by the City of Toronto. Members to include Saida, Derik, Nathan, and Chris. Members will review the strategy and bring forward a draft motion that will look at ways to connect the TDSB and the Toronto Youth Equity Strategy through possible means such as adopting, adapting and/or supporting the strategy.</p>	<p>The TYES Working Group will meet to discuss and prepare a motion and report back at the February meeting.</p>
7.)	<p><b>CAC Review</b>  Superintendent Jim S. provided a brief update on the CAC Review recommendations which will go to Planning and Priorities Committee meeting on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7pm. Members may make a delegation at this meeting if they have any concerns about the report. Members expressed concerns about the recommendation that the Safe and Caring Schools Committee is being recommended as an adhoc committee as it will not be able to deal with issues that arise connected to Safe Schools.</p> <p>EPAC struck a CAC Review Deputation Working Group to prepare a delegation for the January 22<sup>nd</sup> PNP meeting. Members</p>	<p>The CAC Review will meet to prepare the delegation, and delegate at the January 22<sup>nd</sup> PNP meeting. The working group will report back at the February meeting.</p>

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	include Michael, Saida, Co-Chair Penrose, Joesi, and Kevin.	
8.)	<p><b>Regulation 274</b> Co-Chair Penrose asked whether there is an update from staff regarding the letter from the Board and whether the letter was submitted to the Ministry. Members would like to know what the letter says. There is a need for procedures around the Employment Equity Policy. EPAC would like to see procedures so that EPAC can have input.</p> <p>***<b>MOTION:</b> Michael, seconded by Sharon on behalf of EPAC requested staff to develop a draft of procedures to direct the implementation of the Employment Equity Policy and that draft be shared with EPAC for input. EPAC will follow up with PSSC regarding these procedures.</p> <p><b>EPAC Training re: Function of Advisory Committees</b> The date for the training has been confirmed for February 4<sup>th</sup>. Kayode, Adwoa, Joesi, Kowser, Kevin, and Augustre requested to attend the training. Location to be confirmed.</p>	Linda will book a space for the training and confirm details via e-mail.
9.)	<p><b>Black History Month</b> Co-Chair Omer, at the last meeting recommended striking a Working Group to review the delivery of Black History Month within TDSB. The group will review the way Black History Month is presented to kids in the classroom. The focus of the working group is to review how TDSB teachers teach children about Black History Month and to take a systemic look at how TDSB is delivering Black History Month. Diane mentioned that the Equity Website has information relating back to kingdoms, and civilizations, and does not begin with slavery. Superintendent Jim S. suggested taking a closer look at the TDSB census data to drive the work that EPAC does.</p> <p>Some members expressed that children should learn about slavery from their parents and not the TDSB and that it is the responsibility of parents to tell them where they came from and what they have gone through to get here.</p> <p>Black History Month Working Group members include: Co-Chair Omer, Christine, Augustre, and Saida.</p>	The Black History Month Review Working Group will meet and report back at the next meeting.
10.)	<p><b>Staff Report (Superintendent Jim S.)</b></p> <p><b>Focus on Youth Program - March Break &amp; Summer</b> The FOYT program will be hiring 200 students (16 &amp; 17 years old) during the March Break and (18 &amp; 19 year olds) during the Summer Break. A formal e-blast will be sent to agency partners. Members were asked to contact Jim if they know of students (16 &amp; 17 years old) who need some work over the March Break of Summer. Information will also be sent via Direct Line.</p>	
11.)	<b>Other Business</b>	

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	<p><b>Somali Task Force (STF)</b>  The STF will be taking 23 recommendations to the Program &amp; Services Committee (PSSC) on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Co-Chair Omer expressed that the Somali community does not need an STF; that the STF does not represent or engage the whole Somali community; that Somali students are succeeding; and that this group further stigmatizes the community. There will be a protest next Tuesday (20 parents, and 11 students). Last Friday, a draft of the recommendations and report was shared. The STF consisting of 22 members dedicated 100's of hours of volunteer hours to come up with the recommendations.</p> <p><b>Somali Parent Liaison Group (SPLC)</b>  Saida reported that the Library Curriculum Working Group has already developed recommendations for PSSC to teach Somali children their mother tongue. There is a workshop being held on February 8<sup>th</sup> to review the recommendations.</p> <p><b>Latin American Education Network(LAEN)</b>  Derik has prepared a report to be presented to EPAC at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Saida will send information on regarding the workshop via e-mail.</p> <p>Add LAEN Report to February Agenda.</p>
12.)	<b>Adjournment:</b> The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.	
13.)	<b>Next Meeting:</b> February 13 <sup>th</sup> , 6:30pm	