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**Sent:** Tuesday, February 02, 2016 11:53 AM  
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**Subject:** Said Ali Eligibility

Hello Tom,

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me yesterday about Said Ali's situation. Here is the follow up information you requested

#### **SUMMARY OF SITUATION**

I first began to look into Said's situation in mid October 2015. After working 12 years as a counselor in Hillsboro and Newberg School districts I relocated to Westview High School in Beaverton This year. As I began to review students transcripts in order to assess the students on my caseloads academic progress I identified said as a student at risk of not graduating. Little did I know the extend of the information I would find. Said enrolled in Beaverton School District as a Kindergartner after moving with his family from Somalia at the age of 5. Said was enrolled in ELL programs immediately, but was an active ELL student until 8th grade. As students at that age are still in a stage of development that includes language acquisition, the average student who was enrolled in the same district since Kindergarten would have achieved proficiency in 3-5 years, meaning the would have been exited from the ELL program somewhere from 2 grade to 4th grade. It is very likely that Said had shown signs of learning disabilities that were being accredited to his language acquisition rather than being correctly identified. The fact that he spent 3-4 years longer in ELL than an average student was an indication of other issues that I believe should have been assessed in late elementary, or early middle school. However, the fact that he was receiving support services through ELL similar to that of which he may have received in special education did allow him to find some success in early education years.

In Said's Freshman year he did have some success though he had a lot of supports in place for him. Though exited from ELL services he was still on monitor status. In addition he was placed into a reading and writing support class as well as a Algebra survey class. Though I was not here at Westview at this time after reviewing the previous counselors notes and speaking with seyeral of his previous teachers, it is my understanding that it was apparent that he had significant learning issues. Said was referred to be evaluated for special education in

the fall of his sophomore year and approved for testing that was conducted during the winter of his Sophomore year. Testing was completed for Said in the spring of his sophomore year, in which he did show significant low areas across all areas. In order to qualify for special education for a specific learning disability he needs to show areas of strengths and weaknesses, but in his case all his academic and intellectual abilities were low, so he did not qualify. In reviewing the notes I read that at this time the parents were told that Said did show the indicators of Attention Deficit Disorder and if the parents would seek out an evaluation by their medical doctor that the school would look at eligibility for special education under other health impaired for the ADD, but his parents and he declined looking at eligibility under other categories.

This brings me to the current year. After gathering all of this information and meeting with Said on multiple occasions, I wanted to meet with his parents to understand their perspective on not pursuing further assessment as it was apparent to me he would not graduate without appropriate support. After meeting with his father in late October of 2015 it was very apparent that the cultural differences and lack of knowledge about the educational system and learning issues played a big role into their decision not to pursue further resources for Said. His parents emigrated from Somalia when Said was 5 and have very little if any formal education. His dad is currently employed as a dishwasher at a local restaurant and his mother does not work. His parents both speak Maay and have very limited English abilities. In speaking with Said's father with the assistance of an interpreter, his dad believed that all it would take for Said to be successful is for Said to focus and work harder. His father had seen behaviors of what he described as not wanting to do his homework, not concentrating on things for more than a few minutes at a time constantly goofing off and was attributing these to his desire to be successful. Though these same behaviors can also be a manifestation of ADD. It was a long meeting of explaining to his father that with information we already had about his intellectual capabilities and the potential of the diagnoses of ADD that Said lacks the abilities and skills needed to focus and work harder unless we can give him the supports to understand and overcome his disabilities. By the end of the meeting I believe His father had a better understanding of the issues and agreed to having Said evaluated and considered for special education. In November I referred Said to the Special Education team again and his father took him to his medical doctor as well.

As I spoke with Said and many of his past and previous teachers, I also learned that Said's biggest passion was for Basketball. Through all of his struggles in school it was apparent that his desire to play for the team as well as his connection with several of the coaches was keeping him from giving up all together. So in December I wrote my first letter of endorsement for an athletic eligibility waiver. The hope was that as we evaluate Said for possible services we could use the eligibility as a way to improve some of his academic behavior. It was my belief that Said had developed many avoidance behavior in class because as his classes became more difficult in later years we were simply asking him to perform at a level he did not have the ability or skills to do. This has been quite effective as teachers reported to me on a weekly basis that Said was in class, attentive, and trying to engage in the work. Unfortunately most also confirmed he really did not have the skills or ability to do it without significant support.

As winter break approached neither evaluation had been completed but expected that shortly after the return from break that they would be finished. Shortly after winter break Said was formally diagnosed with ADD and recently started medication for his condition. In addition the psychological report was finished, indicating the following;

- Full Scale IQ - 78 (7th percentile)
- Processing Speed - 80 (9th Percentile)
- Working Memory - 80 (9th Percentile)
- Verbal Comprehension - 83 (13th Percentile)

- Perceptual Reasoning - 88 (21st Percentile)

This confirmed that Said's intellectual abilities are significantly lower than average.

## **OUR NEXT STEPS**

1. On Friday October 5th we will have an eligibility meeting to determine if Said will be eligible for Special Education Services.
  1. I fully anticipate Said being found eligible as Other Health Impaired with his diagnosis of ADD
  2. If found Eligible the Special Ed Department has 40 days in which to conduct an IEP and Placement meeting (though I have been told it usually will be 2-3 weeks)
    1. Said will not be placed into special education classes until the IEP has been written and placement determined.
2. We have adjusted Said's 2nd semester schedule and graduation plan to address his needs as much as possible and to allow for the insertion of Special education support if/when found eligible. (See Graduation Plan Below)
3. On Friday October 5th will look at the option of moving Said to a modified diploma track. (Based on the assessment results this is the recommended and appropriate option) If we move in this direction it would allow more flexibility for elective type classes that could prepare Said for possible community college or trade school programs.

## **GRADUATION PLAN**

### **Standard Diploma**

#### **11th Grade Term 2**

Lit and Comp 11B  
Ceramics 1  
Student Leadership  
Probability / Stats Analysis  
Ultimate PE  
Government  
English Credit Recovery

#### **Summer School - Credit Recovery**

##### **Health 2**

##### **Physical Science**

##### **English 10 A**

##### **Geometry B**

#### **12 grade Term 1**

Lit 12A  
Prob Stat Analysis A

Biology A

Elective

Elective

Elective

Elective

Elective

12 grade Term 2

Lit 12B

Economics

Biology B

Elective

Elective

Elective

Elective

Elective

Hopefully I included all the information you needed, Please let me know if I forgot anything or you need anything else.

*Patrick Baker*

**Counselor**

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