

Expanding from Equity Supports to Leadership and Results

The Minister of Education's Response to *Reality Check*

A review of key program areas in the *BLAC Report* for their effectiveness in enhancing the educational opportunities and achievement of African Nova Scotian learners.



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Introduction

In February 2008, Dr. Enid Lee and Clem Marshall of EnidLee Consultants were commissioned to complete a review of 12 recommendations from the *BLAC Report on Education: Redressing Inequity—Empowering Black Learners* (Black Learners Advisory Committee 1994). This review was undertaken to provide direction for focused improvements on our current practices and policies. The Nova Scotia Department of Education has carefully considered the *Reality Check* (2009) report and recommendations for African Nova Scotian learners and is pleased to respond to the recommendations.

Dr. Lee and Mr. Marshall comments that in Nova Scotia many resources, both material and human, have been provided, with a goal to achieving success for African Nova Scotian students. The report states: “Effective programs and services such as the African Nova Scotian Student Scholarship program, the Student Support Worker program, and the English 12: African Heritage course, which have been put in place by the African Canadian Services Division and school boards for African Nova Scotian students, are making a positive difference to the academic achievements of African Nova Scotia students.” Even so, there are still many African Nova Scotian students who are not achieving as much success as they should.

Why is this? The consultants identify the following specific areas where improvements can be made:

- better alignment and communication among the various groups working for African Canadian students
- better communication between African Nova Scotian communities and schools and between communities and organizations working on behalf of African Nova Scotian students
- continue to provide training/learning opportunities in the area of anti-racism
- remaining vigilant in enforcing anti-racism policies

The overarching conclusion that can be drawn from the report is that the task of achieving better results for African Nova Scotian students has largely been delegated to specific organizations and individuals. The challenges have not become embedded in the daily thinking and activities of everyone in the education system, from the very highest positions of administration to every person working at every level in the system—The Department of Education, organizations, boards, and schools. Hence the title of this response to *Reality Check: Expanding From Equity Supports to Leadership and Results*.

We have developed a network of supports, and now we have opportunities through committed leadership to make our education system even richer and more successful. The consultants encourage us to work more as a team with African Nova Scotian communities and all of our partners to gather data, to reflect on what the data is telling us, and to adjust our programs and strategies accordingly. This is a model that has the potential to help not only African Nova Scotian students but all students in our system. But, having said this, we cannot lose sight of the fact that African Nova Scotian learners face greater obstacles, which have their roots in racism.

The question of systemic racism in the education system has been well documented. We agree that systemic racism undermines the commitments of our society to build an inclusive community and it is the responsibility of the institutions, such as the public school system, to act and be a part of the solution. This response strongly supports such action.

The African proverb “It takes a village to raise a child” acknowledges the fact that successful schooling depends on the combined input and energy of all stakeholders. Too often, parent and community engagement is an afterthought or remains at the bottom of the list of things to do for busy individuals. We know that successful parent and community engagement takes time and commitment. We acknowledge this and will make every effort to put engagement at the forefront of our actions. This process will begin with listening to what people have to say and including them in the decision making and opportunities to take action. We acknowledge that we must do a better job of engaging parents and communities, and this response reinforces our commitment to engaging them. We, as a system, can learn much from parents and communities, and we must ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. We must ensure that we are engaging them as partners in a respectful and meaningful way. Only through a co-operative effort can we hope to create the right environment for improvement.

We recognize that school boards are critical for ensuring the successful implementation of these recommendations. Effective school boards take many different forms, but they all require common attributes. These attributes include vision, leadership, supports, and commitment. School boards that provide these attributes create conditions for powerful growth and development. If this response to *Reality Check* is to be effective, school boards must commit to making this happen in the schools and classrooms across the province.

Having said all of this, this report comes in the midst of a very difficult economic climate. We have challenging times ahead, but we will strive to work with our partners to make these recommendations a reality. Fortunately, much of what needs to be done can be started by hard work by the people we now have and with the possible reallocation of resources where necessary.

Appendixes

There are two appendixes included in this response that are intended to supplement the information given in the main body of the response.

Appendix A: Dr. Lee and Mr. Marshall made 68 recommendations, including her key findings, parts of which are cross-referenced in more than one area of her report. This response has been organized into nine key themes, to allow for a more focused response to the report as a whole. Appendix A allows the reader to cross-reference the responses with the original report. This appendix shows where each recommendation appears in *Reality Check* and where the same recommendation may be found in this response.

Appendix B: When the *Reality Check* report was released in December 2009, it was made available to stakeholders and members of the public for feedback. The original deadline for submissions was the end of January, 2010. In response to requests from stakeholder organizations, that deadline was extended to April 1, 2010. During this time, two invitational focus groups were also organized. Appendix B provides details of how the input of stakeholders and the public was secured. The feedback from all of these sources has been considered in the development of this response.

Theme 1: Governance

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is recognized as a leader both nationally and internationally with regard to the structures and programs that it has implemented in response to the *BLAC Report*. The model that the Department of Education has developed over the past years includes structures and relationships within (e.g., the African Canadian Services Division) and outside of, the Department of Education (e.g., school board representation). We all have a part to play in this model. We also recognize that with any model there is room for improvement and we will strive to continue to enhance the model that we currently have in place. *Reality Check* represents changes in the way we think about implementing change for African Nova Scotian learners. The Department of Education and its partners are committed to fully implementing the recommendations of *Reality Check* and will ensure that structures are used to their full capacity.

The title for this response, *Expanding From Equity Supports to Leadership and Results*, is particularly relevant to this theme. We recognize that the next evolutionary step to level the playing field for African Nova Scotian learners requires all partners to take a leadership role in the practice and promotion of the principles encompassed in *Reality Check* and other such reports. The Department of Education is committed to modelling leadership required to create the necessary change within our education system. We also recognize that all partners must elevate the level in which discussions and planning occur for all to see and understand that equity is incorporated in all that we do.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Governance Theme

A. Governance: Moving to Leadership

34. *Principals and Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right Coordinators review structures and processes for addressing issues of institutional racism and place more focus on dealing with the racism faced by ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school board staff including the Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right Coordinator, and principals to review each of the structures and processes currently in place for addressing issues of institutional racism. The focus of this review will be to address areas that can be further developed to address issues of racism faced by African Nova Scotian learners. This work will start now, findings will be shared amongst all school boards as they become available, and an implementation plan will be developed in the 2010–11 school year.

39. *School administrators share and nurture the vision among all staff that all ANS students can and will succeed under appropriate conditions.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the school boards and schools to ensure that the importance of this message is communicated to all members of the education community and that this expectation is incorporated in their day-to-day work.

6. *The DOE incorporate the implementation of the Racial Equity Policy and Diversity Management into the Performance Management Review of all Division and Branch directors.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will ensure that there is a required Racial Equity Policy and Diversity Management component with all director-and-above-level performance management reviews. This would be equivalent to the current mandatory Finance and Human Resources performance targets. Further, the Department of Education will encourage school boards to consider adopting a similar approach for board-level staff. This recommendation will be fully implemented by September 2011.

35. *Principals allocate adequate institutional time for the preparation of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right teacher representatives for their responsibilities in regard to race, culture and human rights.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to examine the extent to which Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right advisers have time for these responsibilities and develop goals and a plan to move toward those goals to ensure that Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right advisers receive the necessary supports to be effective in their positions.

36. *Principals provide, wherever feasible, both private space and scheduled time for Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right Coordinators to address needs and/or challenges specific to ANS learners.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education recognizes that private space for consultation is generally not an issue within school buildings in the Nova Scotia public education system. However, it will work with school boards to move toward ensuring that there is scheduled time for the Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right coordinators and principals to meet and collaborate on addressing the needs of African Nova Scotian learners in their buildings.

16. *Each division and branch of the DOE identify how it can invite input from ACSD.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education's Senior Management team will develop and implement a plan on how to invite input from the African Canadian Services Division into each of the division and branch areas of responsibility. This plan will reflect ongoing communication between the African Canadian Services Division and the other branches and divisions within the Department of Education, with the goal of establishing increased partnerships.

17. *Each division and branch of the DOE identify how it will share the activities it undertakes in the process of fulfilling its own mandate to support African Nova Scotian learners.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Senior Management team will conduct an analysis of programs and services provided through the Department of Education that fulfill its own mandate to support African Nova Scotian learners. The purpose of this analysis will be to identify areas that can be further developed through inter-divisional partnerships. There will also be a focus on how current practices can be expanded to be more inclusive of African Nova Scotians.

B. Governance: Oversight

14. *The ACSD be designated a partner within the tripartite monitoring structure designed to address the recommendations of this report.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division has become an active member of the Tripartite Monitoring Committee. The Tripartite Monitoring Committee has met several times to participate in the development of action plans for each recommendation. They will continue to meet, monitor, and report back to the communities on the implementation of these recommendations.

51. *The CACE be designated a partner within the tripartite monitoring structure designed to address the recommendations of this report.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. This recommendation is consistent with the Council on African Canadian Education's current mandate. The Council on African Canadian Education has become an active member of the tripartite

monitoring structure. The Tripartite Monitoring Committee has met several times to participate in the development of action plans for each recommendation. They will continue to meet, monitor, and report back to the communities on the implementation of these recommendations.

60. *The BEA be designated a partner within the tripartite monitoring structure designed to address the recommendations of this report.*

The Department of Education accepts with this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. The Black Educators Association has become an active member of the tripartite monitoring structure. The Tripartite Monitoring Committee has met several times to participate in the development of action plans for each recommendation. They will continue to meet, monitor and, report back to the communities on the implementation of these recommendations.

43. *The CACE accelerate efforts to have an Africentric Learning Institute (ALI) Board appointed so that CACE might resume its advisory function.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division in conjunction with the Council on African Canadian Services Division has begun the process of forming an Africentric Learning Institute. The department will have an Africentric Learning Institute board appointed no later than June 2011.

52. *The ALI, the CACE, the BEA, and the ASCD begin the process of forming an ALI board with extensive community participation.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation and has been working co-operatively with the Council on African Canadian Education, Black Educators Association, and Africentric Learning Institute to implement this recommendation. The department is committed to a transparent process that involves wide community participation with African Nova Scotian communities.

49. *The CACE, in its advisory capacity to the Minister of Education, initiate discussions to convene meetings of the provincial ministries which have impact on the education of ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Council on African Canadian Education and the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs to convene a meeting with provincial ministries that have an impact on the education of African Nova Scotians.

Theme 2: Staffing

The Department of Education recognizes that adequate resources are necessary to make *Reality Check's* recommendations attainable. Staff and resources are essential components of any plan. The Department of Education is committed to working with school boards and other education partners to address the staffing issues identified in this report. We will develop detailed action plans that respond to both the human resources planning issues identified and ongoing barriers to recruitment and staffing (e.g., the number of African Nova Scotian teacher candidates).

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Staffing Theme

5. *School boards elevate the position of Coordinator of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights, or its equivalent, to enable co-ordinators to influence more directly the implementation of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right policy and procedures at school sites.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work with school boards to elevate the position of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Coordinator to a Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Senior Staff Adviser and to design the new role and responsibilities. The new positions will provide leadership by developing and coordinating school board strategies directed at ongoing implementation of the provincial Racial Equity Policy and the school board Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights policies. The Department of Education will work with school boards to ensure that the necessary policies and practices are put in place to move this recommendation forward. This recommendation will be fully implemented by September 2011.

4. *School boards increase the number of ANS Student Support Workers (SSW) where appropriate, in consultation with the Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Coordinator, and that SSWs be integrated into the life of schools to enable them to directly impact the educational experience of the ANS learner.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation and will work with school boards to identify any areas of need with the Student Support Workers program and begin addressing these concerns. The Department of Education will provide school

boards with provincial guidelines for the Student Support Workers program in the 2010–11 school year to ensure consistency of services across the province. The Department of Education will also work with school boards to provide professional development for school administrators on best practices around the effective use of Student Support Workers within schools.

30. *School boards negotiate with unions where necessary to align the salaries of Student Support Workers (SSW) with their responsibilities. Research tends to support that SSW salaries should be adjusted upward.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to address this recommendation and to ensure that changes in the roles and responsibilities of Student Support Workers are reflected within the pay scale for the Student Support Workers positions, the purpose being to allow school boards the opportunity to recruit individuals with greater qualifications at an appropriate pay scale. This process will begin in September 2011.

65. *The DOE provide funding for another Regional Educator for the most geographically challenged area.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Black Educators Association to address this recommendation during the implementation of the 2006 Regional Educators Review. The Department of Education will identify specific funding requirements to ensure the ongoing successful implementation of this program.

3. *The DOE increase the staff of the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD), particularly in the area of curriculum, and fill the vacancies immediately to enable the division to fulfill its mandate.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will pursue increased staffing for the African Canadian Services Division. The purpose will be to more fully implement the *Reality Check* and *BLAC Report* recommendations and, in particular, to establish an elementary curriculum consultant and an assessment and evaluation consultant for the African Canadian Services Division to address recommendations specific to data analysis and assessment and evaluation practices. The Department of Education has filled the current vacancies within the African Canadian Services Division and within a year will create and fill an elementary/ junior high consultant position.

20. *The staff and resources be provided to develop curriculum for students in the earlier grades.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will review its current staffing allocation and make changes, as funding becomes available, to address the issue of African Nova Scotian curriculum development for the earlier grades, in collaboration with the English Program Services Division.

25. *School boards intensify efforts to recruit more ANS teachers.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards, universities, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, and the Black Educators Association to enhance the collective efforts to recruit more African Nova Scotian teachers for the public school system. The department will continue to develop a range of programs and initiatives with partners specifically designed to increase the number of African Nova Scotian teachers available within the system.

Theme 3: Accountability

The Department of Education recognizes that accountability must be a large part of all that we do and say. Accountable organizations stand out from others because of their superior performance and greater employee satisfaction and higher performance. The Department of Education understands that we must ensure that we have the tools to monitor and track our progress. We must be able to provide accurate information in a meaningful way to all stakeholders. We must ensure that we can be accountable for the decisions that we make and their results.

Each organization, including school boards, will define, and communicate its roles to the other organizations and to the broader community. There will also be a mechanism with clearly articulated criteria, to periodically review the success of each of the organizations that support the needs of African Nova Scotian students and to ensure that appropriate changes are made once identified through reviews. All partners recognize we still have a great deal to do to support our African Nova Scotian learners.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Accountability Theme

A. Accountability: Data and Research

1. *The Department of Education (DOE) facilitate school boards in collecting quantitative data on the academic performance of, and opportunities to learn, that are provided to ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work within the Public Schools Branch and school boards to collect this quantitative and qualitative data. The department recognizes that it currently has expertise within the Public Schools Branch and school boards in the area of data collection and analysis. With this said, it also recognizes that it has a limited capacity to collect all of the necessary information at this time but will use currently available resources available to begin this process. It expects that as the Student Information System is put in place by 2012 it will be better able to collect all of the necessary information.

The Department of Education recognizes that public awareness about the importance of self-identification will be crucial for collecting accurate data on the education system. Every effort will be made by the department to work with its partners to ensure that there is trust in the process as self-identification is

voluntary. The Department of Education knows that once parents understand the importance of having an accurate picture of the reality for learners they will work with the department to collect this very important information.

53. *The ALI, as part of the research components of its mandate, collaborate with School Boards, families and the BEA to gather data on the educational status of NS students in terms of opportunity, performance and placement, such as Individual Program Plans (IPPs).*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation and will work the research component of the Africentric Learning Institute to facilitate collaboration among school boards, families, and Black Educators Association to collect data on the education status of African Nova Scotian students with regards to opportunity, performance, and placement.

55. *The Africentric Learning Institute (ALI):*

(a) gather and disseminate statistics on completion of college and university education by ANS students;

(b) survey students who have an IPP in order to assess whether they have a desire to pursue higher education;

(c) invite scholarship winners to connect with and mentor younger members of the ANS community; and

(d) investigate the local conditions that contribute to limited applications from an area.

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Africentric Learning Institute Board to ensure that the research component of the Africentric Learning Institute is tasked with the collection and dissemination of data on college and university completion rates for African Nova Scotian learners.

The Department of Education will work with school boards to determine the most effective manner in which to survey students with an individual program plans to assess their aspirations to higher education.

The Department of Education will work with the Africentric Learning Institute, Black Educators Association, and the Council on African Canadian Education to investigate models for mentor programs for scholarship winners and younger members of the African Nova Scotian communities, and will work with the Council on African Canadian Education and the Black Educators Association to periodically review scholarship applications and their distribution, as part of the Scholarship Review Committee.

56. *It is recommended that the Africentric Learning Institute (ALI) conduct research that measures the effectiveness of the programs offered on adult learners and their impact or influence on the academic achievement of younger students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Africentric Learning Institute Board to ensure that the research component of the Africentric Learning Institute is tasked with the collection and dissemination of data on the effectiveness of the programs offered and the impact on adult African Nova Scotian learners and on the academic achievements of younger African Nova Scotian students.

57. *The ALI conduct follow-up research on the impact of the Cultural and Academic Enrichment Program on the development of numeracy, literacy and positive cultural identity.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Africentric Learning Institute to move the recommendation toward full implementation once the Africentric Learning Institute's structures and personnel are in place.

9. *The ACSD gather and disseminate statistics on completion of college and university education by ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation and will work with the Africentric Learning Institute, when it is formed, to ensure that it is collecting and disseminating this data.

10. *The ACSD annually track the number of ANS students participating in English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses each year, and coordinate those figures with data from research into the number of ANS students who have an IPP.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division currently collects data on the total number of students enrolled in these courses. This data will be expanded to include additional information on African Nova Scotian learners when these individuals can be identified through self-identification. This will occur with the implementation of a province-wide student information system in the 2010–2012 time frame. In the meantime, the department will work with school boards to determine a plan of action regarding interim collection of this data.

33. *Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right coordinators begin to gather race-specific data regarding ANS learners in terms of the input they receive from the programs developed to serve their special needs or from programs directed to all students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to ensure that Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Coordinators are an integral part of the data collection as it relates to African Nova Scotians. The Department of Education recognizes that the capacity to collect some of this data now exists within school boards and will be exploring options to collect and use this data with school boards. The department will also work with school boards to ensure they are receiving input from all programs established to address the needs of the African Nova Scotian learner within the education system as well as from programs directed to all students.

38. *Teachers engage in action-based research so that they become more focused on the impact of their instruction.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to collect data as it relates to the impact of instruction practices on the African Nova Scotian learner. The department will work with school boards to develop the capacity within the teacher population to understand and engage in action-based research.

B. Accountability: General

2. *School boards and the DOE review the Individual Program Plan of every ANS student and make changes in placement where deemed necessary.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education recognizes that the implementation of this recommendation will be affected by its current capacity to identify African Nova Scotian learners within the system and will work with school boards to collect this information on students who have been self-identified. The Department of Education also recognizes that as it develops the capacity to better identify our African Nova Scotian learners it will have a more comprehensive response to this recommendation.

Policy 2.6 of the *Special Education Policy* (Department of Education 2008) requires that all individual program plans be reviewed by the program planning team. Parents are members of this team. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work with parents of African Nova Scotian learners

who are on individual program plans to support them as team members during the review. The department will also work with school boards to determine any trends across school boards and the province. This is an ongoing process, but preliminary data will be collected during the 2010–11 school year.

61. *The BEA fully implement the findings of the 2006 Review of the Regional Educators Program.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work with the Black Educators Association to move the recommendations within the 2006 Review of the Regional Educators Program towards full implementation.

68. *The BEA provide more regular and detailed accounts to the DOE on the work of regional educators and the relationship of that work to ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Black Educators Association to outline appropriate reporting and accountability practices to the Department of Education. These processes will focus on the current level of programming as it relates to the impact on the achievements of and opportunities for African Nova Scotian learners.

Theme 4: Communication

The Department of Education is committed to working with the partners identified in the *Reality Check* report to increase communication among the communities, organizations, and government structures. A large part of this responsibility includes more open, candid, and ongoing communication among the organizations. The Nova Scotia Department of Education recognizes the importance of ensuring effective communication with regard to decision making for new and existing policies and regulatory priorities. Collaboration among all partners is a priority.

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is committed to relevant and timely information being shared with the communities and allowing for an exchange of ideas to inform practices. Two-way communication among the organizations and with parents as key partners will be improved. A plan will be developed to establish a forum in which the organizations can educate other partners regarding the work that the organizations are doing to address the needs of African Nova Scotian learners. An ongoing process to share information with the communities and parents will also be established and implemented over the next year. It is important that the communities know and understand the work that each organization is doing and that the organizations assist parents and students by directing them to the appropriate resources.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Communication Theme

A. Communication with African Nova Scotian Communities

41. The Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) establish regular communications with its base.

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports the Council on African Canadian Education's commitment to establish an ongoing communication strategy with the African Nova Scotian communities. The Council on African Canadian Education has identified an independent and joint strategy with the Black Educators Association and the African Canadian Services Division as the most effective way to accomplish this recommendation. Regional consultation has already started and will happen twice a year starting in 2010.

42. *The CACE organize listening sessions that will give every ANS community an opportunity to raise questions and provide feedback on CACE's operations; and that CACE return to the same communities within three months to report on action taken based on the listening sessions.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with Council on African Canadian Education's commitment to organize and conduct listening sessions through regional meetings. The Council on African Canadian Education has agreed to report back to the African Nova Scotian communities within a timely manner at the conclusion of these sessions on the actions that have been or will be taken as a result of these sessions. The Council on African Canadian Education has also indicated that an ongoing communication strategy is currently being developed.

58. *The BEA re-establish greater communication with its base across the province.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation. The Black Educators Association has agreed to develop a communication strategy to ensure greater communication with its base across the province. Regional consultation will happen twice a year starting in 2010.

59. *The BEA re-establish greater communication with its base across the province through listening sessions, and report back to the groups with which it met in three months on the results of its earlier meeting.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with the Black Educators Association's commitment to establish listening sessions within the African Nova Scotian communities across the province through regional meetings. The Black Educators Association has also agreed to report back to the communities in a timely manner on the actions taken from this consultation.

46. *The CACE arrange for a quarterly reporting structure to the ANS community to enhance transparency around the impact of its work on the lives of African Canadian learners and invite feedback from the field.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education is pleased that the Council on African Canadian Education is committed to establishing a process for ongoing communication between members of the African Nova Scotian communities and the Council on African Canadian Education board. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work with the Council on African Canadian

Education board to ensure that this consultation addresses issues of transparency, accountability, and community input. The Council on African Canadian Education, Black Educators Association and African Canadian Services Division will establish a quarterly journal to be distributed across the African Nova Scotian communities in 2011.

B. Communication: Education System

44. *The CACE and senior education administrators reinstitute or develop a process for quarterly communication around matters concerning the education of ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and has met with the Council on African Canadian Education to establish a quarterly consultation process. The Department of Education and the Council on African Canadian Education are committed to ensuring that this is an ongoing process of exchanging information. A schedule has been established and will commence in 2010.

47. *The CACE give its support to the ANS School Board Caucus by convening a joint meeting.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education is pleased that the Council on African Canadian Education has convened a meeting with the African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus. The purpose of the meeting was to investigate opportunities for the Council on African Canadian Education to provide ongoing support to African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus representatives. The Caucus has already established a regular meeting schedule based on this recommendation.

64. *The BEA seek funding to document and disseminate its work with ANS learners and families.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Black Educators Association to establish a communication strategy and with the Black Educators Association and the Council on African Canadian Education to document and disseminate their work as it relates to African Nova Scotian learners and their families.

8. *The ACSD review its communication strategies and re-brand itself so that the Division can receive appropriate credit for its achievements and ongoing work.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department agrees with this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division has already begun responding to this recommendation. In order to communicate more clearly about its current support and involvement within the system, it will add a communication strategy to each of its current initiatives. The African Canadian Services Division is strengthening its identity with specific programs such as the Parenting Workshop Program and BEd program. The African Canadian Services Division will also build upon this by working directly with Communication Services within the Department of Education to develop an enhanced overall communication strategy.

15. *ACSD, Student Services Division and the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office, which are collaborating around the training in cultural competence, establish a regular forum and process for deciding how collaboration can be continued and expanded to include other divisions and branches.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Public Schools Branch will establish a regular forum and process for deciding how collaboration on cultural competencies can be expanded to include all divisions and branches within the Department of Education.

Theme 5: Professional Development

In response to the *Reality Check* report, the Nova Scotia Department of Education in co-operation with our partners in education and other stakeholders, will investigate guidelines for effective practices, and strengthen efforts to promote integration within existing professional development initiatives. Collaboration is not only a cost-effective measure but also one of the most effective manners in which to move many of the issues identified within *Reality Check*.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Professional Development Theme

12. *The ACSD provide professional development for teachers of English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11, with a focus on the development of the capacity of teachers to address racism and feelings of isolation of lone ANS students in their classes.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division will continue to provide ongoing professional development for teachers of the English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses. Additional components will be added to address the areas identified beginning in 2010.

22. *Guidance counselors be included in appropriate professional development training programs along with teachers being prepared to teach English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to ensure that guidance counsellors are included in appropriate professional development opportunities, along with teachers who will teach English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11.

24. *Students' experiences with the English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses be shared across the province with guidance counselors, administrators and ANS communities.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will ensure that student experiences with the English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 are shared with guidance counsellors, administrators, and the African Nova Scotian communities across the province.

21. *Best practices be shared and that new initiatives in professional development take into account the development of the capacity of teachers to address racism and feelings of isolation of lone ANS students.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards and universities to create professional development opportunities to support teachers in the development of strategies to address racism and isolation of lone African Nova Scotian students. The Department of Education recognizes that teacher training institutions have a responsibility to ensure that new teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to address these issues and will ensure that institutions prepare new teachers with these skills.

37. *More administrative attention be paid to the everyday classroom routines and activities, e.g., principals do a walkthrough with a focus on teacher preparedness in instruction and high-level interaction between educators and ANS learners.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education, including the African Canadian Services Division, English Program Services, French Second Language Services, and Student Services, will work with school boards in the development of new programming and professional development opportunities to ensure that administrators can focus on teacher preparedness and high-level interaction with African Nova Scotian learners. The Department of Education also recognizes that there must be ongoing opportunities provided for educators to engage in professional development opportunities that create a better understanding of the African Nova Scotian learner.

7. *The ACSD offer workshops in culturally responsive assessments.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division will work with the Public Schools Branch, including but not limited to the Evaluation Services and English Program Services Divisions, to support

the development and implementation of these workshops. The Department of Education will work co-operatively with school boards to ensure that these workshops are delivered in a timely manner.

18. *The Student Services Division, in collaboration with ACSD and the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office, continue to offer in-service workshops in cultural competence and anti-racist education; and that the evaluation and follow-up of those workshops address the ways in which the training makes a difference to students' experience.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. Student Services, African Canadian Services, and the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office will continue to develop and offer cultural competence and anti-racism training as a component of their ongoing support to school boards and schools. The Department of Education will ensure that there is a measurement component added to these sessions that will provide opportunities to assess their impact on the African Nova Scotian students' educational experiences.

40. *Teachers receive support on embedding Africentric content into a rigorous curricular framework focused on assisting students in developing numeracy and literacy.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with universities and school boards to provide professional development opportunities for teachers on embedding Africentric content into a rigorous curriculum. The Department of Education will also work within French Second Language Services and English Program Services to develop professional development opportunities that support Africentric content within the areas of literacy and numeracy.

32. *The Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right Division in each board continue to provide professional development for SSWs to equip them to respond to their wide range of responsibilities.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with each school board to ensure that there is ongoing professional development provided to Student Support Workers. Each board will be required to ensure that there is a professional development growth plan in place for its student support workers that reflects the unique circumstances and needs of its schools. The department currently has a Student Support Workers Professional Development Committee that will also continue to coordinate provincial and regional initiatives.

29. *Parenting Workshops be expanded to include topics such as the medicating of young ANS boys or girls because of Attention Deficit Disorder.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education is currently in the process of developing a workshop entitled “Supporting Your Child Identified as Having a Learning Disability.” This workshop will address the issue of attention deficit disorders. The workshop will also address consultation with doctors about the use of medication. It will be available to parents in the 2010–11 school year.

63. *The BEA increase the professional development opportunities for tutors and site co-coordinators to enable them to program for multi-age groups and to document their students’ growth and learning.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation. The Black Educators Association has agreed to increase the number of professional development opportunities for tutors and site coordinators within the Cultural Academic Enrichment Program. The focus of these professional development opportunities will be on supporting multi-age groupings and documenting of students’ growth and learning.

Theme 6: Curriculum

Collaboration on the design and delivery of programs has become a normal approach on the part of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, and we are always seeking new ways in which to improve our services. The Department of Education will continue to work with our partners in the area of curriculum development and with universities to ensure that pre-service teachers are equipped with the necessary skills to address the issues identified within this report.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Curriculum Theme

19. *English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses continue to be developed and made available to more schools.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will continue to support the development and implementation of the English 12 African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses and will work with school boards and schools to ensure that all students are provided with the opportunity and encouragement to take them. The department will continue to work with school board directors of Programs and Student Services to promote and expand these courses.

23. *More African Canadian and ANS content be added to the English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division will continue to infuse the current English 12: African Heritage Literature and African Canadian Studies 11 courses with more African Canadian and African Nova Scotian content.

11. *The ACSD, in collaboration with other curriculum specialists, continue the preparation and delivery of African centred resources for students in the Elementary and Junior grades.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation. The African Canadian Services Division will be able to implement this recommendation upon the engagement of additional staff, as noted in recommendation 3. New curriculum consultants within the African Canadian Services Division will be assigned to support learners in the elementary and junior-high grades.

Theme 7: Student and Community Engagement

The Department of Education is committed to providing child-centred, family-focused responses as the most effective way to help children and young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of becoming disadvantaged later in life. Our partners will continue to engage and involve African Nova Scotian communities through outreach and workshops.

The Department of Education will continue to examine the impact of classroom instruction, curriculum content, and pedagogy on the success of African Nova Scotian learners. Our focus will be on raising the academic performance of all students and narrowing academic performance gaps for students from diverse backgrounds.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Student and Community Engagement Theme

66. *The BEA continue to review and restructure its program to maximize the use of its personnel, assets and resources.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Black Educators Association to determine the best means of reviewing and restructuring its programs.

54. *The ALI, as part of the community development components of its mandate, develop, deliver and evaluate African-centred Leadership Workshops for ANS youth to prepare them for leadership roles in the community.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work with the community development component of the Africentric Learning Institute to develop, deliver, and evaluate Africentric leadership workshops for African Nova Scotian youth to prepare them for leadership roles in the community.

28. *School administrators, teachers and families establish links between schools and the Cultural and Academic Enrichment Program.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to ensure that administrators and school officials are familiar with the Cultural Academic Enrichment Program and are equipped to work in partnerships with it.

13. *The ACSD intensify efforts to encourage those outside of the Halifax Region to apply for scholarships under the African Nova Scotian Student Scholarship (ANSSS) Program.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards and the Black Educators Association to hold a series of school and community-based information sessions with parents and students about the African Nova Scotian Student Scholarship program to ensure that African Nova Scotian communities are aware of this opportunity.

27. *Administrators and other school officials become familiar with the parenting workshops to ensure that they are able to work in partnership with empowered parents.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to ensure that administrators and school officials are familiar with available parenting workshops and are equipped to work in partnership with empowered parents.

Theme 8: Program Review

The Nova Scotia Department of Education is committed to working with our partners to ensure that the models we have in place meet the needs of our African Nova Scotian learners. We are committed to reviewing programs and making changes where appropriate.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Program Review Theme

26. *All Positive Parent Workshops be evaluated for effectiveness in terms of the difference that parent engagement makes to student achievement.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education is in the midst of developing a process and an instrument to be incorporated into parent workshops that can provide quantitative and qualitative data regarding the effectiveness of this program as it relates to student achievement. This instrument will be implemented in all parenting workshops by September 2011.

67. *The BEA evaluate the Parenting Workshops to gather more concrete data on their impact on parent involvement in their child's education and their performance.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Black Educators Association to develop a means of evaluating parent workshops to assess their impact on their child's education and performance.

62. *The BEA review and restructure the Cultural and Academic Enrichment Program (CAEP), where necessary.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation and will work with the Black Educators Association to review and restructure the CAEP to ensure that it is an effective and efficient program for the communities in which it serves. An action team will be established and the review of individual programs will begin in 2010.

Theme 9: Roles and Responsibilities

A clear understanding of roles and responsibilities is essential if we hope to work together as partners in the education system. We must ensure that all stakeholders are clear with regard to the roles and responsibilities of all organizations within the education system. We must ensure that our parents and communities are clear about the roles and responsibilities of those who are in place to serve them. The reality of our education system is that we have an ongoing intake of new parents, which requires that an ongoing communication strategy is in place to ensure that everyone is kept abreast of the roles and responsibilities of all partners within the education system.

Specific Responses to Recommendations within the Roles and Responsibilities Theme

Roles and Responsibilities

31. *School administrators review the level of integration of the SSW in the systems and structures of schools to ensure that the worker's role is clear, that the worker is able to influence the culture of the school as a whole, and that the worker can interact proactively with ANS students and their families.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with school boards to develop a framework to support administrators in integrating Student Support Workers in the systems and structure of their school and will ensure that these roles are clear to all staff in the school. Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right Coordinators will provide ongoing professional development opportunities for student support workers to ensure that they are adequately equipped for their revised roles. The Department of Education will work with each board to support the development of its professional development growth for its student support workers with the understanding that these plans will need to reflect the unique circumstances and needs of the school board's schools. The Department of Education will also work with school boards to support a framework implemented by school administrators, with a particular focus on support administration in addressing the issues related to African Nova Scotian learners. The Department of Education also believes that the release of the department's upcoming *Provincial Student Support Workers Guidelines* will support school boards in moving this recommendation forward.

45. *The CACE, the Black Educators Association (BEA) and the ACSD meet with community groups to clarify their specific responsibilities around common areas of service.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education strongly supports this recommendation and will work co-operatively with the Council on African Canadian Education and the Black Educators Association to jointly meet with community groups to clarify areas of responsibility. This will begin in the fall of 2010.

48. *The CACE refocus on its advisory capacity and resume regular meeting with the Minister of Education.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education will work with the Council on African Canadian Education to establish regular meetings and other avenues of ongoing consultation between the Council on African Canadian Education and the Minister. This meeting schedule has already been established and will continue on an ongoing basis.

50. *The Board of the CACE assume responsibility for the completion of the recommendations assigned to it in the Report, and provide an update to the ANS community on the results of these activities.*

The Department of Education accepts this recommendation. The Department of Education agrees with this recommendation and will work with the Council on African Nova Scotian Education to provide an update to African Nova Scotian communities on the results of the implementation of its assigned recommendations.

Conclusion

We will continue on our journey to ensure that African Nova Scotian learners have the necessary opportunities to achieve success in our education system. This review is one more chapter in the struggle of African Nova Scotians to ensure quality education for their children. The Department of Education would like to acknowledge that *Reality Check*, is directly linked to the historic document, the *BLAC Report on Education: Redressing Inequity-Empowering Black Learners* (Black Learners Advisory Committee 1994). This response is a testament to the continued importance of the BLAC Report as it continues to be the guiding document for much of what we do.

We believe that by focusing on key areas of governance, accountability, staffing, communication, professional development, curriculum, student and community engagement, program review and roles and responsibilities we have a formula for success. We and our partners have already begun to move many of these recommendations forward during the drafting of this response. We acknowledge that much more work needs to be done during the next few years to continue to build upon the successes to date, but we believe great things are possible.

We have committed to time frames for most of the recommendations within this response. In instances where a time frame has not been identified, the time frame will be developed in consultation with our partners by January 2011. The department will then provide the Tripartite Monitoring Committee with the time frames. We recognize that this will not be a static process but rather one of ongoing revisions and improvement. With this said, we are committed to moving these recommendations to completion in a timely manner.

We recognize that there is a shared accountability for all stakeholders to the implementation of these recommendations and the Department of Education must take a leadership role. This report establishes the Tripartite Monitoring Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations and report back to their respective organizations and communities. We also recognize that the department must monitor and support the implementation of these recommendations on an ongoing basis. The department will establish a new African Nova Scotian Regional Education Officer position to support the implementation of these and other recommendations specific to the African Nova Scotian communities. This position will report directly to the Senior Executive Director of the Public Schools Branch ensuring immediate access to the senior administration of the Department of Education. The collective efforts of all individuals and organizations involved will move these recommendations forward to further support student success.

The Minister of Education will present an annual report to the House of Assembly on the status of the implementation of the *BLAC Report* and *Reality Check*. This report highlights

accomplishments with regards to implementation of the recommendations. The Minister will present it to the house in the spring of each year.

The Department of Education would like to express sincere appreciation to Dr. Enid Lee and Clem Marshall for their deep commitment, insightful recommendations, and significant contributions to the continued well-being of African Nova Scotian children.

In addition, the Department of Education is grateful to those parents, educators, students, administrators, boards, and other interested people who provided written submissions and participated in the review process.

This response reflects the direction set by the Department of Education and those who contributed to the review process and provides a framework for action.

The Department of Education invites all those involved in the education community to reflect on and act upon the directions of the *Reality Check* report and this response. Together, we will strengthen our education system and achieve the vision of full citizenship for all.

Appendix A:

Table to Cross-Reference Recommendations, Pages, Themes

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
1	12	Department of Education and School Boards	The Department of Education facilitate School Boards in collecting quantitative data on the academic performance of, and opportunities to learn, that are provided to African Nova Scotian students. – <i>6 months</i>	Accountability: Data and Research
2	12	Department of Education and School Boards	The School Boards and the Department of Education review the Individual Program Plan of every African Nova Scotian student and make changes in placement where deemed necessary. – <i>1 year</i>	Accountability: General
3	12 74	Department of Education and School Boards	The Department of Education increase the staff of the African Canadian Services Division, particularly in the area of curriculum, and fill the vacancies immediately to enable the Division to fulfill its mandate. – <i>1 year</i> The Department of Education increase the staff of the African Canadian Services Division to enable the fulfilment of its mandate – <i>6 months</i>	Staffing

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
11	13	African Canadian Services Division	The African Canadian Services Division, in collaboration with other curriculum specialists, continue the preparation and delivery of African centred resources for students in the Elementary and Junior Grades. – <i>6 months</i>	Curriculum
12	13	African Canadian Services Division	The African Canadian Services Division provide professional development for teachers of English 12 and African Canadian Studies 11, with a focus on the development of the capacity of teachers to address racism and feelings of isolation of lone African Nova Scotian students in their classes. – <i>6 months</i>	Professional Development
13	62	African Canadian Services Division	The African Canadian Services Division intensify efforts to encourage those outside of the Halifax Region to apply for scholarships under the African Nova Scotian Student Scholarship Program.	Student and Community Engagement
14	13	African Canadian Services Division	The African Canadian Services Division be designated a partner within the tripartite monitoring structure designed to address the recommendations of this report. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Oversight

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
15	74	African Canadian Services Division, Student Services Division, Mi'kmaq Liaison Office	African Canadian Services Division, Student Services Division and the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office, which are collaborating around the training in cultural competence, establish a regular forum and process for deciding how collaboration can be continued and expanded to include other divisions and branches. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Education System
16	74	Department of Education	Each division and branch of the Department of Education identify how it can invite input from the African Canadian Services Division. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Moving to Leadership
17	74	Department of Education	Each division and branch of the Department of Education identify how it will share the activities it undertakes in the process of fulfilling its own mandate to support African Nova Scotian learners. – <i>6 months</i>	Governance: Moving to Leadership
18	74	African Canadian Services Division, Student Services Division, Mi'kmaq Liaison Office	Student Services Division, in collaboration with the African Canadian Services Division and the Mi'kmaq Liaison Office, continue to offer in-service workshops in cultural competence and anti-racist education; and that the evaluation and follow-up of those workshops address the ways in which the training makes a difference to students' experience. – <i>6 months</i>	Professional Development

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
19	57	African Canadian Services Division	English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses continue to be developed and made available to more schools.	Curriculum
20	57	African Canadian Services Division	The staff and resources be provided to develop curriculum for students in the earlier grades.	Staffing
21	57	African Canadian Services Division	Best practices be shared and that new initiatives in professional development take into account the development of the capacity of teachers to address racism and feelings of isolation of lone African Nova Scotian students.	Professional Development
22	57	African Canadian Services Division	Guidance counselors be included in appropriate professional development training programs along with teachers being prepared to teach English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses.	Professional Development
23	57	African Canadian Services Division	More African Canadian and African Nova Scotian content be added to the English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses.	Curriculum
24	57	African Canadian Services Division	Students experience with the English 12: African Heritage and African Canadian Studies 11 courses be shared across the province with guidance counselors, administrators and African Nova Scotian communities.	Professional Development

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
25	57	School Boards	The school boards intensify efforts to recruit more African Nova Scotian teachers.	Staffing
26	65	African Canadian Services Division	All Positive Parent Workshops be evaluated for effectiveness in terms of the difference that parent engagement makes to student achievement. – <i>3 months</i>	Programs Review
27	65	School Boards	Administrators and other school officials become familiar with the [parent] workshops to ensure that they are able to work in partnership with empowered parents. – <i>6 months</i>	Student and Community Engagement
28	91	School Boards	School administrators, teachers and families establish links between schools and the Cultural Academic Enrichment Program.	Student and Community Engagement
29	65	African Canadian Services Division	Parenting Workshops be expanded to include topics such as the medicating of young African Nova Scotian boys or girls because of Attention Deficit Disorder. – <i>6 months</i>	Professional Development
30	34	School Boards	School boards negotiate with unions where necessary to align the salaries of Student Support Workers with their responsibilities. Research tends to support that Student Support Workers salaries should be adjusted upward.	Staffing

Recommendation Number	<i>Reality Check</i> Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
31	34	School Boards/ Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Right	School administrators review the level of integration of the Student Support Workers in the systems and structures of schools to ensure that the worker's role is clear, that the worker is able to influence the culture of the school as a whole, and that the worker can interact proactively with African Nova Scotian students and their families.	Roles and Responsibilities
32	34	School Boards/ Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Right	The Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights Division in each board continue to provide professional development for Student Support Workers to equip them to respond to their wide range of responsibilities.	Professional Development
33	46	School Boards/ Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Right	Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights coordinators begin to gather race-specific data regarding African Nova Scotian learners in terms of the input they receive from the programs developed to serve their special needs or from programs directed to all students. – <i>3 months</i>	Accountability: Data and Research

Recommendation Number	<i>Reality Check</i> Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
34	46	School Boards/ Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right	Principals and Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights coordinators review structures and processes for addressing issues of institutional racism and place more focus on dealing with racism faced by African Nova Scotian students. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Moving to Leadership
35	46	School Boards/ Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right	Principals allocate adequate institutional time for the preparation of Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights teacher representatives for their responsibilities in regard to race, culture and human rights. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Moving to Leadership
36	46	School Boards/ Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Right	Principals provide, wherever feasible, both private space and scheduled time for Race Relations, Cross-Cultural Understanding and Human Rights coordinators to address needs and/or challenges specific to African Nova Scotian learners. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Moving to Leadership
37	50	School Boards	More administrative attention be paid to the everyday classroom routines and activities, e.g., principals do a walkthrough with a focus on teacher preparedness in instruction and high-level interaction between educators and African Nova Scotian learners.	Professional Development

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
38	50	School Boards	Teachers engage in action–research so that they become more focused on the impact of their instruction.	Accountability: Data and Research
39	50	School Boards	School administrators share and nurture the vision among all staff that all African Nova Scotian students can and will succeed under appropriate conditions.	Governance: Moving to Leadership
40	50	School Boards	Teachers receive support on embedding Africentric content into rigorous curricular framework focused on assisting students in developing numeracy and literacy.	Professional Development
41	79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education establish regular communications with its base. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Communicating with Communities
42	13 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education organize listening sessions that will give every African Nova Scotian community an opportunity to raise questions and provide feedback on the Council for African Canadian Education’s operations; and that the Council on African Canadian Education return to the same communities within three months to report on action taken based on the listening sessions. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Communicating with Communities

Recommendation Number	<i>Reality Check</i> Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
43	13 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education accelerate efforts to have an Africentric Learning Institute Board appointed so that the Council on African Canadian Education might resume its advisory function. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Oversight
44	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education and senior education administrators reinstitute or develop a process for quarterly communication around matters concerning the education of African Nova Scotian students. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Education System
45	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education, Black Educators Association, and African Canadian Services Division	The Council on African Canadian Education, the Black Educators Association and the African Canadian Services Division meet with community groups to clarify their specific responsibilities around common areas of service. – <i>3 months</i>	Roles and Responsibilities
46	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education arrange for a quarterly reporting structure to the African Nova Scotian community to enhance transparency around the impact of its work on the lives of African Canadian learners and invite feedback from the field. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Communicating with Communities
47	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education give its support to the African Nova Scotian School Board Caucus by convening a joint meeting – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Education System

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
48	79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education refocus on its advisory capacity and resume regular meeting with the Minister of Education. – <i>3 months</i>	Roles and Responsibilities
49	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education, in its advisory capacity to the Minister of Education, initiate discussions to convene meetings of the provincial ministries which have impact on the education of African Nova Scotian students. – <i>6 months</i>	Governance: Oversight
50	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Board of the Council on African Canadian Education assume responsibility for the completion of [its recommendations], and provide an update to the African Nova Scotian community on the results of these activities. – <i>6 months</i>	Roles and Responsibilities
51	14 and 79	Council on African Canadian Education	The Council on African Canadian Education be designated a partner within the tripartite monitoring structure designed to address the recommendations of this report. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Oversight
52	14 and 81	Africentric Learning Institute	The Africentric Learning Institute, the Council on African Canadian Education, the Black Educators Association, and the ASCD begin the process of forming an Africentric Learning Institute board with extensive community participation. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Oversight

Recommendation Number	<i>Reality Check</i> Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
53	14 and 81	Africentric Learning Institute	The Africentric Learning Institute, as part of the research components of its mandate, collaborate with school boards, families and the Black Educators Association to gather data on the educational status of African Nova Scotian students in terms of opportunity, performance and placement, such as Individual Program Plans (IPPs). – 6 months	Accountability: Data and Research
54	14 and 81	Africentric Learning Institute	The Africentric Learning Institute, as part of the community development components of its mandate, develop, deliver and evaluate African-centred Leadership Workshops for African Nova Scotian youth to prepare them for leadership roles in the community. – 6 months	Student and Community Engagement

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
55	62	Africentric Learning Institute	<p>The Africentric Learning Institute (ALI):</p> <p>(a) gather and disseminate statistics on completion of college and university education by African Nova Scotian students;</p> <p>(b) survey students who have an IPP in order to assess whether they have a desire to pursue higher education;</p> <p>(c) invite scholarship winners to connect with and mentor younger members of the African Nova Scotian community; and</p> <p>(d) investigate the local conditions that contribute to limited applications from an area.</p>	Accountability: Data and Research
56	69	Africentric Learning Institute	The Africentric Learning Institute (ALI) conduct research that measures the effectiveness of the programs offered on adult learners and their impact or influence on the academic achievement of younger students. – <i>6 months</i>	Accountability: Data and Research
57	91	Africentric Learning Institute	The Africentric Learning Institute conduct follow-up research on the impact of the Cultural and Academic Enrichment Program on the development of numeracy, literacy and positive cultural identity.	Accountability: Data and Research

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
58	85	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association re-establish greater communication with its base across the province. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Communicating with Communities
59	15	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association re-establish greater communication with its stakeholders across the province through listening sessions, and report back to the groups with which it met in three months on the results of its earlier meeting. – <i>3 months</i>	Communications: Communicating with Communities
60	15 and 85	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association be designated a partner within the tripartite monitoring structure designed to address the recommendations of this report. – <i>3 months</i>	Governance: Oversight
61	15, 85 and 88	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association fully implement the findings of the 2006 Review of the Regional Educators Program. – <i>6 months (3 months on pages 85 and 88)</i>	Accountability: General
62	15 and 91	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association review and restructure the Cultural and Academic Enrichment Program where necessary. – <i>6 months</i>	Programs Review

Recommendation Number	Reality Check Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
63	15 and 91	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association increase the professional development opportunities for tutors and site co-coordinators to enable them to program for multi-age groups and to document their students growth and learning. – <i>6 months</i>	Professional Development
64	85	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association seek funding to document/ disseminate its work with African Nova Scotian learners/ families. – <i>6 months</i>	Communications: Education System
65	88	Black Educators Association, Department of Education	The Department of Education provide funding for another Regional Educator for the most geographically challenged area. – <i>3 months</i>	Staffing
66	88	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association continue to review and restructure its program to maximize the use of its personnel, assets and resources. – <i>6 months</i>	Student and Community Engagement
67	88	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association evaluate the Parenting Workshops to gather more concrete data on their impact on parent involvement in their child's education and their performance – <i>6 months</i>	Programs Review

Recommendation Number	<i>Reality Check</i> Page	Lead Body	Recommendation	Theme
68	88	Black Educators Association	The Black Educators Association provide more regular and detailed accounts to the Department of Education on the work of Regional Educators and the relationship of that work to African Nova Scotian students. – <i>Ongoing</i>	Accountability: General

Appendix B: Process for Gathering Public Input for the Minister's Response

Background

As noted in this response, Enidlee Consultants was hired by the Nova Scotia Department of Education to conduct a review of the effectiveness of 12 of the programs and services implemented as a result of the *Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report*. As part of her review of the effectiveness of these programs and services, Dr. Lee met with teachers, principals, students, parents, and community organizations across the province as well as with school board and department staff.

Report Feedback

Dr. Lee's report was released on December 10, 2009, and made available to stakeholders and members of the public for feedback. An online questionnaire asked three open-ended questions:

- Do you have any concerns about a specific recommendation(s) in the report?
- Are there any key issues not addressed in the report?
- Do you have any other comments about the report or the recommendations?

Submissions were also accepted by e-mail, mail, and facsimile until a deadline of April 1, 2010. In total, 25 submissions were received by the Department of Education. The Black Educators Association and the Council on African Canadian Education each provided submissions, as did the Cape Breton–Victoria Regional School Board, the Chignecto–Central Regional School Board, the Halifax Regional School Board, and the Strait Regional School Board. There were also submissions from 19 members of the public.

In addition to the above-mentioned public feedback, two invitational focus groups were organized by the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs in Sydney on March 1, 2010, and in Halifax on March 2, 2010. Those invited were drawn from members of the African Nova Scotian community who were unlikely to have been part of the meetings held by Dr. Lee during her consultation. Both of these focus-group sessions were attended by the Hon. Marilyn More, Minister of Education, and the Hon. Percy Paris, Minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs.

The feedback from all of these sources has been considered in the development of this response to Dr. Lee's report.

