

## Teacher Professional Development: Cultural Understanding

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### Basic Information

<b>Summary</b>	This Professional Development is designed to identify and develop an understanding of how the individual student's cultural background impacts their education within the classroom and overall school climate. Staff will identify major expectations of the school, and help to set the tone for the individual classroom culture to be followed by the staff.
<b>Grade/Level</b>	Staff Professional Development (Teachers, Administrators, Building Staff)
<b>Time Frame</b>	
<b>Subject(s)</b>	School Culture/Environment Plan Teaching Somali Immigrant Children: Resources for Student Success
<b>Topic(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Developing communication between the school and Somali population (students, parents, grandparents, families)</li><li>- Understanding more about the backgrounds of and challenges facing Somali refugee and immigrant students</li><li>- Understanding and strengthening school culture (Habits of Mind, Living Above the Line, Cardinal Rules/Policies, etc.)</li><li>- Developing a support system to understand the values, beliefs, backgrounds and socio-economic conditions of Somali students (and families)</li></ul>
<b>Notes</b>	

### Standards And Key Concepts

<b>Standards</b>	
<b>Understandings</b>	
<b>Essential Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What can educators do to support the Somali students (and families) within the school?</li></ul>

- Where do we begin connecting our school with the Somali community?
- What are Somali students' impressions of starting school in the US?

**Knowledge and Skills**

**Schoolwide Goals through the Metro Habits:**

1. ***Engaged Learner and Critical Thinker*** - All staff members develop ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their impact on the culture of the school environment; especially in relation to cultural understanding of the individual and whole school.

2. ***Inquiring Learner*** - Staff develop perspective consciousness, ability to warrant conclusions, and recognition of relatedness/interdependence when working with a diverse classroom with high number of Somali students.

3. ***Effective Communicator and Collaborator*** - Staff develop understanding of duties and rewards of being-effective citizens in the school community requiring active multi-cultural student participation and honoring individual voice within the classroom. This also includes the ability to compose and express (via email, phone, or in-person) well-articulated information that improved knowledge and experience through the use of open-ended questions.

4. ***Active and Responsible Decision Maker*** - Staff learn personal skills and tools to become more effective decision makers and responsible managers of their classroom atmosphere and students cultural restrictions.

**CARDINAL QUALITIES**

“Can I look in the mirror tonight and know that I did the right thing?”

1. **HONOR:** Affording dignity and respect to yourself and others. Keeping your word and maintaining a reputation as a good person.
2. **COURAGE:** Doing and saying the right things, at all times, especially when it may be uncomfortable, frightening or unpleasant.
3. **RESPONSIBILITY:** Being accountable for your words, actions, and obligations to yourself and others.

**General Norms of Conduct**

1. We are fully present
2. We listen with openness
3. We criticize ideas not people
4. We start and end on time
5. We assume positive intent
6. We monitor air time

7. We practice courageous communication

**Schoolwide Policy:**

***DO everything possible to maintain a POSITIVE/PRODUCTIVE learning environment for the ENTIRE school-building and within the individual classrooms.***

*- More specifically, when it comes to others, our school and classrooms will be tolerant of each other and each other's viewpoints. We all come from different backgrounds. We do not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation or handicap with regards to treatment. Harassment and hurtful comments will not be tolerated!*

**What can educators do?**

1. Understand the needs and challenges facing newcomers.
2. Support new students and build their self-confidence.
3. Assist students to reduce the sense of fear that often characterized their lives before coming to the United States.
4. Value new students and build their sense of belonging in the classroom and the school community.
5. Exhibit positive attitudes towards and acceptance of Somali students.
6. Facilitate students' and parents' adaptation and adjustment to the new school system.
7. Ensure a safe school environment, free from racism and bullying.
8. Value and respect the culture and beliefs of Somali newcomers.
9. Establish collaborative networks with parents and students.
10. Establish and maintain communication between the school and the Somali community.

## Performance Tasks And Assessment

Performance Task	
Performance Prompt	
Assessment/Ru	

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## Learning Experiences And Resources

<b>Sequence of Activities</b>	<p><b><u>DAY 1</u></b>  <b><u>Possible Folktale "Hook"</u></b></p> <p>15 minutes: Somali Folktale - The King's Daughter</p> <p>Read the Folktale that has the overall lesson of "Talk about your problems with people who care. Together you have a much better chance of solving them." The goal is for the staff to read the folktale and brainstorm current problems that relate to the diversity of the school and the increased Somali population.</p> <p>15 minutes: Somali Folktale - The Elephant and the Squirrel</p> <p>Read the Folktale that has the overall lesson of "Everyone does not like the same thing. What one person likes doesn't mean it's good for everyone. Don't expect everyone to like what you like, and don't think that you should like what everyone else likes. Don't be friends with someone that could hurt you." The goal is for the staff to read the folktale and make further connection that what is good for one student, may not be for another. Each person needs to be treated and understood as an individual based on the overall person (ie: learning styles, culture, background, ability, etc.).</p>
<b>Differentiated Instruction</b>	
<b>Resources</b>	<p><b>Attachments/Resources:</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For-Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/AR-CMEF-1.pdf">https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For-Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/AR-CMEF-1.pdf</a></p> <p>Somali Folktales: <a href="http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E_tale_19.html">http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E_tale_19.html</a></p>

## **Somali Folktale - The King's Daughter**

A long time ago a very rich king had a smart and very beautiful daughter. They ruled over a very prosperous city that had three roads leading into it. Each road had a special kind of traveler assigned to it. However, each road also had problems, which threatened the travelers going into the city. The first road had a mean lion that ate up everything he saw. The second road had a gang of men who would kill the travelers. The third road had a group of thieves that robbed the travelers of their food and belongings.

Many men came to the king to ask him if they could marry his beautiful, smart daughter. But the king's daughter loved another man, and she wanted to marry him. However, the king didn't want her to marry the man she loved, so he announced that his daughter would only marry the man who could get rid of the dangers on the three roads into the city.

All the men in the city started to compete with each other so they could be the winner, and marry the king's daughter. They all failed to get rid of the dangerous attackers on the roads leading into the city.

The girl's lover went to the girl, and said, "You are a very smart girl. How can we solve these problems so we can be married?"

She said, "Let's take care of the lion first. We'll set a trap for him. Don't use a spear or carry other weapons."

He set a trap for the lion. Then he called the king and all the people in the city, and he said, "Here's the lion I caught without a weapon." Everyone was surprised, and they all clapped for him.

The daughter's lover then secretly went back to her, and asked her how to get rid of the gang on the second road. She said, "We'll cook some delicious food. We will put poison in the food. Then we'll tie the food to some donkeys, and have them walk along the road." The gang of men robbed the food from the donkeys. They ate the food very fast, and they all died.

The young man went back to the king's daughter, and asked her how to get rid of the thieves on the third road. She said, "Go find as many horses as you can. Tie thorn bushes to each horse. Then let the horses run in different directions to scare the thieves." The running horses made lots of dust, and when the robbers saw all the horses and the dust, they thought they were being attacked by an army.

They said, "A huge and powerful army is coming! What shall we do?" They decided to run away in different directions so no one would find them together.

The king was very happy that all three roads leading into the city were now safe for travelers. He let his daughter marry the man she loved. They had a big wedding with many presents from

the people in the city.

They were happy because they had faced these problems together. They had discussed their problems and decided how to solve them. They were always loyal to each other.

**Lesson:** Talk about your problems with people who care. Together you have a much better chance of solving them. [http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E\\_tale\\_19.html](http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E_tale_19.html)

### **Somali Folktale - The Elephant and the Squirrel**

A long time ago an elephant and a squirrel were friends. They would play together. One day they went swimming. The elephant carried the squirrel and put him in the water. Then he left him alone to swim. The squirrel struggled for air because he could not swim. The elephant didn't know that the squirrel couldn't swim and that he was struggling to get out of the water. The squirrel got stuck in the mud, and he was very tired. When the elephant came back to get the squirrel, he saw that the squirrel was tired and sad. He played with the squirrel, and carried him on his trunk. The elephant was trying to make the squirrel happy.

The next day the squirrel came to the elephant. The squirrel said, "I came here to tell you, my friend, that the fun we had yesterday is killing me. The things that are fun for you are not good for me. I can't stand this anymore."

The elephant was so surprised. He said, "All I wanted was to play with you, and to be friends with you. You say that I'm hurting you instead of playing with you. What did I do to you?"

Then the squirrel said, "What you like may not be what I like. So please, my friend, leave me alone."

**Lesson:** Everyone does not like the same thing. What one person likes doesn't mean it's good for everyone. Don't expect everyone to like what you like, and don't think that you should like what everyone else likes. Don't be friends with someone that could hurt you. [http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E\\_tale\\_18.html](http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E_tale_18.html)

### **Somali Folktale - The Power of Education**

Once upon a time, two men were travelling together. They were cousins. They were on their way to a special school that taught religion. While they were traveling, they stopped at a town

that was ruled by an uneducated king. Since it was a Friday, they prayed at the mosque where the king talked nonsense. They slept in this town at night. In the morning they continued their travels. Finally, they reached their destination and they started to learn about the Islam religion. After they finished their religious education, one of the men said, "Let's go back home."

The other one said, "I will not go back home until I learn about politics." The first man said okay, and he started travelling back home.

He returned to the town where the uneducated king lived. When he was in this town, the king was leading Friday's prayer again. The man prayed with them. After they had finished the prayers, the king gave a speech. He said anything he wanted because he was not educated. No one dared to say that the king was wrong. However, the man who learned religion took over the speech. He changed everything that the king said. He made the king look like a fool. The king ordered his soldiers to put the man in prison. They took the man from the mosque, and took him to jail. They put him in a dungeon.

After two years, the prisoner's cousin returned to the town after he finished his political education. He didn't know his cousin was in jail. It was another Friday (Prayer day for Muslims). When they finished prayers, the king started to give his same old speech. After the king finished the speech, the man who learned politics raised his hand. The king let him talk. The man said, "Your king is so intelligent." He kept praising the king. Then he said, "The luckiest person in this world is the person who prays with this king for four Fridays, but you would be luckier to cut one hair from his head. Everyone started running to get a hair from the King's head. A mosque full of people tried to grab the King's hair. They climbed all over the King, trying to get his hair. The King died. Then the people who lived in the town chose the man who learned politics to be their King. He let his cousin out of jail. He had very tangled and matted hair after being in jail for two years.

**Lesson:** Any education you gain will help you one day.

[http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E\\_tale\\_10.html](http://hooyo.web.free.fr/E_tale_10.html)

