

8-2016

What do Somali Students, Parents and Non-ELL Teachers Expect from Each Other?

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**What do Somali Students, Parents and Non-ELL Teachers
Expect from Each Other?**

By Edle Sanwa

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in English

August, 2016

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In my thesis, I would like to study what Somali students, parents and Non-ELL teachers expect from each other. According to Museus, (2014) racism is defined as “a social system that benefit a dominant racial group and allow that population to maintain disproportionate power and privilege over minority racial groups, their experiences, and their access to resources” (p. 12). Pigott, R., and Cowen, E. (2000) also argue that most white teachers have more trust with white students who look like them and that may lead students of color not to trust white teachers. Especially young minority students have more respect with their teachers and they expect the same trust from the teachers. Most students of color show more trust in teachers who look like them and may even try to mimic them in order to become like them. The article also mentions that white teachers expect white students to be academically more competent than students of color.

According to Nieto, (2013) research shows that US student population is changing from largely White, European American population to a diverse student population. People from different places in the world are coming to U.S for different reasons. Some are coming here because of war, others are coming because of democratic reasons and they come to our country (US) to have a better life. Research by Mckown and Weinstein, (2008) also shows that:

Teacher expectations have been proposed as one contributor to the ethnic achievement gap. According to this account, teachers sometimes base their expectations for student achievement on student ethnicity, with teachers expecting more from European American and Asian American students than from their African American and Latino peers (p.236).

Many teachers base their relationship with their students the race, sex and ethnicity of children. According to research by Murray, Murray and Waas, (2008) explains that “Individual child characteristics such as sex and race appear to be related to teacher ratings of the quality of their relationships with young children” (p. 50).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For the literature review, I would like to cover how different authors discuss the relationship between teachers, students and parents. For the literature review, I would like to get answers for the following questions:

- 1) Do students' cultural background and their relationship with the teacher matter?
- 2) How might teachers' expectations be related to child ethnicity?
- 3) Do good student–teacher relationships help students' learning?
- 4) What might put minority students' academic achievement at risk?
- 5) How can teachers provide a meaningful learning outcome for minority students?
- 6) What is parent involvement? and
- 7) How does it affect a child's learning outcome?

Does Students' Cultural Background and Their Relationship with the Teacher Matter?

According to Museus, (2014) racism is defined as “a social system that benefit[s] a dominant racial group and allow that population to maintain disproportionate power and privilege over minority racial groups, their experiences, and their access to resources” (pg. 12). Many other authors define racism in other ways, but most of them agree that racism is a negative way of discriminating against individuals based on their skin color, origin, physical appearance, immigration status and more. On the other hand, there are many areas that are invisible to many authors and educators such as immigrant and language issues (Museus, 2014). The "white-black" way of defining racism is little bit generalized and the author believes more is needed when considering the issue of race and discrimination. Research by Decker, Dona and Christenson, (2006) shows that:

Having a positive relationship with one's teacher may be a factor that promotes positive

outcomes and ameliorates risk for students who may be considered at-risk for negative outcomes such as school dropout. However, having a negative relationship with one's teacher may further promote negative outcomes for at-risk students as well (p. 85).

It's helpful and promotes academic learning if students have a good relationship with their teachers. On the other hand, it's also rewarding and less stressful if teachers treat their students equally and try their best to close the gap between them and students in general.

According to Nieto (2013), American students have developed a relationship with their teachers inside the classroom and outside the classroom. In general, that relationship doesn't occur between nonwhite students and their teachers. As for students of color, that relationship hasn't developed due to geographic distance between the teachers and the school they teach; social distance, which means not seeing each other outside the classroom and not being able to go to the same churches, malls, parks, or community activities; social and cultural values being different from their students (as some teachers believe students of color's culture is deficiency as it promotes violence, not valuing education and parents not being involve in their children's educations); and lastly, a majority of the teachers being white. Nieto (2013) also found that, when it comes to building a relationship with students of color inside and outside the classroom, a teacher must have the following. First, see teaching as an act of love; second, see teaching as advocacy; and lastly see teaching as honoring student identities and believing in their futures.

According to Lee (2005), he believes that in the US school system, the curriculum, policies and staff favor white students and especially the middle class white students. "I will argue that the school's culture reflected, perpetuated, and privileged white middle-class cultural norms" (p. 3). The author also indicated that most white teachers' define good students to be white and from middle-class families. In the article, the author is specifically concerned about Hmong students, but most minority students are going through these challenges and Somali

students are among them.

According to Pigott and Cowen (2000), they also argue that most white teachers have more trust with white students who look like them and that may lead students of color not to trust white teachers. Young minority students have more respect for their teachers, and they expect the same respect from the teachers. The article also mentions that white teachers expect white students to be academically more competent than students of color. Those teachers who expect low academic performance from students of color devote less time and help and may not encourage learning goals for students of color.

Pigott and Cowen (2000) also believe that teachers of color show more trust for students of color than white teachers. Schools that have more teachers of color have less students of color suspended or treated differently. On the other hand, the author also reported that African American teachers judged African American children to have fewer problem behaviors than white teachers did. According to Baker (2006) in the article called "Contributions of teacher-child relationships to positive school adjustment during elementary school" the author indicates that "Successful relationships with teachers may be differentially important for children with developmental vulnerabilities" (p.213). For example, a good teacher-student relationship is very helpful and decreases problems among aggressive students. Teachers having good relationship with their students promote the academic wellbeing of the students and brings a satisfaction to minority students. The author also indicated that "Close relationships with non-familial adults can serve as protective factors, permitting vulnerable children to develop more adaptive beliefs about themselves and the social world and to develop critical behavioral and social emotional competencies" (p.213).

How Might Teachers' Expectations be Related to Child Ethnicity?

As for the Latino students, they have less relationship with their teachers inside the classroom or outside the classroom. According to Marx, 2009, states that, “[First], Latinos account for 85% of U.S children speaking another language at home; [second,] they make up 19% of the U.S public schools population and third 90% of teachers are white”. They couldn’t be any more different. As for how teachers and administrators view Latino students perhaps these two words can summarize their view on Latino students: “problems and challenges” (Marx, 2009, p. 82). When these teachers are white, only speak English, and see their students as problems and challenges, how can they then develop a relationship with their students inside the classroom and outside the classroom? These teachers will not be able to give their students their right to an education. These teachers believe their Latino students have different values and morals than they do. They believe that Latino students “don’t care about school, have no motivation to succeed and in return they assign them to special educations, non-college bound track classes such as home economic,” (Marx, 2009, p. 83). How can these teachers connect with their students if they view as problems and challenges? How can their students be receptive to them? And how can the school achieve its goal of educating these students? White teachers and administrators believe Latino students do not have the same value as they do when it comes to education, or motivations to succeed. When these teachers bring their biases to the classroom they undermine their student ability, this crushes their student dreams, and it keeps the status quo. Relationship between Latino students and white teachers inside the classroom seems almost impossible due to geography, social distances and white teacher's and administrator's view on Latino students. You need to work on your citations.

According to Pigott and Cowen (2000) they claim that “Teachers’ rating typically

indicates that, African American children have more behavioral problems and poorer academic performance than White children” (P. 178). These behavior problems may contribute to the situations that black students are in and they may think that getting in trouble is the way they can solve the problem, but this may make the situation worse. These authors believe that:

differences increase with time indeed, by seventh grade, African American children were judged to have twice as many behavior problems as white children with closely matched race samples—something that many prior studies have lacked—this study’s main purpose was to assess the roles that child race, teacher race, and teacher–child racial congruence play in teacher ratings of children’s school adjustment and performance (p. 178).

According to Mckown and Weinstein, (2008) they believe that many teachers in the U.S expect more from White and Asian students than from black students and this negative relationship between the black students and white teachers leads black students to lose motivation. Teachers’ negative expectation may make three things happen. First, white teachers may provide more quality educational instructions and time to white students that they had expected more from. Secondly, the white students may also try their best to fulfill their teachers’ expectations, which leads them to be more motivated than black students. Thirdly, black students may become concerned about the low expectations from the white teachers and become less motivated.

According to Frankenberg, (2010), he believes that, immigrants with the high number of children are increasing in the US schools and teachers in the US school need to prepare for the challenges and the needs of those students. The author also believes that, most of the current teachers in schools, especially elementary teachers, are not ready to deal with the students from different cultures and different geographic background. The author also argues that teachers’ attitudes towards race are being less tolerant than the general population, which is something that

is unacceptable. Teachers went through training about teaching and they are expected to be better than the general population. The author also indicates that, what may cause white teachers to be less tolerant is the environment they are in, and based on this, research shows that “White teachers as overwhelmingly teaching in Communities very close to where they grew up and have attended homogeneous teacher preparation institutions” (Frankenberg, 2010, p. 455). And that may have contributed the way they treat their students.

Do Good Student–Teacher Relationships Help Students’ Learning?

Research conducted by Decker, Dona, and Christenson, (2006) shows that student teacher relationships are better when the students are younger, and it deteriorates as they grow older. The student-teacher relationship is closer in elementary level than in middle school and also middle school is closer than high school. Also, student-teacher relationships are closer in high school than in college.

According Nieto, (2013) some unique things about teachers who have had positive impact on Students of color is that all of these teachers love teaching. As one of the teachers said “I just felt alive, it was me” (p. 126). In terms of describing how he feels about teaching, on another occasion this teacher Mr. John Gunderson said “ I love what I do and I love getting kids to think” (Nieto, 2013, p. 126). When teachers love to teach in general they will translate their love of teaching into positive action in terms of teaching their students. Students will be receptive to them as they can see the sincerity in the teacher’s eyes. The teacher becomes authentic and breaks barrier between his or her students. These teachers would show this passion of teaching no matter what kind of students they teach. When teachers love teaching, they love to see their students succeed. They become their student’s biggest supporters and facilitate a perfect opportunity to develop that relationship with their students inside the classroom and outside the

classroom.

When teachers build a good relationship with students of diverse background, it honors Students' identity. In terms of honoring their identities they believe in their dreams as all of the teachers believe that they "welcome their students' identities into the classroom, encourage them to retain their native or community language and to maintain ties to their communities," (Nieto, 2013, p. 130). When a teacher can respect and value their student identity which is different from his/her then students will feel safe in the classroom, and they become productive. The majority of white teachers have stereo types of students of color, specifically Latinos as they say "they don't value education, respect women and encourage teen pregnancy" (Kubota & Lin, 2009, p. 89). If these teachers have all of these negative stereotypes for their students, then how can they recognize their identity in the classroom? To build relationship with your students inside the class, you must first respect their identity and discuss issues pertaining race, identity, and culture so they can get to know their students better, break barriers between them and teach them more effectively. All of these actions will help student psychological wellbeing which will help him or her to be a successful student unlike the rest of the teachers in the country who believe that students of color should be assimilated as their culture is inferior (Nieto, 2013).

Nieto (2013) also claims that, Yolanda an African American teacher, Alicia Lopez a Puerto Rican and Spanish, and John Nguyen a Vietnamese honor their student's identities in different ways but they also believe in their future:

Yolanda an African American honors her students identities who are African American and Latino's by being a role model, Alicia who teaches Latino students goes out of her way to let her students to get to know her and it shows that she can relate to them and honor their identity. Mr. Nguyen who teaches African American students gets to know his students by becoming student of them he constantly listens to them and gets to know them on a person level during discussion in class. All of these teachers "make

sincere effort to get to know their students' families, become involve in the community they teach, and try to call their students by their first name no matter how hard it is (Nieto, 2013 p. 131).

When teacher accommodate students' identity instead of suppressing it, it builds bond between them which in return leads to meaningful learning outcome.

What Might Put Minority Students' Academic Achievement at Risk?

Graziano, Reavis, Keane, and Calkins, (2006) show that when children are growing up, it is important for individuals, for example parents, teachers, caregivers and other adults who are around them to have a positive relationship with the children. These authors believe that, "The early childhood years have recently been identified as a crucial period for the development of important executive functions such as attention, inhibition, working memory and literacy skills that are necessary for successful school transition and later academic success" (p. 4). Graziano, Reavis and Keane (2006) believe that what students experience in their early days will have impact on their future goals and students may result in academic failure including dropping out of school or performing below average points or end up having conflict with their schoolmates or classmates.

In the United States, students develop relationships with their teachers inside the classroom, but the relationship in most cases is between white students and white teachers. As for minority students for example Latinos and African/American students rarely build a positive relationship with their white teachers inside the classroom or outside the classroom. Marx, 2009 believes that "53% of American teachers live in the district they teach, with only 32% living within the attendance areas of their school building" (p.83). That is nearly 88% of the teachers are not living with the community that they teach. The geographic and social distance between the teacher and students does not facilitate an opportunity for them to encounter one another

outside the classroom. Teachers are not part of the community so in return they won't be able to understand their students. Teachers and students have separate social lives. They will not see each other at community events, like sports events, local mosques, churches, and malls. If teachers live within the community, it will be easy for them to see their student outside the classroom on a regular basis, make home visits, and cheer them on school sports events. But when teachers don't live in the community or within attendance distance, then how can they build relationships with their students. If teachers don't have relationship with their students, it will affect students' learning as they won't be receptive to their teacher and reach their goal. According to Marx, 2009, Teacher who teach in the city usually live in the suburb "more than 90% of teachers are white, while 97% speak only English" (p.82). These teachers who teach students of color in the city purposely live far away from their school in order to detach themselves from the community as they believe they are superior to them.

How Can Teachers Provide a Meaningful Learning Outcome for Somali Students?

Nieto, (2013) believes that one way to build relationship with students of diverse backgrounds is to advocate the students. Some advocacy is simple as listening to ones students. In the Nieto's book, when Mr. Nguyen asked his students why they liked him, one student said "well you listen to us" (p. 134). something as little as listening even though not agreeing can build a relationship inside the classroom. Students will see their teacher as someone who cares, and is concerned for their social wellbeing and in return his/her student will be receptive to him/her if they can only listen. Another teacher brings a refrigerator, a microwave and food to class to feed them (Nieto, 2013, p. 134). Others give their cell phone and home phone numbers to their students and parents so that they can call them any time for any issues. Other teachers become advocates of their students by convincing them of the importance of education, helping

them flourish, and getting to know them individually (Nieto, 2013). These teachers see teaching as a social justice and this drives them to become advocates of their students. They want to make the playing field even by taking on many different responsibilities such as, being mentor, parent and counselor along with teaching. These teachers understand the importance of all students being educated specially those who don't have any assistance or guidance from parents and communities.

According Nieto (2013), these teachers foster their student's dream by "teaching them to make ethical life choices not simply high scores on test (p. 127). They teach their students to become noble citizens who become an asset to the nations. Yolanda nurtures her students dream by helping them create a vision for their future (Nieto, 2013, p. 92). This teacher believes in her students, encourages them, and most importantly believes in their future even more than they do. This vision gives these children hope and future and encourages these students to dream. She guides her student into believing that they can accomplish anything that they put their mind to. For Maria she fosters her students dream by "having high expectation" and "seeing students' progress make her work worthwhile" (Nieto, 2013, p. 102). Compare this to teachers and administrators who see Latino students as "problem and challenges" (Marx, 2009, p. 86). She certainly doesn't see them as a problem or a challenge, but instead sees them as young men and women who can achieve success if they are guided. Challenging students and having high expectation will help students achieve their dream. As we can see, Maria takes joy in her students' progress. This progress will at the beginning of their education is setting the foundation for a brighter future. As for John nurturing students dream is "improving the human condition, not just getting high scores on test" (Nieto, 2013, p. 99). John believes in improving people's lives as whole. By improving the students' lives you will give them an opportunity to chase their

dream.

When teaching students in general, teachers need to view teaching as a life of service. They need to display their passion and love of teaching on a regular basis. This makes them successful teachers who produce model citizens (Nieto, 2013). They love to see their students' succeed; they're the biggest advocate, they foster their dreams and set high standards and believe in the student's dreams. They connect with their students inside the class by listening to them, sharing their personal struggles, and matching the curriculum with their sociocultural. They connect with their students outside the class by living in the community, connecting with parents and students, making home visits and becoming involved in the community they teach. These teachers not only build a relationship with students of diverse background inside the classroom and outside the classroom, but they leave a lasting impact on their students' life. Nieto, (2013) believes that, in order to facilitate a positive relationship with students of diverse background, teachers and educators need to implement the following changes. First, they need to be hiring more teachers from the Latino and African American community, who share the same culture and values as their students. Second, curriculum must be reflections of the student sociocultural. Third, teachers need to live in the district that they teach. Fourth, white teachers and educators need more training to serve students of diverse background. The problem these students face affects society as a whole. We must no longer tolerate our youth from poor and disadvantage background being denied their right to quality, education, life, and pursue of happiness. Children, families, and society is effected by students of color not being able to achieve quality education and this hurts our society, When all students succeed society will succeed as a whole.

What is Parent Involvement? And How Does it Affect a Child's Learning Outcome?

Kuperminc, Darnell, and Alvarez-Jimenez, (2008) claim that "Parent involvement has

been described as the degree to which a parent dedicates resources of time and energy to his or her child in a given developmental or educational domain” (p. 470). Parent involvement is described as social capital that helps students to be motivated and reduces the achievement gap among minority groups and also for poor achieving white students. On one hand, the author also indicated that “The high rates of academic failure and school dropout among Latino youth in the United States are a significant source of concern for educators and policy makers” (p. 470).

Parents’ involvement is one of the main inputs that are needed to reduce the achievement gap between the white and minority students for example Latino/immigrant students. Parent involvement is believed to work and help the students to improve and to close the achievement gap, because parents hold primary responsibility for their children. Kuperminc, Darnell, and Alvarez-Jimenez, (2008) also stated that Latino parents are less likely to attend school conferences than white parents. According to the authors, they stated that Immigrant black parents are less likely to attend school conferences than US black parents. In general, immigrant parents are less able to attend school conferences to discuss about their children with the teachers. Culture issues and parent involvement need to be discussed.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study is to discover and identify:

1. What do Somali students, Somali parents and non-ELL-teachers expects from each other?

Participants

Participants in the study were composed of 10 non-ELL Elementary teacher who are native speakers of English, 10 Somali-American Elementary students and 10 Somali parents who are non-native speakers of English that may or may not attended or taught at adult schools in St Cloud Area. I only used 7/10 teachers, 1/10 of the students and 1/10 of the students. Most the parents and students have the same idea about this topic.

The first participants of the study are Elementary teachers who teach the Somali students that are participating in this study. Most teachers at least have 5 years teaching experience and most of them work with Somali students in a number of years.

The second participants are Elementary students from kindergarten to fifth grade and most of them were placed based on their age not in their education level. Majority of these students at least attend 30 minutes ELL services every day. Most of the newly arrived Somali students enroll to English Academy program that help them to improve their English skills. This program is only allowed one year for each student to enroll.

The third participants will be Somali parents. Most of these parents only speak Somali Language. Since my L1 is Somali Language, participants will be translated/interpreted everything in Somali Language and I will translate back everything to English. Some Somali Parents also attend to adult's school and most of them were exposed to education system in the United States of America.

Parent and student Participants will include both males and females and only include Somali

Speakers. Participants will voluntarily participate in the study, with no compensation available for the completion of the study.

One of the reasons why I choose to do the interviews is that most Somali parents are oral communication to writing, and I believe that will help me to gather more information from the Somali participants. On other hand, many Somali parents may not be able to read and write either English (L2) or Somali (L1) and interviewing in their L1 (Somali) may ease and make them to respond better.

Materials

Participants will be responding to each interview question. There will be only one interview questions directing the participants to take the interview and each group (Somali students, Somali parents and non-ELL-teachers) will have a separate interview questions. The instructions of the interviews will be exactly the same, and participants will be asked to respond to the interview questions. The interview questions will be created in way that gives participants enough time to respond.

Procedures

When collecting the data, the researcher asked the participants to fill out a questionnaire that permits the researcher to interview them (consent forms). According to the Belmont Report (1979, p. 27), it states that informed consent requires that human subjects, to the degree that they are capable, should be provided with the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them. Based on the consent forms, the researcher will continue to conduct his research and will continue to conduct the research to those who are willing to participate voluntarily. The researcher will interview teachers, students and parents separately. The researchers will audio

record the participants one by one. For those who only speak Somali, the researcher will translate their participation in English.

Analysis

I would like to analyze the research to find the expectations between Somali students, parents and non-ELL-teacher expects. The study is not about Linguistic analysis and I am only interested about the content of what the research participants mention about the interview questions for example, what kind of things they said? What kinds of things are mentioned more often? What kind of gaps may be there among the three groups? On one hand, the study doesn't have to transcribe everything. I am also planning to listen the audio multiple times and I will take notes while listening. I would also like to see if there is any pattern. On the other hand, I would like to use qualitative analysis, because it will help me to see how good or how bad the expectation between Somali students, parents and non-ELL-teacher will be. I will also use Qualitative analysis that may help me to decide what kind of information goes with what and this is called emerging themes. I will use the emerging themes, because I don't know what kind of information that will emerge from the research. As I listen

Chapter 4: Research Results

Based on previous studies that are conducted from other minority groups, I believe this study will be able to find answers for the thesis question: what do Somali students, parents and non-ELL teacher expects from each other? The results will be presented with a focus on the following themes: 1) the blindness of white teachers, 2) Somali students/parents frustration in US schooling system, 3) intercultural difference between the teachers and the Somali community, and 4) lack of inter-language between the teachers and Somali parents and students.

1. The Blindness of White Teachers.

I would like to describe how most white teachers are blind about Somali community issues. Most white teachers indicated that they have good relationships with Somali students and parents, but the Somali students and parents believe that, they don't get welcomed from white teachers and Somali parents hope white teachers could feel the struggle of Somali students in schools and offer an opportunity for their children.

White teachers play their professional roles and didn't recognized the struggle Somali parents and Somali students are going through. For example Teacher4 stated that,

I don't know the expectation of Somali parents, because I don't know many Somali parents. I haven't seat down with them and said, what are your expectations for your child at school? How do you discipline your child at home? If I have to say, I will say same as American parents, but parenting is probably different in different cultures. Let us say we have the same expectation, but I know that is probably not.

On the other hand, these are the things that Teacher4 has to say about Somali Parents,

At the new school, I feel that the Somali parents here speak better English than Somali Parents of the Old school I used to work. I think, coming here I was shocked to see all the ELL kids in my classroom, I can talk to most of their parents, because most of them do speak English. So I wonder if cultural think that they spread apart like that is or if it's just oh I knew someone who live there before. This year I was very impressed with the ELL population at this

school and how all of the kids except my Jump start kids that came after the school year knew English and I am just like, how do all students know English? And I asked them and their like Oh my grandpa came whatever year and now mother is here and I was very impressed with the English skills of the students here at [school name] and how fast they are learning the language skills. Most of my Somali students in my old school was in ELL, but this is my first year that I have Somali students who didn't receive ELL services, because their academic skills are so high and that is awesome.

Teacher4 also reported:

Somali male parents are my biggest challenge, because I know there is a cultural thing with men for example, with eye contact and all those things and get nervous when a dad came to my classroom. I think like, do I shake their hand? Do I stand back? Do I not make I contact? All of those cultural things that I will do if an American dad walks in and we shake hands and I don't know if I can do that with a Somali parent.

Teacher4 continued:

One other thing is that, I assume that all girls that wear Hijab could speak Somali, so one year I said you need to talk to this little jump start kid to tell her what is going on and the little girl looks at me and she is like, I don't speak Somali. And I said, what you mean you don't speak Somali? You look like you speak Somali. She said no I am from Kenyan we don't speak Somali, I speak Swahili. I was like, oh I am so sorry. So that assumption my part as a teacher, I am assuming that all of these students speak Somali and some of them don't, because they didn't live in Somalia they live in Kenya and learn English and Swahili in Kenya. I am sure Somali families' value education. I am not sure, is it higher, middle or lower, where does their value of education come in to play in American school. Is it really important to them?

And said also:

It is concern to me, because I want them to be educated and have the same choices as America students or any kid that goes to American schools. I want them to have the same education piece. I guess a typical story is, I am going to go back to the old school that I used to teach. In that school, it was hard to communicate with parents, because of the language barrier. You can't just call and say; oh I want to tell you that Mohamed was awesome at school today, that part is hard. That typical story of not being able to communicate with parents is the hardest part of being a teacher. I want to be that person that can call and say, Mr. so and so had awesome day at school today.

Many white teachers in the schools are not aware of the cultural differences that Somali

students have and some may know, but are not willing to listen. Myself, I talked to couple administrators about these issues and the administrators have training to deal with students who have different cultural backgrounds, but many white teachers do not. Imagine what these white teachers have to say about Somali community at large, Teacher2 stated that:

I only had one time that I felt that for whatever reason I couldn't build a relationship with a parent to help their child. Only once and I was being here for Nine years. I really felt it was a language barrier issue and I was still working with an interpreter. I questioned whether there is a trust, but it was a childhood just needed a lot support behaviorally and the family and I just had little bit different perspectives on that. I felt the behavior was significant and the family didn't and I just questioned, did I do a good enough job explaining what the concern was, explaining what typical behavior is for this age, and explaining all of that. I questioned whether I did my part with that. But that is really only being the one time that was a huge role block.

This teacher thought this kind of incident happen once, but it's something that happens to Somali families every single day.

Parenting means different in different cultures. In countries from which most Somali refugee come from, it is the teachers' responsibility to make sure students are doing what they are supposed to be doing. It is the teachers' responsibility to question and to be accountable for any missing assignment or misbehaving. In many schools, the parent will only step in if there are any financial issues or if a student's behavior is deteriorating up to a stage where the teacher couldn't get a solution. Most US white teachers have higher expectations from Somali parents, but many Somali parents may not be aware of what is expected of them by US white teachers. Many parents may be willing to try their best, but language may get in their way and that may lower their potential to make a difference in their children's learning.

On the other hand, many US teachers are not aware all the difficulties that Somali Parents are going through and think Somali Parents are lazy and don't care about their kids. Teacher2

responded that:

There is only one that comes to mind and it was early on in my career. I had a concern about a student's behavior and the mom said through an interpreter, when he is at school you deal with it. It surprises me because my perspective is very different and I was confused. I didn't know like I know now and just with us talking to, that there is different perspective, so that was little bit shacking to me, that I felt like they were just saying okay it's your problem, because it happening during school day. I was left bewildered wondering we need to be a team together so that we can help your child and I don't in hide side and think parent didn't want their child, but they were just saying it happen during school day you deal with it. So that surprised me anticipating that, but It was my first year here and it was my first year working with such a diverse environment and it was one my first experience with that cultural perspective and because I didn't understand it, I was left confused and feeling little disappointed saying you should be my partner and I want you to partner with me to help your child.

The blindness or lack of understanding of the white teachers for the struggles of the Somali students and parents can be seen in their comments during the interviews. Teacher5 reported that:

It seems like I sometimes get complete to opposite end and I tend to get Somali parents are not involved at all and kind of give me the impression that they don't care and then I have the extreme opposite where I might me afraid to call home if their child is trouble, because I am cautious what the parents going to do and how they are going to handle it. So I will say the story of when I was surprised by the expectations is may be a time where they were just the expectations for their child was so high and this is kind of behavior situation where they expect their child to behavior at school and that wasn't the case. I kind of felt like the expectation at home was higher and that surprise me. I have had a lot of Somali Students that have impressed me both academically and just their character of who they are. I have some really high Somali students that are well achieving and it impress me that a lot of Somali students can speak comprehend and write English, can read, comprehend and speak in Arabic and can read, comprehend and write in Somali as well. So, it's really amazes me that they have three languages that they are literate. Sometimes I feel that, they are not as adults they should be? Granted that is not just Somali parents, I have other parents with other cultures and I wish it could be more adults' involvement. Sometimes I feel like school isn't important to them and just the support that they need to give their child isn't always there". On one hand Teacher2 stated that: "It's really good, I am still trying to overcome the language challenge, because I do thing that is the biggest barrier and I so desperately want to know they understand what I am saying and we are on the

same page, so that they know what my concern is or my celebration to them calling and say thank goodness your child is the student of the month. Do they understand its students of the month and I want them to come to school at 10 o'clock to be able to celebrate? So my concern with that is, do they really understand what I am saying. Sometimes they respond with yes, yes I will come and they don't come and I think oh that was miss opportunity, because I thought they understood. Here maybe they didn't.

On the other hand, Teacher1 summarized that:

Overall, sometimes the language piece can be frustrating, I think some of the kids they play the game of I don't understand and they understand just perfectly fine and it convenient to say ooh I don't understand when they don't want to do stuff, so is kind of figuring out some of that with them and for me it's frustrating, because I don't know how to help them. There are things that I care, for example when parents come in and they ask me something and I don't understand their concern and they say again and still not understanding I feel bad and frustrated not because of what their saying, but because I don't know what to do with them in order to help them. Overall, my experience with my Somali kids is all positive even the little guy (Somali student) who runs me crazy every day, he gets a good heart and works hard he will get there, he just some days harder than others. Overall I had good experience with my Somali students. So, and I like what they add in to our Classroom.

Teacher1 also describes her frustration with Somali parents. She stated that language barrier is the number one cause of the problem. This is what she has to say

...language and I just want to help them and help their kids, I don't know how to do that and I don't know how to explain our expectations and I don't know what they expect of me a times. So when I don't know if their happy of what I am doing or not happy or are Somali parents have problems what is happening at school or if their okay with it what is at school. When we have conferences almost always parents are appreciative and say thank you, thank you for working with my child, thank you for helping them and usually moms say you are the second mom of my child. You're helping my kid and they need to be respectful to you. Somali parents are want that, but sometimes there is that broke down in communication and I don't know how to communicate and explain what our school expectation are comes in my classroom.

Teachers would like to see the parents' involvement in the school setting. Teacher7 responded that:

I would like the parents to do the best, they can communicate with me through an interpreter or whatever means they have, if they have a question or concern and then I will try my best to help them. I have only one family that I haven't be able to meet with them. I think that will be not typical story that I have experienced this year. I don't know if it does more due to their schedules than actually not want to interact and be a part of their child's progress at school for their education.

Teacher5 also indicated that:

My role as a teacher is to be supportive, and the parent expectation is to hope teachers with high expectations to make sure that I do my Job best for their child. To set an example to their child that school is important and I have something they value and they care about and just to communicate to have open communications. The typical interaction between me and the Somali Parents has been positive. I have a lot great interactions with them. They are attending more in open house, they are calling with questions concerning about children's academics and behaviors".

Teacher5 also stated that she would like to have a wonderful relationship with the parents:

I think I still feel that I am still trying to teach the parents as well as to know what their expectations are as a role for their children in school and also trying to get them to live up to that expectations as well.

In addition, Teacher7 reported that she have a great relationship with Somali parents and this is what she have to say:

I think when I had my first Somali family I was surprised by how supportive, how they involved and supportive. They wanted so much for their child and they wanted my help with that. I was working at school that didn't have a lot of parent involvement, didn't have a high rate of parents that show up for conferences. My Somali parent did show up the time wanted. That was a surprising with the school that I was working at. I have a great relationship with my Somali Parents whether they speak English or not, so that I can communicate with them on my own or through an interpreter, both have been great, I even being seen parents out at target or Sam's club has being very good. I felt a positive response from them as been their child's teacher that we are together to support the child. I think it's great. My husband was with me and we were at the Sam's Club and a parent and one of my students came to me. My husband was surprised by the interactions, because he hasn't experienced a lot of interactions with the Somali families. I

think, the more people with a different background, the more we can be together and communicate one another.

The blindness of white teachers for Somali student and parent struggles is strong: they think that have great relationships with Somali students and parents. Teacher2 reported that:

Somali students impressed me all the time. I will just do this year, I have a specific student, and he in fact was the student of the month. I have a boy who is so inquisitive in everything that I teach him, he is instantaneity internalizes and just knows and he just constantly seeking out more challenge and amazes me every day with his academics, but not only that his leadership and his positive role model at school and just every day, if there is another thing I see him do, that is impressive and just he is a great role model. Very eager learners. What is really common, depends of cause on the child and whether their academic progress and behavior at school won't extra conversation or if doesn't, but I will say what I have described is very typical with my Somali Parents. I think it could depend on the family. If the child well behaviors at home, I don't think they have concern at school and we talk about academics, but if there are not well behaviors child at home then that behavior comes to school.

Teacher1 also included that:

As far as Somali Parents and students, I have had no issue with Somali students, they come in they are part of our class, if they have a problem with somebody, we workout, we try to tackle out and get everybody to understand we are same and if we like to make this place better, we need to work together. It doesn't matter who you are and where you came from, we are classroom and we need to work together and the only way we can make a difference in where is if we can get along and get work together. So, with my Somali students in my class, I know there is a language barrier for some and sometime the communication going home. Parents don't understand our expectations how to help their children and it's not the kids fault and we try to help the kids here at school, but once they're in the room, they're just like anyone else for me and it's not. We honor our differences and talk about our similarities and differences, but there're not singled out, because there're Somali. When we are doing story problems or doing things we talk about use their names in the story problem or sometimes we talk about if you're wearing blue Hijab you can line up, so we just include some of those pieces in to our day and try them to feel their just like anyone else I don't know, kids are just typical for me I know there is issues when they're not with me, there is issues when there're unstructured area. I know I hear reports when there're in the GYM, music or art where there're not listening or not following directions or that kind of thing, but for me, for the most part, there're doing what there're supposed to be doing. For parents, I don't know if parent don't know how our

school system works and they don't know that when we are in the middle of teaching, we can't just go in the whole way and visit with them, because I have twenty-six kids and there're doing only, who knows if am not there with them, so I think there're that piece of it for us is how do breach that gab and help parents understanding. Willing meeting with them is just not any old time it must be during break time or before school or after school. Because don't want to necessarily if the child is having an issue I don't talk about it in front of the whole class and so there is that piece of privacy for them and have to figure out a way to communicate with home better.

Some white teachers acknowledged the misunderstanding between white teachers and Somali families. Teacher2 reported that:

Very similar, I am thinking about calling a family last week to tell them that their child was selected student of the month and when I was fast started talking with, it was the dad, and he was very responsive. Yes, yes that is great, we will be there and I am like 10 o'clock Friday and then yes 10 o'clock on Friday. So I felt like we had really a good communication and he knew his son being celebrated and they will going to come 10 o'clock on Friday to see the celebration and then Friday ran around and they didn't come at 10, but they came at 10:15 am. They get there, but of Couse he was off the stage. So I really wish if I can do that differently or next time may verified through an interpreter or someone just to make sure, but it's hard because I couldn't tell my students, because it's a secret. It's hard to use the student to say, is mom or dad coming to school on Friday? Which is something I will do, is mom or dad talks about meeting with me on Friday? But for the student of the month, it a surprise to the student and I can't do that. My most common experience is just the realization that my role is to help them day to day with language acquisition and sometimes I over estimate what they know language wise and so I am constantly every day trying to think, okay did I say in a way that is clear, could have I used visual. What can I do? I am trying to bring in different things to support their language acquisition without underestimating their ability, because sometimes I think just because their learning second language, people underestimate cognitively where there at in their learning. So they are just like my other kids, only they are bilingual which is really cool. I think they expect me to educate their children, so if they are already English speaking to just met the standards and bush them as far as they can go and act academics. I think they expect me to teach their kids how to be respectful to one another. I think also with families who are just learning English, I think parents expect me to teach their kids English which is exactly what I do and just make sure their child is working up to their potentials like any parent.

Most of the white teachers reported that they have a great relationship with the Somali parents and students, but both the Somali parents and student's interviews indicated that this report could be the blindness of white teachers. Teacher6 stated that:

I was being saying this sense the beginning, the Somali students having in class are just some of the most fun kids, because of the progress they make is so rewarding as a teacher and some of them will come in with little exposure, some of them have had the ability to go to head start program or something, but the gains they make, makes you feel really rewarding as a teacher as you can see the difference you making in their lives. Like I just said, first I was taking back, now I expected when they come in and I think now I understand it more that we get on that same page quicker, because in the beginning of the year I know what they expected of me and I think now that a lot of the parents in the community have talked, when I have kids overlapped they know what my expectations are, they're the same for every kid that is the classroom. My expectations with the Somali students are the same as my other non-Somali students. I keep everyone the same learning standard. They are going to get what we are teaching, if I am going to give extra scopes, they are going to get it. But anything I sent home things need differentiated I do that for all of my kids, so I expect from them everything I expect from my ELL or non-ELL.

In addition, Teacher2 reported that:

What I have found is that, they are very far advanced in their English language learning and so they are typical second grade students. I mean, they are just typical little boys and girls going through similar developmental milestone as the non-ELL friends. I see them coaching on little bit faster, but it's because they have that Somali knowledge base and they can connect to what I am saying in English to what they already know in their native language. So they seem to progress faster academically, but that is the way it will be when you have learnt the language.

Teacher5 also reported that:

My experience with ELL for Somalis has being positive and typically feel that those children are a little behind academically with English in regards to reading, speaking, writing and comprehending, so just needing extra support with academics. They academically seem to be right at average compare to their peers and may be sometime little below average so there are some kids that I need to make sure since they are not getting ELL support so I am working with them little more to keep them up and ready to be the same level with their peers".

Teacher3 similarly reported that:

Just today and yesterday I used two different Somali kids as an example of awesome faithful work and I put their papers up and I compliment on them that they are doing awesome work to the class and I show them examples. How will I say this? I get along great with them. That is not an issue at all. No challenges except that they are really busy and I am really busy and sometimes it is hard to communicate, because there is a language barrier.

I am also surprised with the student's response and I believe this specific white teacher doesn't encourage Somali students to try to learn their best. I believe teachers and administrators can make a positive difference in Somali students' educational wellbeing and help them to make their American dreams true, but this specific white teacher is doing the opposite, and she didn't give a chance for Somali students to achieve their goals in education. For example, this is what the student has to say:

I liked that when one time the teacher said Russia is in Asia and she was showing something on the map, then I told her Russia is not in Asia, it is in Europe and then she gave me a peanut and I really like that moment, because I knew something that she didn't know". The student also stated that, "One thing that makes the teacher happy is when we are quiet and we don't get trouble in recess. And also when get in straight line and listen to her.

Also:

I remember last year, there was a kid that made fun of me every time and when I told my teacher she says just ignore him. That really hurt my feeling and later on, me and the kid get in to fight and I get suspended. But I told her that kid keep make fun of me every time, I believe that, she could help me right at that moment then I wouldn't have gone to that fight. I feel like when I tell her that white kids make fun of us, she doesn't take our concern serious.

All The Somali students I interview believe that they don't get the same treatments as white students get. As I was doing my observations, there was an incident that happen in this school district a couple months ago. A white student claimed that a Somali students bit her. The teacher and nurse believed what the white student told them. The cultural liaison asked them

what happened and the teacher started explaining about the incident saying that the Somali student bit the white student on her hand while they were in the gym and both the nurse and teacher decided that, the cultural liaison has to call the Somali parents to let them know what the child did at school and the consequences to what she did. Since the parent is illiterate in English, the cultural liaison asked both the teacher and the nurse if he can do more investigations before he call the parents.

When the cultural liaison raised that concern, both the nurse and the teacher got upset and told the cultural liaison that the Somali kid always lies in front of the student, and they said they can still see the marks on the white student's arm, why should we need to do more investigation? They said everything explains itself. They both left and asked the cultural liaison to deal with the case, since he is not agreeing with them. The cultural liaison interviewed both of the students and found out that, the white student bit herself to put the Somali student in trouble. I feel sorry for the Somali students who go through this type of harassment, and I wish the white teachers will feel some sympathy and treat Somali students the way they treat non-Somali students.

Parents showing up to school conferences is very beneficial to students' learning, because parents will know how the child is doing at school, and they will also get enough time to chat with the teachers to know more about their child's wellbeing when at school. Many Somali parents may have different opinion about the school conferences, since they may not have had parent-teacher conferences in Somalia.

High Percentage of Somali parents do not to speak fluent English and many teachers may think all Somali parents are like that and treat every Somali parent as illiterate in English. I believe, although administrators and teachers need to know more about Somali parents, but its

teachers' responsibility to convey the right message. Somali parents also tell their kids not to argue or talk back to any adults and they dictate to their kids to give more respect to their teachers. One parent indicated that his daughter got along with everybody, but that didn't mean that all the Somali students were having a good time at school. Maybe there are positive things that this specific student is having at school for example, the teachers that she met while at school are well trained teachers or it could be her academics, she is maybe an A+ student in her academics and that is why she is getting along with everybody.

The parent suggested a good idea to help Somali parents who are illiterate in English: if the district implements an ESL program that targets Somali parents that will improve the students' learning and will allow Somali parents to understand more about district policy and allow them to attend all the conferences for their children. The parent is complaining about a specific incident that happened to her daughter. I believe the staff are mandated to report any unusual situation, and they did the right thing, since the parent agrees that his daughter did something that is inappropriate in the school setting. I believe what made the parent feel that way is not an easy thing and staff did the right to report to the school principal. This will help the child and I believe she will learn from her mistakes and will not do it again. Below is what the parent has to say:

Well, interacting with elementary teachers is different compared to upper level teachers. They talk to you as a child and not as a parent during conferences, which they shouldn't. It is very common and I believe it is understandable, because they are in that environment. I think it's good that their tone of voice is different for the parents. The soft talks are working for the kids in the elementary. As a parent, I feel that I am a child when I come for the conference, because they use the same tone of voice. And I actually informed this concern to one of the elementary teachers to talk to me like an adult, because they should be able to adjust in to different settings.

The second parent reported:

Well, most teachers look at our children and might consider the parent to be non-English speaker. This is typical, because when the school calls they call with an interpreter and I don't need one. They need to understand only some parent's need it. I tell my children to listen their teachers the way they listen to us and I also ask them to show some respect to the adults already them and teachers are among the adults around them. My daughter doesn't have an issue interacting with other students. She likes to make friends.

A third parent said:

Keeping the social part is important and children notice things, so I keep it to a positive level and they should be okay. Teachers are also expected to be socially ready, since they are trained to teach and to be ready for changes. I would like my children teachers' to respect our religion, since my daughters may dress differently than most of the American kids. The teachers' behavior should be at a professional way and hopefully they behave better when they see that from their teacher. I believe this district is doing a great job and so far I am happy with what they're doing for my children.

Based on the parent's response, I believe that white teachers may have a different approach to Somali parents than to white parents. Some white teachers may do that unintentionally while others may do it intentionally. What the parents is saying is that, most white teachers may assume all Somali parents don't speak English well and they may talk to all of them the same way without asking if they speak well or not. The parent believes that the way white teachers communicated to him may cause the environment they are in, and if white teachers try to communicate the same way for all Somali parent although some parents speak fluent English, it is a problem. The parent suggests that:

Teachers need to change the tone of voice when communicating with the parents. They need to speak to them as a parents not as kids. The parent feels upset and he doesn't like the way teachers treat him during the conference with the teachers. I believe the parent tried his best to educate the teachers and tell them about his feeling. Many teachers are open-minded and may be willing to make changes based on positive comments from the parents.

More than half of the s stated that they have no issue with Somali students and students who are a part of their classes. It doesn't matter where they came from; all they want is for their class to work as a team. One teacher believes that:

Somali parents are not understanding school expectations and that creates problems with the students' wellbeing.

Another teacher mentioned that: a parent may agree to come for a meeting or school assembly in a certain time and they may show up late.

In general, white teachers believe that the language barrier creates a lot of misunderstanding between the white teachers and parents.

Teacher5 believes that: she is having a positive relationship with Somali parents and there is good number of parents who turn up during conferences and volunteer twice a week.

Another teacher believes that: because of work schedule, some parents may not be able to come to school when teachers are available to have a conference with the parents and they may show up during instructional time.

Teacher1 talk about her experience with Somali students and parents and the language barrier between them. She stated that: ELL students may try to find out a way not to do their work.

She also was frustrated with the Somali parents, because she may not understand them, and she feels sorry about the frustration that the Somali parents are going through.

Teacher2 also mentioned that:

Great things about ELL Students. Trying her best understanding about ELL students is really a positive thing that an American teacher can do. She makes sure that no student is left behind in her class, weather ELL or not Non-ELL.

Most of the white teachers agree that ELL students are struggling and they are going through a lot.

2. Somali Students/Parents Frustration in US Schooling System.

The Somali students' frustration and lack of confidence in their US teachers and the problem with the way they get treated can raise an awareness and allow school administrator to help and to accommodate to the needs of Somali students better in schools. All the student interviews stated that:

I remember last year, there was a kid that make fun of me every time and when I told my teacher she says just ignore him. That really hate my feeling and later on, me and the kid get in to fight and I get suspended. But I told her that kid keep make fun of me every time, I believe that, she could help me right at that moment then I wouldn't have gone to that fight. I feel like when I tell her that white kids make fun of us, she doesn't take our concern serious.

This happens to a lot of Somali kids this district as reported by one student:

Whenever time that we go to teachers and we tell them these kids are making fun of us, they make it seem like it is not big deal, but when we get in to fight we are the once who get in to trouble, because they say you started, even though they are the one that instigated and pushed us. How the teacher treated me hated my feeling, because I want to be treated just like everybody else and I want them to be punished of making fun of me. They always start and the teacher never helps us. I feel sad, because I like my class, I like my teacher and I want her to treat me like everybody else. I do nothing, I just complain to her and just tell her and later on, the kids tell us a tattle tell.

Another time:

I was in the hallway and me and this kid were calling each other names and another teacher heard both of us calling each other names and I am the only one who gets in trouble and he didn't get in trouble, because the teacher said she didn't hear him saying names to me, but she heard both of us and I understand she only heard me, but she heard the other students, because we were both yelling at same time. How did she hear what I said and not him? Whenever we get kids making fun of us and start with us and we complain to the teacher and the teacher says is not big deal. That is typical for every day, but if we do something to them, we always get in trouble.

In another student statement:

The relationship with my teachers is not good, because they always make fun of us. There are only few of us who are Somali, so is not good. My best friend are Mohamed and Ahmed, my other two Somali friends. If I need help I ask my friends, I don't like to ask anything to the teacher, because she always makes me feel uncomfortable and she always says she explains everything on the board and I don't want be the one who is asking her questions if I don't understand, so I just ask my friends. I like my teacher, because she reads to us after lunch and she take us to field trips sometimes.

Also reported:

When I have a problem, I go to my Somali friends, I tell them first, because I want them to be witnessed for me if get trouble later. The story that I would like to share with you is that one time I remember this girl tripped Mohamed and then he pushed her and he get in trouble. I didn't think that she is going to trip him, because Mohamed didn't do anything before she trips him, he was just walking and she trip him for no reason. I thought that was crazy, because he did nothing to her and she tripped him for no reason. She did that, because she knew she can get away with it and the teacher is going to believe her. We came from recess and we were just walking together and she did tripped him and he only pushed her and this kind of incident happens all the time and teachers believe them and not us. This kind of incident happens all the time and teachers always make decisions before they investigate. I think teachers are still the same and they treat us differently. They don't believe us and they still believe whatever white students tell them.

All the teachers agreed that Somali students who are new to the country are struggling and most of them are trying their best to close the learning gap and get same level with their pairs.

For example, Teacher6 reported that:

It's same upon to the point where if I know that they don't speak or read English then I am accepting that the homework is going to come back and I just clip the extra homework they have together until I get a parent volunteer in the room and parent volunteer helps with small group of kids to do, but then again I will do that for any of my other population that isn't doing it at end.

Three teachers gave individual examples about Somali students and how rewarding is when you make a positive difference to the students who are struggling. Teacher7 indicated that Somali

parents do not receive the same amount of information that others members of the community get. She reported that:

The language barrier, I write news latter in English, I can't write one in Arabic or in Somali. So, that is really hard. For example, the information that our Somali families get is less than the information that our English speaker families get. So, the information that I would like to give it to everyone, that is the challenge.

Another teacher explains the frustration of Somali Parents during conferences and the Teacher1 stated that:

I like it and I like having interpreters during conferences. I feel bad that they don't have enough time. There is only 15 minutes of time for each conference like everybody else and I believe it's unfair, because everything I said have to be said again by the interpreter and feel like the interoperated conferences has to be longer, because our parents has the right to know how their kids are doing and it feels like we are rushing too much and we don't have enough time with them a times.

Teacher5 also reported that:

A while ago, I had a Somali student that was not prepared at all for kindergarten. He was not body trained and just couldn't handle the school setting. Things were just vey chaotic for him and I felt at that particular time for that child best social emotional development that they would kind of start over with preschool and get acclimated to school and how to function in school setting and the thing with preschool it was four days in a week and was half day, so I felt like that would be kind of a good gradual build up for him, because when he was tiny kindergarten, he will get tired and just he couldn't do well full day in kindergarten. I just truly felt like he wasn't developmentally ready for kindergarten and all the expectation. So I had spoken to parents or to mom who was the one I had connection with and had said that, I didn't feel like, kindergarten isn't what is best for him at that particular time and she actually get very upset with me and felt that, I was being racist teacher and I was kind of hint pointing her son and was kind of accused and not wanting to get her child a fair and equal opportunity. When I felt that I was trying to find what best for her son and having him have preschool experience and build his ability and to be able to kind of have a fresh start for school and to get ready for kindergarten to get all prerequisites ready for him and she vied that as being not fair, so was not a typical story and hopefully that wouldn't have that again, because it wasn't fun story.

All the teachers agreed that, Somali students impressed them in different ways. Some teachers mentioned about the educational piece and how quick they make improvements and overcome the challenges they are go through in the beginning of the schooling system in the US.

Teacher6 reported that:

The challenge, I guess they will be no difference than any kid, so they will be a lot of different challenges. Some will be, they didn't have the exposure, as trying to give that exposure, while you still trying to teach to the lessons of 20-25 kids. Some of the other challenges will be where you have sending home some stuff and for some other kids they have parents or relatives that can help them and so they are doing their homework and you will see them making quicker gains, because they are reinforcing that work at home. Some of other kids who are sponging up in class just aren't getting that extra help at home. So you see them making progress, but not at the same rate, so I guess you kind of take upon yourself to say, I want to give one more to keep up with those other kids that you know they really can be or should be keeping up with. You can tell they typical have had parents who lived here longer. They may have gone to those preschool or some type of head start program, they have the experiences and you can see that they already had the routine that is taking place". Teacher3 also stated that "I think it's absolutely true that the family live at home is very busy and parents are working and there is a lot of kids that people are caring for. There is a lot going on in their community after school also and I think it's really hard. Kids that don't speak English well don't get enough services and they don't get enough time with the teachers that they need. Meeting with Somali parents in the beginning of the school year that their very interested in what their children are doing. Each of the three that came and talk to me, specifically made special times talk to me about how important the role was for their child and please keep teaching my child and I am like second mother to their child. Each of them expressed how it was difficult for them to do a whole a lot of support at home, because of their busy schedule. They need the support; they struggle with coming in and out of the classroom. I try to know what to do when they are here and when they are somewhere else. The older they are the longer they have been around more than they understand that and get the hang of it, but I think it's hard because there is not much communication and there is this of kind break down classroom and the ELL classroom.

Some teachers are very positive and feel sorry for what the Somali parents and students are going through. Some argue that, Somali parents who come for interpreted conferences need to have more time than the non-interpreted conferences. Another teacher mentioned about the

family size of Somali families and how students bring what is going on in the community to the school setting. Some teachers also talk about how Somali parents value education, but one teacher described that how difficult it is to imagine how much they value about education. Is it high, middle or low? Another teacher expressed the wonderful interactions she is having with Somali parents and students.

Many teachers said that they have positive feeling about Somali students and they would like them to have the same educational opportunities as other non-Somali counterparts. One teacher said that she was trying her best to help Somali parents to learn more about the education system here in the US and at the same time learn more about the expectations of Somali parents from her. Teacher7 reported that: In my experience, all of the conference that I have done have being great. There is acknowledgement of their child's hard work. The families is grateful that they are working with me and we are all working for their child. A parent came to the classroom to ask me to help their child something they wouldn't be able to do it at home and the thought that, it be helpful if I talk to the child. That has worked, so knowing that, I can ask them to help me in supporting their child and they can ask me. Every day, kindergarten is different world in any other grade level. I think Somali students and non-Somali students want to learn from each other. So, I have kids teaching words in Somali and I have kids teaching in English. If we are reading a story, they will tell me what the word means in Somali and try to help me to pronounce the words correctly. They really want to learn from each other and I find that most of the things that are issues are because they don't know. So this year I had a student who was lifting up another student's Hijab. That wasn't because she wanted to harass her, it was because she didn't know and so I think, in kindergarten they are all learning each other's culture.

In addition, Teacher2 also stated that:

I just want them to support their kids and encourage them to learn and I know that, that is what they want to do too and so it comes down to that understanding of what is that. I want them to be helping their child to read at home. I know they probably don't always have the skills to read to their child in English, that okay, but they could listen their child to read in English just to get their child reading and help them to build a positive concept of school and encouraging them school is an important place. Helping their kids to understand and support them what is school behavior here in America. It may be different, it may different where they were a year ago, but helping them to team with me to send that exact message. Schools are important let us work hard and we will lean together.

All the teachers indicated that Somali parents have some sort of expectation for the teachers. Most of the teachers stressed these that expectations are positive and what is best for the kids. Somali parents expect their children to have a fair and welcoming environment that can help them to learn and develop a better understanding about their education. Somali parents expect the school to be a comfortable place that make their kids to grow mentally and academically. Teachers showed that they will try their best to fulfill the expectations of parents in general and specifically for Somali students. Teacher1 reported that:

I have where behaviors you know when they come in and they find out that the students are not doing what there're supposed to be doing. I am sure what has been said, but the tune of voice, it looks like we are on the same page and we both have the same expectations. I think that is a nice piece of we are together as a team and the students doesn't think they can do one thing at school and they can do something else at home. So that was nice to have that piece where the parent will say hay, this is not okay at school and this is what you need to be doing that is helpful. I think everybody surprises the flip side where the student will go home and tells some outraged stories and the parent believes them and it's like if they were 10 kids playing on the playground somebody will say soothing if your being somebody was hitting you, somebody will say something and we are not letting that happen and parents sometimes will believe what the child is saying, it's like that just is not happening and I don't know if dad or mom will say oh and they get extra support at home or they are trying to get somebody in trouble at school. So sometimes, when its flip sided it's hard. On the other hand the state of things in our community it probably easier to believe in somebody is mean to them than nice and that is when I step back and say, you know what if I was in their shoes and knowing the way the community is and what people say and the way they act, it will be easier for me to believe there is bad things going on than good things. So, have to keep that prospective sometimes.

The frustration of Somali parents and student in US schools are described by white teachers and these are their comments during the interviews. Teacher4 reported that:

I am really surprised at discipline, I think that when we talk to parents, I think their like, yes we will do this and this, but when the student comes back the next day and I say did mom and dad do something? No, they didn't do anything. The children go home and they get to play their video games. So I don't if there is disconnects with discipline if parents to say at school like this is what the teacher

want to hear and then not follow through or the kids just say no and know what the issue could be.

Teacher1 also reported:

I think I learnt from them for a lot of my students that persistence and perseverance of staying with it and sticking with it and all over sadden its oh I get this, I can read now and just and sharing of their language and some of their customs and stuff for me that is learning piece, I enjoy that part of it, because I get to know my students, I get to know more about their family and get to know more about their home life and for me that is a good experience and just learning from them and their perseverance and what they had to endure and also they had exhibit the premade a few years back and they talk about the interviewed different Somali people in about their Journey and how they get to Minnesota, what their lives were like and having read through the stuff that they had gone through to get here. The lives they hard when there were still over there, it just kind of change my view points and just I can't imagine the life many of them had fled to get here and the persistence, perseverance, the hard work and the hatred they face and they still perceiver and they still trying to make a better life. After seeing that and hearing a lot of stories that has really changed my perspective on a lot of things. I think they expect their kids and themselves to be treated fairly and be treated with respect and they get good education and I don't know if kids care about education as much as just having fun, but I mean school is just a good place for them, school is safe place for them. They expect to be welcomed here and be treated well. I think the biggest challenge that I see with my Somali students are two that I have noticed year to year. Making sure that I am building enough really English skill with the foundation they need for successful reading later. But the other thing I see that is a little bit of a trend is specially our new to the country families, helping them to understand the expectation of what it is to a student in our school which is something that they are not familiar with and I always make sure patiently to explaining that and modeling that and teaching them each day, what is it like to be a student here. You know a lot of them impressed me all the time, like when we are reading, they are processing when working in class, they are reading in English, there are translating in to whatever language their speaking at home and they have rethink back out in English to answer and they do this with everything we are doing in class, specially students who are new to the country and they just need that time to process. I don't know how they can deal with it and I think just getting up and coming in and being different from the rest of the class and not letting that, I don't know if it bothers the kids in my classroom. They came in and there're a part of our class and just may be the older kids the way people view them in the comment that were made and some of that stuff just I don't know how you can deal with for that kind of negative attitude towards you and still be a positive person, because that will be really hard and I think right now the way our community is, there're is a lot of bad stuff and a lot of hurtful

and trouble things.

The student expects everything that a teacher is expected to do for their students. It is the teachers' responsibility to care for the students and to treat them equality without looking at their physical appearance, skin color, religion and country of origin. It is the teacher's responsibility to fulfill the student's expectation and to care about students. It sounds weird when the student told me about this story and I had similar stories from other students that I interviewed. I never thought a teacher will treat their students the way I heard from these students. Parents are sending their children to school in order for their children to be educated, but not their children to experience hatred and to lose the hope of getting a better life. The student himself is wondering how the teacher is treating the Somali students in general and the way she discriminates against the Somali students when they have conflict with other students especially white students.

The student complains about the teachers and how she is not doing her job to investigate more what the white students are telling her. I asked this specific student if this is the only teacher who treated the Somali students this way. The student told me that, during his learning in US schools, there are well trained teachers and bad teachers in his time, but this year's teacher is the worst and racist of all times: "The teacher is not even willing to learn more about my culture and she expects me to know everything about the American culture." Sense it is the end of the school year, I asked the student what he thinks about the teachers in general. The student concluded that: "high number of teachers in the Midwest are not willing to accommodate students from other culture than white."

Based on what the student told me, weather Somali students complain or not, they still experience injustice and get pressure from the non-Somali students. The white students find out

that, whatever they do to Somali students, they can get away with it, and they always try to irritate Somali students to put them in trouble.

I really felt sorry for this student and Somali students in general. I experienced myself some of the things that the students are experiencing. Many teachers in the schools are not aware of the cultural differences that Somali students have. According to the student's response, most of the Somali students in this specific school don't have good relationship with other non-Somali students, and I believe teachers didn't perform their professional duty wisely to make sure every student grows academically and mentally in order to achieve their goals in education. The response of the student shows that he doesn't have any connection with other non-Somali students in the class, and it's very hard for them to interact with other non-Somali students and that may slow down the learning of these Somali students. Teachers need to play big role to make sure students are getting the best education and to overcome challenges to be ready for the next level.

This student doesn't have confidence in the teacher, and I believe he is already experienced a negative response from the teacher and that is why he is not willing to ask help from the teacher. This shows that the student doesn't have a good relationship with the teacher and that is why he is asking help for his friends instead of asking the teacher. I was expecting the student to mention more about the academic and how the teacher teaches or a specific subject that the student likes, but based on the student's response, he is irritated. It is really shameful for the white teacher to treat this Somali student in the way he has reported. Teachers are trained and I believe that they are aware a lot more than the public and they are expected to treat their students better than what the Somali student describes. The white students knowing about white

privileges can create a negative impact on the Somali students, and they always put the Somali students in trouble and they get away with it.

Parents expect more from the teachers and schools administrators. Ninety percent of Somali parents interviewed believe that they are doing their best to help their kids. They also believe if teachers could understand them and were willing to create a safe environment for kids to grow and to excel: the academic goals they have in mind. Parent reported that:

Yes, when you're a parent, it is good to know about your children's education status. Once in a while I come to school to check on them and chat with their teachers in the morning when I am dropping them off at school. I tell them that, this year is no different than the year before and that the teachers and administrators will help them if they have any concern or question.

Not every Somali parent follows this example. Many of the Somali parents that I interviewed are competent enough in the American learning system to help their child to excel in schools.

Luckily this parent is able to help his kids academically and is able to communicate to teachers in regular basis:

I would like the district to create a program that helps parents who are non-English speakers and to let to those parent the importance of school conference. There was a time when my daughter used language that she didn't know the meaning towards one of the staff in the lunch room. The staff asked my daughter why she is saying what she said and if she knows the meaning behind it. The staff found out that, my daughter doesn't know the meaning of it and asked her not say again. Another staff member jump in and took my daughter to the office and my daughter missed her recess for two days. I was shocked, because she is different when she is at home and I never expected her to say those things, but she a kid. Everything is good now and she learned her lesson. What I wanted was the school to contact me when these kind of incident happens, but the principle told me that he forgets to call me and apologized about it.

Most teachers mentioned that biggest challenge they have with the Somali parents is the language barrier between them. Teachers indicated that they don't know the expectations of Somali parents ,and it is hard for them to imagine how good or bad Somali parents are feeling

about the teachers in general. Teacher3 reported that:

Current story hasn't been typical for me at all to have student who is not taking care their work and have a parent not already helping make that to happen. That is kind of what is happening with the student that I and you are working with, that for whatever reason and I Know that family is very busy, I get that, but the student is crying out for support at home and I am not doing my work until I get it. You know what I am saying, that is not typical response that I heard from children, because he is very capable student, but he just shuts down. He needs his parents very much to be checking with him and to see what he is doing and he is not getting that support so he is shutting down, that is not typical.

Teacher1 also stated that:

Just like all of kids. They need to work hard, try hard and be respectful. If there are trying their hardest and there're being respectful and working hard we good and that is how you make good things happen and don't make excuses and just do your best and if don't know something ask and ask us what to do and ask and say I don't understand be honest with us, I don't get it, instead of just pretending what you are doing. Just say I don't get, it is okay, because that is why your here, to learn. If you don't tell me what you don't understand it, I don't know, until you do something and you do wrong and you're frustrated and we have to fix it. It's easier just to say I don't know and we work on it and we work on it together.

Somali parents try their best to communicate and know more about their kids' education on a daily bases and that is something that most of the teachers are expecting from the Somali parents in general. Somali parents tell their kids positive comments about the school before they meet with the school staff, teachers and administrators for every new school year. They expect the teachers to teach their children and provide the necessary tools to advance in their education. Support them and listen to them. They like teachers to challenge their children and to see what they have learned. The parents just said what every parent expects teachers to do for their kids. Somali parents are willing to take baby steps with their children to support them in their lives. Many Somali Parents are struggling with their children and may experience behavior that are not culturally appropriate at home. Many may consider their children as westernized, as the children

are imitating their white school mates. Although it is against the law and school policy, some teachers discriminate against students based on their religion and physical appearance. Somali parents care about the wellbeing of their children, and they want the best for their children. Teachers are expected to behave in a certain way. Parent interviews show that parents have different opinions about how the district treat their children with about 30% of the Somali parents liking how the district is treating Somali students.

3. Intercultural Difference Between the Teachers and the Somali Community at Large.

Many teachers indicated that they have a positive connection towards Somali students, and they welcome Somali students and allow them to share their culture with other students in the classroom. Teachers reported that they are willing to learn and like to hear from others who may have different culture and beliefs. Teacher7 reported that:

Learning about their culture. Learning about their tradition and Eid, learning about they like to teach a new work in Somali to their teachers and friend. Just bringing another experience to the classroom and share everything about school and home and so it's great to hear about their experience. We celebrate a lot in kindergarten, so today I was working with Somali student and she finally understood math problem and it was wonderful and she went to the next problem and she is like look and it was yes you did it. So we celebrate that way a lot.

While other teachers believe negative things about Somali students, Teacher5 stated that:

I will say this particular year and I haven't had this problem until this current school year. I have the challenge that I have with my Somali students is the back talking and disrespect to adults in our school and I don't know if it's the combination of them together where they feel of each other and they just play that or if its individually who they are, I haven't be able to figure out if that is who they are or because their group together in the classroom and they pick it up that behavior from one the other, but that is something that is challenge for me this year and it hasn't been typical. I don't know why this year is a challenge for me.

Teacher2 also reported that:

The biggest challenge for me is the communication barrier because I work with

families that the communication isn't a barrier, everything changes, because we can communicate and we can team and partner and even if they didn't understand or their idea of what teacher and parents do from their home, their native or home where their immigrated from even if that is different. when we can communicate with the same language we can work together to help me understand what their perspective is and then say, oh okay and this is what we do in America and this is what we expect our parents. So, let us work together and figure how we can do better. You help me and I will help you. When there is a language barrier, I even feel like with an interpreter for some reason, it just doesn't seem to be as personable and the parents and I are building a relationship, it feels like the relationship is built through an interpreter. I had sweet little girl who was so nervous to give speech in front of the class and we practiced and practiced and she don't want to do it, we waited and practiced more again and again and we waited couple times. Finally, after multiple practice seasons she gets up and gave a speech and she came to me and she said, I was so scared, it was really okay and I said yes it was really okay and we practiced and your friends really wanted you to succeed. It was exciting to see her overcome that fear of being in front of her friends and speaking. What has been interesting for me specially understanding the culture, because there is so much to learn about the Somali culture and it's so different from American culture? It's being really need to, you know I have the kids during Eid (Islamic holiday) and they share with class what is Eid and why are you celebrating and they share that and they tell us the fun exciting things they get to do and because that happens so early on during school year, I feel like it's such a good starting point and my Somali students they will know that I care about them. My other children who don't celebrate Eid, but celebrate other holidays that are very similar, they start talking about, oh that is like Christmas for me or whatever and now they are connecting on holiday that are in their culture that celebrate little bit different things, but similar and just them sharing about. We being doing this global enrichment and when kids share about different countries there be like that is like in our country and they share about their heritage and it fun to see them as leaders because I am not expert on that at all so, they are taking that role of helping educate everybody about their culture and I have done that for the last couple years more so that when I have first started teaching here and it really seems it helps to show we all very similar and we have our own sets of ideals, customs and culture and part of it is just understanding of friends of other culture do.

All the teachers expressed that parents like to hear something good about their children.

Although most of them have busy schedules, they still try their best to communicate to the teachers and try to find out what is going on with their kids' and remind their kid that the teacher is just like them and they need to listen and respect the way they respect their parents. Teacher6

reported that:

Kind of typical will be more that, the parents want their kids to succeed, they want to know what is going on in their education, but I think with some of their work schedule, it's hard for them to see you at the end of the day or get the phone call at the end of the day and of cause when I first started teaching, when a Somalian kid came in to class, the parent will come in the morning and that I think that for a lot of people is distracting, because that is when we starting teaching. But as you work with them longer, you will know they are just getting done with work a lot of them and without even going to bed, they are just coming to see their kids. Make sure everything is okay for the day before they go home. So I think is just that learning curve that we understand like anyone what they have going on and reason for it. Very common, when they drop off their kid in the begging of the year or as we talk throughout the year if some concerns come up, that the first thing that they refer back to remember the teacher is like your parent and we work together to get the result that we both looking for, the growth in their child. I can say I haven't had any thing a know now, in the beginning a few times, I tried to shake the hand of a Somali women, but once I learned they don't do that, you know I just don't offer it which is still sometimes hard not say how are you doing? But they of cause do smile and something likes specially the parents that I have had relationship teaching two, three and four of their kids and that part is really nice. As far as challenges with them it will be that part where finding someone in their life building that could be go person with them to help them with that reading the news letter's or going through the folder, just so as their child gets older and may be hasn't be motivated to learn that their keeping up with, wait you do have homework tonight even if the kid says I don't and things like that. With the ELL [students], sometimes we have those kids just haven't had as many of the experiences, like those kids who may already had brothers and sisters that went through the school setting and they may be more active in the room that understand in the beginning of the year routine as far as sitting down, lining up. Some of those kids may have to not have seen a lot about a bathroom that flashes automatically, so just exposure to new things that we are doing. But once the year goes on and they have had those experiences, it seems they adapt very well. There is a different once. Some of the once are when they are first learning how to read and you know parent meet with you and excited about it, telling you about it. Other once will be, some of the kids that coming new to the country that are really having trouble in the classroom seeing them 2nd grade, 3rd grade walking down the hall just really learning how to adapt the school setting. You hear good comments from teachers that kids had got up doing better when I first experienced them and they were kind of wondering what they were doing, running around at the door, that to me is rewarding seeing that they have featured out and making gains.

Most of the teachers stated that, they only have interaction with Somali parents during

conferences through interpreted conferences. Many of them mentioned that they don't have the same interactions as they do with the other non-Somali parents. Some teachers believe that, it is because of the language and cultural differences. Most teachers also believe that there is always positive outcomes when they met with Somali parents and Somali parents encourage their kids to do well in school. Teacher4 talked about an important point and said that, "During conferences most of parents that I met with are moms and they are mostly concerned about the behavior of their kids than their academic." Teacher4 stated that:

I will say, knowing more about the culture and how the discipline piece works in their culture, like how will you discipline your child if they do something bad? Do they have consequences and things? My only really interaction is conferences and interacting with mostly moms at conferences and most of them are really concerned about their child's behavior. They don't really talk about the academic piece which is most important to me. They always worried about how are they treating you, how are they treating other kids, how are they treating people in the class, how do they act at school. When struggling Somali students, finally catches on to either reading or a math concept and Oh that is so fun and they just want to keep learning and learning, so it's nice to break that language barrier so that they can learn at school better. My expectations are the same as my American Students. I expect them to follow the rules, learn academics, I know it header for them, but as they learn and listen, I know their smart it just a language barrier. So I have to say same expectation.

High number of teachers agreed that they are in the process of learning more about Somali culture to help and welcome Somali students. Teacher5 reported that:

Learning for me from the Somali students has being opening my eyes as to where they have been in life. I have had students coming to me that are 7 to 8 years old and they already experienced way more life than one should have. For me to be aware all that and always in the back of my mind that may they have been witnessed to or have being exposed to is an experience that shaped who they are and haven't may be grown up with the best of life so far and for me to take home and step back and to realize that, to acknowledge it and to remember that they still just 7 and 8 years old. I will say it's common. Majority of Somali parents that I have had have all being parents wanting the best education for their child. Yes, I have had a positive relationship with parents. I have had a couple female Somali parents that volunteered in the classroom. I have had one that came in twice a

week and volunteered and it was a great opportunity for everyone to know that the Somali culture involve in educations and wanting to be a part of education. Volunteering like I had isn't necessarily the typical of Somali Parents; I think that was just a great opportunity for that. I will say typical parents' involvement has been coming to open house or coming to conferences and just wanting what is best for their child. I had a Somali students last year who had a physical disability and she started the year with a lot of I can't do that. Didn't really have the highest self-esteem to herself and we ended the year. I was hard on her and not going to except her saying I can't do it and I spent a lot of her second grade year with a lot of, you going to have to do it, you have to try, no one is going to help you in life and you going to help yourself and going to persevere and bush through it. At the end of her second grade year, she was just the most confident and able to do things that she wasn't able to do it in the beginning of her second grade. Mom and I had a meeting and just even mom is like she is doing all this now she wasn't able to do her confidence and just kind of different outlook in life and she really felt good about it.

Teacher6 also stated that:

Helping me with some other words for example to sit down or using to go to the bathroom. Saying good morning to them (asalama alaikum) and things like that. They help me to talk to them and of course some of the different foods when we have celebration. Parents thank me by giving me different foods and kids tell me about it or share the candy and they know about it. Learning about the clothing and see someone is wearing.

4. Lack of Inter-Language Between the Teachers and Somali Parents and Students

All the challenges teachers described revolves around the language barrier, and every teacher is trying to find a solution for it or may be stressed with the language piece Somali students and parents are struggling with. The message that goes from school to home and relationship between teachers and parents is not good because of the language piece. Many teachers agree that students are struggling with the language piece, but academically gaining and learning new stuff everyday. Teacher3 stated that:

Typically, again very willing to learn, they sometime need little extra support, but they are eager to learn. Sometimes there is a little bit of language barrier, but we clarify it and they get it and they are very bright like anybody else.

Most teachers agree that these students came to the United States of American, and they may also have parents or siblings who speak English and that may help them to do well in school. There are a group of Somali students who are not enrolled in the ELL program, but still struggles with the school system. The Non-ELL Somali students may attend preschool or any form of schooling before they started this school.

All the teachers showed the lack of inter-language awareness between them and the Somali community at large. Teacher7 reported that:

A lot of the students who do speak Somali a lot of them also went to preschool or to a daycare where they learnt English as well or an older siblings or parent taught them how to speak English. I don't see any differences in their academic. I think in the beginning of the year there was a difference in their academics, because there was a group that didn't know a lot of English and that is what they are soaking it and there was another group that knows English, but they are working on their other skills. More with my ELL students and I think, it is the language barrier. If I don't know how to communicate with them and they don't know how to communicate with me that are more the challenges". Teacher 2 also reported that "Year to year you know we have conferences twice a year and open house when they come, but day to day operation will be when I call to check in regarding their progress sometimes positive things about how they are doing other times when I need to discuss a concern, I have always felt that my Somali families are very concerned about their child's progress and wanting to know what is going on at school and also what they can do to help me or what I am doing. They also want to know what I am doing for their child. Somali parents are very similar to other families that I work with. Things that sometimes gets difficult is when you need someone to translate and help out with that and I found out that a lot of my Somali families have access to someone who can help out that which makes much easier. I have few families who work at school and so my interactions with them are on a daily basis conversing just like colleagues and it makes that relationship even stronger when we talk about their child. Like I said, it's very big responsibility to be a teacher, but personally I like that challenge and I guess I won't have any other way that is what I expect for all my kids.

Teachers also talked about their interaction with Somali parents during school conference. Teacher1 stated that:

Mainly, the interactions we have are during conferences through interpreted

conferences. Sometimes we have parents that will come in hallway and visit us, but often times in the middle of teaching and we are not able to have conversation or may have language barrier between us. My main conversations with parents are during conferences with interpreters. We have good turn out with interpreters and we have conferences twice a year and then parents that don't need interpreter often times would like to come in the hallway and sometimes we go through you if we have question or concern with the parent. We get a little bit of support that way.

Teacher6 also reported that:

Interacting with Somali parents, I have noticed that being a male teacher that a lot times when they drop off their kids, they will tell their children that I am like their father and that, it surprises me at first, but it really made sense their handing off child that their having being trying to educating them down to have a good path and their wanting that same relationship with the teacher as they have with their kid that they want the best for them. They want their kid to respect the teacher so that they focused and learning. It's was very humbling, but also a responsibility, but I appreciated that.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The expectation between the Somali parents, Somali students and Non-ELL teachers is very hard to conclude based on the information collected in all parties. Most of the Somali students and parents are on one side, while teachers are on the other side. Most of the Somali students and parents I interviewed negatively criticized American teachers in general. They stated that teachers are not trying their best to help the Somali students. They also maintained that the teachers discriminate against the students and would not allow them to explore and learn to overcome the challenges they encounter when at school.

For Somali student to learn in school, the white teachers expect that the Somali parents would show up for conferences and be concerned more about the betterment of their children. They would like to see Somali parents trying their best to get used to the environment and have a discussion with teachers to solve the cultural barrier between the teachers, parents and students. On the other hand, teachers also believe that a lot of Somali parents are struggling to get use this environment in order to help their kids to excel their learning. Teachers also believe that they are learning a lot from Somali students both language and culture. For example, teacher 5 stated that:

Learning for me from the Somali students has being opening my eyes as to where they have been in life. I have had students coming to me that are 7 to 8 years old and they already experienced way more life than one should have. For me to be aware all that and always in the back of my mind that may they have been witnessed to or have being exposed to is an experience that shaped who they are and haven't may be grown up with the best of life so far and for me to take home and step back and to realize that, to acknowledge it and to remember that they still just 7 and 8 years old.

But many Somali parents believe that US teachers are not treating their children the same way they treat white students. They believe that even if Somali students try their best, teachers are

still degrading them and letting them down. Parents also stated that, there are a few teachers who like to treat Somali students like any other student and they hope all the teachers do the same.

Somali students also raised some concerns with their teachers and one student told me about this story:

I remember last year, there was a kid that make fun of me every time and when I told my teacher she says just ignore him. That really hurt my feeling and later on, me and the kid get into fight and I get suspended. But I told her that kid keep make fun of me every time, I believe that, she could help me right at that moment then I wouldn't have gone to that fight. I feel like when I tell her that white kids make fun of us, she doesn't take our concern serious.

When a fifth grader expresses his concern this way and other students also raised some other similar issues, it's really tough not to believe him.

The relationship between the teachers and Somali parents is not that well established. Both the teachers and the Somali parents agree on this issue, and I believe that it is caused by the culture and language difference between the two groups. This is how teacher4 responded when asked this interview question: What are your expectations of Somali parents?

I don't know, because I don't know many Somali parents. I haven't seat down with them and said, what are your expectations for your child at school? How do you discipline your child at home? If I have to say, I will say same as American parents, but parenting is probably different in different cultures. Let us say we have the same expectation, but I know that is probably not.

The limitation of this research was that most of the teachers I interviewed were vigilant and may not express the expectation they expect from Somali parents. Others teachers may not express their concern with the Somali parents and students. We all know that, discrimination exists in many of the US schools, but none of the teachers mentioned anything about this. In the figure, I would like ask more specific question about this topic for each of the groups and find a solution to make sure Teachers, Somali Parents and Somali students have positive expectation from each

other.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Interview questions about the expectations between Somali students, Somali parents and Non-ELL elementary teachers.

Students

Can you tell me typical story about interacting with teachers?

How common is this story?

What did you think of that?

How did you feel about it?

What did you do about it? Can

you tell me another story?

Can you tell me a story that is kind of typical?

Can you tell me a story that is not so typical?

One or two things your teacher did in class and you really like it? What is it?

What is one thing you did in class that makes your teacher happy? Give me an example?

How is your relationship with your classmates?

Who is your best friend in the class?

Whom do you ask if you need help in class?

What are one or two things that your teacher does in class that you really like?

What is one or two thing that you do in class that makes your teacher happy? For me an example?

Who do you want to tell first about something that makes you happy?

Who do you go to first when you have a problem?

Who do you go to when your friends need help?

Researcher response

When you are with your teacher, what do you expect?

Tell me a story when the other did something that you did not expect.

What was it?

What did you think about it at first?

What did you do to figure it out?

What do you think about it now?

Parents

Can you tell me typical story about interacting with teachers?

How common is this story?

What did you think of that?

How did you feel about it?

What did you do about it?

Can you tell me another story?

Can you tell me a story that is kind of typical?

What did you tell your child to prepare for the new teacher?

What did you tell your child to interact with other students at school?

Do you think it's a good idea to attend school Conferences?

How often do you visit your child/children at school?

What do you tell your child before they begin the day of class in any year?

What do you expect your children's teachers to do for you children?

Academically?

Socially?

Ethnically and Religiously?

Behaviorally?

What do you like about what the school does for your child?

What would you like the school to do that it is not doing?

Tell me a story when others did something that you did not expect.

What was it?

What did you think about it at first?

What do you think about it now?

Teachers

Can you tell me typical story about interacting with Somali parents?

How common is this story?

What did you think of that?

How do you feel about it?

Can you tell me a story that is kind of typical?

Can you tell me a story that is not so typical?

Can you tell me a story where Somali students impressed you?

What is your experience with Somali students? With ELLs?

What is your experience with Somali students? Without ELLs?

What is an example of a joyous event with a Somali student? Tell me a story about it....

What are your challenges with Somali Students?

What are your challenges with Somali parents?

What are your expectations of Somali students?

What are your expectations of Somali parents?

What do you think Somali parents and students expect of you?

Tell me a story when you were surprised by the expectations of parents?