

## African Nova Scotian Education Framework

### AFRICAN CANADIAN SERVICES BRANCH



SANKOFA

“Inclusive education is a commitment to ensuring a high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive and equitable education to support the well-being and achievement of every student. All students should feel they belong in an inclusive school—accepted, safe, and valued—so they can best learn and succeed.”

—*Inclusive Education Policy* (Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2019, p. 1)

“Our vision of a quality education system for Black learners in Nova Scotia entails a system that is accessible and equitable from the perspective of Black learners and their parents.”

—*BLAC Report on Education: Redressing Inequity—Empowering Black Learners* [BLAC Report] (Black Learners Advisory Committee 1994, p. 15)

### Inclusive Education

In 2018, the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) recommended the development of an educational framework that would provide provincial education system leadership and accountability to support the well-being and achievement of African Nova Scotian/Black learners. This recommendation was accepted by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development on February 5, 2019 and African Canadian Services was tasked with developing an educational framework that would support African Nova Scotian learners. The *African Nova Scotian Education Framework* supports the vision of a quality and equitable education as defined by the *BLAC Report* (Black Learners Advisory Committee 1994).

The framework embeds concepts outlined in the *Expanding From Equity Supports to Leadership and Results: The Minister of Education’s Response to Reality Check* (Nova Scotia 2010) and is informed by the experiences of students, parents, educational stakeholders, RCE/CSAP and departmental staff, and the Council on African Canadian Education.

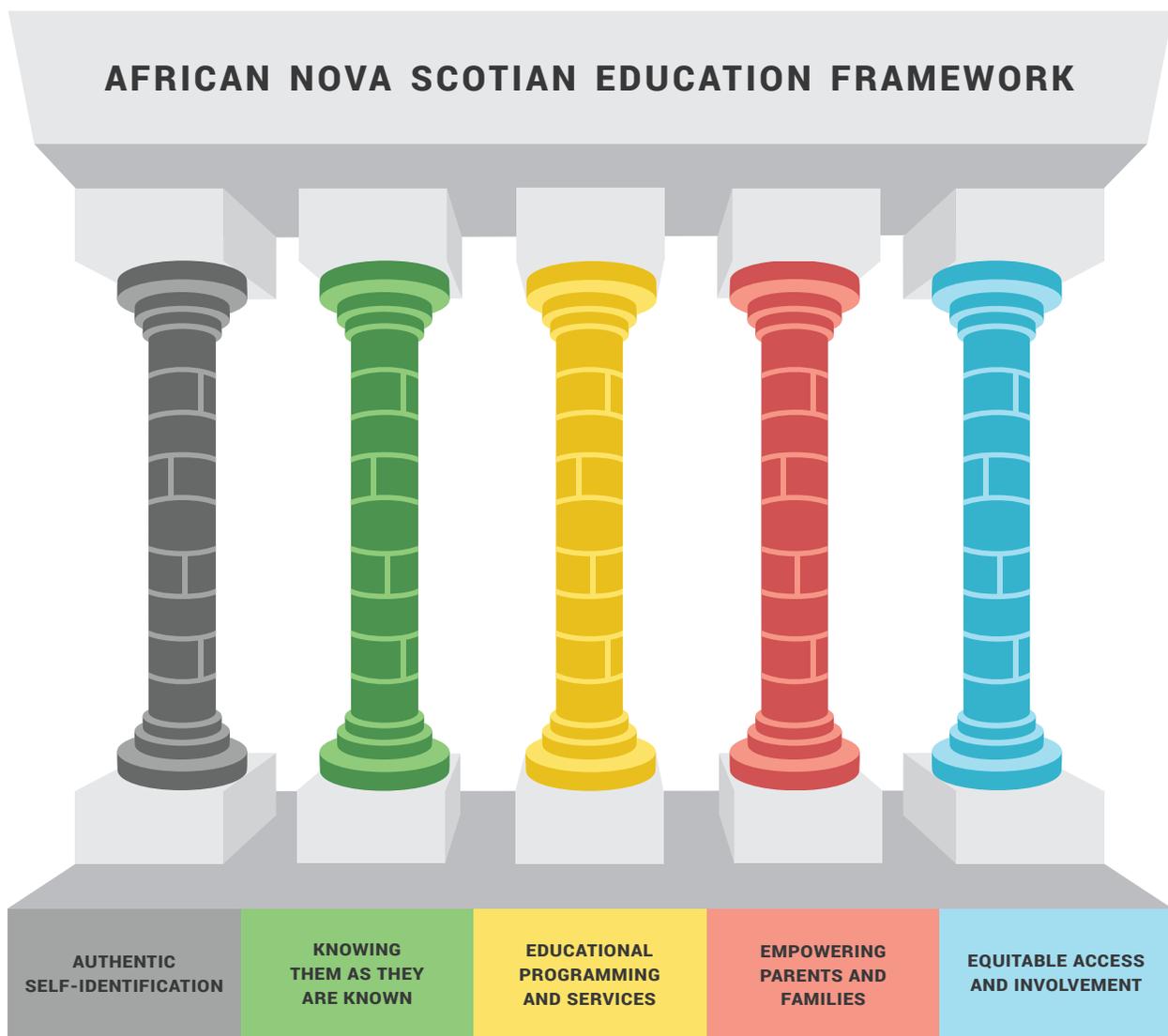
### Why is an African Nova Scotian Education Framework necessary?

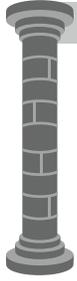
The purpose of the framework is to move the system forward and address the systemic power structures and inequities that create barriers for ANS/Black students. The framework aligns with Nova Scotia’s Inclusive Education Policy commitment to ensuring a high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive, and equitable, education to support the well-being and achievement of every student.

All staff are called by the Inclusive Education Policy to use their power and privilege to support Black students in feeling safe, accepted, and valued so they can best learn and succeed during their time in school.

### What is the structure of the African Nova Scotian Education Framework?

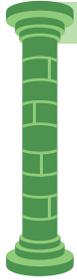
The framework is comprised of five pillars. Each pillar outlines the essential themes that are necessary to ensure that ANS/Black students feel safe, cared for, and inspired within our provincial education system. This foundational structure addresses the systemic barriers that exist in education thereby allowing ANS/Black students to be heard, seen, and supported so they can reach their “promise and potential.”





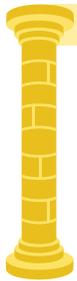
### **AUTHENTIC SELF-IDENTIFICATION**

African Nova Scotian students are descendants of rich, multi-generational, and multi-ethnic histories of strength, resilience, and innovation. Members of Nova Scotia's Black communities choose to self-identify in ways that honour their identity, cultural assets, and ways of being. Nurturing and affirming students' identities demonstrates that their individual and collective identities are valued.



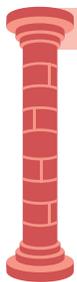
### **KNOWING THEM AS THEY ARE KNOWN**

African Nova Scotian cultural beliefs systems affirm Black children as wonderful creations that are endowed with gifts and talents that must be nurtured through individual and collectively confirming experiences. Authentic, strengths-based practices that honour spiritual, familial, and communal understandings, and that engage the brilliance of Black learners through culturally responsive teaching, inspire wellness, a sense of belonging, and success at school.



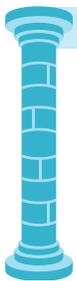
### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES**

Meaningful academic and wellness programming, services, and supports that nurture and inspire children and students from pre-primary to graduation towards their goals and career options. This includes the collection, monitoring, and analysis of data to enable access to courses, programs, and opportunities leading to post-secondary pathways.



### **EMPOWERING PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

Intentional actions, processes, and opportunities that empower parents, families, and a student's system of support as essential decision makers regarding programming and/or support for their child. An authentic collaborative partnership between home, school, and community that supports and strengthens their child's well-being and achievement.



### **EQUITABLE ACCESS AND INVOLVEMENT**

Increasing access to resources and meaningful involvement in decision making in support of African Nova Scotian/Black students, parents, and staff that is consistent with roles and responsibilities.

## What are our priorities?

- increase in African Nova Scotian staff and meaningful services and supports
- increased presence within the public schools program framework document
- formal monitoring and evaluation of the success of adaptations and Individual Program Plans for ANS learners
- increase in timely reporting and appropriate responses to racial incidents in schools
- increased performance at levels 3 and 4 on the provincial assessments
- increased number of ANS learners in Advanced Placement, Co-op, Discovery Opportunities, French Immersion, International Baccalaureate, O2, and Skilled Trades
- increased graduation rates and post-secondary confirmations

## How can the pillars support the commitment to inclusive education?

The pillars will

- provide tangible pathways to demonstrate commitment and leadership towards inclusive education while simultaneously mitigating the circumstances that a history of anti-Black racism has created
- give direction on how best to nurture and value Black students within the public education system
- assist in engaging a critical lens to recognize and interrupt deficit practice and recognize the brilliance of Black learners
- enhance the ability to recognize and identify the resources, opportunities, and services that are essential to an enriched and authentic educational experience for Black learners
- build on system competencies to strengthen confidence and shared accountability

## What's important to know?

The principles guiding the African Nova Scotian Education Framework:

- ANS learners are descendants of rich, multi-generational, multi-ethnic histories of wisdom, intelligence, strength, and resilience. Their sense of identity, purpose, and belonging are interwoven in family and community.
- Spirituality is a foundational tenet within the African Nova Scotian worldview. African Nova Scotian learners are holistic, comprised of spirit, mind, and body.
- Education is a right of all children and should enhance and inspire African Nova Scotian learners to fulfill their purpose, promise, and potential.
- Curriculum and learning resources should accurately provide knowledge of African Nova Scotians and their ways of knowing and being in all curricula areas and learning experiences.

## Whose voice has informed the African Nova Scotian Education Framework?

- African Nova Scotian Social Innovation Lab
- African Nova Scotian Student Support Workers
- African Nova Scotian teachers
- Council on African Canadian Education
- Council to Improve Classroom Conditions
- CRP Lead Team
- Education Program Committee (EPC)
- EECD staff
- Executive Leadership Table (ELT)
- MTSS Working Group
- RCE/CSAP executive directors
- RCE/CSAP math specialists
- RCE/CSAP staff
- Regional Coordinators, African Canadian Education
- Regional Educators, Black Educators Association
- School Advisory Councils
- students, parents, and guardians

For more information on the African Nova Scotian Education Framework contact the African Canadian Services Branch at (902)-424-3151.

## References

Black Learners Advisory Committee. 1994. *BLAC Report on Education: Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners*. Halifax, NS: Black Learners Advisory Committee. [www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/blac-report-education-redressing-inequity.pdf](http://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/blac-report-education-redressing-inequity.pdf).

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Nova Scotia. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Forthcoming. *Public School Program Foundation (Draft)*. Halifax, NS: Government of Nova Scotia.