

African Canadian Services Branch

AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN STUDENT SUPPORT WORKER PROGRAM



Because of the under-representation of Black teachers and administrators in schools in Nova Scotia, it was proposed by the researchers of the *BLAC Report* that the presence of at least one adult with whom Black students could identify racially and culturally would improve the quality of the learning environment in schools.

—*Reality Check* (2009, p. 29)

Provide a support person in the school to whom Black learners can talk to about any frustration experienced. The person would also provide the attention they are seeking.

—*Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report* (1994, p. 97)

The Student Support Workers Program is a foundational recommendation of the *BLAC Report* and is recognized as one of the key programs that has made a positive difference to the academic achievement of African Nova Scotian (ANS) students. The Student Support Worker Program aligns with Nova Scotia's Inclusive Education Policy and is key to ensuring that ANS learners experience a high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive and equitable education to support their well-being and academic achievement.

The SSW program operates to promote a school climate that is culturally safe, supportive, and respectful. SSWs mobilize and integrate school and community resources to improve the impact of these resources on student learning. SSWs provide support to students within designated spaces, classrooms and schools and are intentionally integrated into the life of schools to enable them to directly impact the educational experience of all ANS learners across Nova Scotia.



Student Support Workers provide support to staff, including, but not limited to, principals, teachers, and regional support staff, to nurture and inspire academic excellence. SSWs are trained in the Technology for Improving Education Network (TIENET) which enables the systematic collection of data on the role of the SSW program in nurturing the wellness and achievement of Black learners.

African Nova Scotian SSWs are cultural role models who have authentic relational contact with students and provide essential parental and community knowledge. In short, they “know students as they are known” at home and play an integral part in the educational programming and support services that our students receive daily.

The African Canadian Services Branch, within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, directly supports Regional Coordinators and the Student Support Worker Program with a shared vision supporting African Nova Scotian/Black learners as detailed in the *BLAC Report* and enhanced through the African Nova Scotian Education Framework (ANSED).

For more information, contact the African Canadian Services Branch at: (902) 424-3151 or (902) 233-0312.