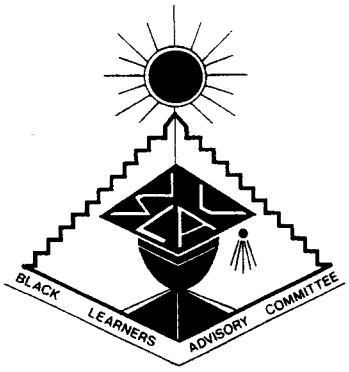
Volumes 1 to 3

BLAC Report on Education



Volume I

Summary

BLAC Report on Education

Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners

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Letter of Transmittal

December, 1994

Honourable John MacEachern
Minister of Education
Province of Nova Scotia
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Sir:

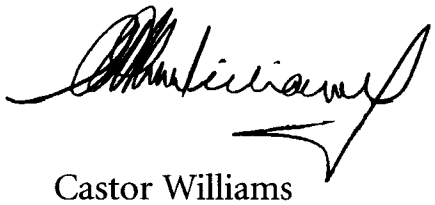
On behalf of the African Nova Scotian Community, I am pleased to present to you the Report of the Black Learners Advisory Committee on Education.

Redressing educational inequities and empowering Black learners requires the commitment and positive involvement of parents, community, governments, the education systems and the learners themselves.

This report puts forward our vision of a quality education for Black learners in Nova Scotia and advocates strong partnerships working towards that vision.

We look to your support and participation in this noble mission.

Respectfully submitted,



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Abbreviations and Terms

In the BLAC Report the terms Black, African Nova Scotian and African Canadian are used inter-changeably to refer to Nova Scotians of African descent previously called Negro, "Coloured," or Black.

ACEP	African Canadian Education Project
ALI	Afrocentric Learning Institute
AUBA	African United Baptist Association
BEA	Black Educators Association
BCC	Black Cultural Centre
BIF	Black Incentive Fund
BLAC	Black Learners Advisory Committee
BUF	Black United Front of Nova Scotia
CAYG	Cultural Awareness Youth Group
CBE	Council on Black Education
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
NSAACP	Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People
SCPP	Supervisory Career Path Program
TYP	Transitional Year Program (Dalhousie University)

Racism

Many people think of Racism as discriminatory acts or prejudicial attitudes towards an individual or a group of individuals because they are different in some way. Racism is more complex than that. It includes power. All races discriminate and all races may have some prejudice but not all races possess the power to carry out racist acts to the same extent. Racism includes the power to oppress a subordinate group that has fewer resources to resist the oppression.

Oppression

Oppression is achieved when the dominant group administers unequal treatment to the subordinate group. Inferior education, residential segregation and denial of employment are among the many unequal treatment to which subordinate groups are subjected.

Foreword

Reforming Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia Schooling by implementing the BLAC Report: an introduction.

In Canada over the period 1984-94 there has been a plethora of commissions and reports devoted to probing what each panel sees as key aspects of schooling within its province. When on the Pacific Coast in 1988, Barry Sullivan reported his finding in *A Legacy for Learners B.C.,* he identified three purposes to which his team was devoted:

- it listened in public hearing to what the people said about the school's role in the educational process;
- it used research studies to examine some fundamental and vexing issues relating to the provision of (B.C.) educational services;
- it attempted to develop and present a coherent understanding of the school's role in B.C. society today.

The present Ontario Commission on Learning still sitting in 1994 is seeking to listen to their communities, to utilize research studies for comparable purposes and to develop and present such understanding of their schools that will insist on more cultural groups. Nova Scotia has attended to its need for commissions and reports: this is evidenced by provincial investigations, school board inquiries, and studies by individual universities which must act quickly to breakdown barriers and provide a more inclusive education to the *new* and insistent multiracial pluralistic audiences.

A new card in the Nova Scotia deck is the emergence of a reforming Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC). The BLAC is providing a significant service to the province, to mainstream public and to the public institutions which had been fossilized into unrighteous and nonmoral traditions of service and patterns, highly neglectful of the needs and in particular of educational aspirations of Black people.

The BLAC has been doing for its constituency – namely the Blacks of Nova Scotia – what Sullivan was charged to do for B.C. in the 1980s and what the present Ontario Commission on Learning is seeking to do now for that beleaguered multiracial province.

The BLAC has used a series of research methods to inform itself again and the wider public too of what Black people there know by their ancestral memory: The province's schools (and other public sectors) underservice Black youth and have perpetuated the *underservice* with disastrous historical consequences. Fortunately for all of us the BLAC has gone further: in clear, quiet, but informed ways it sets out steps by which the public bodies must now seize this watershed moment to reform their structures and operations.

Bearing in mind that:

> *Social policy trends, like spring, come late to Canada. The current vogue for education reform – has been in fashion in other countries for a decade or more.*
>
> "The Revolution in British Schools," *Globe & Mail,* May 5, 1993.

It is then not early yet clearly opportune that the province of Nova Scotia listens to the BLAC's key request and intimations, and by updating what its public systems do, also heed what even the British Education Secretary, John Patten, gave as explanations of what a government must do:

> *The thoroughly modern role for a government that has learnt the lesson of the last half century... is to set educational targets, measure performance and supply money, while providing a light-touch framework within which local people can develop the sorts of schools that they feel they need.*
>
> GLOBE & MAIL, OP CIT

The arguing stirred by Patten's view in Britain and by his education bill and regulations since 1988 now see even left leaning premier Bob Rae finding value in some things within this penchant for controlled decentralization, a simpler sensible search for a new accountability within a new equity. Nova Scotia understands the need for this new equity.

The BLAC asks that:

- Black teachers be negotiated into the multi-racial schools;
- Black curricula appear in the new inclusive curriculum; and,
- an Afrocentric Learning Institute appear now on the institutional landscape as an autonomous plant making public delivery of materials that are rigorously co-built, professionally well managed, and also with some professional *Training, Co-evaluation* and *Co-planning* roles emerging with rigor.

The BLAC sees the need to build in better in-servicing of all professionals and will do this through *accredited partnerships.* As the Afrocentric Learning Institute draws on energies from its founding Black volunteer bodies, the neglected Black communities would come alive in a million ways: with its youth revitalized, and violence everywhere being replaced by regenerated purposefulness in all spheres.

Reformation in Nova Scotia is given an unmitigated boost, as the establishment of BLAC along the lines proposed within these pages gains momentum.

Vincent D'Oyley, Ph D
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Introduction by the Chair

This report examines and illustrates major issues that persist in the education environment of Nova Scotia. From the African Nova Scotian viewpoint, this report demonstrates vividly, the realities of the African Nova Scotian experience in a discordant education system that is devoid of any effective policies essential and sympathetic to their needs.

Clear deficiencies that exist include the shortage of policies affecting race relations at the Board and school levels; the need for school curriculum and policies to accommodate cultural diversity; the need to realign the relationship between the home and the school; the lack of any development of creative and resourceful programs for teachers' professional training, maturation and growth in a multicultural and multiracial society; a scarcity of Black role models in the systems, methods to respond to racial harassment and the assessment of students for placement; the lack of an effective process to evaluate text books for bias and the absence of materials to engender more positive attitudes in the African Nova Scotian student. Programs to ensure early childhood education and access to post secondary education are also in short supply.

The BLAC Report presents a holistic approach to the problems and concerns of parents of Black learners and students. For the first time, we feel that there is a real possibility for progress which is based upon the creativity and intelligence which Black Nova Scotians themselves are able to contribute to the solution of the problem. The report is based on evidence from the grass roots. It is not an academic article for the learned review. It reflects the deep feelings of African Nova Scotians at all levels about matters which closely touch their lives – the education of their children, their own education, their work, their careers, their life roles in Canadian Society. Consequently, where possible, the report directs solutions to the appropriate authorities.

The report further demonstrates that racial discrimination, overt or covert, systemic or otherwise, has played a major part in denying African Nova Scotians equal opportunity to education. This in turn has had disastrous consequences in employment and access to other services. As a result, most African Canadian children are from birth trapped in a vicious cycle of societal rejection and isolation, poverty, low expectations, and low educational achievement.

The question now is what has been the cost to the individual in terms of lost income, psychological damage, emotional pain, and the personal humiliation of racial discrimination? What has been the cost to the Black community in terms of employment and self-esteem? What has been the cost of generations of self-doubt?

While our report is the principal product of the BLAC study it is not the only result. The research project itself acted as a stimulus for public policy discussion in the many communities we visited, and brought to light points of view and insights not previously examined. Consequently, corrective action was being taken on some of these matters well before the publication of this report.

The establishment of education committees, the appointment of Regional Educators and the setting up of academic and cultural enrichment programs for African Canadian students are part of the effort. It is the Committee's firm belief that education is still the primary key to improving the self-concept, self-esteem, academic performance, and economic opportunities of the African Nova Scotian.

To break the cycle of failure and dependence, drastic measures must be taken to redress and address the inequities. Most educational reforms in Nova Scotia are focussed in the public schools. But racial discrimination manifests itself at all levels of eduction from pre-school to university to policy making. Combating racism, particularly systemic racism, needs to be considered as essential to educational strategies at all levels of education. This report provides an ideal opportunity to acknowledge and redress the oppression and discrimination which Black Nova Scotians have endured over the past two hundred years.

African Nova Scotians must begin to participate in the definition, design and development of social policy and social agendas beyond demands for simple racial inclusion and acceptance.

As a result, I want to emphasize that in the BLAC report we are seeking a partnership with government and other stakeholders in the education system to bring about constructive, creative and meaningful change. Furthermore, African Nova Scotians are aware of the customary resistance in the system, subtly or non-subtly, to the presentation of any constructive changes that affect their welfare.

Today, however, African Nova Scotians are saying loudly and clearly that the BLAC Report, in which they have participated fully and with which they are in full agreement, must not be a another cosmetic strategy on the part of government to calm the restlessness of two hundred years of unfulfilled expectations.

On the contrary, the awakened consciousness of the African Nova Scotian, as revealed in this report and the recent experiences such as the trauma of Cole Harbour High School, underscores the urgency that all stakeholders in education ought to adopt a mutually respectful and cooperative approach towards the education of the African Nova Scotian, as suggested and outlined in this report.

We have many criticism and concerns. We are also appreciative of government support of the work of the Black Learners Advisory Committee through the Ministers of Education over the last several years.

Finally, I want to thank all those involved in this exercise, the Committee members, the staff, community organizations, our partners in the education system and in particular the Black community. The community members who participated in the BLAC education conference, in the focus groups, and those who submitted briefs, were generous with their time, information and suggestions. The Committee members, although from different professional backgrounds were united, cogent and creative. Our administrative and research staff were persevering and productive.

It has been indeed a personal honour and privilege to serve throughout as your Chair and to assist in this historical endeavour. My gratitude goes to all of you.

Castor Williams
Chair, BLAC

Vision of Quality Education for Black Learners in Nova Scotia

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. In reading the BLAC report, the burdens and injustices experienced in the past and present are clear. It is also evident what actions must be taken "to right the wrong." For any and all of these efforts to be constructive, agreement must be established regarding the journey and destination of all the recommendations, goals, strategies and actions plans. "How we get there" and "how long it takes" will be the substance of on-going discussions among the various stakeholders. At this stage, the need for change is recognized and acknowledged by all stakeholders. A clear, well-articulated and well-understood vision of where efforts should be directed, by what means, and to what end must be agreed upon by all stakeholders... as quality education for Black learners in Nova Scotia will result in quality education for all learners.

Our vision is of an education system which is equitable, accessible, inclusive for all learners by the year 2001. Both academic and cultural excellence for African Nova Scotian students is a reality. Mastery of basic skills, and the total school environment, including the academic content, which reflects a sensitivity to African Nova Scotian students is evident in ways articulated by the BLAC report of 1994.

In the near future, we see a system where every child is challenged to achieve personal excellence; where race, class, age, financial resources, and gender are recognized and addressed every day as Nova Scotian educators prepare all learners for full participation in society and in their communities. Social and economic inequities are not allowed to deny equal opportunity for access to education.

In 2001, we have an education system which is capable and competent to work with each individual child in full recognition of their resources – social, intellectual, and physical. The system provides educational experiences that celebrate diversity; where every child is welcomed and valued by sensitive teachers trained in multicultural and anti-racist approaches; a system in which African Nova Scotian children find the educational environment conducive to the creative experience of learning. We see an education system which provides Black role models at all levels; as well as materials, resources and professional development to improve teacher effectiveness.

We envision a quality education system where parents and teachers are continually interacting and adjusting inside and outside the school environment to ensure the learner's best interests are considered in the pursuit of an excellent education. The African Nova Scotian community has shared in the building of this excellent educational experience for its learners through the Council on Black Education, through programs developed by the Afrocentric Learning Institute, and the community Education Committees. Together, we have created supportive, constructive ways to ensure mastery of "basic skills" in liberal, vocational, economic and political education.

We see Black community groups, the church and the education system working together to support the sense of identity of Black learners by fully acknowledging their African heritage. The Afrocentric Learning Institute, Education Committees, and the Regional Educators are co-ordinating cultural and academic enrichment programs for African Nova Scotian youth. We see the African United Baptist Association continuing to support the educational, moral and spiritual development and well-being of African Nova Scotians. We envision the teaching and learning materials used in the school system reflecting a multi-racial society that values the positive contributions of all its members. Quality education for African Nova Scotians means knowing ourselves and our condition. This definition means that cultural education is a priority that is equal in importance to all other priorities.

We envision an education system which recognizes and has high expectations of all members of its society to offer and do their best; a system which recognizes the value and the rewards it receives for developing the skills and talents of every citizen. In addition, we see the media joining us now as we embark on this very important journey and helping us spread the good news of the accomplishments and achievements of Black learners.

We see the education system working hand-in-hand with the economic sector to employ the resources and talents of every Nova Scotian in jobs, careers and professions that give them dignity and the opportunity to be productive and grow. Equal opportunity to access and master new technology is guaranteed in the schools. Our children have an understanding of how computers work and affect our lives. More educational opportunities are available to adult learners in Church Halls and Community Centres at flexible schedules. By the year 2001, high levels of employment have been achieved within the economic infrastructure of Nova Scotia. African Nova Scotians work side by side with all other Nova Scotians in all sectors to produce excellent products and services for a global marketplace.

By the year 2001, Nova Scotia's education system has become a model for other countries to consider as they struggle with racism, classism and religious intolerance within their systems and societies. Nova Scotia's strides were made through changes in policy and practices. In practice, the system invested equitably in all its citizens; opened its doors early to allow children to enter as the need demanded. With regard to legislation, the Nova Scotia government dedicated its resources to creating full citizenship for all Nova Scotians. A Council On Black Education is working diligently with the Department of Education and the Black community to ensure educational and cultural excellence for Black learners.

Summary of Recommendations

Participation of the Black community in decision-making, planning, and delivery of educational services.

Since our forced arrival in North America, African people have been in an almost constant posture of reacting to our state of powerlessness and dependence. At the same time, negative societal attitudes, perceptions and denigrating practices made economic and societal mobility extremely difficult, if not impossible. African Nova Scotians need to abandon this posture and adopt one of dynamic, assertive participation.

Prior to the appointment of the Black Learners Advisory Committee four years ago, there was no official avenue by which issues pertaining to Black education could be brought to the attention of Senior Management of the Department. As a result, the education of Black learners was marginalized.

At the present, the Department of Education offers three basic services in support of Black education (Black Incentive Fund, Literacy and Career Education). But this limited effort directed at addressing Black educational issues in Nova Scotia is undermined by meagre resources and the dispersed nature of the Black communities across the Province.

To ensure that Senior Management receive a focused presentation of Black education issues as well as include such issues on their agenda at an ongoing level, and to support the School Boards in Black education initiatives, a new structure is necessary.

There is also a need to monitor and continually analyze the policies of the Department of Education with respect to the needs of Black learners and educators; and to develop a partnership with senior education administrators to obtain a firm commitment to a multi-racial, anti-racist educational policy and strategies for change. Consequently, we recommend that:

The Minister of Education

1 Elevate the Black Learners Advisory Committee to a Council on African Canadian Education to monitor and continually analyze the policies of the Department of Education with respect to the needs of Black learners and educators; to develop a partnership with senior education administrators; and as a mechanism for enhancing the status and functions of the BLAC vis a vis local school boards and post-secondary educational institutions.

2a The Minister of Education establish a Branch in the Department to deal specifically with African Canadian Education.

2b The Minister of Education appoint to the staff of his Department an Executive Director – African Canadian Education, who would be a member of the Senior Management Committee of the Department of Education and who would have general responsibility for the direction and coordination of African Canadian education programs provided by the Department.

Cultural Education and Self-Esteem

African Canadian culture is often relegated to an inferior status by schools thus hiding our group's true historic struggle for survival, liberation and enhancement. On one hand, the suppression, destruction, distortion of a group's history and culture by others, and the surrender of one's own culture results in low self-esteem. On the other hand, ignorance and disrespect for African Canadian history and culture breed low expectations and unhealthy educator assessments of African Nova Scotian students, personalities and potential.

African Nova Scotian children must be given the opportunity to experience an appropriate cultural education which gives them an intimate knowledge of, and which honours and respects, the history and culture of Black people. As the National Alliance of Black School Educators aptly observed, "*Academic excellence cannot be reached without cultural excellence.*"

There is a need for a clearing house and resource centre (an Afrocentric Learning Institute) for the collection, display and dissemination of information on effective educational strategies and exemplary practices as they relate to Black students. Responsibilities of the Institute should include holding regular province-wide conferences; sponsoring appropriate research and publishing the results; offering professional development courses to public school, community college and university teachers and staff; professional development for parents; and networking efforts of all groups dedicated to improving Black student perfomance.

Lastly, there is need to monitor and evaluate performance of school boards and schools in implementing race relations policies and in the hiring and promotion of Black teachers.

Recommendation:

3 Establish an Afrocentric Learning Institute to assist in curriculum development and conduct ongoing research on issues impacting on Black learners in Nova Scotia.

Under-representation of Black Teachers and Administrators

There is an urgent need to increase the number of Black administrators, teachers, social workers and guidance counsellors at all levels of administration and support. This study found that Black teachers and administrators were under-represented by about 50 percent in relation to the percentage of Black students in the Nova Scotia public school system.

Black learners for generations have been met by schools and teachers who held little respect for their culture, race and communities. Often they have been met by outright hostility in the schools. The present generation of Black students is facing similar conditions – cultural barriers and systemic racism.

Hence, whether their thoughts are consciously articulated or left simmering, Black students want to know why all or most of the people in charge of their schools do not look, talk or walk like they do. They want to know why the teachers do not come from their communities, and why the curriculum provides little understanding of themselves and their history.

To redress the under-representation, provide role models and improve the quality of the learning enviroment for Black learners:

We recommend that the Minister of Education:

4 Make scholarships available immediately to assist 20 Black youth annually for the next 10 years to undertake teacher training to help redress the under-representation of Black teachers in the public education system.

We further recommend that School Boards:

5a Provide Black role models by seeking out and hiring Black teachers, guidance counsellors and administrators, and whenever necessary, implement an affirmative action program to achieve this objective.

5b Provide a support person in the school to whom Black learners can go to share their frustrations and experiences. Schools should respond to issues of loneliness, of feeling different from the majority.

Need for Multicultural/ Anti-Racism Policies

Ever since integration in 1954, the Black community has been attempting to "*catch up*" in education. There have been numerous organized efforts on the part of the Black community to change the educational system to meet the needs of the Black community of Nova Scotia. Change has been at a snail's pace mainly because there has been little effort on the part of the education system to address the central problem of institutionalized racism.

Without anti-racist educational policies and an understanding of institutionalized racism, educators act, consciously or unconsciously, in a racist manner and are unable to implement a system that is free of racism.

We believe that the Department of Education and the School Boards have an obligation to create a conducive learning environment for all students regardless of gender, race or colour. Therefore the Department should incorporate anti-racism principles as a key element of the philosophy of education. Furthemore, the:

The Department of Education Should:

6 Through the new Council on Black Education, establish a strong mechanism to monitor the implementation of Multiracial and Anti-Racism policies in the public schools, and implement an intervention process for non-conformance to the standards.

7a Communicate and enforce equity and anti-racist standards; and require all components of the education system, including school boards, to develop and implement anti-racism policies.

7b To facilitate the process, the Department should provide $50,000 to every School Board to ensure effective implementation or continuation of anti-racism initiatives.

8 Make cross-cultural and race relations training a mandatory component for all in-service and teacher training programs, including child care teacher training.

Learning/Teaching Materials

Learning materials used in the classroom should reflect our diverse society in a positive light. They should relate to the experiences of the students while aiding the extrapolation to a global perspective. They must also be useful in challenging inequality, injustice and racism in society.

Despite numerous reports it is accepted that school curriculum in School Boards across Nova Scotia does not adequately reflect the diversity of the Canadian population. In general, the presence of Blacks in Nova Scotia and Canada as a whole receives scant attention. Furthur, the little information which is available is often inaccurate and stereotypical.

The Department of Education Should:

9a Develop programs, resources and learning materials which accurately provide knowledge and understanding of Black people: our history, heritage, culture, traditions, and our contributions to society as an integral part of the curriculum and make them available to the schools.

9b Allocate sufficient funds for additional and appropriate staff to continue the revision of the curriculum at every level of education, so that it fully reflects the cultural diversity of Nova Scotia. Examine existing texts and learning materials and either discard or suitably amend any that distort or mis-represent the past or the present role of any group of people within the province.

10 Establish student assessment and testing instruments and practices that recognize racial, cultural and gender diversity.

11 Provide quality preschool educational opportunities such as Four-Plus for all African Canadian children. Priority should be given to children in rural areas and the inner city. Early intervention support strategies which have had success elsewhere should be evaluated to consider those appropriate for use in Nova Scotia.

Access to Higher Education and Financial Support

In higher education, the quest of African Nova Scotians for equal educational opportunities is impeded by socio-economic inequities and the absence of adequate provision for compensatory assistance. Escalating tuition costs, reduction in financial assistance and cutbacks in academic support and counselling services have the combined effect of hitting the weakest the hardest and penalizing African Nova Scotians.

The problem of equal access is particularly acute in those professional schools which serve as virtually the sole avenue of entry into such professions as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, computer science and engineering. Admission policies and procedures control access to positions of influence and high economic and social reward. Admission policies exert a powerful and often a controlling influence on who may enter certain critical occupations and practice certain professions. The fact that Nova Scotia has produced less than five Black Nova Scotian medical doctors is a clear testimony to the problem of access and affordability.

The higher education experience is both rewarding and expensive. Black students confront formidable and often insurmountable social, economic and academic challenges in their pursuit of a university degree. To lower the barriers, we recommend:

The Nova Scotia Government Should:

12a Provide scholarships and financial assistance to Black learners in recognition of achievement and need. Extend the Incentive Fund to cover all Black students in post-secondary institutions, and increase the amount to match the escalating university fees.

12b Provide scholarships for Black students who wish to enter professional programs from which Blacks have been traditionally excluded such as medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, computer science and engineering.

Mobilization and Training Parents for Advocacy

Educators must develop a model of parent education and advocacy which empowers both the parent and the student. The main objective of the model should be developing the parents' confidence in providing home education support to their children and to talk with teachers and administrators about educational matters.

Parents of Black learners need to understand how the education system works for them to be able to participate. Parents who have traditionally felt alienated need training and mobilizing before they can be effective participants in the suggested school reforms. Without such training, most Black parents will not participate in the School Councils for example, which are being introduced. The Regional Educators Program introduced by the BLAC is key in this training and mobilization.

Among their duties, Regional Educators serve as liaison between parents and teachers, and they are devoted to social knitting - that is to say, rebonding, reconstructing and restructuring relationships, partnerships and collaboration between and among teachers and parents, students and teachers. Regional Educators not only stand as the parents' representative at school, they also arrange for instruction or professional development of parents in a variety of ways. We must find ways to mobilize, activate and involve Black parents in the education system. Parents are crucial partners.

Additionally, it is less costly and more productive in terms of money and human suffering to provide supplementary instruction (in math, language arts) during the years of schooling than to attempt corrective action or provide welfare payments later. It is also futile to try to make distinctions between what the education system and parents should do while the students fail.

The Nova Scotia Government Should:

13a Continue to support the Regional Educators Program as part of the community outreach to encourage parental involvement in the education process.

13b Financially support an education program which will educate parents of Black learners on how the school system works and equip parents with the skills to help their children at the various stages of development.

14a The Department of Education in partnership with the BLAC and BEA develop a plan to set up learning centers in the communities to provide academic (reading and math) and cultural enrichment programs for Black students after school and/or on Saturday mornings.

14b That the Minister recommend for consideration in the 1995-96 budget estimates, the funds necessary to begin implementation of the plan in September 1995 and to enable communities which currently have such programs to continue. The Minister should explore financial assistance from other levels of government for these projects.

Teacher Education and Professional Development

At the present time, most teachers, school administrators and staff cannot be expected to contribute fully to African Canadian academic and cultural excellence in the absence of systematic training, both in appropriate teaching strategies and in African Canadian history and culture. In general, educators at all levels are unprepared by training or by experience to do what needs to be done because more often than not, they are unfamiliar with essential culturally relevant academic subject matter.

As well, course syllabi, bibliographies, and reading lists are often devoid of material on racism, African Canadian history and culture, and the education successes of those teachers who have overcome barriers and disadvantage which limit educational opportunities of Black learners.

The need to re-orient the attitudes of teachers has led us to believe that changes in teacher training offer the best hope of significant change in the schools and of breaking the vicious cycle of self-fulling prophencies for Black learners.

Teacher Training Institutions Should:

15a Incorporate anti-racism principles as a key element of the philosophy of education and reflect these principles in major institutional documents such as the University Act, Calendars and all curriculum and course guides.

15b Sponsor cross-cultural and anti-racism training programs or workshops for their faculty and staff. These workshops should focus on raising the level of consciousness of racism in society and how it is perpetuated in the education system.

15c Develop detailed guidelines for the evaluation of teaching/learning materials and resources for any forms of bias: gender, cultural or racial.

The Schools and School Boards Should:

16 Provide race relations, and cross-cultural sensitivity training to all teachers, staff, administrators and school board members; and ensure that all principal teachers and others responsible for leading and advising teachers, understand the principles of Anti-racism Education.

School Discipline

Poor discipline in Nova Scotia schools has become a major concern over the past five years. During this study, discussions about discipline within the school and outside school were often heated. Issues of fairness, outdated rules and parental roles surfaced repeatedly. It was also recognized that "*acting up*" and "*playing class clown*" are coping mechanisms for students experiencing academic difficulties or discouragement and alienation.

The school is a community of people – students, teachers, administrators, staff and parents. Like any other community, the school must have rules and regulations so that it can conduct its affairs with tranquility and justice. The mature exercise of rights and responsibilities demands that adults and young people alike respect the rights of others and respect rational authority.

Educators and parents tend to have false conceptions of what causes undisciplined behavior, and thus, do the wrong things with the best intentions. Teaching alternate behaviour rather than simply punishing bad behavior should be the focus of the discipline process. Discipline should be predicated on the premise that a school is a place for learning and that discipline, in a constructive sense, provides educators with an opportunity to help students to change their behavior toward more positive ends.

Schools and School Boards Should:

17 Collaborate with communities in resolving disciplinary problems. Create opportunities for parents, teachers and students to meet in communities to develop trusting relationships.

Low Teacher Expectations and Insensitivity

Low teacher expectations is one of the greatest barriers Black learners in Nova Scotia and North America as a whole face. There is also a strong feeling among parents and Black students that the education system is insensitive and unsympathetic to the needs of Black students.

As well, many teachers, because of lack of relevant training in Black history, race relations and cross-cultural understanding, have little appreciation of the enormous challenges Black learners face on a daily basis. Consequently, teachers and school administrators tend to view and treat all students the *same*. But same does not mean fair.

To educate Black learners successfully, teachers must develop a sense of responsibility to becoming sensitive to their students' emotional, psychological, and physical needs. In addition, teachers must hold similar expectations for all their students and provide Black students and their parents with positive feedback and reinforcement.

Teachers Should:

18 Ensure that academic expectations are communicated and reinforced regularly (to students and parents). Recognize, praise and reward the students' efforts and achievements.

19 Watch the progress of Black children as early as grade primary, and focus on helping every child master the basic skills in reading and mathematics.

Agencies Responsible for Adult Education and Upgrading Should:

20a Link upgrading and job skills training to employment by targeting jobs. Make the job re-entry programs more effective and relevant by incorporating work placement with prospective employers for at least a year. Offer colleges and university extension courses in the community.

20b Establish adult literacy (0-6) programs in Black communities. These programs must be community-based, community-owned and run by the communities. Develop a Black Provincial Literacy Network.

20c Most learners who enroll in upgrading programs want to obtain their GED. However, 16 weeks is not sufficient to bring learners to this level. Therefore extend the time frames at the Learning Centres to meet the needs of learners.

20d Human Resources Development Canada should provide increased allowances for people in training, retraining and upgrading programs to a level adequate to cover essential living expenses for trainees and their families. It is essential that single parents in training programs receive adequate day care support to care for their children.

21a Community College campuses should make every effort to recruit in the African Nova Scotian communities, and develop better communication with the African Nova Scotian communities.

21b Set up support systems on the Community College campuses to help with the transition and retention of African Nova Scotian students.

21c Develop and implement race relations policies for the whole Community College system.

22a To increase access to the apprenticeship program for African Nova Scotians, better coordination between the Community College placement offices and the Apprenticeship division must be developed. Also make the restrictive grade requirements for apprenticeship more flexible and take experience into consideration.

22b Provide scholarships for apprentices and technical trainees the same way scholarships are awarded for other post-secondary fields of education.

Community and Parent Involvement

Parents of Black learners, like all parents, have a direct stake in the quality of public education. Yet for a variety of reasons, schools have been unable to involve them in school activities. Facilitating parent involvement is crucial for Black students, the majority of whom are "*at risk*" of being pushed out or dropping out.

Through community-based Education Committees, we can work to overcome barriers which separate school personnel and parents of Black learners, to build bridges between these two key players based on mutual respect and cooperation, and to encourage parents to become advocates in the schools and at the school board level.

The African Canadian community must take the initiative in restructuring the basis for the educational messages and values which subconsciously as well as consciously shape the self-esteem and achievements of all African Canadian children in the education system. The community must send a clear message to the children and Black youth that education is a priority for the community. This can be done through greater involvement with the education system and through community events that combine entertainment, motivation and education.

However, even in the best of circumstances, public schools can only provide a part of what is needed for the education of African Canadian children. The most important cultural and historical education must be provided by the independent efforts of the Black communities. There is need for independent African Canadian educational and cultural centres in every sizeable Black community in Nova Scotia.

Parents Should:

23 Become active participants in the education of their children. They should participate in training to become effective advocates for their children by learning how the education system. Parents should ensure that their children are in school daily; prepared to learn and will abide by school rules and regulations.

24 Find educational assistance, enroll the child in supplementary educational programs; participate in school activities. Provide rewards and recognition to students who excel academically.

25 Develop alternative discipline measures to help the children understand the choices they are making and the consequences of those choices. Develop appropriate discipline for the unacceptable behaviours.

The Black Community Should:

26 Establish Heritage Schools for African Canadian children. Implement the Saturday School model developed by the African Canadian Education Project (ACEP).

27 Set up an African Canadian Education Foundation with a charitable status to solicit corporate funding for the education initiatives in partnership with the Nova Scotia Government.

Support for Youth Organizations and Programs

The small numbers of Black students in most schools and classrooms, combined with the insensitivity of some teachers and students maginifies the sense of isolation and makes school life difficult for African Canadian students. During the community consultation process, it was felt that there was a need for an open organization for African youth to meet and discuss problems and issues of particular interest to them.

African Nova Scotian youth, especially those outside metro Halifax, felt that no meaningful mechanism existed for them to consider the difficulties and alternative solutions to their problems.

Black Organizations Should:

28 Provide programs for youth to build self-esteem and awareness of life choices. Enhance the work of groups such as the Cultural Awareness Youth Group. Focus on preventing teenage pregnancy, and educate youth on the pitfalls of teen parenthood.

29 Establish effective networking among all Black communities; and start a political skills training program to increase leadership with diplomatic and negotiating skills to work with school boards, agencies and governments.

It is further recommended that:

30a The implementation of this report begin in the 1995-1996 financial year and that the content of each recommendation be in place no later than June 1999; and that,

30b The Minister of Education make an annual report to the House regarding actions taken and planned in response to the recommendations of this report and recommend further action if necessary.

Action Plans

Recommendation I

The Minister of Education should devise a mechanism for enhancing the status and functions of the BLAC vis-a-vis the government, local school boards and community organizations. (Elevate the BLAC to a Council on Black Education).

Action Plan

- The Minister of Education (Policy Branch) in consultation with BLAC should draft legislation for the creation of a legislated body to be known as the Council on Black Education with the mandate to ensure quality education for Black learners in Nova Scotia by June, 1995.
- The Government should pass legislation establishing the Council on Black Education by December, 1995.
- The Minister of Education should officially appoint the members to the Council on Black Education by March, 1996.
- The Council on Black Education holds its first session by May, 1996.

Recommendation I

Strategy	Target Date	Accountable Stakeholders	Funding Sources
The BLAC will present a proposal on the Council to the Minister of Education by tabling the BLAC report.	December 1994	• Minister • BLAC	Department of Education
Minister of Education responds to proposal.	February 1995	• Minister	
Representatives of the BLAC and the Policy Branch will meet to draft legislation.	March 1995	• Minister • BLAC	
The BLAC passes over its responsibilities and assets to the Council on Black Education. This transition would include passing the Regional Educators Program to the Black Educators Association for an interim period during 1996-97.	April 1996	• Minister • BLAC	Department of Education

Recommendation 2

- Establish a Branch in the Department to deal specifically with African Canadian programs.
- Appoint an Executive Director of Black Education Programs to the staff of this newly formed Branch, who would be a member of the Senior Management Committee of the Department of Education. This Executive Director would be responsible for the direction and coordination of the African Canadian Education Programs provided by the Department.

Action Plan

- The Minister of Education and the Black Learners Advisory Committee will meet to set up an implementation process and team for the new Branch by June, 1995. This newly designated Implementation Team will be comprised of representatives from the BLAC (and from appropriate divisions within the Department).
- The Implementation Team will meet to lay out the terms of reference for the Branch including key responsibilities, job descriptions and appropriate resource requirements for the Branch by January, 1996.
- The Minister of Education and the newly created Council on Black Education will initiate the search for the Executive Director for the Branch by June, 1996.
- The Branch will commence operation by September, 1996.

Recommendation 2

Strategy	Target Date	Accountable Stakeholders	Funding Sources
Consolidate the resources within the Department of Education already designated for Black Learners, e.g. Incentive Fund, Literacy Facilitator, Race Relations & Black Education Consultant, BLAC staff & resources, and Black Studies with the Community Colleges	December 1996	• Minister of Education • BLAC • Advisory Committee for BIF • BEA	Department of Education
Initiate discussions with the Research Division of the Department to assess information requirements regarding Black learners.	December 1996		

Recommendation 3

The Minister of Education will support the establishment of an Afrocentric Learning Institute to assist in curriculum development and conduct on-going research on issues impacting Black learners in Nova Scotia.

Action Plan

- The Minister of Education will commit sufficient resources by October, 1995 for the development of the Afrocentric Learning Institute.
- Black Learners Advisory Committee, will initiate discussion with the BEA, ACEP, Black Cultural Centre, African United Baptist Association by December, 1994 to develop a detailed proposal for the structure and resources necessary to the Afrocentric Learning Institute (ALI).
- Enhance and expand the academic cultural enrichment programs such as the tutoring, mini university, math camp, CAYG, and daycare centres. (ongoing)
- The Afrocentric Learning Institute will commence operation by January, 1998.

Setting the Stage

Among other things, excellence in education must prepare a student for self-knowledge and to become a contributing problem-solving member of his or her own community and in the wider world as well. No child can be ignorant of or lack respect for his or her own unique cultural group and meet others in the world on an equal footing.[1]

Rationale for the Study

Ever since the establishment of the public school system in Nova Scotia, there have been numerous organized efforts on the part of the Black community to change the education system to meet the needs of Black Nova Scotians. Despite these efforts, change has not occurred. Part of the problem has been the reluctance and failure of the government to acknowledge and combat direct and institutional discrimination and racism in the education system.[2]

In undertaking the research project, the BLAC hoped to document the educational experiences of Black Nova Scotians, to identify the issues impacting on the education of Black Nova Scotians, and to assess the learning needs of the Black community. From this understanding of the past and present situation of the Black learner, the BLAC would formulate and recommend solutions to the educational crisis facing the Black community.

Prior to the BLAC undertaking, there had been numerous studies of the situation faced by Black students in the province, but each one of these studies was issue-specific or concentrated on a particular region or community. There was no comprehensive, provincial analysis. None of the studies had examined the education of African Nova Scotians from a holistic perspective. None had a broad data base from which a learning needs assessment could be made. The BLAC study hoped to fill that void.

Outline of the Report

The overall report, *The BLAC Report On Education* consists of three volumes.

Volume 1 is made up of a brief introduction to the report and sets the study in context. It contains the major recommendations, a summary of findings, and the recommended plan of action.

Volume 2 consists of three sections. The first provides an historical overview of the experiences of Black Nova Scotians with the education system and the Black community's persistence in the struggle to gain access to quality education for their children. The second section contains four case studies, two of which illustrate the various strategies applied by two distinct communities in their struggle to achieve quality education. The remaining two case studies provide an assessments of two programs which have served as "a ramp to the playing field" as well as an acknowledgement by the system of the inequality of educational opportunities for Black learners. The third section of Volume 2 provides an analysis of experiences of Black learners elsewhere in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. What educational issues have they had to contend with and what strategies have they adapted? What have been the results? Important lessons can be learned from these experiences and have been helpful in the development of the action plan advanced in this report.

Volume 3 consists of two sections. The first section brings to life the reality faced by Black learners and is drawn from interviews held throughout Nova Scotia's Black community including parents, students, and Black educators. The people who lived the experience describe it in their own words. The section is supplemented by contributions from a number of White teachers and school administrators. The second section presents the results of the socio-demographic survey conducted by the BLAC and data from the 1991 Census of Canada which illustrate and reinforce the statements made during the community consultations. The analysis explores such issues as whether more Black students than Whites drop out before high school graduation, and if so, at what rate. It provides detailed results of the socio-demographic survey and explains what it all means.

The Black Learners Advisory Committee

The Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) and all African Nova Scotians share the vision of a Nova Scotia, a Canada, in which all people, regardless of race, language, gender or economic status, live with pride and dignity; and enjoy fully and equally all opportunities for education, employment, recognition, and self-fulfilment. Regrettably, for many African Nova Scotians, this vision still appears distant. Discrimination in such areas as educational opportunities, employment, legal justice and social acceptance is still common. The education system alone cannot be expected to eliminate discrimination and prejudice from our society. Nevertheless, with its unique role in shaping the attitudes of Canada's future leaders, the education system can make a significant contribution in both combating racism in particular, and discrimination in general.

Statement of Concern

When the Black Learners Advisory Committee was formed nearly four years ago, it assumed the challenge to help resolve a deep rooted problem that has existed for almost two centuries: unequal access to quality education. The BLAC seeks to provide greater access for Black Nova Scotians to share in the planning, operation and full benefits of the education system. From offices across the province, the BLAC has been working in partnership with the parents, students, teachers, school boards, Black community organizations, the Department of Education and others to develop a comprehensive approach to improve educational opportunities for Black learners in Nova Scotia.

Working through the Minister of Education and with financial support of the Nova Scotia Department of Education, the BLAC's mandate is to:

- Advise the government, through the Minister of Education, on the development and implementation of policy for all levels of education;
- develop systems, statistics and relevant research to determine the effectiveness of educational services and programs for Black learners;
- review and comment on issues as they affect accessibility and quality of education for Black learners at all levels;
- liaise with the Black communities, organizations and appropriate provincial and federal government departments regarding education and the training process; and,
- undertake specific projects and tasks in keeping with its overall terms of reference.

The BLAC is composed of twelve members with diverse backgrounds drawn from the Black community. These members have been the driving force in providing direction for the accomplishments of the BLAC to date.

Research

Research has been a major component of the work done by the BLAC in meeting its mandate to provide the government with a comprehensive picture of the past and present conditions of Black learners, and a strategic plan to ameliorate the inequalities between Black Nova Scotians and other Nova Scotians. This three volume report presents a summary of findings, and a series of recommendations based on an historical review of Black education in the province, case studies, a socio-demographic survey and an examination of experiences elsewhere. Through ongoing research, the BLAC will monitor the implementation of the recommended changes as well as continue in its role of reviewing programs and developing further recommendations.

Regional Educators

The Black Learners Advisory Committee has established seven Regional Educators who work across 22 school boards, and in all Black communities across the province. Their role is to act as full-time facilitators for educational community development, conduct research on the past and present conditions of education of Black learners, and work with educational institutions for positive change. In particular, the Regional Educators are responsible for:

- Advocating on behalf of parents and students in the public education system;
- establishing a network of parent and student support groups or Education Committees to increase the community's support for student achievement;
- assisting Black learners access educational resources, programs and other services offered by government and volunteer agencies;
- conducting workshops and community training for parents and students on educational issues;
- helping educational institutions with the development of policies to assist in the elimination of institutional barriers to the educational achievements of Black learners;
- monitoring the policies, practices, and programs of the Nova Scotia public education system to help ensure equal educational opportunities for Black learners; and,
- liaising with community groups, organizations and representing the BLAC on different committees and Boards.

Education Committees

Through the Regional Educators, the BLAC has facilitated the establishment of 25 education committees across Nova Scotia. These committees are composed of concerned parents and members of the community who want to play an active role in the education of African Nova Scotian children. Some areas of involvement include:

- Advising the BLAC, through the participatory research process, of the educational needs of their respective communities;
- setting up community workshops for parents and students;
- serving on school board special committees and helping with the development of school policies;
- developing academic support and enrichment programs for students;
- setting up course selection and career nights for students in the community; and,
- inviting role models to speak on Black culture, self-esteem, and self identity.

The committees, with the assistance of the Regional Educators have provided cultural and educational enrichment through hosting of over 200 events within the Black communities.

The BLAC hopes that through the Education Committees, parents of Black learners will have their input listened to and respected. As well, parents should be seen as key resources working not only to improve their own children's education but the schooling of all children. The BLAC believes that organized into groups, parents of Black learners can advocate for children and can educate educators. Therefore, the BLAC views the Education Committees as a vehicle for empowering communities by enabling them to learn how the education system works and encouraging them to become more involved in the educational process.

Community Visitations

From the very start, the BLAC committed itself to consult extensively with the people who would be directly or indirectly affected by its work. As a result of this decision, the BLAC members and staff have visited and consulted various Black communities in teams of two's and three's. They have conducted information sessions and received input from community members about the education of Black learners. These visitations have been very educational and useful in exposing the members to the different needs of the communities scattered across the province.

In March 1993, as part of community consultation, the BLAC planned and hosted a successful provincial conference on education. The conference entitled *Education: Our Passport to the Future* was attended by about 350 people from across the province. The conference also provided an opportunity for province-wide participation in identifying the educational issues affecting Black learners and recommending solutions. The feedback from these sessions has either been acted upon by the BLAC or incorporated into the research reports as recommendations.

Other Accomplishments

Over the past four years, the BLAC staff have been deeply involved with the school system. Through the Regional Educators, we have helped school boards with developing race relations policies. Through teacher in-service and classroom presentations focussing on race relations and Black History, we have been able to reach 320 of the 480 schools in the province. We have in-serviced 650 school and school board administrators, and addressed over 5,000 of the province's 11,000 teachers. As well, we have addressed 90,000 of the provinces estimated 167,000 students.

The BLAC staff have responded to about 550 individual incidents, numerous requests for information, and made about 240 community presentations.

In addition, the BLAC staff have frequently commented on educational issues through written submissions to bodies such as Saint Mary's University Faculty of Education Self Study and Evaluation Program, and the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education.

Context

Black Nova Scotians, like other Black Canadians, are victimized by a racist ideology and a racist social structure. Racism permeates the entire social, economic, political and cultural environment of Nova Scotian and Canada. The situation was clearly articulated by the *Donald Marshall Report* when it stated that "*Blacks have had to bear almost unbearable burdens*". That report further noted that "*the segregation of many Black children in all-Black schools until the mid-1960s was one prime example of the special burden, the burden of White prejudice, discrimination and oppression that Blacks have endured.*"

During the BLAC research, we encountered widespread condemnation of the education system as *biased, insensitive* and *racist.* Systemic racism was seen as manifested in student assessment and placement; in labelling of large numbers of Black students as slow learners or having behaviour problems; in streaming; in low teacher expectations; in denigration by and exclusion of Blacks from the curriculum; and in the total lack of responsiveness to the needs of Black learners and concerns of the Black community.

A number of important recent studies have documented the existence of discrimination in modern Canadian society (*Hill* 1981; *Head* 1985; *Pachai* 1987; *Stephen Lewis Report* 1992; *The Graham Report* 1984; *The Report of the Nova Scotia Advisory Committee on Race Relations* 1991; *The Donald Marshal Report* 1986. Studies by Parliamentary Committees of the Federal Government *Equality Now* 1984; *Equality for All* 1985; the *Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment* (The Abella Report, 1985), have also documented the existence of widespread discrimination against Blacks and other visible minorities in Canada. In all these studies, there was general agreement that Blacks face prejudice and discrimination in social, economic and political institutions, as well as in the education system.

The BLAC report builds on the above studies, starting with the premise that institutions are affected by the society's ideologies and practices. Because racism exists in Canadian society, racism also exists in the schools. The crucial point to remember is that racism is not simply a matter of individual or group prejudice. Racism is built into the very structure and institutions of society so that the subordination of minority groups is maintained.

The BLAC report focuses on how racism is manifested in the education system and how it has impacted on Black learners and the Black community. It is hoped that the report will lead to a greater understanding and awareness of the greatest barrier faced by Black learners in the Nova Scotia education system – institutional racism. It is also hoped that this greater awareness will in turn lead to a commitment to removing these barriers.

Key Indicators

The data obtained from the BLAC survey, together with the 1991 Canada Census results, provides a striking portrayal of the Black community in Nova Scotia. The results for key socio-demographic variables – education, employment, occupation, and income – consistently indicate that compared with the average Nova Scotian, African Nova Scotians are severely disadvantaged in all areas. This disparity cuts across age groups and can only be explained by one factor – that of systemic or institutionalized racism.

The study clearly demonstrates that the education system does not respond to the needs of Black students and by extrapolation to the needs of Black communities. Black students do not receive the basic education to prepare them for higher education particularly in science and technology.

- According to the 1991 Census, only a small proportion of the Black population had achieved post-secondary education. The results show that less than 2 percent of the 65 year old and older Black population had completed high school while 8 percent of the non-Black population in this same age group have graduated from high school.

- The drop-out data indicate that the gap in educational attainment between the Black and the average Nova Scotian is growing, not declining. For persons over the age 60, the level of educational disparity between Black Nova Scotians and the average Nova Scotian is 29 percent. But for younger people, the gap is 44 percent. While drop-out rates may be declining, the education system is failing Black Nova Scotians, who are not experiencing the same improvements as the average Nova Scotian.
- The BLAC recently obtained suspension data for Halifax City School Board for the academic years 1987-1992. The results on suspensions indicate that Black learners accounted for 16 percent to 21 percent of all suspensions in Halifax. This rate is more than double the 8 percent share of the Black learners in the Halifax school system. The clear conclusion is that Black learners are more likely to be suspended than other students.
- As well, the study clearly indicates that Black Nova Scotians had a much higher level of unemployment than the general population. The BLAC survey found that more than 35 percent of Black adults interviewed were unemployed. In contrast, Statistics Canada surveys estimated the overall Nova Scotia unemployment rate at 15.8 percent at the time, less than half that of the Black community.
- Unemployment rates among the younger age group are more appalling. For Black Nova Scotians 20-29 years of age, unemployment averages around 45 percent. For those 30-39 years of age, unemployment is as high as 30 percent.
- In addition, Black Nova Scotians are highly concentrated in low skill, low pay occupations, according to 1991 Census data. Our analysis found that Black Nova Scotians are under-represented in managerial, teaching and technology related occupations, but over-represented in the service, clerical and construction occupations.
- Recently published data by the Nova Scotia Department of Human Resources confirm our findings. The data show that of the 11,717 people employed by the the Nova Scotia Civil Service, just 200 are Black. And while 20.9 percent of all civil sevants earned less than $25,000, 37.5 percent of Black civil servants were below that level. The concentration of Blacks on the bottom rungs is further illustrated by the fact that 58.5 percent of Blacks made less than $30,000 compared to 38.7 of all the civil servants. ("Civil Service Closed Shop to Minorities," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, September 8, 1994).
- Similarly, the results suggest that Black Nova Scotians have far lower incomes than the average Nova Scotian resident. Income data for the entire Nova Scotia population are in very strong contrast to the incomes of the Black Nova Scotian population. The average 1992 family income in Nova Scotia was estimated at $46,870, with an average family size of 3.2 persons. Our estimate for the 1992 average Black family income, based on the information provided in the BLAC survey is $20,500, less than half that of the average Nova Scotian family. Statistics Canada estimates that the poverty line for a family of four is an annual income of $30,460. Clearly, an overwhelming majority of Black families are subsisting at incomes far below the poverty line.

The cycle of poverty and dependence established as a result of these low incomes has important and long lasting implications for the educational needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. Children from homes where incomes are marginal are known to more likely have problems related to their health, nutrition and overall well-being that in turn affect their educational performance.

Low incomes limit the ability of families to acquire the best possible education for their children, and access to post-secondary education is difficult, if not impossible. While education alone is not a guarantee for success, the lack of educational credentials is an enormous constraint and a barrier to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Black Nova Scotians have been consistently and systematically denied equal opportunities in education and employment and as a result, they are struggling in terms of education, employment and income. The entire set of survey and Census results are therefore indicators of the larger problems arising from systemic racism. Discrimination affects the Black learner in different ways and at different levels but the long term results, presented throughout the report, reflect the failure of society and the inability of the educational system to address the needs of the Black student. The ultimate result is the failure of people to reach their potential and to use that potential for the benefit of society.

The results of the socio-demographic survey reinforce the findings of other components of the research such as the History, the Case Studies and the Participatory Action research. A clear message from the study is that the Black learner has often felt alienated and out of place within the provincial educational system.

Analysis

Factors Contributing to the Failure of the System

It is possible to attribute lower average incomes, chronically high unemployment, and the kinds of work performed to the lower educational achievements of African Nova Scotians. A review of all the available studies and data clearly shows wide disparities in education between Black and White Nova Scotians. The question is why is educational attainment in the Black community so much lower than the Nova Scotia average, given the commitment of the Black community to the importance of education?

In 1993, the BLAC members were asked to analyze the summary of information gathered in the community consultations. In sorting this information, three major categories emerged related to the situation facing Black learners in Nova Scotia today. These three categories were identified as:

- institutional and systemic barriers;
- socio-economic factors; and,
- negative perceptions affecting Black learners.

In analyzing the relationships among these three major categories, the institutional and systemic barriers were identified as the *causal factors*. If efforts are made to change and/or correct these, it is felt that the situation for Black learners would improve. It is also felt that addressing the institutional systemic barriers will have an effect on the other two major categories. The socio-economic factors were identified as a *contributing factor* to the Black learners' situation and it is thought that addressing these would "help" but not eliminate the problems experienced by Black learners. The negative perception of Black learners was identified as *a symptom* of the larger problem and one which attracted much media attention. By addressing this group of factors, it is felt that no meaningful change would occur in the situation facing Black Nova Scotians.

The interrelationships between systemic racism in the education system, school failure or underachievement and the economic and social marginalization are illustrated in the diagram on the following page.

Discrimination against Black Nova Scotians, Aboriginals, other racial minorities, women and the poor has been part of the Nova Scotia education system for centuries. While open acts of discrimination are increasingly rare, systemic discrimination is still widespread. Racism is deeply embedded in all structures of the education system. Each school or educational institution in itself is a microcosm of the larger society. Therefore the people who staff and administer schools cannot be assumed to be fundamentally different from those in society around them.

A closer examination of the varied aspects of the school should enlighten the reader of how the system has failed, and continues to fail, to provide equal opportunities to all Nova Scotians.

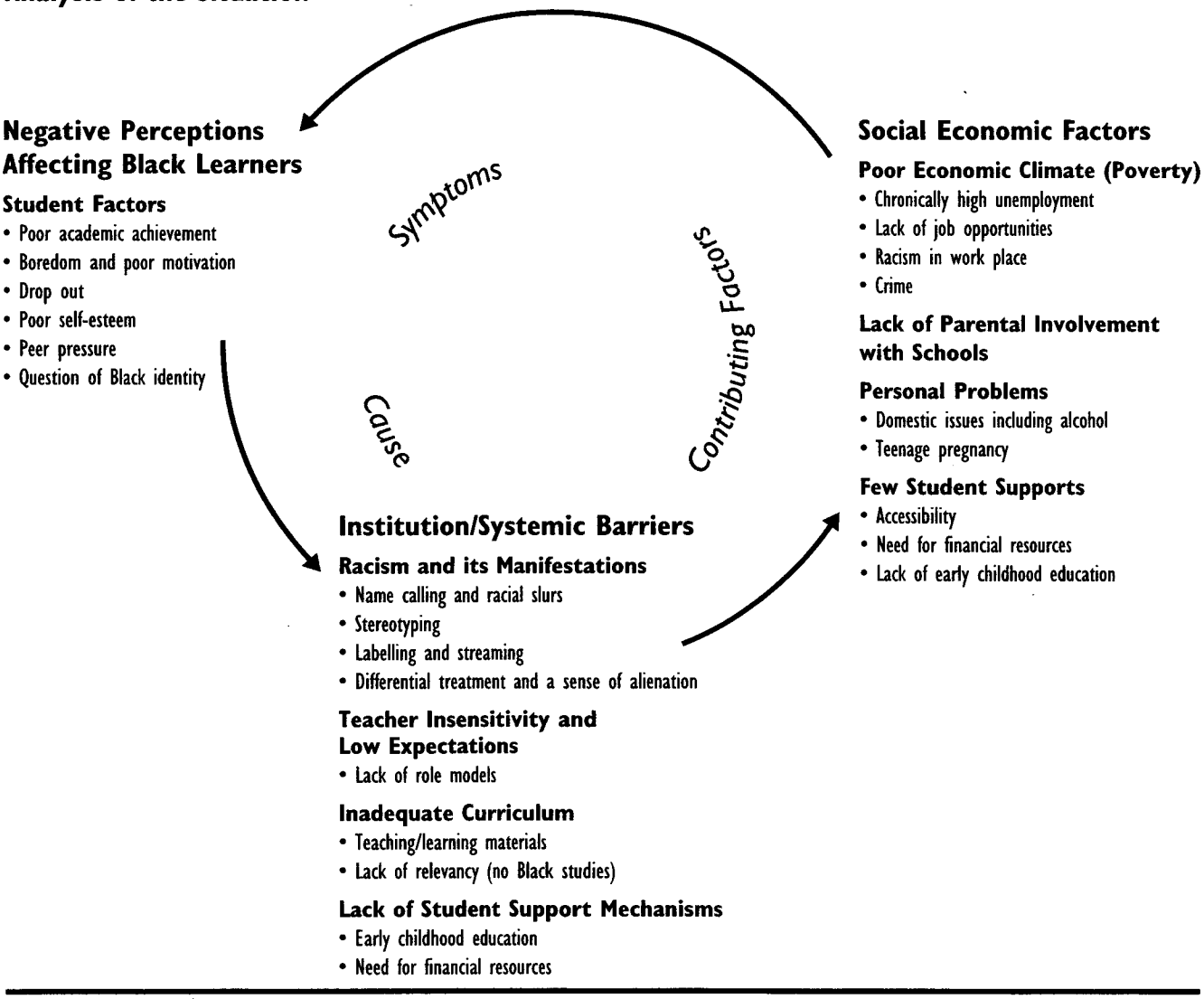
Curriculum

Curriculum refers to the total educational activity, including goals, programs, objectives, methods, patterns of organization, of instruction, and of learning, and materials and resources used. In order to be productive members of society, students must be taught certain social and cultural values and skills aside from purely academic subjects.

For almost two centuries, Black communities have demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the content, context and teaching styles of the curriculum of the public school system by actions ranging from the numerous petitions to logging class action complaints with the Human Rights Commission. Parents and students have questioned the absence of a curriculum that is culturally relevant or reflective of their experiences. The impact of the exclusion from the curriculum on Black learners has been analyzed by numerous educators and summed up by Professor Molefi Asante thus:

> *Lacking reinforcement in their own historical experiences, they become psychologically crippled, hobbling along in the margins of the European experiences of most of the curriculum.*[3]

Analysis of the Situation



Schools reinforce feelings of limited self-worth and cultural isolation by ignoring the historical contributions of African Canadians or devaluing their culture. The absence of Black history and its impact on African Nova Scotian children has been repeatedly articulated and several promises have been made:

> *We have been made vividly aware of how Black students feel that their race and culture simply do not appear in the conventional school program and that they are left without models, symbols, and achievements with which to identify themselves. The implementation of our recommendations would result in putting Blacks in the school program; in ending forever the ignorance and general lack of awareness of their presence, of their contribu-tions and of their legitimate expectations; an end to discrimination and prejudice against them in schools.*[4]

That was in 1983. "*When you examine the Nova Scotia curriculum*" the Commissioners further noted, "*the Black community hardly seems to exist at all.*"[5] Ten years later, not much has changed. Black students and their parents are still voicing the same concerns. We heard the same cry over and over again across the province during the past two years. Consequently, one of the most common recommendations made was the necessity to change the curriculum by introducing Black studies and integrating Multicultural/Anti-Racism education into the Nova Scotia education system.

Educators must acknowledge the stratification of Canadian society along racial, class and gender lines and the oppressive structures that maintain the status quo. School boards and the Department of Education must go beyond the "sensitizing" function in attempting to help teachers to systematically construct, implement and evaluate multicultural curricula.

Cultural Education

Hopes that desegregation of schools would close the gap of racial inequality in education have never been realized. In fact there are African Nova Scotians who argue that things have worsened, and the statistics seem to suggest exactly that. Throughout the era of integration, the social and cultural distance between poor African Nova Scotians and the schools that are supposed to serve them has grown steadily. As Dr. James Comer at the Yale Child Study Centre has often noted, "*The failure to bridge the social and cultural gap between home and school may lie at the root of the poor academic performance.*"

Cultural education is essential for the development of a cultural identity. Cultural identity is how we view ourselves in terms of our race, ethnic background, our values, language, customs, religious and social practices, clothing and diet. Cultural identity has a powerful impact on self-concept and self-esteem. Therefore a good education should lead to the attainment of self-knowledge, in addition to the preparation of people for economic survival and intellectually challenging careers. Self-knowledge is acquired through the study of a people's culture and history.

African Canadian children need a sense of history and pride in their own culture and heritage, as well as the coping skills to deal with prejudice and racism. A few school boards now offer materials on Blacks and a number of schools offer classes in Black history, but these materials and classes are not available to the majority of school boards and are not sufficient to meet the needs of the students. It was clear from the evidence we heard across the province that adequate cultural education has not been, and is still not available through public schools to the majority of African Nova Scotian children.

Attitudes and Expectations of School Staff

Prior to school integration in the late fifties and early sixties, parents hoped that if their children could get into the same schools and sit next to White students, they would have equal opportunity to quality education. But experience has shown that this was naive. Black students in the Common Schools encountered and still face two institutional barriers: teacher insensitivity and low expectations which result in differential treatment. Black students feel ignored by their teachers. They *"feel invisible in class, unimportant."*

In looking at what actually happens when teaching occurs, a growing body of research points to the teacher – his or her attentiveness, expectations, encouragements, attitudes, and evaluations – as the primary focus in influencing students' perceptions of themselves as learners. There is ample evidence that these teacher characteristics increase or decrease the probability of student learning (Braun, 1976; Brophy, 1979; Good, 1980; M. Smith, 1980; Turner, 1982; among others).

Expectations on the part of the teacher play an important part in student achievement and self-image. Teachers tend to exhibit more positive non-verbal behaviour (smiles, nods, winks) to students considered bright than to those considered dull. Teachers also teach more to, spend more time with, and request more form students they consider to be able. Furthermore, "slow" learners are more likely to be ignored, to receive less attention, and to be given fewer opportunities to respond (Willis, 1970; Brophy and Good, 1974). Based on the image of their ability and potential in the minds of teachers, certain students receive a disproportionate number of inviting messages while others are disinvited, wither intentionally or unintentionally. In subtle and indirect ways, teachers' expectations can and do function as self-fulfilling prophecies, although not always or automatically. There is also strong evidence to suggest that student social class, race or ethnicity is a major determinant of teacher expectations. Teachers must have positive attitudes toward racially visible students and have high expectations of African Canadian youth.

Differential Treatment

Many students reported that they felt alienated in school because they were consistently overlooked. They said they were seldom called on in class or encouraged to participate in class discussions. They stated that they simply did not feel a part of the school and they seldom related with teachers in even the most casual way. Their teachers rarely seemed to notice the students' absences from school. These students felt that not enough teachers cared to invite them to participate in school life.

Students live in a world of attitudes, expectations, and evaluations. Most students are acutely aware when some are given more opportunities and encouragement than others. Those who feel excluded or "disinvited" remember keenly the slights they receive. If students are to excel in school they must have an environment that nurtures their potential. When they are treated with indifference, they are likely to become indifferent to themselves and to school.

In addition to school policies of suspending, expelling, "administrative withdrawal," labelling, tracking, and grouping, many students are alienated by educators who, either intentionally or unintentionally, behave in ways that result in student embarrassment, frustration, and failure. In addition, a student's feelings, ambitions and creativity may be "destroyed" by a teacher's negative comment, physical gestures, or other behaviour. These actions may be little more than a teacher's failure to call on or even look at certain children.

For Black youth in Nova Scotia, being Black matters significantly, for it indicates that they will be treated differently and have different opportunities. Because African Canadian children perceive that they are viewed differently, labelled, and receive different opportunities, consciously or subconsciously their educational and career aspirations are negatively affected.

Pedagogical Methods

It should be noted that a multicultural curriculum can be taught in a traditional and racist way. The way out of this dilemma is through the intervention of anti-racist teaching. Anti-racist teaching would incorporate "education" which is multicultural while the "teaching" would be anti-racist. In this context, anti-racist teaching is seen as coming about through a teacher with the "right" attitude, the appropriate knowledge, and the necessary skills to bring about learning that will challenge racism and change the bias of the traditional ethnocentric and biased education to which we are accustomed in Canada.

Assessment, Labelling and Streaming

We were told by parents and students that it was a common practice for guidance counsellors or other school staff to steer Black learners into vocational or the general programs by telling them that they would graduate faster or it would be easier to get a job. Another way to discourage Black students from taking the more challenging courses was to say that the student was not prepared or would not benefit from the class.

We found that most of the information on streaming of Black learners was unobtainable. We were told that the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act forbids the keeping of data based on race, therefore no such data was available on Black learners. However, available evidence clearly indicates that Black Nova Scotians are less likely to take careers involving mathematics such as engineering, computer or medical sciences – the jobs most crucial to Canada's global competitiveness and therefore jobs of the future.

Streaming, tracking or ability grouping as it is commonly known, is a way of sorting students. Sorting determines the kind of skills, knowledge and resources available to students. Although it is known as ability grouping, streaming has very little to do with ability. Rather, streaming is usually based on achievement as measured by standardized tests or estimates of a child's ability.[6]

Even when streaming is based on the judgement of teachers, students, and/or parents, it rarely accounts for differences in family education or circumstances, past school experiences and other factors. It fails to fully consider each student's strengths, weaknesses and potential.

Streaming does not raise students' or parents' expectations. It does not encourage effort. It is not designed to help students progress. Streaming does however stereotype students without developing a plan to push them forward. It results in labelling which also has negative consequences. As Dr. Joan Oaks, the renowned American educator has often demonstrated, for students in lower tracks, these labels become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Streaming advocates say grouping permits teachers to give more attention to individual students' needs, allowing "high" achievers to progress quickly and "low" achievers to set and meet reasonable goals. There is little proof that streaming benefits students. There is much evidence that students in higher tracks receive certain advantages which include highly qualified and experienced teachers, additional resources, more intensive and challenging writing assignments, and exposure to a wider variety of teaching strategies such as cooperative learning and lively discussions.[7]

In a recent court case *People Who Care vs. Rockford Board of Education*, the judge agreed with Dr. Joan Oakes that:

> *The grouping practices provided unequal opportunities to learn and served no remedial function for minority students. These practices did not even enable minority students to sustain their position relative to white students in the district achievement hierarchy.*[8]

But more significantly, streaming creates classes teachers do not want to teach and tends to segregate students based on race and class.

Generally, streaming duplicates inequalities of race, class, and sex that exist throughout our society. The stigmatizing system of classifying students as educationally handicapped is used to punish and marginalize students who resist conformity and, in our society, tends to be applied to large groups of Black learners.

In so doing, it undermines the most basic goal of public education: to help all students reach their potential and prepare them for life as productive citizens.

Streaming is harmful to students. In the *People Who Care vs Rockford Board of Education*, the court found that "*a low level or basic ability grouping would deprive students of the opportunity for various educational experiences, particularly in the Mathematics and science fields.*"[9]

Teachers and parents sometimes believe that streaming is beneficial because it seems to respect differences among students. However, once a child is in a low track, it is almost impossible to get out. Every day the children spend in the low level class, they lose ground to students in more advanced groups.

The dangers and impact of labelling students was eloquently discussed by the Graham Commission, which cautioned schools on the use of labels:

> *The understandable urge of many schools and parents to introduce children to reading, writing, and arithmetic very soon after their arrival at school and to move them through the prescribed programme at something approaching a pre-determined rate, regardless of their present stage of physical, sensori-motor, and intellectual development, may result in the accentuation or even in the creation of real or apparent learning disabilities, of emotional and psychological disturbances, and of hostility to learning. More patience, more time, and more recognition of the fact that not all children develop at the same rate or are ready for the same activities at the same time might result in the natural adjustment of many children to learning and the discovery that many difficulties that are supposed to be symptoms of special learning difficulties are in fact created by school schedules, requirements, and expectations. In particular, schools must avoid the danger of labelling all children who are different from the norm or are non-conformist as being abnormal or as suffering from learning disabilities.*[10]

When teachers and administrators are asked to describe their policies and programs for testing and placing racially visible students, their overwhelming response is that they treat them *all the same.* However, the research and most psychologists tell us that testing instruments are culturally biased.[11] Treating all students alike is unfair because it equates equality with equal treatment. Making accommodations for children from the dominant culture and not doing the

same for children from minority cultures means unequal treatment and, therefore, denial of equal opportunity. If assessment procedures are going to be used, modifications should be made to tests and testing procedures.

Whereas upper-income parents frequently understand the implications of placement decisions and also have the skills to negotiate about situations that may be detrimental to their children, low-income parents may not have these advantages. The first task for the Black Educators is to create awareness among parents of the consequences of placement decisions and differential curriculum for their children. This would lead parents to ask questions.

The perception that students are being streamed into general or basic level programs deliberately and with malicious intent is a negative force which the School Boards must act promptly to counter. One part of the solution is improved communication designed to inform parents and students. Likewise, it is essential for schools and Boards to ensure that students are not being deliberately placed below their performance and potential level of achievement since this is definitely not the policy of the Boards.

Lack of Black Role Models in Schools

Black learners for generations have been met by schools and teachers who held little respect for their culture and race. Often they have been met by outright hostility in the schools. The current generation of Black students is facing similar conditions – systemic racism and cultural barriers.

Hence, whether their thoughts are consciously articulated or left simmering, Black students want to know why all or most of the people in charge of their schools do not look, talk or walk like they do. They want to know why the teachers do not come from their communities, and why the curriculum provides them little clue about themselves and their history. Parents and students want Black role models in classrooms.

All Black students don't simply "hobble along" in the Eurocentric curriculum. Some make a conscious decision not to learn the irrelevant materials delivered by "strangers." Herbert Kohl, author of *I Won't Learn From You,* 1994, explains the student resistance to learning:

> *It consists of an active, often ingenious, willful rejection of even the most compassionate and well-designed teaching. Not-learning tends to take place when someone has to deal with unavoidable challenges to her or his personal and family loyalties, integrity, and identity. In such situations, there are forced choices and no apparent middle ground. To agree to learn from a stranger who does not respect your integrity causes a major loss of self. The only alternative is to not learn and reject their world.*[12]

All the comments we heard from parents, students and educators, and the evidence from *Experiences Elsewhere* clearly indicate that by far the most important single factor determining the quality of students' education, their success in achieving the goals of education, their attitude toward learning, is the quality of interaction between the learner and the learning environment. And the quality of the learning environment is determined by the quality of the professional teaching staff, including the school administration and the quality of child-parent interaction. Students blessed with good and caring adults will excel educationally, regardless of other circumstances. But if the teachers are non-caring and "just doing a job," the onus on

the student becomes tremendous. This has often been the experience of Black learners in the Nova Scotia school system. Parents and students demand teachers become sensitive to their needs.

Teacher Training

There was a general dissatisfaction with the teacher training system which produced teachers who lack cross-cultural training and are therefore ill-equipped to teach multi-cultural and multi-racial classes. Indeed, there was a general tendency to regard teachers, together with students, as victims of an inadequate system, which must be changed. Parents and teachers suggested that teacher training programs must be improved to include Multicultural Education and Anti-Racism Education.

Many parents think teachers are doing a good job. "*They are doing the best with what they know.*" Others suggested that teachers are not demanding enough of their students. Some said the problem lies with teachers who have taught for many years. Is their training current? How can we best help the teachers already in the system continue to improve their teaching techniques? Overall, there was a feeling that if teachers were better trained, prepared or sensitized to the systemic discrimination, racism and the diversity of cultures in Nova Scotia, they would be better equipped to help Black students identify with the school and want to learn, hence achieve.

Many teachers in Nova Scotia were trained before the multicultural policy was introduced, and long before anti-racism teaching practices were widely discussed. Many of them cannot cope when they are faced with the issue of race. Apparently their backgrounds and training have not prepared them, and therefore they are at odds when they have to deal with a racial situation in the classroom. Most opt not to see colour, which in turn makes racially visible children feel invisible. As a result, there is a need for revamping the teacher education and professional development programs.

In the individual schools, it is the individual teachers who shoulder the responsibility for providing educational opportunities for students. What the teachers do or do not do , at the point of contact with the students, determines the success of the whole educational experience. The teachers' decisions, attitudes, and competency largely determine how well these responsibilities are performed. Most teachers however, will require and must be provided with assistance and advice to discharge their responsibilities in regard to multi-cultural and multi-racial classrooms. Therefore they must be provided with increased opportunities for in-service training, with community cooperation and support, and with advice from the BLAC and BEA.

There are positive signs that systemic racism is increasingly well identified and steps are being taken to address it. Several school boards, for example have adapted, or are in the process of drafting, race relations policies. Over the past three years, the metropolitan school boards have been seriously engaged in training teachers in race relations and cross-cultural understanding. The Department of Education has taken a major step toward acknowledging the educational inequalities that exist between the majority Nova Scotians and the Black Nova Scotians by the appointment of the Consultant of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Black Education.

Individual schools and other institutions have introduced Black studies and student support programs and have began conscious efforts to provide opportunity for Black students. But the social consciousness of teachers and of the society needs to be heightened so that schools become more conscious of the systemic discrimination within their programs and activities and also more actively engaged in constructive efforts to provide fair and equitable opportunities to African Nova Scotians.

While teachers must play a central role in meeting the special needs of children, it is unrealistic to expect that teachers can have the time or energy to assume the duties and responsibilities of social workers and psychologists. A more holistic approach must be adopted that would involve other professionals. These professionals would be expected to reach beyond the school to involve the child's family. This implies that the Departments of Education, Health, Community Services and other agencies have to integrate their services, and work more closely in coordinating their activities so that each will make its contribution to the provision of the best possible services to the affected child.

Community Participation and Parental Involvement

> *No one has a stronger, more direct interest in good education than a parent. Educators who fail to recognize this, seeing parents instead as irrelevant, inadequate, or even obstructionist can never fully succeed in educating young people.*[13]

Although research shows that there are positive benefits of parent involvement on student achievement, many parents of Black children are alienated from the school system.

Black parents, like all parents, have a direct stake in the quality of public school education, yet for a variety of reasons, schools have been unable to involve them in school activities. On one hand, many Black parents say they have felt "unwelcome" and often "talked down to or belittled" by school personnel. On the other hand, there is a pervasive attitude among educators that Black parents do not care about the education of their children.

Many parents complained that teachers do not keep them up to date about their children's education and how well they are really doing. There is a communication problem, parents noted. Parents want accurate information in plain language, and they want to be listened to when they talk about their children's educational needs. They want to be involved in decision making through representation on school trustee boards and schools boards.

Parents who have not had much formal education themselves sometimes feel that they cannot help their children as much as they would like to. Other parents do not have enough time to help. It is also true that some parents are not sufficiently well informed and self-confident to be effective guides and advocates outside the home. These parents are not likely to intervene effectively with teachers and other authority figures, or to provide children with informed discipline and credible guidance for aligning behaviour with the requirements of outside institutions. Many have to overcome their personal negative experiences with schools. Additionally, many parents face the problems of managing children when they are the sole providers. Teachers need to develop greater respect for these parents.

Facilitating parent involvement is crucial for Black students the majority of whom are at risk of being pushed out or dropping out. The BLAC hopes to involve parents as advocates and decision-makers. Through the Education Committees, parents of Black learners should have their input listened to and respected. As well, parents must be seen as key resources working not only to improve their own children's education but the schooling of all children. Organized into groups, parents of Black learners can advocate for children and can educate educators.

Through community-based Education Committees, we can work to overcome barriers which separate school personnel and parents of Black learners, to build bridges between these two key players based on mutual respect and cooperation, and to encourage parents to become advocates in the schools and at the school board level.

Parents can also play an important role in curriculum reform and implementation. As schools try to institute multicultural/anti-racism curricula, parents are a valuable resource. Parents can have positive effects on the curriculum, especially if they are organized and supported by the local school and school boards.

Most educators recognize that parents can help their children at home. Schools can encourage positive interactions between parents and children by helping the school serve as a centre where parents can help one another. Support groups, parenting classes, and literacy classes can be helpful especially when organized by or with the consultation of parents. Lending books, audio and video tapes can help enhance education in the home. Parents can also educate their children about the history and contributions of their cultures and communities – filling in gaps often left by schools.

In addition, the quality of parenting, including parental interaction with the rest of the nurturing environment, seems central in determining whether children suffer the kind of discouragement and disorientation that leads to dropping out and delinquency. Educators must develop a model of parent education and advocacy which empowers both the parent and the student. The main objective should be to develop the parents' confidence in providing home education support to their children and to talk with teachers and administrators about academic issues. Schools must desist from giving the child a message that "*Your community and your parents are powerless.*"

Bonding Parents and Schools

Schools have to become open places where parents can feel that they are welcome, and valued. For the most part, schools do not give that message. When a parent is called at school, it is usually because something has happened with their child. And when they show up at the school, often there is a sign that says all visitors must report first to the principal's office. "*It is like you are being summoned by the principal.*" Many parents have negative memories about public schools, and being "summoned" to the principal's office in particular makes them relive those memories.

In fact it is more than just signs; it is how parents are treated. Often, they are treated disrespectfully. Sometimes they are ignored. Parents have the right to be treated with respect by school staff including the secretary, teacher or principal.

Some teachers or administrators require parents to make an appointment. Yet parents usually come to school only if something is urgent. They need to talk to someone right away, not to be told to book an appointment next week.

There are other ways teachers make parents feel unwelcome. For example, teachers usually communicate with a parent directly when that parent's child has misbehaved. "*It is always a negative call.*" Rarely do teachers call up parents to say how well their child has done. If teachers were to do that, there would be better communication in place.

Teachers need to be sensitized to the importance of parental involvement. At the school board level this should include staff in-service. But most important, the Province must require teacher training institutions to adequately prepare new teachers in knowing how to work with parent volunteers, conduct parent/teacher communication, and overcome possible racial, class and gender biases.

The traditional, community-based organizations such as the BEA and the African United Baptist Association (AUBA) have made parent organizing a priority and used their resources to sustain such efforts. But these volunteer organizations have been overwhelmed by the worsening economic and social conditions. Their resources are stretched to the limit, and new approaches must be defined. A possible alternative is to require school boards, perhaps assisted by the Department of Education, to hire school-community support workers with the responsibility for working with parents.

The Regional Educator or school community worker has a primary responsibility to engineer and negotiate the education and teaching of parents. Many parents will engage in workshops on parenting-related topics and some may be encouraged to enroll in upgrading programs. The prime role of the school community workers however should be to reinforce the parents in what they are doing with their children with their schooling. A pat on the back, a word of praise, a well-deserved certificate or other public recognition of a job well done, a friendly and comforting ear for routine parental expressions of frustrations, can level mountains of defeat.

There is need for a fundamental change in the relationships between the school system and the Black communities, between the school and home, teachers and the Black students. New caring and trusting relationships, built on mutual respect and the principles of equity, and on the belief that every child can learn, will go a long way in establishing a conducive learning environment.

Students

Many Black youth and adults are afflicted with low self-esteem and despair so severe that they need constant encouragement. Low self-esteem and despair are often reflected in discipline problems, poor motivation, poor academic performance, and an "I don't care" attitude. The Black youth who *do not care* are putting on a show of bravado. To protect their feelings from the constant frustration and punishment they expect, they do "not care" what others think, say or do. They are convinced they cannot succeed in the mainstream. We need to take decisive and drastic action in order to restore their hope. As one parent pointed out, "*without hope, the youth turn to dope.*" Consequently, the report stresses the importance of developing a positive self-concept and self-esteem among Black learners because a child's ability to succeed in life increases when her self-esteem increases.

Cognitive, Affective and Functional Education

A good education consists of three main ingredients:

- **Cognitive education**
  The acquisition of knowledge, information and technical skills; the study of useful disciplines. This aspect has been the pre-occupation in modern and post-modern society.
- **Affective education**
  The learning about self: self concept, self-identity, self-potential which equates to self-esteem.
- **Functional education**
  Acquisition of knowledge of the social system, utilizing ability and affective knowledge for the advancement of self, community and society. This education is now popularly termed "life skills" or "interpersonal skills."

Academic learning is facilitated by overall growth and development – social, psychological, emotional, moral, and intellectual. Children who do not receive experiences that promote adequate overall development are at risk of failing in school and, in turn, failing in life.

In the education of Black learners, affective education has been starkly neglected. Functional education has been inadequate. Meanwhile, we narrowly concentrate on the cognitive predictably without success. Moreover, through bias in the curriculum, low teacher expectations, testing and evaluation, the cognitive education of the Black learner has been grossly distorted. And it is not just the cognitive education of Black students or even their attitude toward education that has been distorted; the distortion of the Black student's self knowledge (affective education) and the place and possibilities of Blacks in the world (socio-cultural) is very acute.

Without affective education (cultural education), the Black student cannot formulate a positive self-concept and self-identity of himself. Among other things, culture serves certain vital psychological functions. It is the material and the source of group identity. It is group identity which serves as the basis for group unity, a unity which enables a group to mobilize its resources in support of itself. The suppression, destruction, distortion of a group's history and culture by others, and the surrender of one's own culture results in low self-esteem. We then build up an array of programs to address the poor self-esteem – the symptom.

To function in the workplace, we draw on our affective education and cognitive skills to perform certain duties for the employer. Without affective education and lacking cognitive skills meant that the Black learner left school barely able to function in the workplace. That is to say, he lacked the functional skills, functional education. Without affective education, all efforts to build up the Black child's functional skills (communication, social, and job skills) became an uphill battle. It has proved a difficult mission because apart from poor self-esteem and the lack of positive reinforcement, the Black learner failed to see the relevance of cognitive education. There are no Black role models to demonstrate that mastering cognitive knowledge meant future success in the world of work, the "real world."

To address this anomaly, we again created an array of programs to deal with symptoms of the failure of the education system. We refer to such programs as *Options, Life Skills, Work Orientation Workshops,* or *Self-Esteem Workshops.*

We see the problems of Black learners correctly as sociological or collective (Black, racial) but, searching for solutions, we inevitably resort to the psychological realm. We immediately look for a sample of individuals to subject to some program or experiment to upgrade their individual behaviour. Meanwhile, we neglect to do anything to change the social circumstances – let alone societal processes. The flaw in the individual self-esteem approach has long been acknowledged. In 1962, Dalhousie President Dr. A. E. Kerr in a comprehensive report "on the position of Negroes" in Halifax city pointed out:

> *It should be clear to the social scientist that it is hopeless to cope with this problem by providing sufficient self-esteem for members of minority groups as individuals. The discrimination which these individuals experience is not directed against them as individuals but as group members and only by raising their self-esteem as group members to the normal level can a remedy be produced.*[14]

To manage in the complex society of today, young people need the highest level of overall development ever required in the history of the world. They need sustained and skilled parental help to acquire such a level of development, as well as sensitive and supportive institutions, particularly the school.

Yet, children today spend far less time with parents and depend far more on the schools and other caretakers for their educational preparation. In addition, as clearly demonstrated in the *Socio-Demographic Study*, most African Canadian families combine great economic problems with very weak educational backgrounds.

Income, education, race and class differences create tensions and often anger and alienation between home and school. Alienation and distrust reduce the ability of parents and teachers to work together to support the development of students. Thus acknowledgement and concerted effort to change these factors must be part of the holistic approach to meet the learning needs of African Nova Scotians.

Additional Burdens

- Facilities and Equipment Disparities: Children of all races should have equivalent facilities, equipment and supplies. Children should have an equal opportunity to learn. However, as it is clearly noted in *History of Black Education in Nova Scotia* (VOL 2), the government did not provide equivalent facilities, equipment or supplies to the Black schools. Black students and their teachers, at various times, had little support equipment, an insufficient number of textbooks (which were often outdated) and a constant lack of supplies. Further, the record shows that Black students were taught in dilapitated, unheated buildings. These disparities in facilities, equipment, materials and supplies between Black schools and the White schools existed for almost a century and a half, until the late 1970s. Parents and teachers complained, and even Government Inspectors of Schools wrote about the glaring imbalance and uneven distribution of school equipment between Black and White schools. In the *People Who Care vs Rockford Board of Education*, the judge found that "*System-wide disparities in facilities, equipment, materials and supplies between minority and predominantly white schools ... clearly indicate intentional discrimination.*

- School Closings and Student Busing: Throughout the 1960s and 1970s to the present day, school boards have bused Black students away from their "neighbourhood" schools to schools within the White commmunities in an effort to desegregate majority White schools. Complaints and protests from parents of Black learners that one-way busing was unfair were completely ignored. Black schools in East Preston, Upper Hammond Plains and elsewhere were closed as new, supposedly integrated schools were constructed in White communities. This placed additional burdens on Black students. The recent experience of North Preston students bused to Ross Road School and Cole Harbour is a prime example of this disproportionate burden. This burden of integration was born exclusively by Black students. No White students are bused to a Black community.

Department Guidelines and Monitoring

Those responsible for the education system must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Black parents, community and other stake holders that they are doing an excellent job. As the commissioners of the Graham Commission wrote more than ten years ago:

> *It is more important that the school system should identify the benefits that are expected to accrue to the students and be required to demonstrate that the efforts of the schools have been effective. To say simply that all these fine things (good teachers, modern buildings, modern equipment and learning materials) have been provided but stubborn or foolish students refused to take full advantage of them is to ignore the failure of the school system. Evaluation of school performance, moreover, must include careful consideration of the satisfaction of parents and students. Above all, it must be carried out by someone other than those who are providing the service that is being evaluated.*[15]

Therefore, the Department of Education must establish a mechanism in consultation with the BLAC to monitor the treatment and performance of African Canadian students in the province.

Conclusions

Despite some School Boards' detailed race relations policies, the BLAC believes that racial discrimination is one of the major reasons Black Nova Scotian students fail to complete secondary school programs. We believe strongly that if the policies were uniformly and consistently applied in schools, considerable progress would be made in elevating the distress many students feel.

What is required is a strategy that breaks down the two major barriers: cultural isolation on the one hand, and institutionalized discrimination manifested in the academic labelling process and low teacher expectations. The first barrier to academic achievement, isolation from cultural roots, can result in both psychological and emotional harm to Black children. This damage is manifested in identity crises, confusion, and insecurity – neither of which is conducive to competing for academic success.

The second barrier, systemic discrimination, which is consciously or unconsciously motivated by ignorance and racial stereotyping, finally lowers the expectations that school personnel have of Black youth. Consequently proper nurturing and guidance of Black children does not take place. Regardless of class or background, African Canadian children confront a difficult time in reaching their full potential in Nova Scotian schools as they exist.

What is required goes beyond dealing with racial incidents promptly and discouraging name-calling. Our children need to feel that discipline is fair and uniform and not based on bias and prejudgment of guilt. In addition, Black learners need teachers to recognize that they can achieve as well as other students and that they and their parents have high aspirations.

This Committee also found that all attempts to address the inequality in education have been in many cases short-lived, or woefully inadequate. *Experiences Elsewhere*, also indicated that the impetus for educational reforms towards equity have almost exclusively come from the outside; that the only change that is likely to occur within the school context is change which does not potentially threaten the status quo. It was also clear that this type of incremental change has not been successful in addressing the poor achievement, low self-esteem, and feeling of isolation experienced by Black students in the aggregate. Therefore, we must explore other alternatives: establishing settings outside of the schools for solutions to the historical patterns of discrimination and academic failure.

We acknowledge that the major curriculum and budget decisions, as well as the critical questions of who will be served and how, remain in the hands of the majority. Black Nova Scotians, for the most part, remain excluded from the planning and execution of educational policies and programs.

At the same time, African Nova Scotians cannot disengage from the education system, rather we must try to foster positive change. The change must be from the current system which implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, condones racist practices and promotes academic failure of Black learners – to an education climate where all children have true opportunity for personal development and success. The change envisioned will lead not only to improvements in student achievement but also to positive changes in the public schools.

Lessons Learned

We can well feel proud of our few gains, fully conscious of the fact that it's not what we've done but what we've had to do it with, not how little we've gained but how much we've overcome."[16]

History of Black Education in Nova Scotia

Many lessons have been learned as one examines the history of education and the Black Community in Nova Scotia. The lessons emphasize the deliberate strategies used concerning Black Nova Scotians to encourage and enforce a place of servitude and menial labour in Nova Scotia. The lessons also demonstrate centuries of incredible fortitude as Black Nova Scotians, especially in their role as parents, struggled to gain access to an education system set up to prepare the dominant population for a wide variety of roles in society while excluding Black children.

The significant lessons are outlined here.

Lesson 1
Segregation was used as a strategy to maintain a practice of racial superiority of Whites over Blacks. Evidence of this can be seen in the rural, isolated, barren lands given to Black immigrants in the 1700s and 1800s. As well, the established pattern of Black servitude prior to 1783 onwards has maintained and provided the philosophical underpinnings of White supremacy and racial intolerance in this province.

Lesson 2
Throughout the history of Nova Scotia, government promises to Black Nova Scotians were never honoured. The British had promised the Black Loyalists that suitable land would be made available for farming and other agricultural pursuits. The records indicate however that Blacks were given only very small plots of rocky, infertile and unsuitable land. The broken promises meant inadequate living conditions, few or no rations, which led to exploitation as cheap labour, share-cropping, licenses of occupation and for some, emigration at the earliest opportunity. Others were forced to migrate to the towns and cities where they were often unable to compete with more skilled Whites. For those who remained on the rocky farms, the result was abject poverty and near starvation. The present patterns of poverty and isolation of Black Nova Scotians can be traced back to that period of Nova Scotian history. As well, the deep rooted and widespread mistrust of "the system" (government and its agencies) among Black Nova Scotians today, can be traced back to this same pattern of broken promises.

Lesson 3
Prohibitive costs, poorly trained and underpaid teachers, rudimentary curriculum which excluded geography classes and math for Black children, clearly point to an educational agenda set by the dominant society for the role Blacks would play in Nova Scotian society.

Poverty meant education was limited or considered a luxury for Black Nova Scotians well into the 1960s. This placed limits on the employment opportunities for Blacks to "the heaviest and lowest paid jobs," concentrated in manual and menial labour. This perpetuating cycle left few Black youth able to envision post-secondary education or a position beyond those options traditionally open to the Black community in Nova Scotia. Denied resources, educational and employment opportunities, Black Nova Scotians were compelled to supply cheap labour for survival. This dependency by much of the Black community on the dominant society continues today through their dependence on the provincial welfare system.

Lesson 4

Racism and discrimination in education was institutionalized through legislation by municipalities and the Nova Scotia House of Assembly. To undo it, similar measures will have to be adopted. Policy changes, however, have been delayed by the pattern of denial set by politicians and school administrators of the existence of racism in the system.

Through numerous legal and financial strategies the successive Nova Scotia governments representing the dominant society have created an education system that have segregated and discriminated against Blacks. Two examples of such discriminatory legislation follow:

- By only providing an educational subsidy to those communities who could raise between fifty and two hundred pounds sterling, build a school and hire a teacher,the Nova Scotia government, in the early 1800s, effectively denied the Black comunities of the province access to education. The poverty of the Black communities ensured their dependence on religious organizations for their educational resources. The "African schools" established by philanthropic organizations between the 1816-1850s for the Black communities developed a curriculum intended more to instill obedience and maintain the Black population in a submissive condition. When White students attending common schools were studying English, Latin, Greek, spelling, grammar, classics, algebra, geography and the use of globes, their Black counterparts were deliberately restricted to instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and the catechism.
- By adopting an amendment to the Education Act of 1836 which meant school districts could establish schools for Black children even if a Common School may have already been established in the district, government gave legislative sanction to separate schools and inferior education for the Black community.

Lesson 5

Attitudes expressed by some legislators and other leading citizens in Nova Scotia regarding the Black population have, over the years, been consistent. Black Nova Scotians have been viewed as undesirable, lazy and fit for only the most menial labour or as servants. The result has been a Black population deprived of equal educational and employment opportunities and a lack of adequate public services.

The only people interested in securing quality education for Black children were their parents and other members of their community. One method to acquire quality education that brought some tangible results was through petitions to the government for buildings, teachers, and higher standards of education. Many of these petitions repeatedly pointed to the inadequate curriculum, deficient environments, great distances from the home, and the difficulty to attend high schools or post-secondary institutions due to the substandard quality of the education the students received. Issues raised over one hundred years ago are still being raised by the Black community as evidenced in the numerous studies which cite the inferior, limited and, in many cases, nonexistent education available to Black Nova Scotians. A brief submitted by the Black United Front to a Royal Commission, for example, resulted in the inclusion of many of their recommendations in the Graham Report of 1974. Although urgent, these recommendations have remained relatively untouched.

Organizations such as the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP), questioned the situation of racial discrimination and inferior education beginning in the 1950s and 1960s. Other groups including the Black United Front (BUF), Black Educators Association (BEA), African United Baptist Association (AUBA), Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC), have continue the struggle.

In the 1970s, the Black community escalated their efforts to obtain equal education through their launching of "class action suits" against the Halifax and Digby School Boards through the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

The 1990s has seen the creation of the *Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations* which has produced 94 recommendations to improve race relations in Nova Scotia of which nineteen deal with education. A call for strong monitoring mechanisms has been identified as necessary for meaningful change to take place.

The BLAC continues to work on the issues raised by the Black community in an effort to respond to the needs of the Black learner for quality education.

Lesson 6
Policy changes and legislation must be accompanied by an aggressive educational program. Although the laws regarding education may change, the evidence is that actual practice has been very slow to change. In 1954 the reference to "different races" was dropped from the legislation but actual desegregation did not occur until well into the 1960s. Further, many politicians and policy makers appear to have been unwilling or unable to admit to the role that segregation played in the education system of Nova Scotia. *This denial has meant more rationalizations and dehumanizing treatment toward Black Nova Scotians. Anti-racist education and training must be an integral part of the curriculum.*

Lesson 7
A strong, pro-active monitoring mechanism is essential to monitor the performance, treatment and progress of Black learners in the education system. Historically Black parents and organizations have taken on the role of monitoring the education system and the quality of education received by Black learners. Community development initiatives and strong leadership in the Black communities have helped form groups to identify and strategize around community needs and issues related to education, housing, employment and human rights. But the critical nature of education to our future requires that a formal monitoring mechanism be developed as soon as possible.

Lessons From The TYP and BIF

The Transition Year Program (TYP) and the Black Incentive Fund (BIF) are two examples of initiatives which were initially intended to increase the Black learner's access to education but which, when left outside the control of the Black community, served to perpetuate inequality in the education system.

The Black Incentive Fund, established in 1965 by the provincial government was both ill-conceived and badly managed for the first 20 years of its existence. Housed initially in the Department of Welfare, the Fund, it has been argued, maintained a welfare mentality over much of its lifespan thereby contributing to the growth of young peoples' dependence upon government for assistance. Critics of the Fund maintain that the Fund hurt Black youth more than it helped. The $20 to $30 a year received by junior high school students and $90 to $120 a year for senior high school students certainly assisted with the purchase of otherwise out of reach articles of clothing but under no circumstances could be considered as making the difference between staying in or out of school.

In fact, for the nearly 20 years that the Fund was in place within the public school system, it became a focus for racist and other derogatory remarks. It was commonly referred to as "the Nigger Fund" and was pointed to as "proof" by members of the White community that Black children were "paid to go to school."

The salient point is that the same government which set up this Fund, ostensibly as a tool of redress, did absolutely nothing to alleviate the growing miscommunication and turmoil around the Fund; even though reports, commissioned by the government, pointed out such problems early on in the process. Neither was government proactive in seeking ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Fund when its utility as a stay in school mechanism was called into question. A laissez faire attitude was adopted by government towards the Fund. The Fund remained, relatively unchanged, the government's sole strategy for over 25 years for redressing the inequalities in education facing Black students in Nova Scotia.

Today the Fund has been removed from the public education system and is positioned instead to act as an incentive to Black students considering university. The Fund offers $4,500 in scholarship monies to Black youth entering university straight from high school. These changes however have come only through the persistent efforts of the Black Educators Association and other members of the Black community within the province. They did not come at the initiative or even with the encouragement of government.

The second example of an initiative intended to increase the Black learner's access to education but which served to perpetuate inequality in the education system, is the Transition Year Program. Established in the late 1960s as a collaborative effort between Black graduate students and a number of faculty at Dalhousie University to enable both Blacks and Natives access to a university education, the TYP struggled over the next 25 years to establish itself on a secure footing within the university environment. Denied adequate financing and commitment from senior levels within the university, denied involvement by members from the Black community, the TYP was set up for failure from the start. Not until the 1990s with the *Breaking Barriers* report and the resultant commitment of funding until the year 2000 did the TYP have any semblance of stability. The 1990s also marked the appointment of the typ's first indigenous Black director. An outside observer may remark that the typ has finally come into its own. The reality however is that the director still lacks the full support of senior administration within the university.

The history of the Transition Year Program, taken together with the history of the Black Incentive Fund, hold a number of important lessons. First, it is imperative that initiatives affecting the education of Black learners be developed in partnership with the stakeholders, the Black community. The time is long past when members from one culture can pass judgments on rectifying the problems of another culture.

Secondly, it equally imperative that initiatives affecting the education of Black learners be controlled by the Black community or that structures be established that are staffed and controlled by members from the Black community.

Lessons Learned from *Experiences Elsewhere*

The requirements for educational change and reform are linked to global, national and local situations. Changes in the world economic system, increasing government deficits and unemployment, the failure of the educational system to meet the needs of its stakeholders (students, parents, employers, funding agencies and society as a whole) the lack of accountability in funding and curricula and the need to educate our children to meet the global knowledge-based, technological, multicultural world of the next century, demand wide-spread change in the education system. Such wide-sweeping change is essential to remove barriers and motivate learners, especially Black Nova Scotians, so as to maximize the effective contribution of everyone to Nova Scotia's future prosperity.

Examples of *Experiences Elsewhere*

As in Nova Scotia, the need for change has been evident for a long time. In some jurisdictions, educational change has been attempted with varying degrees of impact. A summary of our research drawn from the *Experiences Elsewhere* report (see Volume 2) is outlined in the following table:

Summary of Experiences Elsewhere

Type of Change	Examples	Level of Impact
Curriculum changes	• 1993 announcement by Conference of Atlantic Premiers re: common public school curriculum based on specific outcomes and standards	Announcement only
	• 1993 introduction of common curriculum approaches to education in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta	Moving away from streaming
	• Afrocentric philosophy recognizes and celebrates the needs and perspectives of Black learners; stresses the important contributions of Africans to world development	Empowers Black learner
	• Multi-cultural approach being used in Britain, Australia and Canada to ensure fair treatment, equal access to programs and resources, retainment of group identity	
	• Anti-racist education focuses on needs of the learner through the school environment, the curriculum, staff development, teaching and learning process to improve the self-respect and dignity of the Black learner	
	• 1990 study by Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. found teachers and students analyzing inequities related to race and makes nine recommendations	Study only

Type of Change	Examples	Level of Impact
Leadership-oriented changes	• Magnet schools - East Harlem, 1980's – parents make decisions about which school their children attend and decisions about curriculum are made locally or at a community level	
	• Business and education partnerships – needs of business and industry reflected in curriculum, direct funding to schools	Much criticism of vested interest and control by business
	• 1988 study in Ontario by Dr. Karen Mock recommends anti-racist education strategies for teachers and indicators for a school where teachers and staff are aware of the practical implications of anti-racist education (also see Vernay Mitchell and Godfrey Brandt 1986)	Study only
	• 1986 research paper of Harry Houghton and 1990 report by Dr. Mock made recommendations for the inclusion of the input of visible minorities into the curriculum process and policy development re: race and ethno cultural topics	Little progress
	• Scholarship Builder program started in the U.S. in the late 1980s encourages "at-risk" students to complete high school, private sector funding, scholarships, social worker assigned to work with student, family, teachers	Some individual achievement
	• Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication suggested 20 techniques for supporting post-secondary students	Paper presented at a conference
	• 1987 Ohio program set up: CLEAR Alternative: Creative Learning Environment for Academic Redirection	Improvements in attendance, attitudes and achievement
	• The Working Group on Parental Involvement, 1991, Toronto Board of Education	No formal assessment done yet
"Fix-the-Problem" oriented changes, support mechanisms and alternatives	• Regarding high drop-out/push-out rates for Black learners: 1987 Omaha Public Schools Superintendent's Task Force on Student Dropouts, Nebraska identified "community of caring adults" as most important factor	Report presented
	• 1991 study New South Wales, Australia identifies importance of "parental and school support	Report presented
	• 1991 U.S. Study Meeting the Goals of School Completion examined programs aimed at preventing school drop-outs, accountability and monitoring of the school system evident here)	Study only
	• 1990 U.S. hearing on the Office of Educational Research and Improvement focuses on ways to address problems of unequal education and drop-out rates	Report presented

Type of Change	Examples	Level of Impact
"Fix-the-Problem" oriented changes, support mechanisms and alternatives	• 1990 Special Report on Mentoring from Project Literacy U.S. and the National Urban League Inc.	Successful at improving academic achievement of "at-risk" African-American youth
	• Study of Mentoring Program in Florida 1990	
	• 1987 Ontario Study by George Radwanski looked at how well the system is meeting the needs of students; policy observations and recommendations are noted	In 1993, the Ontario government moved to eliminate streaming
System-oriented changes, holistic approach	• United Nations Human Development Report 1993 – development gaps for Blacks in the U.S. based on factors such as income, life expectancy, literacy and education	Report only
	• "A Lot to Learn" report by Economic Council of Canada – "dropping out like education itself, is a cumulative process"	Report only
	• 1987 study called "Black Concerns by National Education Association cited challenges and recommendations concerning students, curriculum, teachers, family, community, employment, collaboration, legislation and leadership training	Study only
	• 1989 report "The National Agenda for High Education into the 21st Century" stresses need to retain minority students and prepare them for post-secondary education	Report only
	• Research conducted in Florida called "Closing the Education Gap: A Mayo Clinic Approach to Academic Achievement: lead to Project BASE (Blacks for Academic Success in Education) involves parents, churches, businesses in helping students	"Remarkable" gains in Black students' achievement
	• 1968 long term Primary Prevention Project by Dr. James Comer in New Haven, Connecticut, at the Martin Luther King Jr. School and the Simon Baldwin School. In 1985 study the successes are documented, based on principles of wellness and link between home and school environments	Schools exceed the national average for academic achievement
	• 1980's program developed by Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu of Chicago – SETCLAE: Self-Esteem Through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence evaluated in 1992	Specific positive measurable achievements, math scores and self-confidence
	• Florida Endowment Fund for Higher Education: proposed in 1984, became fully operational in 1987. The Fund focussed on increasing the number of African American faculty in Florida universities and colleges; establishing Centers of Excellence to expand the minority student post-secondary application pool; and developing private-public partnerships.	High success rate in all aspects of project; documented in evaluation study funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation

It is evident from the *Experiences Elsewhere* report that in a few cases meaningful change has been created; this is particularly true of Project BASE in Florida, the Martin Luther King Jr. School in New Haven, Connecticut, and the SETCLAE program developed by Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu, in Chicago. Although there are differences between the educational systems in Canada and the United States, the reasons for change are comparable and the keys to creating successful, sustainable change in the school system of Nova Scotia will be very similar.

A review of *Experiences Elsewhere* directs us to call for systems-oriented change rather than attempting solutions that only affect one aspect of the multi-faceted problems facing everyone involved with improving the academic opportunities of Black Nova Scotians. A systems-oriented approach by its very nature will demand that the changes be seen as permanent enhancements to improve the quality of education for all learners in Nova Scotia's schools, and in particular, Black learners. Short-term measures will be taken in the period of transition but if we take our future school system seriously, all short-term, transitional initiatives will align with long-term visions and renewal mechanisms for our schools.

To ensure meaningful change, certain key elements must be in place. These include:

- The active involvement of parents and community in the education of the Black learner to enable the education system to be aware and respond to the needs of Black learners;
- The incorporation of methods and materials that reflect culture, learning experiences and learning needs of Black learners in the curriculum and the entire school system;
- The introduction and maintenance of anti-racist policies, strategies and teaching throughout the education system – including some mechanism for monitoring the actual practise of anti-racist education throughout the transition period;
- The incorporation of multicultural and anti-racist approaches to education into all teacher training programs including preparation and counsellors, secretaries and custodians; and,
- The adoption of a holistic approach to helping Black learners which recognizes the culture, home environment, parents and community as part of the learning environment for the learner.

Conclusions

Since our arrival in the province almost three centuries ago, African Nova Scotians have been deprived of economic and social rights through denial of access to economic resources and educational opportunities. In order to survive, they were compelled to accept the lowest paying menial jobs. Societal prejudice, premised on European "racial superiority" and perpetuated through legislation, the education system and the media, has led over the centuries, to the economic, social, and political marginalization of African Nova Scotians. Denied an economic base from which to develop their communities, their long history is marked by the struggle for survival and freedom in the province. This struggle is clearly evident in education where, despite all efforts to exclude Black people, the Black community has responded with initiatives to counter inequality.

The *History of Black Education in Nova Scotia* (Vol 2) clearly shows that the history of education in this province is a story of competing contradictory traditions – education for full citizenship for White Nova Scotians and education for second-class citizenship for African Nova Scotians. Extending back into the nineteenth century, against the background of "Jim Crow" laws which excluded the Black learners from the Common Schools, the Inglewood and North Preston case studies detail the deliberate neglect by government and the Black community's tenacious pursuit of education. Hence, the historical evidence collected, documented and presented here, clearly suggests that through educational policy and practice, there has been a deliberate effort to create, and maintain, an educational underclass of Black Nova Scotians.

The *Participatory Action Research* (Vol 3) focuses on the present day experiences and perceptions of Black Nova Scotians vis-a-vis the education system. It paints a graphic but bleak picture with some positive but limited movement, especially in terms of institutional changes to reflect the diverse and multicultural nature of Nova Scotia. During an intensive process of community consultation, parents and students across the province described a school environment that remains both cold and hostile to Black learners. Systemic exclusion from the curriculum, lack of Black role models, lower expectations and insensitivity of teachers and school administrators all combine to make public schools an alien place. As well, data collected from the survey on school disciplinary measures, and information supplied by two school boards, confirm the community's widely held view that Black Nova Scotian students are harshly treated by the school system.

Largely as a result of the historical settlement patterns which were based on the principle of separation of races, many Black learners still live in communities that are relatively isolated and suffer from chronically high unemployment, poor housing, inadequate transportation as well as inadequate or non-existent public services. From the cradle on, most African Nova Scotian children still face enormous barriers – impoverished communities, dysfunctional homes, alienation in schools, and most important of all, societal prejudice: racism, and classism. Racism is undoubtedly the most enduring and damaging legacy of the European colonization of the non-White world. This report outlines some of the manifestations of systemic discrimination, including segregated schools which led to lower expectations for Black learners. The low expectations, combined with lack of sensitivity towards Black learners, have often proved to be self-fulfilling prophecies.

The analysis of the *Socio-Demographic Survey* (Vol 3) delineates the devastating consequences of the centuries of overt, covert and institutionalized (systemic) discrimination in education and employment based on race. An analysis of the 1991 census indicates an average school drop-out rate of higher than 50 percent; one out of every three adults unemployed; and 60 percent of all adult Black Nova Scotians reporting "no income" or an annual income of less than $7,500. There is no doubt that the wide disparity in educational opportunities and attainment between Black Nova Scotians and the majority of Nova Scotians has had a ripple effect on employment and income. This has trapped African Nova Scotians in a vicious cycle of poor education, poor jobs or unemployment, poverty and thus the inability to access or purchase quality education.

A *Review of Experiences and Activities in Other Jurisdictions* (Vol 2) underlines the critical need for sweeping change within Nova Scotia's public education system. It demonstrates the need for a holistic approach by government departments and agencies in responding to the needs of Black youth specifically and youth in general. Services must be coordinated to achieve the greatest impact and better results. As well, the report stresses the need for school systems to actively encourage and welcome parental and community involvement in the educational process.

Traditionally, the discussion of educational issues is dominated by administrators and educational consultants. On the contrary, this report presents voices and recommendations from the parents of Black learners, students, community organizations, and teachers. It urges for new and effective relationships between the Black community, the parents, the students, the education system and the different levels of government.

It should be noted that by the nature of our task: identifying the barriers to the educational achievement of Black learners and the things that the Black community feels should be changed, we shall dwell upon the negative aspects of the existing school system. To save time and space, we are forced to generalize. There will be exceptions to almost every observation, but we cannot stop at the end of every sentence or paragraph to repeat that we do not mean all teachers, all schools, or all parents. Therefore we ask the reader to keep this in mind.

We also recognize that some of the report's recommendations imply changes that might evoke misgivings, at least in the short term, in the minds of some teachers and educational administrators. Let it be clear, however, that it is not the BLAC's intention to alienate teachers. The Black Learners Advisory Committee is fully cognizant that without the teachers full support, participation and cooperation, our most important proposals for improving educational opportunities and the school achievement of Black learners will be ineffectual.

Finally, this report marks yet another attempt by the Black community to define and implement a comprehensive approach to eliminate the numerous barriers Black learners encounter in the education system. It also provides an ideal opportunity to the Nova Scotia government and other levels of government to acknowledge and redress the oppression and discrimination which Black Nova Scotians have endured over the past two centuries.

Implications if Recommendations are not Implemented

The history of mis-education of African Nova Scotians is clear. What is frustrating for African Nova Scotians is that only modest steps forward have been taken, by previous governments, in our long history of grievance against the educational system. These measures, however, fall short of what would be needed to comprehensively change the inequalities that exist in education.

Grievances that African Nova Scotian children suffer as a result of institutionalized racism in educational institutions can easily be measured through comparing Black and White students who are attending the same schools, using the same instructors and the same curriculum. The actual damage resulting from the system's failure to provide adequate cultural and academic excellence for African Nova Scotian children is seen in the comparative drop-out rates, school suspension rates, graduation rates, crisis of identity and, feelings of alienation/isolation.

The Black community continues the struggle for equal access to the same education and full privileges that other Nova Scotians have enjoyed. Few educational institutions today, however, have adopted the type of comprehensive approach required to permit equal access by the Black learner.

One of the central problems that hinder the achievement of African Canadian academic and cultural excellence is the legacy of racism. African Nova Scotians in particular seek equal access to educational opportunity and redress for prior deprivation caused by segregated schools, racial discrimination, and poverty. Equal status demands that all citizens be treated equally in sharing the national resources and in exercising citizenship rights.

African Nova Scotians are entitled to redress for centuries of exclusion and mis-education. We are entitled to more than an equal opportunity to compete with those whose privileged status as White Canadians has been maintained at our expense, giving them an unfair head start in all competition.

This only reinforces why the recommendations from the BLAC report on education must be pursued. These recommendations will assist dismantling the systemic discrimination that has, and continues to maintain African Nova Scotians as a cultural and educational under class.

Many aspects of social and education policy are framed around the rights of Acadians to cultural and linguistic maintenance. Similarly, many advances have been made to redress previous discriminatory treatment of women. Federal and provincial governments have enacted legislation in many spheres of social and economic life of people of the First Nations.

In 1993, the Aboriginal people were awarded 20 million dollars to establish their own Education Authority. The Acadians have managed to establish multi-million dollar educational infrastructures with about a 7 million dollar operating budget in 1993-94 fiscal year. Both the Aboriginal and the Acadian people continue their struggle for academic and cultural excellence.

The Federal and provincial governments provide funding for these customized services or supplemental resources on the realization that the Nova Scotia mainstream education system does not meet the needs of these groups of students. The redress should not be, and cannot be any different for African Nova Scotian students.

Furthermore, despite the hard economic situation, resources have been secured to meet the urgent needs of the Atlantic fisheries. It is our hope that the Nova Scotia government will seek and allocate sufficient resources to redress the historical discrimination, mistreatment and neglect which has cost African Nova Scotians educationally and economically.

The major problem has always been lack of government commitment to real change. African Nova Scotians on the other hand, must never be satisfied with the appalling treatment or living conditions in which we find ourselves because of the history of systemic racism. The redress of the inequality in education for African Nova Scotians should be no less of a priority, to either the provincial or federal government.

Experience has taught us that social and institutional change does not often come out of the good will of those in power. It is only when the African Nova Scotian community has used sustained and determined community actions that there had been any reaction to addressing our concerns.

Should this report be shelved or the recommendations compromised, as many others have been in the past, then the Black Community will have no choice but to seek legal recourse under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, the Constitution Act of 1982, and the Nova Scotia Education Act. It would draw upon the legal experience of other educationally and culturally marginalized Nova Scotians such as the Mi'Kmaq and the Acadians. Other legal cases that could be cited elsewhere are:

Brown vs the Board of Education Topeka;

The Fédération Provinciale Des Comités de Parents Inc. vs. The Attorney General of Manitoba;

The People who Care vs. The Rockford Board of Education School District #205

In the Rockford Illinois case, 15 people filed a lawsuit in 1989 against the Rockford district school system. The United States Magistrate, Judge P. Micheal Mahoney held the school district accountable for decades of both intentional abuse and benign neglect, indicating the rights of minority children had been violated.

The magistrate described the case as, "*the story of a school district that, at times has committed such open acts of discrimination as to be cruel and committed others with such subtlety as to raise discrimination to an art form.*"

To date the *People Who Care* lawsuit has cost the Rockford Board of Education $52.9 million.

Even as a test case the African Nova Scotia Community might want to demonstrate the existence of negligence by school boards, principals, teachers, and other educational institutions. The systematic exclusion, mis-education and often times mis-placement of African Nova Scotians, suffered at the hand of professional administrators' and educators' malpractice, must warrant some "*existence of proximate cause.*"

Community groups will have to be mobilized into political action to bring about change or prescribe legal remedies if the recommendations of the report are not implemented.

The severity of the problems facing the African Nova Scotian community cannot be addressed by the community alone. For the governments and school boards not to act will lead eventually and inevitably to even greater social and fiscal costs to everyone in the province, to say nothing of the continued wastage of human and economic resources.

We can never forget or permit others to forget, that our present level of development as a people is the result of long standing racist and exploitative practices and an absence of justice where the rights of African Nova Scotians are concerned. Justice demands fairness, compensation, and retribution. It is justice we demand, nothing more, nothing less.

Notes

1 National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), *Saving the African American Child*, November, 1984, PAGE 11.

2 The definition of discrimination has recently been broadened to include direct and indirect forms of discrimination. Direct discrimination is based on negative or prejudicial attitudes with the intent of denying equal treatment to an individual or group.

Indirect or institutional (systemic) discrimination may be a result of institutional or structural policies or practices which deny opportunities based on race, sex, national origin or other arbitrary distinctions. In this report, institutional and systemic discrimination are used to describe indirect discrimination.

Institutions are fairly stable social arrangements and practices through which collective actions are taken. Examples of institutions are government, business, unions, schools, churches and courts etc. and the people who represent the institutions . Institutions have great power to reward and penalize. They reward by providing career opportunities for some people and foreclosing them to others. They reward as well by the way social goods are distributed – by deciding who receives formal education, training and skills, political influence, moral support, public recognition and self-respect, productive employment, fair treatment by the law, decent housing, and the promise of secure future for self and children. All these in turn affect self-concept and self-confidence which are crucial for individual and group achievement.

When institutions (structures in society) consistently reward and penalize people based on their race; or when institutions operate in ways which limit some people on the basis of their race, and advance others on the basis of their race, that is Institutional Racism . One of the clearest indicators of institutional racism is the exclusion of visible minorities of societies from positions of control and leadership.

3 Asante, Molefi Kete "Afrocentric Curriculum," *Educational Leadership*, January 1992.

4 Graham Report, Graham Report, VOL III, PAGE 52, 1983.

5 *Graham Commission Report*, VOL III, PAGE 56.

6 Hilliard, Dr. Asa G, *What Good is This Thing Called Intelligence and Why Bother To Measure It?*, VOL III, paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, Symposium, New Orleans, Lousiana, April 1994.

7 Rethinking Schools, *Rethinking our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice*, Milwauke, Wisconsin, 1994, PAGE 178-181.

8 United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Western Division; *People Who Care vs Rockford Board of Education*, School District #205, Report and Recommendations, November 1993, PAGE 77.

9 *People Who Care vs Rockford Board of Education*, OP CIT, PAGE 32.

10 *Graham Commission Report*, VOL III, 47, PAGE 46-47.

11 Hilliard, Dr. Asa G, VOL III, OP CIT.

12 Kohl, Herbert, I Won't Learn From You, *Rethinking Schools*, VOL 7, NO 3, 1993.

13 IBID.

14 Quoted from *The Mail Star*, Halifax, Nova Scotia, October 4, 1962.

15 *Graham Commission Report*, OP CIT, VOL I, PAGE 42-3.

16 Oliver, Pearleen, *A Brief History of the Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia 1792-1953*, 1953, PAGE 78.

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Volume 2

The History of Black Education in Nova Scotia

Case Studies

A Literature Review of Experiences and Activites in Other Jurisdictions

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BLAC Report on Education

Redressing Inequity – Empowering Black Learners

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Section 1

The History of Black Education in Nova Scotia

The History of Black Education in Nova Scotia

Introduction

The history of Black education in Nova Scotia is largely one of exclusion and neglect legalized through discriminatory legislation and enforced by the racial attitudes of White society. For more than two hundred years, the Black population of this province has been systematically denied an education on an equal footing with the White population leading one Canadian historian to write of Nova Scotia that "*In education we find the most significant manifestation of colour prejudice in Canadian history.*"[1]

The purpose of this section is to outline the history of Black education in the province in an effort to understand how it is that in the 1990s, Black students and parents are still struggling to find equality in education. Understanding the history of education and how it relates to the Black population of this province is essential if we are to come to grips with the problems facing the Black learner today. We are often told that in order to understand where we are today we must learn from the lessons of the past; we are also told that unless we are vigilant, history will repeat itself.

The document begins with the story of how the Black population arrived in Nova Scotia, the promises made by government concerning land and provisions and the promises broken by government. We learn of the policies, both written and unwritten, which served to keep the Black population separate from the White population and in an almost constant state of poverty, and of repeated efforts to encourage their emigration from the province.

Determined to stay, the Black population put down their roots and undertook to build communities on the rocky ground which they were given. Education was seen by the early communities as a means of economic and social advancement and the Black community responded positively to the government's efforts to establish an educational infrastructure in the developing colony. But White Nova Scotian society was no more ready in the mid-nineteenth century to accept the Black population as its equal than was Nova Scotian society half a century earlier. If the Black population was to receive any education, it was to be separate from the White community and of a limited and inferior nature. Black parents protested, petitions were written, but segregation was to remain the dominant feature of Black education in Nova Scotia until the 1960s. So shameful was the situation that Nova Scotia has the distinct claim to fame as being the province "*most consistently hostile*"[2] to Black school children.

We then learn of the contemporary period; the period of rural school consolidation and the Black communities' efforts to catch up in matters related to education. We see the emergence of an increasingly sophisticated community of Black educators, parents and students who understood that the educational patterns set by the previous 150 years, could not immediately be undone by the simple act of abolishing segregated schools. We see pain, frustration, and an intense determination born of over a 200 year struggle to obtain equality in education up to the present day.

This then is the story of Black education in the province of Nova Scotia.

Arrival of the Black Loyalists

When the Black Loyalists of approximately 3,500 freed Blacks came to the province in 1782, they came under the belief that they would receive lands, justice, formal education and equality with their White Loyalist counterparts. Such belief was short-lived however as the Black Loyalists soon came up against racial attitudes similar to those from which they were fleeing.

While the British had promised freedom, land and opportunity to all Loyalists, Black and White, who chose to fight on the side of the British in the War of American Independence, these same assurances were not forthcoming from the governing bodies of Nova Scotia. When the Loyalist immigrants arrived in the province between 1783 and 1792, few arrangements regarding land, supplies and food had been made on their behalf. The colonial authorities were caught up in the war and paid scant attention to the needs of the new emigrants. The Black Loyalists fared the worst as the familiar patterns of racism began to emerge in this so-called land of freedom.

Slavery and the accompanying philosophical underpinnings of White supremacy and racial intolerance were no strangers to Nova Scotia. Prior to the outbreak of the American War of Independence, approximately 765[3] Blacks had worked as household servants in Nova Scotia as the legal property of their White masters. When the War broke out, Britain opened the doors of Nova Scotia to the White Loyalists (numbering approximately 30,000), including their slaves estimated at approximately 1,200 in number. It was easy for the White Loyalists to transplant their attitudes born of slavery onto an already established pattern of Black servitude within the province. Slave sales and advertisements for slaves and runaways were commonplace in the newspapers of Halifax in the late 1700s. The *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, March 28, 1775 edition carried the following for sale item: "*a likely, well-made Negro boy, about 16 years old*". The same paper in January 1779 advertised the sale of "*an able Negro wench, about 21 years of age, capable of performing both town and country work.*"

In 1784 there were 1,232 slaves in the Maritimes, the majority in Nova Scotia. Slavery as an economic institution however gradually declined over the next half a century, being replaced by a large labour force of free Blacks and poor Whites whose services could be had at a lower cost than the upkeep of a slave. While the institution of slavery was officially abolished through the British Commonwealth in 1833, the philosophical underpinnings of slavery including attitudes of racial superiority and separation of the races remained to define the on-going relations between the Black and White population of the province.

The approximate 3,500 Black Loyalists who emigrated to Nova Scotia were for the most part skilled artisans with teachers and ministers also among their numbers. Arriving in Nova Scotia on the British promise of freedom and opportunity, they soon found their place in society little different from that which they had left behind. The colonial authorities were initially overwhelmed attempting to meet the needs of 30,000 new settlers to the province. Those who had lost property through their loyalty to the British crown were regarded as having priority in the allocation of land; the Black Loyalists, not previous landowners, were forced to wait until the White claims were settled before theirs were even considered.

But the 100 acre land grants and free provisions promised by the British government to the Black Loyalists in exchange for their loyalty against the revolution were never honoured. Instead of being granted productive lands in proximity to already established and prosperous areas, they were settled in rural and isolated communities apart from the White communities, on barren land, and were ill equipped for the winter months. Birchtown, Brindley Town, Little Tracadie and Preston – these were the main areas of settlement for the Black Loyalists. Pachai, 1990, notes that the Black Loyalists waited long, and mostly in vain, to get a pittance of a land grant for about a third of their number. Even those who were successful, received, on average, less than a third of the size of grants given to White Loyalists. Instead of a land of opportunity, the Black Loyalists encountered severe economic hardship and an intense hostility from the poor White population of the province as the two groups competed for the few low paying jobs in the post war depression that gripped the province.

Walker writes that the early petitions written by the Black Loyalists to the authorities regarding the promised land grants are especially instructive in revealing Black Loyalist motives and aspirations. "*An impoverished minority, neglected and put aside by White officials, yet they waded right in to demand the rights they knew were theirs ... they demonstrated a confidence not only in their own abilities but in the good faith of White society. Delays and betrayals were blamed on local officials, on circumstances, on mis-understandings. Their belief in eventual success also became a part of their community mentality; conscious of their own worth, they never learned despair but cultivated a patient expectation even while their petitions continued to demand the same things year after year.*"[4]

Nor are the broken promises made to the Black Loyalists with respect to land grants the whole story. The arrangement made by the British for the Loyalists was for all to receive full rations the first year, two-thirds rations the second year and one-third rations the third year; these were to sustain them while they got their farms established and their first crops in. The available rations however were in short supply and were deliberately withheld from the Black population until the needs of the White settlers were fulfilled. In some instances, the Black Loyalists were denied provisions unless they first agreed to manual labour on the roads. The White Loyalists, on the other hand, were not required to work for their provisions. As late as 1791, John Clarkson, agent for the Sierra Leone Company, reported that there were "*innumerable witnesses (Black Loyalists) who had not received one year's provisions, neither a mouthful.*"[5]

Prevented from obtaining land, most Black Loyalists were forced to wage labour as their means of survival, clearing land, laying the roads, constructing the public buildings throughout the province. In fact, it has been speculated that one of the reasons the colonial authorities were not particularly anxious to contribute lands to make the Black Loyalists independent was because Black labour was an essential element in local activities such as land-clearing and construction. Because the Black Loyalists needed the work for basic survival, employers exploited them, paying them wages about one-quarter of the rate paid to White labourers. White workers blamed the Black Loyalists rather than their employers for undercutting wages and hostility was often expressed in violent forms. In July 1784, a mob of White workers actually drove the Black Loyalists out of Shelburne and Birchtown, burning their homes and church.

Other Black Loyalists survived on a share-cropping arrangement with a White landowner, paying a percentage of the crop in exchange for use of the land. Intended as a route for full ownership, this tended to become a perpetual condition because they could never accumulate enough surplus to pay back the initial loan for seed, tools and provisions.[6]

For nine years, the Black Loyalists struggled in their attempts to carve out a life for themselves and their families. While many of the White Loyalists were also faced with difficulties in the early years of settlement, the productivity of the lands granted them in the Annapolis Valley and northern portion of the province, as well as the business opportunities arising from the growing merchant trade, enabled them both social and economic mobility. Such mobility was deliberately withheld from the Black elements of the province with policy dictating that the Black population would remain on the fringes of society both geographically and economically.

Marginalized geographically, economically and socially, it is hardly surprising that about 1,200 (over one third of the total number) Black Loyalists chose, in 1792, to leave Nova Scotia for the colonization of Sierra Leone. Nine years after their arrival to the province, the British promises of land were finally exchanged for 15 ships, provided by the British Sierra Leone Company, to enable their departure for Africa. But even these attempts at freedom and security were hampered by the colonial authorities, who, not wanting to lose a cheap source of labour, made it illegal for any to leave who were debtors or indentured servants. False declarations were not uncommon in White society's attempts to maintain their hold over the hard-working Black underclass. We can speculate that those who remained were the poorest of the Black population and those most in need of leadership.

The departure of the 1,200 Black Loyalists for Sierra Leone represented the loss of the Black community's leaders, teachers, preachers and artisans, and served to marginalize the remaining Black population even further. Pachai has noted that all but three of the Province's Black Loyalist teachers and leaders left Nova Scotia for Sierra Leone.[7] Their departure virtually emptied the schools of Black teachers and resulted in the loss of significant role models for Black students and their parents who remained. The majority of the Black teachers of the day were also the Black communities' religious and political leaders, the intelligensia of the Black community. Many of the schools and chapels were closed or were forced to rely on White leadership. The choice of Sierra Leone over Nova Scotia had far reaching effects for the Black families who remained in the Province, the ramifications of which are still being felt, 200 years later.

Arrival of the Maroons

The second significant group of Black immigrants to arrive in Nova Scotia, of approximately 500 in number, were the Maroons arriving from Jamaica in 1796. A proud and military people with a long history of guerrilla warfare against the British in Jamaica, the Maroons had agreed to a truce with the British in exchange for a guarantee they would remain in Jamaica. Like the land grants promised to the Black Loyalists before them, this guarantee was also broken and the Maroons were transported en masse to Nova Scotia. Here they were settled in the isolated community of North Preston, recently vacated by the Black Loyalists, and were put to work on the fortifications of the Citadel. The Maroons rejected all attempts at assimilation and, unhappy with their inadequate living conditions made worse by the bitter winters, they successfully petitioned for transmittal to a warmer climate. In 1800, four years after their arrival to the province, all but a few of the Maroons followed the Black Loyalists to Sierra Leone to put down an insurrection against the British.

Arrival of the Black Refugees

The third and largest wave of Black immigrants to Nova Scotia occurred during the War of 1812 and numbered approximately 2,000. Known as the Black Refugees, they were American slaves, the ancestors of much of the indigenous Black population in the province today. Like the Black Loyalists, the 2,000 Refugees were attracted to the British in wartime by promises of independence, grants of land for economic self-sufficiency, and provisions over a three year period. Like their Loyalists brothers and sisters before them, however, no prior official arrangements had been made to receive them, or settle them in a systematic manner.

Following the settlement patterns of the two earlier groups, the Refugees were settled in isolated communities, with the majority in Preston and Hammonds Plains, well apart from the White communities, on rocky plots of eight to ten acres in size. But unlike the Black Loyalists who, when they did receive land, received full land grants, the Refugees received only *licenses of occupation* which withheld the right of sale or conveyance. In this way the Refugees were tied to their unproductive plots of land and unable to seek opportunity elsewhere in the province.

Initially welcomed by White society as a source of cheap labour, the Black Refugees faced increasing hostility both as their numbers grew and as the province entered a severe economic decline, occasioned by the end of the War and a series of agricultural failures. The years 1815 and 1816 were particularly devastating; the former was referred to as the *year without summer* and the latter as the *year of the mice.* Neither year saw sustainable crops resulting in hundreds of the Refugees relying entirely on the government for their survival. The government's initial plan of Refugee self-sufficiency over a three year period proved impossible and was replaced by a 30 year period of inadequate welfare grants to stave off starvation.

Hunger and poverty made the Black Refugee population particularly susceptible to disease. In 1815, for example, a smallpox epidemic threatened to eradicate many of the Refugees in the Preston area leading the Lieutenant Governor of the Province to approach the House of Assembly on their behalf:

> *I request that you will make provision for the assistance of the distressed among these people and to facilitate the settlement of the residue upon the forest lands of this province.*[8]

The House requested time to consider this request, and one month later responded:

> *We observe with concern, and alarm, the frequent arrival in this Province of Bodies of Negroes, and Mulattos, of whom many have already become burdensome to the Public. It becomes our duty to state to your Excellency for the information of his Majesty's officers... that we are unwilling by any aid of ours, to encourage the bringing of Settlers to this Province, whose character, principles and habits, are not previously ascertained. We beg respectfully to suggest that the proportion of Africans already in the country is productive of many inconveniences; and that the introduction of more must tend to the discouragement of White labourers and servants, as well as to the establishment of a separate and marked class of people, unfitted by nature to this climate, or to an association with the rest of his Majesty's colonies. We pray your Excellency will use your endeavours to prohibit the bringing any more of these people into this Colony by making such representations to his Majesty's ministers, as your Excellency may deem proper.*[9]

Not only did the colonial authorities of the day completely reject their responsibility for the Black Refugees, once more disregarding the promises made by the British crown, they also attempted in their submission to place a ban on any future Black immigration to the province. Three years after their arrival to the province, the Black Refugees were written off by the provincial authorities as burdens on the state and unequals in class and standing.

The post-war years saw an increase of White immigration into the province. Jobs once held by the Black Refugees and Loyalists, were now in demand by White labourers. Colonial authorities were quoted in 1838 as stating: "*Persons very generally prefer White labouring people to the Blacks by which these unfortunate people have not an equal chance of obtaining their share of even the little labour that is wanted.*"[10]

Denied wage-labour, the Refugees attempted to acquire more productive land for purposes of self-sufficiency but even these attempts were denied. When a local officer asked the British government for help in re-locating a total Black community to better farmland, he was refused, on the grounds that the scheme would "*cherish the mistaken and mischievous notion, that if they are to subsist at all, it must be as Proprietors of land and not as labourers for hire.*"[11] Caught literally between a rock and a hard place, the Black Refugees struggled for their day to day existence in an increasingly hostile environment.

When it became clear to the colonial authorities that the Black Refugees were not going to die from starvation, new plans emerged to rid the province of "*the burden to the public.*" Over a five year period (1817-1821) there were repeated efforts to remove the Refugees from the province through various emigration schemes; first to Sierra Leone, then the United States, and finally to Trinidad. After two years of persuasion, with no result, Lieutenant Governor Dalhousie wrote to Britain that "*I have also to state that none of them are inclined to return to their masters nor to America.*" The fear of return to bondage was greater than the Refugees' fear of poverty and exclusion. Despite repeated attempts by the authorities to *encourage* their departure from Nova Scotia, only 81 men and women and 14 children chose, in 1821, to leave for Trinidad under government sponsorship.[12] Despite the economic hardships and overt hostility facing them in the province, the Black Refugees chose the limited civil and religious liberties which Nova Scotia offered over the unknown to form the backbone of the Black communities of the province today.

By 1816, there were an estimated 5,000 Blacks in Nova Scotia made up of the previous freed slaves, the Black Loyalists (both freed and slaves), the few Maroons who chose not to immigrate to Sierra Leone and the Black Refugees.[13]

The story of the pioneering Black settlements in Nova Scotia during the first half of the nineteenth century is one of: "*poor housing, poor heating, high incidence of illness, seasonal employment, poor harvests, food shortages, welfare grants from the provincial government, similar relief from humanitarian bodies and kindly, more prosperous White neighbours, insufficient land for farming, and land grants by tickets of location or licenses of occupation. The pattern was a familiar one broken only by the changing landscape.*"[14]

In these early years of Black settlement, the patterns of segregated communities, racial hostility and intolerance were established. In recognition that the Black population was a force to be reckoned with (in that repeated efforts to encourage migration out of the province had failed) government policy emerged which minimized Black land ownership and maximized Black dependence on White society for survival. In so doing, the pattern was set for an underclass disenfranchised economically, politically and socially from the dominant society.

Establishment of Separate Schools

The particular oppression that the Black population experienced in Nova Scotia was both reflected in and perpetuated through the education system of the province. While the condition of education for both the Black and poor White population of the province in the late 1700s and early 1800s was equally lacking, the particular patterns of education established for the Black population in these early years remained, by and large, intact for over a century and a half, lasting until the 1960s.

In these early years of settlement, Nova Scotians could not afford schools, and those who did try to establish schools were able, usually, to maintain only poorly trained and underpaid teachers. The government provided but partially effective measures to assist communities in this respect, holding back from a system of free public schools until the Tupper educational reforms of 1864 and 1865. Special grants were made frequently upon petition, and both the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) established numerous schools for both Black and White Nova Scotians.[15]

The Associates of the Late Dr. Bray funded the establishment of schools in the Black Loyalist communities of Halifax, Preston, Brindley Town, Birchtown and Shelburne as early as 1785 followed in 1788 by the SPG appointing a Black Loyalist, Thomas Brownspriggs, as teacher at Tracadie. In these early years the religious organizations recruited a relatively large number of Black teachers drawn from the Loyalist ranks of preachers and community leaders. Pachai notes over thirteen Black Loyalists recruited as teachers all but three of whom left the province for Sierra Leone in 1792. They included well known leaders like Boston King, John Ball and Moses Wilkinson, Isaac Limerick, Joseph Leonard, Catherine Abernathy, Cato Perkins, William Ash, David George and Hector Peters.

The three Black teachers who remained in Nova Scotia were Colonel Stephen Blucke who taught in Birchtown, and Thomas Brownspriggs and Dempsey Jordan, teachers in Tracadie.[16] Between 1785 and 1791, these three Black teachers provided a rudimentary education consisting of reading, spelling and sewing to an estimated three to four hundred Black children. Writing and math were excluded from the curriculum as they *"were considered unnecessary accomplishments in children who would subsequently be required to perform the meanest tasks."*[17] It was clear that the educational goals for Black children were being set by White society which had already made up its mind as to the role Black Nova Scotians would play in society.

In 1811, the Province had passed a law providing a government subsidy for those communities which could raise between 50 and 200 pounds stirling, build a school house and hire a teacher. Given the economic hardships faced by the struggling Black communities, few were able to meet the requirements to obtain the subsidy; thus what education occurred in the Black communities continued to be provided through the various religious organizations. In effect this legislation offered encouragement to settlements of thirty families or more but excluded the rural and smaller districts. This legislation also continued to exclude the poor as it still required students to pay for their books, paper and a portion of fuel to heat the school building.

Educational policy was not to change substantially until 1836 when the Education Act was amended to adopt assessment by the majority of ratepayers in any school district. In addition, an amendment to the Education Act gave powers to the Commissioners of Education of a municipality to use a portion of a grant of 70 pounds sterling which the legislature had made available *to assist poor school districts in establishing schools for Black children, even if a common school may have already been established in the district.* Thus the policy of segregation was established by law and strengthened by government financing.

Education in these early years was largely outside the means of most Black families. Because of the extreme poverty experienced by most of the Black communities, sufficient monies were not generally available for educational purposes once the basic necessities of food and shelter were provided. Consequently, most Black children in Nova Scotia, and especially those in the rural and outlying areas of the province, were without any form of formal schooling, thereby laying the framework for the gap between White and Black education which persists up to this present day.

In these same years education was also lacking in many of the rural and outlying White communities of the province. Fergusson writes that "*In every section of the province there was a need for improvement in the poor and remote districts ... The legislators of the day shrank from assessment (taxation) and the system of education still had its deficiencies.*"[18] In 1850, the first appointed Superintendent of Education recognized that Common School education in Nova Scotia was "*far below the wants of the people and the demands of the age in which they live.*" Only about one-half of the number of children were at any one time in school. Very few school houses were adequate. Most teachers lacked training and were poorly paid. The Census of 1861 revealed that about five-eighths of the total number of children in Nova Scotia between the ages 5 and 15 were without the benefit of education.[19]

While it can be argued, using the above statistics, that there was little difference in these years between the state of education in Black and White communities, the argument can also be made that while only three-eighths of White children received an education, education for Black children was virtually non-existent. The fact remains that in those rural areas which had Common Schools, Black children were forbidden by law to attend them. One can speculate that in those few instances where Black children were entitled to attend Common Schools, few were likely to willingly subject themselves to the racial discrimination that must have been present in those schools, given the climate of the day.

The Black Community's Fight for Education

The story of Black parents and their efforts to ensure an adequate education for their children reveals the depth of the commitment and determination of the parents to ensure quality and control of their children's education. Petitions to government from the Black community were frequent over the nineteenth century with the earliest known petition coming from the community of Preston where families responded to the 1811 legislation requesting supplementary support to establish a one room schoolhouse and a small home for the school teacher. Government responded favourably with classes commencing in 1816 taught by a White teacher provided by the SPG.[20] The next 175 years however saw the community in almost constant struggle with the Province over equal access to education. A more complete history of this community's struggle around education can be found in the Case Study entitled *North Preston's Struggle to Obtain Equality in Education* found in Section 2 of this document.

A second Case Study entitled *Inglewood, a Case Study of Educational Excellence* provides insight into another Black community's involvement in education with particular emphasis on the role played by the community in encouraging its youth to establish and attain high educational goals. The Inglewood Case Study is also found in Section 2.

Nova Scotia's Black communities also monitored the education received by their children resulting in a number of petitions to government pointing out their concerns with the low standards of education their children were receiving. The establishment of separate schools in 1864 resulted in considerable discontentment within some Black communities leading to several petitions against the legislation. Figure 1 provides some examples of petitions directed to the government from Black communities in the province.

Figure 1
Examples of Black Community Efforts to Obtain Education For Their Children[21]

1820	Residents of Preston petition government to establish both a church and school.
1825	Residents of Preston petition for funds to maintain a teacher.
1837	Black families in Dartmouth request aid for their school.
1839	Black families at Salmon River, Yarmouth County, request provincial aid to erect a school.
1841	Reverend Robert Willis, on behalf of the Black community in Halifax, petitions government for funds to establish a training school for Black teachers.
1844	Black families at Salmon River, Yarmouth County, request aid for their school.
1845-9	Residents of Three Mile Plains, Windsor, petition seeking financing to establish a school and maintain a teacher.
1852	Parents of children attending the African School in Halifax petition the School Commissioners regarding treatment accorded the students by the school master. Not satisfied with the solution to their problems, these parents start their own school with a teacher and facility financed through their own funds.
1859	Inglewood residents request provincial aid to complete school.
1860	Residents of Africville finance construction of a school and then petition government for financing to maintain the school.
1860	Nine Black Halifax families petition government for aid to support a school for their children.
1881, 1883-4	Black families in Halifax submit petitions opposing separate schools stating that the Black schools are of *"an inferior grade in which students do not receive equal advantages with children attending common schools."*

The African Schools: 1816-1850

The schooling which was available to Black children was in separate schools established solely for the use of Black children. The SPG's efforts had increased with the arrival of the Black Refugees; between 1816 and the 1850s several modest schools (referred to as the *African schools*) were established throughout the province provided by the SPG and the Associates of the late Dr. Bray. During these years there was also one private school established entirely through Black initiatives, and government-aided schools in Preston, Hammonds Plains and Halifax. There was one school in Yarmouth, two in Birchtown, and one each in Sackville, Digby and Beech Hill.[22] These schools were located in the Black communities, at some distance from the White communities, and were for Black students only. In effect they were the beginning of Nova Scotia's segregated school system.

Education is often held as the best route for enabling social mobility and advancing one's economic situation. Such was not the case however with the African schools, as the curriculum set for the Black students was intended to maintain the Black population in a submissive condition to the dominant society. The minutes of the SPG and other missionary reports, for example, clearly indicate that the curriculum of the African schools was based more on instilling obedience in the Black population than with providing students with upgrading skills or knowledge. The missionary movement throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries customarily coupled the teaching of rudimentary education with the Christian values of *humility and contentedness* as a method of maintaining law and order among the British colonies. Their educational efforts among the Black population in Nova Scotia proved no exception.

When White students attending the Common Schools were studying Algebra, the Classics, English grammar, Latin, Greek, Geography and the use of globes, their Black counterparts were deliberately restricted to instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic and the catechism.[23]

The African schools did extreme damage to the Black learner in both their establishment of a segregated system and their selection of curriculum inferior in quality and content to that received by White children attending the Common Schools. As public education became universal across the province in the 1860s, this separation and inferiority of education was maintained. By the 1860s, separate schools received legal sanction by the passage of legislation that was both overtly racial in overtones and designed specifically to keep Black students out of the province's Common Schools.

Legalized Segregation

In 1865, the province established free and compulsory primary education for all children. At the same time a law was introduced which legally sanctioned discrimination in education against Blacks stating that: "*the school commissioners of any municipality could establish separate schools if they, rather than a body of petitioners, thought them necessary and if the government approved.*"[24] This became known as the law of separate schools and was referred to in the legislature of the day as *the colour line.*

While the majority of schools for Black children would de facto be segregated because of geography, such was not the case in Halifax where a small Black population lived in close proximity to the White population. In these instances Black and White children attended public schools together leading some White parents to complain that their children "*were forced to sit together with Black children.*" Using the law of separate schools, a minute of council was passed in 1876 excluding all Black children from the Common Schools of the City of Halifax and establishing separate schools for their use.

As Frank Boyd has noted, unlike the rural areas where the Commissioners were rarely forced to explain their acts, in an urban area like Halifax "*this effort to establish segregated schools was too obvious an infringement upon the civil and human rights of ratepayers and human beings to go unquestioned.*"[25]

The Black community in Halifax, numbering about 560 in 1880, used sophisticated means in their efforts to reverse the discriminatory minute of council. They hired a lawyer to bring a suit against the Halifax Board of Commissioners citing their right as tax payers of the City of Halifax to continue to send their children to the Common Schools. They held public meetings organized by the Education Committee of the African Baptist Church on Cornwallis St. and successfully recruited the press to their side resulting in newspaper coverage such as the following entitled "*Negroes Need Not Apply:*"

> *One drop of African blood, no matter how respectable and untarnished are the veins in which it flows, is sufficient in Halifax to doom the child of the honest taxpayer to what is, in effect, the ostracism and deprecation of an inferior education. Children of the Rev. James Thomas were denied admission to one of the schools and Mr. French's children were actually driven from school. Neither of them ever sent a child to school afterwards.*[26]

Their efforts continued over a seven year span culminating in several petitions, including a nine page petition[27] signed by 106 Black household heads and presented to the House of Assembly in 1883. This petition is particularly informative in that it shows the great distaste and scorn the Halifax Black community held for the African schools, seeing them as instances of *charity* and fit only for *vagrants and outcasts.* They refer to the injustice of their children being subjected to *the rejected teachers of other schools* and come back repeatedly to the fact that they *are citizens and ratepayers* and *pay taxes as other citizens.* They are particularly upset that their children are forced to walk great distances, passing a number of the Common Schools on their way to the schools established exclusively for their use.

> *The children of Wards I, II, III and IV have to walk past St. Mary's, the National, the Acadian, Brunswick St. and St. Patrick Schools no matter what the weather, away up to the north end of this City to the corner of Gerish and Maynard Streets. The girls of Wards I and II, have to pass most of the schools above mentioned to Poplar Grove, while those residing in Wards V and VI, have to walk past the doors of Agricola St., Albro St. and St. Patricks schools.*
>
> *In very truth there is not a school in this city open to a coloured child, so called, in which they can obtain anything like a good Common School education and this is a city which expends money on Common Schools. The child of the most respectable coloured person in this city is refused admission to any of the schools except those provided by the Commissioners and aforedescribed. While the children of the very dregs of the city of White, so called, can go through a regular course of graded schools up to the high school, there are no advanced schools for our children in the city, and from the very notion of things can never be, because the conditions for a graded school do not exist either as to cash, numbers of pupils, or scholarship, and the schools provided by the Commissioners for the children of your petitioners are not to be spoken of in the same breath in which is mentioned the fine graded schools of this city, from which our children have been expelled and are now prevented from entering. There is no future before our children under this most unjust exclusion.*

Despite the protests and organizational efforts by the Black community to re-establish their children in the Common Schools, by the 1880s there were four schools established in Halifax exclusively for the use of Black children; Africville School, Lockman Street School, Maynard Street School and the National School. These schools were "*deficit in ventilation, drainage and light compared with the Common Schools*" and provided instruction of only "*the most simple and elementary character.*" Those parents who could afford it sent their children abroad for their education while others sent their children to private schools which started up in Halifax to fill the gap left by the 1876 minute of council. The majority however, because of finances, found themselves outside the education system; as was noted in the 1883 petition, "*only one child in five goes to school while four roam the streets growing up in ignorance.*"

The formal challenge by the Black community that the segregated schools were of an inferior nature led in 1884 to the infamous and acrimonious House of Assembly debate[28] in which "*every argument known to man*"[29] against the mixing of races was put forth in the legislature of the day. The leading proponent of the legislation argued that:

> *Laws were made for the greatest good of the greatest number. In theory, coloured children were entitled to admission to public schools, but prejudice was too deep to be uprooted quickly. School boards should be given time in which to find solutions. The schools of Halifax would be destroyed if integration were forced upon the White community. Parents would send their children to private schools rather than permit racial mixing. There were rowdy children in the White schools who could not be trusted to treat the simple Negroes kindly.*

Another speaker stated that while "*he would be very sorry to do any injustice to the coloured people, he considered it a great deal better that they should have separate apartments (schools) and teachers specially qualified to teach them. They would feel more at home among themselves and make better progress in school.*" A third speaker posited that it was "*questionable whether any honourable gentleman would like to have his children occupy a position at a school desk with coloured children.*"

This debate culminated in the passing of an amendment which stated that: *The government could continue to establish separate schools for sexes and for colors, although if no Negro school existed, admission to the public school was to be guaranteed.* In those areas, like Halifax, where the Black population was large enough to justify the existence of a separate school, the amendment strengthened the continuation of segregated schools.

The passage of this amendment had a long-reaching impact on the Black population of the province. For with the passage of this amendment, the Black community lost not only its struggle for the right to attend the Common Schools, but also its right to a high school education and post-secondary opportunities. The schools established for Black children provided only rudimentary education, were outside the graded system of the Common Schools, and were staffed primarily by under qualified teachers.

In 1886 the day was won by those desirous of maintaining the colour line in Nova Scotia's schools and society. In 1918 the law underwent a slight revision but its underlying intent of maintaining separate schools remained. "*The Council of Public Instruction could receive the recommendation of any inspector for separate apartments or buildings in any section for the different sexes or different races of pupils, and to make such decisions thereon as it deems proper, subject to the provision that coloured pupils shall not be excluded from instruction in the public school in the section in which they reside.*"[30] Thus the legal grounds for maintaining segregated schools remained intact. Not until 1954 was all reference to race dropped from the legislation.

Education in Nova Scotia at the Turn of the Century

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many areas of the Province were without schools. When the Free Education Act went into effect in 1865, some 200 of the 1,400 school sections in the Province were without school houses.[31] By 1889, that number had been reduced to 82 sections, with "*the most remote and thinly populated areas*" of the Province still bereft of educational facilities.[32] Mushaboom along the Eastern Shore of the province, for example, opened a school in 1897 after thirteen years of being without any form of schooling for their children.[33] The cost to establish and maintain schools was too onerous for the ratepayers of many communities, Black or White. The salient difference between opportunities for Black and White children, however, was that whereas only a portion of White children in the province were without adequate schooling in these years, *almost all Black children were without adequate schooling.* Black children were systematically denied education in the Common Schools which did exist in their districts, and forced to rely on the meagre facilities and inferior schooling which their struggling communities could afford or which were provided through the African schools.

By the end of the nineteenth century, financial support for the African schools which had been forthcoming from the philanthropic societies in England had ceased. Once these grants were withdrawn, financial responsibility for the schools' upkeep fell entirely to the ratepayers. Given the economic realities of their circumstances, however, most Black communities found it impossible to take on this responsibility on a regular and ongoing basis.

In 1894 the Superintendent's Report on Education for the Province noted that the Lucas settlement had a school; Beech Hill was shortly to open a school; the community at Cobequid Road had been forced to close their school for the year; Maroon Hill school was open for only one term in seven years; a fire had destroyed the school in Partridge River; and there had been no school in Hammonds Plains for 5 years and in Preston for over 15 years.[34]

Those communities able to raise the necessary financing to build a school were often unable to raise sufficient dollars to attract and maintain a teacher. Thus we see schools open for only one or two terms or closed for years. This problem was commented upon frequently in the Inspector's annual reports with the 1894 report noting that "*special aid is required to induce competent teachers.*" The permissive license was usually the rule for the poorer communities and the Inspector struggled to find individuals who were "*tolerably competent*" to work with these "*poor and neglected children.*"[35] Neither White nor Black teachers could be persuaded to teach in the poorer Black communities outside Halifax.[36]

The schools that did exist in Black communities were greatly inferior to the White common schools. "*Inevitably,*" Walker writes, "*the education received by Blacks was inferior. School buildings were often overcrowded and ramshackle, creating an environment that was not inclined to encourage Blacks to attend. Teachers willing to work for low pay in isolated communities tended to be under qualified, and some were barely literate.*"[37]

Clearly finances were not the only deciding factor in the education of Black children. The colour line, established through settlement patterns and maintained through legislation, was still in force at the turn of the century. The Inspector of Schools for Halifax, referring to the existence of two public schools, not 200 yards from each other, with 11 and 15 students respectively, wrote in 1891: "*When will this prejudice, as foolish as it is cruel, cease to cripple weak sections that need to economize all their forces?*"[38]

Education in the Period 1900-1954

Schooling in the first half of the twentieth century continued to be unavailable to Black children in many parts of the province and communities with schools continued to find it difficult to attract teachers. Winks notes that between 1918 and 1954 "*only the most blind of school inspectors could have pretended that separate education was also equal education.*"[39] In the few integrated schools in the province, Black children's instruction time was limited, in some instances, to one third of the time available to White children. Other examples of such glaringly unequal opportunities in education for Black children are summarized in Figure 2.

Between 1939 and 1949, further educational legislation put in place free school books, the municipal school unit and loans for capital expenditure, all of which gave a tremendous impetus to the educational development of the province.[41]The establishment of the Family Allowance also impacted the system by permitting better attendance and better clothed children.

Despite the apparent provincial advances in education, segregated schools continued to be built throughout this period even in areas where the numbers of Black families were small as in Gibson Woods, King's County. Up until 1942, for example, the children of Gibson Woods had attended elementary and junior high school in the nearby White community of Centreville. In that year however a local White businessman "*took offense at the idea his daughter would be attending school with Black children*" and used the nineteenth century legislation to force construction of a segregated school for the children of Gibson Woods.[42]

The provincial legislation barring Black students from the public schools if Black schools already existed underwent further interpretation in the 1940s with Black children being barred from the public schools whether separate facilities existed or not. In the Middle Sackville area of Halifax County, for example, there had been no separate schools for Blacks but the public schools actively discouraged Black children from attending by saying "*they had not the ability to learn.*" It was within this context that Mrs. Pleasah Lavinia Caldwell, a retired teacher with experience in Western Canada, began her 'kitchen school' in Maroon Hill. Begun initially as a volunteer effort, the 'school' received funding and support through the Department of Education over the period from 1946 to 1953. Over these seven years Mrs. Caldwell instructed 27 students, most of whom went on to complete their high school, and in some cases, post-secondary education.

Figure 2
Sporadic Nature of Schools within the Black Communities in the 1900s[40]

1918	All children near Annapolis and Digby had access to public schools "*except the coloured section of Fundy*" where there were 20 children of school age and where there had been no teacher for 10 years. At Joggins, where Whites and Blacks attended jointly, the Black children were only permitted to attend one third of the time.
1912-9	There was no school for Black children in Guysborough County because no teacher could be found to accept the small salary.
1915	Two Black schools in Antigonish County remained closed because no teachers could be found.
1920	The school in Greenville, Yarmouth County, unable to find a teacher, remained closed for at least eight years.
1932	After forty years of no school for the Black population of Guysborough Road, a new school finally opened. The community had raised a portion of the funds itself through concerts and benefit suppers with the remaining coming through the Department of Education.
1936	This was the first year that the Black population of Birchtown, Guysborough County received any formal schooling.
1940	Black students were openly prevented from attending school in Lower Sackville. In response, Mrs. Pleasah Lavinia Caldwell, a teacher who had taught in western Canada, opened the now famous 'kitchen school' in Maroon Hill, where Black children from the surrounding community were taught for the next ten years.

Standards continued to vary greatly between the Black and White schools in these years. Black schools were poorly maintained, inadequately heated throughout the winter months and were without running water. Individual accounts of separate schools by now retired Black teachers are uniform in their condemnation of the conditions. Teaching resources were limited with teachers forced to provide their own supplies or do without. This situation was permitted to continue well into the 1950s, and in some instances the early 1960s, at a time when White school children attended clean, well maintained and well stocked schools.[43]

A description provided by a retired Black teacher[44] of her school in Tracadie, Guysborough County in 1939-40 gives some insights into both the conditions of the Black schools and the attitudes the School Board held towards their Black charges in those years.

> *It was a little one room school with a wood stove in the middle. It had a bare wood floor with an extension built for the entrance which we used as a woodroom and a coatroom. There was an outside toilet and no running water – we went to a neighbour's well with a bucket and each child had their own cup which they filled with a dipper. I remember sweeping snow off the seats and desks. The children kept on their coats and boots in the winter and I moved the children around the stove to keep warm.*
>
> *The windows were all on one side – and I recall a member from the School Board would come by, raise the window and throw in toilet paper for the year. There were no teaching aids – one box of chalk. There was a rotating library among a number of schools. We didn't even have bookcases. The aids we had we brought in ourselves. It was meagre and it was cold.*

From Tracadie, this teacher went on in 1941 to teach at a school in Sunnyville, Guysborough County:

> *This was a new school which the School Board had built. I was the first teacher there. The School Board put up a frame but it wasn't finished inside. I remember there were long benches, windows on one side (like the Tracadie school) and a stove in the middle. In the winter the heat would bring frost dripping into the school between the boards. We held a pie social to build steps for school – it was a new school and there were no steps! The* IODE *adopted our school – they would bring us scribblers, pencils and treats. The Red Cross would bring cod liver oil pills.*

The evidence is clear that the School Boards were lacking in their responsibility towards the Black communities in their jurisdiction. For example, children from the Black communities in Guysborough County routinely dropped out of school in the eighth grade as neither the Upper Big Tracadie school nor the Lincolnville school provided high school education. Meanwhile White children from the nearby community of Matty's Settlement were encouraged to obtain their high school education in the Town of Guysborough with any required expenses such as rent and food covered by the School Board. This option was kept from the Black community until such time as a Black teacher learned of its existence (late 1950s) and challenged the School Board to provide board for one of her children.[45]

> *The School Board said* "there's not much we can do" *but when told* "You've been doing it for years" *the Board wrote a letter stating that* "if you can find a place for your daughter to board, we will take care of the finances." *So my daughter boarded in Guysborough for three years and was the only Black child from Upper Tracadie who got her high school education and the board paid.*

Black children who were able to continue their education past the eighth grade in White schools outside of their own communities were the exception. Along with the name calling and other problems arising from racial discrimination there were the difficulties of transportation and finances for enrollment, clothing and board (if applicable). The retired Black teacher, for example, interviewed from Gibson Woods indicated that she was the only Black student who attended high school in Kentville when she was growing up; and the teacher interviewed in Guysborough indicated that she had obtained her high school while living with an aunt in Boston.

While 48.7 percent of the province's White teachers in 1911 had attended the Provincial Normal College (now the Nova Scotia Teachers College),[46] it was not until 1928 that the Black community saw its first Normal College graduate.[47] In fact most Black teachers in Nova Scotia operated under the authority of the permissive license until the 1960s.[48] Few had a high school education with the majority having achieved the eighth grade level only.

The lack of well qualified Black teachers was complicated by the fact that few White teachers were willing to teach in the Black schools and, if placed in a Black school, transferred out as soon as they were able. One Black elder observed that "*in the space of a couple of years, over eleven White teachers who found themselves at a Black school on Cobequid Road in Sackville, left after only a few months.*"[49]

The lack of well trained teachers available to the Black schools resulted in a province-wide denial of high school education to the Black population. Why this situation was permitted to continue as long as it did is a source of speculation. Some say that the Black community was reluctant to complain about the lack of teaching standards for fear of losing the few jobs that they had. Others say that from the School Board's perspective it was a lot cheaper to pay a untrained teacher than a trained teacher thereby saving considerable dollars in salaries alone. Whatever the reasons, there is no intent here to lay blame on the Black teachers' shoulders. The onus for the provision of equal education falls squarely on the shoulders of government and clearly the government of the day did not live up to its responsibility to the Black community of this province.

Desegregation of Nova Scotia's Schools

Change was painfully slow in coming to the mainstream of Nova Scotia's educational system. While the Education Act of the Province of Nova Scotia dropped the reference to "*different races*" in 1954, at around the same time as the famous Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka decision in the United States, actual desegregation of schools did not occur until the following decade. As late as 1960, for example, there were still seven formal Black school districts in the province and an additional three exclusively Black schools.

There is still a reluctance on the part of politicians and policy makers from the 1960s to admit that segregation actually played a role in Nova Scotia's education system. The problem, from their perspective, was one of poverty combined with the difficulty all faced in accessing high school education in the more rural areas of the province. This analysis reflects Winks suggestion that it was "*custom, inertia and widespread ignorance of the laws, rather than the active will of White segregationists*", which "*had permitted the clauses to remain on the books ...*" and that "*once attention was given to them, in the context of a more generalized and growing Canadian interest in civil rights, the legal foundations for segregation were... put in course of removal in Nova Scotia.*"[50]

Such an analysis is questionable however when it is remembered that as late as 1968 a Black child was refused burial in a St. Croix graveyard drawing upon a 1907 by-law which read "*Not any Negro nor any Indian shall be buried in St. Croix cemetery.*" Indeed elements of the White community were vigilant in their knowledge of the law and applied it vigorously whenever members of the Black community attempted to cross the colour line.

The Viola Desmond theatre incident occurring in New Glasgow in 1946 is another example where the court was used to ensure that Blacks *remained in their place.* Mrs. Desmond was charged, found guilty and fined $20 plus costs or 30 days in prison for sitting downstairs instead of the balcony which was "*reserved for Blacks only*" and this after she had already spent 12 hours in jail for said offense.

In 1960, the then Conservative premier Robert Stanfield, took the first steps to dismantle segregated schools by successfully moving the abolishment of three segregated schools districts in West Hants, followed shortly by the closure of the four remaining Black school districts, Beechville, Hammonds Plains, Lucasville and Cherry Brook, all in Halifax County.

In 1969, the first group of Black students to attend an integrated high school (Graham Creighton Senior High), graduated. Around the same time, local Black schools were being closed down and integration became a hot issue. Lake Loon School closed in 1968, and Partridge River School closed in 1978. Instead of improving the conditions of the Black schools and/or bussing White children into the Black communities, integration was interpreted one way – that of bussing Black students into White schools.

Even within the so-called integrated schools of the 1950s and 1960s, cruel remnants of segregation remained with Black children forbidden to use the same washrooms, entrances or exits to the schools as the White children.

Integration brought its own set of problems to the Black communities as neither Government nor school administrators saw the need to set up guidelines or policies for ensuring the success of integration. Teachers in the public school system were (and continue to be) unprepared to deal with children from different ethnic backgrounds nor were they trained to either recognize or deal with prejudice. Racial incidents, for example, were most often swept under the rug and Black students were admonished and often expelled for responding to them. Black teachers and students alike encountered prejudicial treatment from White administrators and teachers unaccustomed to Black culture and history. The legacy of separate schools, maintained over nearly two centuries in Nova Scotia, spilled over into the classroom resulting in racial stereotyping and low expectations on the part of teachers and racial name-calling by White students. Black students were routinely counselled away from the academic stream into the general stream and drop-out rates soared. Integration brought on new battles for the Black community.

2 Legacy of the Education System

Education and Employment Statistics

Mass educational opportunities for Black Nova Scotians did not exist until well into the second half of the twentieth century. The legacy of the educational system among the Black community of the province has been one of extreme unemployment and poverty. "*A chief consequence of their educational deprivation,*" writes Clairmont, "*given the nature of Nova Scotia's economy, was that Blacks had to compete with the many poor Whites for relatively scarce wages. Not only did this competition generate considerable antipathy between these disadvantaged groups, but also the Blacks found employment almost impossible to obtain.*"[51]

The poverty of the Black community was a real limitation to their children's education. Adequate clothing was difficult to obtain particularly in the winter months resulting in sporadic school attendance. Young girls often had to leave school to take care of their younger siblings to enable their mothers to work as domestics. Young boys would work alongside their older brothers and fathers in the woods or on the farms. Keeping food in the home was for many the only choice and education was a luxury that most could not afford.

The evidence is compelling in the educational and economic statistics of the province. In 1960, for example, there were only 20 Black students attending high school in the City of Halifax.[52] In 1969, at a *Teach-In on the Black Man in Nova Scotia* held at Saint Francis Xavier University, Dr. W. P. Oliver spoke about the economic impact brought about through the lack of education within the Black community and indicated that as much as 80 percent of the province's Black population lived in conditions of utter poverty. Dr. Oliver also referred to a survey undertaken in North End Halifax through Canada Manpower which showed that the average education of Black residents was well below grade 8 with many at the grades 2, 3 and 4 level. At the top end of the education scale, he indicated, there were, in 1969, "*perhaps 35 (Black) university graduates.*"[53]

A survey[54] undertaken in 1970 of thirteen Black communities in the province reflected "*a severely under-educated population even for a province which is known for its lack of educational facilities.*"[55] The survey indicated that educational achievement generally declined from mid-city to urban fringe to rural non-farm populations and that lack of high school training was characteristic of Black communities throughout the province.

Of those interviewed for the survey[56], less than half or 42 percent of the sample, had achieved between grades 5-8 education. Thirty percent had between grades 9-11 and 22 percent attended only through grades 1-4. Only ten respondents had completed high school. Only four persons had some university training – one had completed – and another ten had some technical or commercial training in lieu of completing high school.

An earlier study conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs in 1962 among Black Halifax residents shows that only one respondent in their sample had gone beyond grade 12 and that most Black adults surveyed had attained between the grade 4-9 range.[57]

In seeking to explain the reasons behind this low educational attainment, Henry pointed to the "*discrimination and harassment ... frequently found in the school system serving to reduce the motivation of youngsters to remain in school.*"[58] Figure 3 lists a number of the factors identified through the study which led Black students to leave school early.

Figure 3
Factors Forcing Black Students to Leave School Early[59]

- Incidents of harassment of Black students particularly at the high school level.
- The 'common practice of teachers and students alike' making subtle comments that Black students stay in the lower grades repeating and failing until they leave the school.
- The fact that none of the high schools or universities in the province were geared to the needs of Black students in terms of hiring Black teachers to act as role models even in areas of Black residential congregation.
- The fact that neither schools nor universities have developed special courses on Black studies. Thus Black youth today know little of their own history.

We see then, a people literally disenfranchised both educationally and employment-wise from Nova Scotian society. The limits placed upon the Black community's employment opportunities through their lack of education, aggravated by the racial prejudice of many employers, meant that only the lowest jobs on the social scale were open to them. In 1949 Dr. Oliver stated that "*The Negro today is employed in the major industries of the Province, in the heaviest and lowest paid jobs.*"[60] Twelve years later a survey carried out among Black families in Halifax found that little had changed. Blacks were still heavily concentrated in manual and menial jobs, were unemployed longer than the average for all unemployed, and earned less than the mean city income.

This *ghettoization* of Blacks to menial jobs also conditioned most Black youth to believe that post-secondary education was not a realistic option for them. With few Black role models in professional positions, neither the Black student nor parent seriously considered employment other than those options traditionally open to the Black community in Nova Scotia.

Adult Education and the Black Community

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Black communities throughout the province organized to counter the inferior education and racial discrimination they encountered through the provincial education system. The Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP), incorporated in 1945, developed a partnership with the Adult Education Division of the Department of Education and together enabled adult education classes and self-help projects to take hold among the province's Black communities. The first meeting found 75 residents of Hammonds Plains from those in their early teens to those in their late sixties in the local schoolhouse planning the

first adult education classes sponsored by these two bodies. Dr. W.P. Oliver, one of the initial organizers with the NSAACP, and later an educator with the adult education division, wrote of these early meetings as follows: "*It is called education, but it is rather community planning.*"[61]

Within a period of ten years a strong leadership had emerged among the various Black communities, developed through adult education upgrading classes, self-help projects and a determination to take control over their future. A reading of the annual reports of the Adult Education Division points to the growth of community councils, credit unions, and Home and School Associations among many of the Black communities of the province. These groups, in association with the NSAACP, began to set their own agendas and adult education classes under the direct sponsorship of the division began to decline. By the 1960s the focus was increasingly on community development, with the Adult Education Division's role limited to providing field staff to groups formed to identify and strategize around their communities' needs.[62]

The NSAACP expanded its efforts in the field of community development, culminating in a delegation to the premier's office requesting changes in education as well as other issues relating to employment, housing, and human rights on behalf of the Black population of the province.[63] The meeting took place on October 25, 1968 with the then premier G.I. Smith's response reported in the local newspaper under the heading "*The Black Man's History May Finally Find Its Way Into Nova Scotia's School Text Books.*"[64] The article noted that the lack of Black contributions to history had "*long been the contention of the NSAACP and many Negro educators*" and stated that the premier had requested the province's curriculum division to check this aspect of studies and textbooks that were being considered for public schools. The premier also committed that books by Black authors would be carefully considered for inclusion in the curriculum and that Black representatives would be invited to sit on the department's education committee beginning "*in the immediate future.*" Other areas reportedly agreed upon at the October 25 meeting included the need for special teacher training as well as careful selection of teachers for schools located in Black communities.

BUF, Education and The Graham Commission

As Walker writes:

> *The underlying strategy of the NSAACP of attacking discrimination case by case, however, did not attack general attitudes in the belief that a concerted attack on the outward expressions of racism, would, piece by piece, result in the untenability of racial discrimination generally.*[65]

The promises made by the Smith government in the area of education were not honoured and conditions under so-called integration continued to maintain a gap between Black and White students.

The struggle for equality in education became part of the larger struggle for equality of rights and justice for the Black population of Nova Scotia. It comes as no surprise then that we find an increasingly vocal population, both Black and White, speaking out against the education available to the Black population of the province. The American Civil Rights Movement moved into Canada and Nova Scotia, and local Black leaders emerged who pointed to the Black population's extreme poverty and low levels of educational attainment as examples of the legacy of segregation.

The early efforts of the NSAACP were expanded upon by the Black United Front (BUF), a political organization established in 1968 to present a united voice of Black communities and

organizations across the province. Education became one of the major areas of focus for BUF in its initial years with its monthly newspaper, GRASP, taking on the mandate of assessing the school system. Various issues over its publication (1971-1975) discussed the feasibility of developing curriculum materials, establishing preschool development programs, assessing drop-out patterns and pinpointing further barriers to the quality of education. One issue referred to "*the unsettling atmosphere*" which had engulfed many Nova Scotian schools with a Black student population and commented on "*the deep and hidden frustrations of students (due to) a combination of failing grades, lack of constructive activity in and after school and unsure futures to look forward to. Flaws in our system of education are the direct cause of this.*"[66] Other concerns investigated by GRASP included the funneling of Black students into the general program, the lack of Black history within the school curriculum, and the relationship between the parents and school administration. "*Black parents,*" the readers were told, "*have continued to value a sound education with very high regard and the parent has usually bowed to the wishes of administration so that the education of the child could continue as smoothly as possible.*"[67] GRASP also kept its readership up to date on specific incidents of discrimination in the schools as indicated from a report on charges from 150 Black students attending Queen Elizabeth High School "*that the conditions which exist at this time are in no way conducive to their being able to secure an education free of unwarranted frustration and inconsiderations.*"[68]

In the fall of 1971, the Black United Front presented a 18 page brief to the *Royal Commission on Education, Public Services and Provincial-Municipal Relations* which explicitly linked the low educational attainment among the province's Black population to the institutionalized racism found in the province's education system. Specifically, the BUF Brief focused on the systematic lack of Black curriculum, the lack of Black teachers and administrators in the system, insensitivity on the part of White teachers to the needs of Black students, inappropriate testing methods of Black students, systematic streaming of Black students into general or dead-end programs and the lack of preschools for the Black child.[69]

Figure 4
Selected Recommendations from the Graham Commission, 1974

- That the Minister of Education should appoint a special task force ... to develop effective programs of teacher education and training that will better prepare teachers to identify and be aware of students from minority and disadvantaged groups, to develop and implement programs to meet the special needs of these students, and to avoid any conscious or unconscious positive or negative discrimination against these students within the schools.
- That such programs be provided as a part of any pre-service teacher education and training within the province.
- That such programs should be adapted and intensified for all teachers of schools serving significant numbers of students from minority and disadvantaged groups

The resultant report of the Graham Commission (1974) acknowledged the major points raised in the BUF brief and set forth equally explicit recommendations (see Figure 4) aimed at redressing the inequality of education among Blacks and other minorities in the province. Almost 20 years after the tabling of the report, the recommendations contained in the Royal Commission retain their urgency with few being implemented intact by the Province to date. The Commission not only acknowledged the special educational needs of the Black communities but came up with strategies and funding arrangements to ensure their implementation.

- The Human Rights Act should be extended to prohibit discrimination in the provision of educational opportunity, or in the treatment of students, in the public schools and universities of the province.

- The Minister of Education should direct all schools to take special pains to ensure that their programs in community studies recognize and consider all groups of people within the community and that, in particular, members of minority and disadvantaged groups be neither excluded as topics for such study, nor slighted, nor misrepresented.

- The Curriculum Research and Development Section of the Department of Education, after consultation with representatives of the Human Rights Commission and appropriate representatives of minority and disadvantaged groups within the province, should examine existing texts and learning materials and either retire or suitably amend any that distort or misrepresent the past or present role of any group of people within the province ...

- The Curriculum Research and Development Section of the Department of Education, after consultation with representatives of the Human Rights Commission and appropriate representatives of minority and disadvantaged groups within the province, should develop learning materials that will accurately and sensitively provide knowledge and understanding of major minority groups in Nova Scotia ... and make such material available to the schools.

- Schools should make special efforts to provide in their programs for out-of-school visits to communities in which the population is predominantly different from the majority of the population in the communities that those schools serve.

- The Minister of Education should provide for schools serving significant numbers of children from socio-economically disadvantaged homes additional funds for staff and learning resources necessary to develop effective programs to meet the needs of these children.

- The Curriculum Research and Development Section of the Department of Education, in consultation with the Human Rights Commission and appropriate representatives of the Black community, should develop programs and materials especially intended to provide for students enrolled in schools having a significant number of Black students a full opportunity to explore and acquire knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of the Black people and their heritage, culture, traditions and problems and their contribution to our society.

- The Minister of Education should make additional funds available to schools serving significant numbers of Black students to enable these schools to provide the staff and learning materials necessary to develop and implement programs particularly appropriate to Black students.

- Professional staffs and school councils of these schools should make special efforts to interest and to involve the Black community in the programs and activities of these schools.

- Special financial assistance should be given to provide opportunities for Black students in relatively isolated communities to participate, as part of their school program, in travel and visits to neighbouring and other communities in Nova Scotia.

- Sustained efforts should be made to encourage Black youths to become teachers or administrators in the public school system, both to serve as examples and encouragement to Black students and to assist in overcoming any special learning or adjustment problems faced by these students in the public schools. The Department of Education should seek to make funds available to assist Black youths to undertake teacher training.

Additional Research Efforts

The Human Rights Commission, established in 1967, undertook research among several Black communities in the early 1970s including the gathering of educational data. In commenting on the quality of the Province's educational system, the report states "*there are serious shortcomings relative to visible minorities in our school system... Black students face special difficulties in our local schools. Most of them are in General Courses; few get beyond grade 10, and fewer still advance into post-high school educational institutions.*"[70] The report was particularly concerned with addressing "*the observation that the present educational system is designed largely to meet the needs and standards of the majority or dominant culture.*" Research was presented which revealed that the Province's schools "*are among the worst offenders in encouraging prejudice and in alienating minority students from the academic world.*"[71] The curriculum was found to be filled with minority stereotyping and lacked whole segments of the history and culture of minority groups.

Additional research undertaken in the 1970s shows how the climate of the educational system continued to mitigate against Black children completing their education. Not only were Black students made not to feel welcome through outward acts of hostility by both White teachers and students alike, the system developed a mechanism, known as streaming, which systematically moved Black children into a general course of instruction and away from an academic stream and hence post secondary opportunities.

The summer following the tabling of the Graham Report, four Black university students conducted an *Opportunities for Youth Project* entitled *Educational Perspectives for Blacks.*[72] Their findings showed how segregation, officially terminated in 1954, continued to flourish in more subtle forms through various policies of the educational system. "*Segregation*", the study contended, "*begins in the elementary schools, where students progress at their own rate. In dividing a class into fast, mediocre and slow learners, teachers report that the slow groups are four-fifths Black and the fast groups are approximately one-fifth Black. As the present school system has no failures in the elementary grades, the students go on to junior high where their difficulties exacerbate. The* auxiliary *classes of the junior high become filled with Black students – estimated as high as 95 percent in densely Black enrollment areas. The effect of such channeling on the Black student is increased loss of self-worth and high drop-out rates.*"

The report continues:

> *For those who progress beyond junior high, this subtle segregation in our senior high schools is probably the most relevant, for it has a direct bearing on the future economic well-being of the Black student. It takes the form of students being channeled into one of two basic courses (and in some schools, three programs). Academic (or university preparatory); general, business or auxiliary. These latter three programs lead to the traditional non-professional, skilled or semi-skilled jobs on the labour market.*

Figure 5 presents findings collected by the *Opportunities for Youth Project* on the percentage break down of Black students, by course in three locations – the province, metro and Halifax County, and Metro alone. The findings are similar across the three locations indicating that between 70-85 percent of students were enrolled in the general course.

Interviews indicated that most of the students talked with over the course of the research did not realize that the general courses would not permit them to go on to university. They indicated they had been told by their guidance counsellors that "*these courses would be easier for them, that they would do well*" and hence they enrolled in the general versus the academic stream.

Recommendations coming from the *Opportunities for Youth Project* report are summarized in Figure 6.

Figure 5
Percentage Breakdown of Black Students by Course and Geographic Area[73]

	Province	Metro & Halifax County	Halifax Metro
General	70	70	85
Business	10	10	10
Auxiliary	10	5	
Mixed Academic & General		10	
Academic	10	5	5

Figure 6
Recommendations from the 1975 Opportunities for Youth Project

- Placing Black guidance counsellors in the junior and senior high schools (including the concept of hiring 'floating' Black counsellors to move among the schools with high enrollments of Black students);
- Ensuring additional resources such as special reading techniques are available to schools with large numbers of Black students;
- Developing Black-focused curriculum and other learning materials;
- Establishing preschools for Black children;
- Developing strong parent contact with the schools;
- Making cross cultural training for teachers mandatory; and,
- Hiring more Blacks as teachers and senior administrators in the school system.

The Class Action Suits of the 1970s

Not only were organizations such as the NSAACP and BUF speaking out against the education the Black population was receiving in the province, the 1970s also found parents becoming increasingly vocal and political in their response to conditions in the classroom. The story of the community of North Preston, for example, and its struggle to obtain equal education for their children is a powerful indictment of government neglect. This story is recounted in detail in the Case Study entitled *North Preston's Struggle to Obtain Equality In Education* and found elsewhere in this report. The Case Study focuses on the struggle of North Preston parents to obtain educational equality for their children over nearly 200 years. Issues addressed in the Case Study include parental response to the substandard conditions at North Preston's elementary schools and the low reading levels of North Preston's elementary children resulting in the so-called class action suit of 1975.

Preston and Cherry Brook Class Action Suit

In 1975, the Black communities of Cherry Brook and Preston (North and East) approached the Human Rights Commission with a complaint against the Halifax School Board. After ten years of integration, the communities pointed to the existence of unequal education facilities between the Black and White schools in the school district. The Human Rights Commission moderated on the Black communities' behalf and reached an agreement with the Halifax School Board to establish a Monitoring Committee responsible for overseeing a number of specific actions aimed at improving the educational standards within the communities of the Preston's and Cherry Brook.

An examination of the Halifax County School Board's actions over the 1975-78 period puts in question the commitment of the School Board to educational equality within these communities however. Soon after the original agreement was signed, one school in Cherry Brook had closed and within three years a second school in Partridge River was closed. Schools in Black communities which had over two hundred years of history were being phased out in favour of opening new schools in the developing White communities of Lake Echo and Lake Major despite protestations from the Monitoring Committee. Instead of improving already existing facilities in the Black communities and bussing White students in, the School Board opted to finance the construction of new facilities within the White communities and bus the Black students out. By 1978, the only elementary school left within the Black communities was Nelson Whynder in North Preston.

Digby Class Action Suit

A second Black community which fought hard to bring equality into the integrated classroom was Digby. Prompted into action by years of harassment by White teachers and students alike, the Digby Black community in 1978 approached the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission with an official complaint against the Digby School Board.

Specific incidents cited included ongoing and unchecked name calling and graffiti by White students, inappropriate behaviour on the part of the school's senior administrators, the routine use of the RCMP to escort Black students from the school grounds, and systematic suspensions for arbitrary reasons.

The terms of settlement reached through arbitration by the Human Rights Commission were accepted reluctantly by the School Board. Judge Nathan Green, in an evaluation of the settlement two years after its conclusion, wrote: "*There has been a breakdown somewhere in the chain of command in the Digby Regional High School ... the School Board has been dilatory in putting them (guidelines on dealing with racial incidents) into practice.*"[74] and "*The Black community also feels that there is a lack of sincere*

whole hearted effort on the part of the School Board to encourage students."[75]

Judge Green clearly showed that the problems raised by the Black students and their parents arose out of the racism inherent in the education system of the province. In his evaluation he stated that "*racism must be met on every front*" and indicated that what is needed to ensure that the system itself does not perpetuate or encourage racism is a staff sensitive to the needs, hopes and aspirations of its community and familiar with the deep and abiding meanings of tradition, heritage and race.[76] In making this point, Judge Green quoted from the final report of the sub-committee on race relations of the Toronto Board of Education:

> *Two aspects of the educational system make it vital to success. The first is the system's role as one of the major influences in shaping the hopes and aspirations of our young people. The second is the tremendous credibility of the system itself as a model of the larger society reflecting as it does within the structure, curriculum and programs; the values and accepted order of Canadian society.*[77]

The Black Educators Association

The seventies also saw the formation of the Black Educators Association (BEA) made up primarily of Black teachers and others interested in Black education across the province. Formed in 1971 to investigate the quality of education for Black students in the province, the Black Educators Association has worked for over twenty years on behalf of Black students and teachers to bring equality to the public school system of the province. In 1988, the position of Executive Director of the Association received funding from the Department of Education enabling full time efforts for the position. The BEA works with parents, students, school boards, teachers and other educational bodies and organizations and through those efforts has developed an analysis of the educational system and identified several factors behind the difficulties Black learners face within the provincial education system. Figure 7 lists the areas of major concern the BEA has identified with respect to the school system and Black learners.

Figure 7
List of Concerns Identified by the BEA

- The lack of Black role models in the integrated school environment.
- A noted disharmony among Black and White students.
- Alienation of Black students in the total school environment.
- A lack of visibility of Blacks in the curriculum.
- Deliberate avoidance of Black contribution to society.
- A lack of clear understanding by the teachers of Black culture, behaviour and activities.
- A low expectation of Black students by teachers.
- Guiding Black students to select non-university programs.
- Negative relationships between school staff and Black community.
- Teacher insensitivity towards Black students.
- Teacher inability to motivate Black students.
- Black parents intimidated by physical structure of large school buildings and school personnel.
- Ineffective discipline procedures.
- Inability of administration to deal with racial confrontations.
- A high drop-out rate of Black students.

The Black Incentive Fund

One of the main areas of focus for the BEA over the past 20 years has been with the establishment of an incentive fund for Black students at the post-secondary level and changes to the Education Fund established by government in 1965. Intended to encourage Black children to complete their public school education, the Fund soon became a source of embarrassment and ridicule for many Black students. Awards were based on attendance in its early years, not merit and instead of serving as an incentive to remain in school, became seen as another form of welfare, contributing to the growth of young people's dependence on government assistance. Some believe that the Fund was initially established as an attempt by the provincial government to provide compensation for the years of discrimination faced by the Black community in Nova Scotia's education system. This theory holds that because of the relatively powerless position held by the Black community at the time of the Fund's establishment, the Government, through this one action, felt relieved of further responsibility for the educational failures of the Black community.

The story of the Black Incentive Fund, its origins and the changes made to the Fund through the efforts of the BEA over a 20 year period, can be found in the *Case Study On The Black Incentive Fund* contained in Section 2 of this document and will not be repeated here. It is important to point out however, that the Education Fund remained the Province's sole strategy for 25 years for redressing the inequities faced by Black students in Nova Scotia. It is equally important to point out that the changes to the Fund to turn it into a true incentive at the post-secondary level came only through the determination and dedicated efforts of the BEA. Apart from an annual allocation of dollars, government's role in the Fund appears to have been one of neglect and disregard for the Fund's effectiveness.

The Transition Year Program

The Transition Year Program (TYP) at Dalhousie University stands as a symbol of inequality facing Black learners in the province of Nova Scotia. Conceived and established in the late 1960s to enable Black Nova Scotians and First Nations students access to a university education, the TYP remains a key tool in providing Black youth access to post-secondary education. The story of the TYP, its origins and evolution over a 24 year period, can be found in the *Case Study On The Transition Year Program* contained in Section 2 of this document.

Like the Black Education Fund, controversy followed the Transition Year Program almost from its inception. Established initially by a group of dedicated graduate students and professors, the program was never able to obtain the support of senior administrators within Dalhousie University. Limited by budget and hampered by an uneasy tension between the Black community and the university, the program has nevertheless managed to survive. As the Case Study will show, the TYP has attained a certain strength in recent years reflected in the appointment of the program's first Black director (1992) followed by a commitment of stable funding over a ten year period. The present challenge of the TYP is to develop programming that is appropriate for today's post-secondary educational needs of Black Nova Scotians.

Education Policy and the 1990s

The 1990s have ushered in a new will and sense of urgency with respect to education and the Black community of the province. Sparked by a racial incident in 1989 at Cole Harbour High School in Halifax County, parents, community leaders, and politicians have focused on the need for changes in social and educational policy as they affect Black Nova Scotians.

The Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations was established in July 1991 following a race-related disturbance outside a Halifax nightclub. The initiative was the result of a proposal by the Federal Minister of Multiculturalism, and agreed to by several Black community representatives, the Nova Scotia Minister responsible for the Human Rights Act and the Mayor of Halifax. The mandate of the Advisory Group was to develop a plan of action to deal with racism for the consideration of governments, the community, business and other sectors of society. It included representatives of the federal, provincial and municipal governments as well as of the Black communities in Nova Scotia. In the fall of 1991, the Advisory Group tabled their report which included 94 recommendations on how to improve race relations in Nova Scotia. Nineteen of these recommendations dealt specifically with education.

The Report stated in part that:

> *The educational history of Black Nova Scotians is characterized by a legacy of institutional racism. This continues to be demonstrated by exclusion, insensitivity, cultural genocide, stereotyping, discrimination and segregation... Attempts have been made by the Black community and other institutions to make education in Nova Scotia relevant to the Black experience. Some school boards have formed committees linking them to the Black communities they serve. Some school boards have developed race relations policies and practices, while others have taken piecemeal and ad hoc approaches designed to make changes in support of the Black population. There remains, however, no provincial race relations policy in the area of education; disproportionately few Black teachers; insufficient references to the Black experience in the curricula; and the undermining of the self-esteem of the Black child. The Black perspective, the Black experience and Black contributions to Nova Scotia society must therefore be institutionalized in the provincial education system.*[78]

Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations
Unlike previous studies and reports dealing with the effects of racism in the province, follow up to the Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations has been closely monitored. The Province provided a written response to the report in October 1991 setting forth explicit statements of intent for each of the recommendations. This was followed by a report in June 1992 with an update on accomplishments and work yet to be achieved. This latter update shows some progress in the area of education and racism particularly in the Province's commitment to incorporate anti-racist principles as a key element of the philosophy of education. The Province has also *encouraged* school boards across the province to develop comprehensive race relations policies.

Importance of Monitoring Mechanisms

An analysis of work in the area of race relations in Ontario, clearly shows that the one variable which must be in place for meaningful change to occur in the area of race relations, is the establishment of strong monitoring measures. "*The crucial thing*" writes Stephen Lewis, "*is to monitor the performance of superintendents and principals and individual teachers. And if the performance evaluation falls short, then action will have to be taken.*"[79]

Leadership clearly is the answer to many of the barriers facing the Black learner in today's system. The training, hiring and placement of Black teachers, the development of Black studies, the enforcement of guidelines on racial name calling and incidents are not complicated matters. To quote the May, 1992 Federal response to the Nova Scotia Report on Race Relations, "*The need remains for sustained, concerted commitment and the active involvement of each of us and our institutions to combat racism and racial discrimination.*"[80]

Summary

The preceding pages have attempted to provide the reader with an understanding of the situation facing the Black learner in the provincial school system today. By casting back two hundred years to the settlement patterns of the Province and the concurrent establishment of African schools, we can understand the beginnings of an educational system which has systematically denied Black learners an equal education with their White counterparts. We have learned of the sanction of separate schools by legislative law so that the children of White parents would not have to sit beside Black children reinforcing the racial discrimination of past generations. We have also learned of the ongoing and continuing struggle of Black parents to obtain an education for their children despite the manifest opposition, both economically and spiritually, they faced on a daily basis. While we recognize that education was out of reach for many poor White families in Nova Scotia in the nineteenth century, we are faced with the reality that Black children were, on a systematic basis and enforced by law, forbidden entry to the Common Schools which did exist. The education which was available to Black communities through the various religious organizations was both less rigorous than that provided in the Common Schools of the day, and was aimed primarily at maintaining a servile and content population. Those Black communities which were able to raise the required finances to obtain the government subsidy necessary to build a schoolhouse were more often without a qualified teacher than with one.

That these conditions existed in the nineteenth century is one thing; that they continued to exist well into the twentieth century and that the Black community is still feeling the effects of such discrimination and exclusion, is another matter. For it was not until the 1960s that the segregated schools were phased out and integration occurred, at least on paper. The legacy of segregation remained and spilled out into the classrooms in the form of White hegemony, policies and practices such as streaming designed to maintain Black youth in subordinate and menial positions, and into the playgrounds, washrooms and school corridors in the form of racial name-calling and physical harassment.

We have also seen another side of the legacy of education among the Black community; the underemployment levels and relegation to the most menial of jobs which in turn limited Black Nova Scotians' vision of their employment possibilities.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought the issue of racial discrimination to public attention in Nova Scotia and provided encouragement to those persons in the Black community struggling to make changes in the educational system of the Province. The Graham Commission was the first official body to listen to the issues laid before them by the Black community and made specific recommendations designed to close the gap between Black and White Nova Scotians. Black students, parents and leaders cooperated with academics to document the legacy of segregation and in particular to identify the link between low education attainment and limited employment opportunities.

The question that was raised by the 1975 *Opportunities for Youth* report is even more relevant today as we near the twenty-first century: "*Where have we, as a group of Black Nova Scotians, gone since 1970?*" The issues that were raised in the 1970s are, as we have seen, the same issues that are being raised today by the Black Educators Association and the Black Learners Advisory Committee. These same issues have, as we have seen, been identified at various times and in various studies, reports and surveys undertaken in this province since the 1960s. Solutions and recommendations made by premiers of the province, Royal Commissioners, judges and the various Black individuals and organizations over twenty years ago remain to be implemented yet the problems facing the Black learner are the same.

It is the hope of the Black Learners Advisory Committee that this history will assist policy makers within the Province of Nova Scotia both understand the need for, as well as implement the changes which are required, to make the provincial educational system responsive to the needs of the Black learner.

3 Personal Observations: A Postscript

Racism and the School System

If there was ever any question that racism is a living, breathing issue for the Black learner, the research carried out for the *History of Black Education in Nova Scotia* and the accompanying four Case Studies dispel any such question, replacing it with the unequivocal statement that systemic discrimination has long existed and still exists in the province's education system.

Consensus existed among those interviewed that racism is a powerful and damaging force within the province's education system. Everyone contacted over this research has personally experienced some form of racism in the system and has seen others adversely affected by the system. This was as true for those who have lived in the province all their life as for those who have immigrated recently to Nova Scotia, regardless of profession or employment status.

One prominent Black professional and immigrant to the province shared his personal experience upon coming to Canada and his disbelief and shock regarding the racist treatment he received by certain university personnel, stating that:

> *I was dismayed when I came here to a first world country, to find these attitudes. The very worst is when a university condones such (racist) attitudes. What they don't understand is that the countries send their best!*

Experiences at the High School Level

Time and time again we were told by Black Nova Scotians, now employed as senior administrators or teachers within the school system, or in other professional fields, that they had been advised by their high school guidance counsellor not to pursue university because they would be unable to handle the workload. Most were advised to go to vocational school regardless of their grades or personal goals. One member of the Black Educator's Association shared her experience as follows:

> *In grade 12 I was told by my guidance teacher that I shouldn't go to university. He said he didn't think there would be a job for* "you people"*. Another teacher (also White) asked me shortly after what I was planning to do the next year. He was surprised when I told him the guidance counsellor's response. He told me to get applications to various universities (and also told about four other students to do the same) and we were given a second opportunity to write the university entrance test. The result was that I was offered a scholarship and I went on to graduate with a B.A. and a B.Ed.*

The frightening aspect of this case is that the parents of the young woman in question did not question the guidance counsellor's advice. Like many other parents then and now, they were of the belief that the system knows best. Had the second teacher not stepped in and arranged for the university test, the story of this young woman may have ended differently.

This was not an isolated case of misadvice based on racial stereotyping. The question it raises is how many young people followed the advice of their guidance counsellors and in so doing denied themselves the opportunity to explore their full potential?

Further it is important to realize that most of the experiences shared with us through the interviews occurred as recently as the 1970s so that those guidance counsellors who brought such damaging attitudes and advice to their position, could still be employed within the system today.

Some Recent Experiences of Black Students

Discussions with young people who left the public school system prior to completing their grade 12 (within the last four years) provided insights into a system which has systematically denied the Black learner his rightful place within that system. These young people talked about being ignored during class discussions and rarely being called upon to contribute. "*Unless of course we weren't paying attention, then we'd be called upon.*"

The young people were very clear that the school system had failed them and that, given a chance, they could have been good students. In one early school leaver's assessment:

> *Students only act up in school because they are allowed to. Most of our teachers concentrated on just a few students allowing the others to* "just be there." *If they caught (the education) they caught it, if they didn't, they didn't.*

Another young person who had recently left the system shared how her grade 11 teacher had given her passing marks in English even though she knew she had neither mastered the material nor passed the final exam. The student insisted on being failed and taking the year over because "*I knew I had to learn English to succeed in life.*"

Stereotyping was identified by many of those interviewed as a frequent problem facing the Black learner and in particular the belief that Blacks excel at athletics over academics. One young woman, who happened to be good at sports, commented that she always received encouragement from her teachers to compete on the school teams but that the same encouragement was not forthcoming with respect to her academics. Along a similar vein, one Black educator told of a young student who had always done well academically but who, upon becoming involved in sports in the eighth grade, saw her marks decline from the high 80s to the bare minimum. Through this Black educator's intervention (who, it should be pointed out, was not one of the student's teachers) the student was able to understand the cause for her poor academic performance, re-arrange her priorities and re-establish her previously strong academic position. Although it is not possible to state conclusively that this student would have failed without that Black educator's intervention, it is certainly questionable whether the system would have seen anything out of the ordinary in the situation of a Black athlete with failing grades.

There are exceptions. We were told by young people of the exceptional Black learners who were recognized by the system, included in the class discussions and who were often pointed to as models for other Black learners to follow. A number of the professionals interviewed in this research validated this phenomena indicating they themselves had been identified as "exceptional" students when they went through the system but that this had set them apart from their friends. Instead of an intellectually liberating experience, those affected indicated the experience left them confused and hurt. "*I was treated (by the system) differently from the other Blacks students so then they started to treat me differently. I found that very unsettling.*"

What is particularly distressing from the interviews is the feeling that the education system has let so many young minds go to waste over the years. If, as we were told, that it was for the most part only the exceptional Black learners who were recognized and challenged by the system, then we must wonder how many young people with good minds and average or even above-average abilities were left unchallenged during their school years. Did these students stay in the system or did they leave disillusioned or of the belief that they were not cut out for higher learning? If we think in terms of the bell curve with the bulk of the student population falling between the exceptionally gifted and those with a low learning ability, then we surely must speculate that there has been an extremely large waste of human potential within the Black community of Nova Scotia.

Racial Stereotyping

We were told of some White teachers attitudes' towards Black learners that can only be explained through the racial stereotyping that occurs as the result of racism. In one local high school there is an area referred to by White students and White teachers alike as the *gauntlet.* This is a stretch of corridor which leads to the gymnasium on one side and the school cafeteria on the other. Black students, we were told, tend to hang out in this area during classroom breaks. The teacher who shared this experience with us commented that White teachers routinely request the administration to "*break up the Black students who hang out in that particular area*" and further, that a number of the White teachers have expressed to her their fear at having to walk through that particular stretch of corridor. She summarized by commenting that her colleagues were unable to understand that these Black students were no different from the White students who routinely line a similar corridor in a similar fashion on the second floor.

We were also told of how racial stereotyping can lead to low teacher expectations in the classroom. A psychologist who has worked both within and outside the Nova Scotia education system commented that:

> *I have seen teachers having different expectations for Black students versus White students. I think that part of that expectation comes from their idea that these individuals just can't hack it, that they may be genetically inferior, intellectually inferior. Prejudice exists in the school system.*

An example of how such stereotyping is evidenced comes through strongly in the following case which occurred in the 1990-91 school year. In this instance, there was a Black student at the grade three level who was reading at the grade six level. His reading skills had well exceeded the average since his entry into the school system and had been so recognized by each of his elementary teachers. In his third grade he encountered a substitute teacher who had no prior experience with this particular student nor with his family. The parent made it a point to meet with the substitute during parent-teacher interviews and was assured that all was well with her son and his progress. Yet a short time later the son brought home a report that gave him an "F" in reading. When confronted by the parents as to the reasons for the "F" the teacher was unable to provide an explanation. Stereotyping of the child by the teacher can be the only explanation.

The Role of Racism in Career Development

A number of teachers and school administrators who we interviewed shared with us their personal career struggles and queried the role racism may have played in their inability to obtain senior administrative positions. People were candid about the role played by the old boys network and the fact that, in their opinion, individual teachers are hand-picked and groomed for administrative positions by persons within that network. It would follow that because Black teachers have not been part of the network, that, in general, they have not been promoted past the vice principal level.

One senior administrator went further, stating that in his opinion Black Nova Scotians have been consciously denied access to the network because they are seen as a threat to the system. Black Nova Scotians are the unknown entity. "*It is not clear to the network how we (Blacks) are going to react when placed in a position of authority. Consequently Blacks are very often promoted to the vice principal level but very seldom make it to the top.*"

In the words of another Black administrator:

> *Blacks (in general) do not climb unless they have a form of lobby. You can't play the system and do a good job. To be a principal I would have to sell out. I walk alone. If I had a Black army behind me maybe I would be a principal.*

We were told of racism at all levels of the education system from the primary child who was introduced to her class by the principal as the school's "*only nigger,*" to the teacher who was told by her White colleagues that "*you're not like a typical Black person.*" A number of Black teachers talked about "their being invisible," that their colleagues would arrange for potlucks dinners within the school or evenings to celebrate special occasions but that they were never invited.

Summary

These are just some examples of the racial overtones and incidents which most Black learners and educators experience on a frequent basis. What is important to realize however is that most of these experiences were shared with us by persons who, in the vernacular *have made it.* We have talked with, among others, the professionals, the persons with university degrees who have succeeded in establishing themselves in responsible positions in both the Black and White communities.

Many of the people we spoke with talked about the importance placed upon education in their own family. While their parents may have had attained a lesser education themselves, they were determined that their own children would obtain what they themselves could not. A number of persons interviewed referred to the fact that their mothers had scrubbed and washed to ensure that their children went to school. Others admitted that they had dropped out of the system because of racial intolerance, in some cases more than once, but had returned because of the expectations their family and others had of them.

But what about those individuals who may not have the same determination or support from their home environment to struggle against a system that appears to neither want you nor like you? What about the young person who is raised in an environment that has not learned to appreciate books nor education or who was expected to leave school early to contribute to the support of the family?

These are the individuals who will be, unless they are especially academically gifted, largely ignored by the system and who will in time, fall out or be pushed out of the system. These are the youth who will face difficulties in reading and writing, and who, without the assistance of special resources in the early years, will fall victim to the policy of social promotion and find themselves unable to cope at the junior high or senior high school level. The result is low self-esteem and high frustration levels on the part of the student, labeling of the student as incapable of learning, and an even further distancing of Black youth from the education system.

The time has come for the Province of Nova Scotia to eradicate not just the remnants of the legacy left over from the earlier days of segregation but also to take on a commitment to launch policies directed towards the enhancement of Black learners within the education system. A reading of the history of Black education in Nova Scotia tells us that there has been an unequal investment by government in the education of Black Nova Scotians. It is time for the Province to recognize its longstanding debt to the Black community and commit to a much needed investment in the education of Black Nova Scotians.

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35 1889 Report of the Inspector of Schools for Halifax. PAGE 54.

36 1890 Report of the Inspector of Schools for Halifax PAGE 52. The Inspector notes that he was "*looking to getting (Black) children now attending the City schools getting their Teachers Licenses and replacing the Permissive Licenses. One (Black) student from Halifax County took Grade C in the last July exam with good standing – I could not persuade her however to go to the country and teach as her prospects were much better in the City. I find an increasing number of coloured children attending the City schools.*"

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Section 2

Case Studies

Inglewood: A Case Study of Educational Excellence

North Preston's Struggle to Obtain Equality in Education

Black Incentive Fund

Transition Year Program

Inglewood: A Case Study of Educational Excellence

Introduction

Background to the Case Study

Inglewood is a small Black community located adjacent to Bridgetown in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley. Originally settled in the 1850s by Black Loyalists and their descendants, Inglewood had grown to a population of approximately 80 in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. Fifty to sixty of this number were young people who went through the school system in Bridgetown, nearly all of whom have since moved away to other parts of the province, Canada, the United States and the West Indies for reasons tied to enhanced employment opportunities and racism.

Today, Inglewood is an aging community with a population of about 28 Black residents representing 11 households. There are 3 children under 5 years of age, 3 youth between 11 and 15 years of age, and 4 adults in their 20s to 40s. The remainder is made up of senior citizens. But every summer Inglewood's numbers are swollen by the children, grandchildren and great grandchildren who return to mingle with family and friends. While the old wooden bridge no longer spans the brook that flows though the Inglewood community, the young people who once used to congregate by its sides, continue to come together, now as adults and parents successful in their chosen careers, to share their memories and reminisce about growing up in Inglewood. For Inglewood was something special, and although it had its squabbles like any other community, Inglewood was able to impart to its youth the message that each was unique and capable of accomplishing any goal they set for themselves.

It is with the period of the 1950s and 1960s, when Inglewood's population was at its highest, that this Case Study is primarily concerned. For it was from that period that as high as 95 percent of the youth of Inglewood graduated with their grade 12 or its equivalent and went on to become banktellers, civil servants, policeman, captain in the army, sailors, airman, cooks, secretaries, office administrators, probation officer, law enforcement officer, provincial health inspector, registered nurses, public health nurse, professor of nursing, social worker, school teachers, school principal, publisher, physiotherapist, psychiatrist, dietitian, lab technician, research scientist, nuclear engineer, meteorologist, soil analyst, computer programmer, land surveyor, carpenter/cabinet maker, mason, plumber, bodyman/car refinisher, upholsterer and an electrician.

When we read this list can there be any question that the community of Inglewood has excelled in the field of education? But how is it that Inglewood was able to cut through the prejudices of small town Nova Scotia to excel both academically and professionally? What were the factors behind the success of Inglewood and can they be replicated in other small Black communities across the province?

These are some of the questions examined in the following Case Study. That the Inglewood community has a consistent record of high school graduates who went on to post-secondary institutes is an example of excellence which has important lessons for other Black communities in the province. The Black Learners Advisory Committee is interested in applying these lessons in their efforts to address the inequality in education which has faced Blacks students in this province for over 200 years and thanks the community of Inglewood for their co-operation in the preparation of this Case Study. We give particular thanks to those community members who met with the researcher over this past year as well as to all those who responded to a letter questionnaire.

Organization of the Case Study

The first section of the Case Study provides an historical overview of the community of Inglewood, its origins and early settlement patterns with an emphasis on the history of education and Inglewood. Data for this section were obtained largely from interviews with community residents, local genealogists, and archival records.

The second section provides insights from approximately 15 Inglewood graduates of the 1950s and 1960s and summarizes their thoughts and opinions on how Inglewood as a community shaped their educational goals. This section also provides memories of their student days at Bridgetown Regional High School and comments on the systemic discrimination which they faced in the school system and community at large.

The third and final section identifies those factors responsible for the educational success of Inglewood's students and draws upon the community's collective assessment for the reasons behind their strong scholastic standing and demonstrated leadership.

The latter two sections were supplemented through interviews held with existing and past school teachers and administrators.

History of Inglewood and Education

The Settlement of Inglewood

The settlement of Inglewood, primarily by Black Loyalists and their descendants, dates back to the 1850s and is tied to the development of the African Baptist Church.

The early Black Loyalists who settled in Annapolis County appear to have been successful in their efforts to obtain more than the customary one acre of land provided the majority of their fellow Black Loyalists. A local historian writes that:

> *The first grants to Black Loyalists in Annapolis County were only one acre per man, but between 1787 and 1793 a group of Black Loyalists applied for additional land by warrant, fifty acres per family. It is uncertain whether these grants were confirmed to them but it is certain that by 1838 Black settlers in these communities were established on holdings of that size or larger. Perhaps some obtained these holdings following another petition made in 1809 by* "twenty men of colour" *all of whom had been in the country for at least fifteen years, most of them more than twenty.*[1]

Various small communities on the North Mountain including Phinney Cove, Hampton Mountain Road, and Clements Township were home to over 20 different Black family names including the Clements, Jacksons, Mitchells, Simms, Tallows, Simms, Hills, Cuffs, and Browns. These families lived on land grants varying in size from one to 50 acres and relied upon the sea, the woods, and various trades for their livelihood. Church records indicate that as early as 1829, Black families were members of the Hampton Baptist Church congregation with the majority of Black families becoming members in the 1840s.[2]

In the 1850s a split occurred in the Church occasioned by the formation of the African Baptist Association under the leadership of the Reverend Richard Preston. Mrs. Pearleen Oliver, author of *A Brief History of the Coloured Baptists of Nova Scotia* writes that "*in 1853 Rev. Preston organized and worked with the people in the western section of the province and promoted the idea of an African Baptist Association*"... and that "*North Mountain, also known as Granville Mountain, holds the honour of entertaining the first sessions of this association.*" Mrs. Oliver continued by stating that "*during his visit of 1853, Rev. Preston left the following officers in charge: Deacon Charles Jackson, Elders George Tallow and Daniel Brown. K. Kimbers was appointed the first trustee.*"[3]

The involvement of the Black families on the North Mountain with the African Baptist Association resulted in their expulsion from the Hampton church and led to the settlement of Inglewood. In 1855 the Hampton Baptist Church records the *exclusion* of all church members who had united with a church under the leadership of Richard Preston without having received prior dismissal from the Hampton church.[4]

Thus we see family members moving off the North Mountain to settle along The Bay Road as it was then known. Land was obtained from John Wheelock, a shipbuilder and merchant living in Bridgetown, in individual lots of five acres from land known as "the Farm of Henley". Two of the first lots were sold to Edward Dixon and John Tallow. These families were joined by other Black families from the North Mountain as well as from the community of Bear River and settled on the East side of the road.

When and how Inglewood (woods with a small brook) actually got its name is still a source of speculation. Some say it was named for one of the two early Anglican Bishops of Nova Scotia, Bishop Charles Inglis or Bishop John Inglis; local residents are of the belief that it was more likely named after a sister community Inglewood, New Jersey, where a number of the early Black Loyalists may have originated.

By 1861, the Census recorded approximately 18 Black families in the Bridgetown/Inglewood area for a total population of 104.[5] Family names included Dixon, Tallon, Tallow, Goff, Marsh, Clements, Jones, Jackson, Mitchell, Simms and Kimber. The census also indicates that of all those over the age of 15, all but two could write indicating that the majority of the community had attained some level of formal education. A map of Annapolis County dated March 1864 records the following as residents and landowners of Inglewood: J. Tallow (name later changed to Tyler), J. Clements, W. Clements, A. Clements, J. Jackson, J. Mitchell, F. Hill, E. Dickson, J. Neil and A. Clements. The map also noted the existence of a school house in Inglewood.[6]

Education and Inglewood

It is clear from the few available records that education was important to the residents of Inglewood in the early years of their community's settlement. On February 15, 1859 a petition[7] was sent from five Inglewood family heads to the House of Assembly requesting assistance to construct a school. The petition reads:

> *To the Honourable Members of the Province House now in session: The petition of your humble petitioners showeth that whereas we, the undersigned petitioners forming the coloured inhabitants of the town of Bridgetown in the county of Annapolis; being entirely destitute of the privilege of education, therefore looking upon the rapid increase of our families yearly,* "that they" *without education shall forever be destitute of that blessing which alone is calculated to promote our best interest.*

Therefore we have through the past season with our feeble exertions together with the assistance of our generous friends, erected a building for the purpose of schooling our children, and as the building is yet in an unfinished state a trifle from you will render light the amount needed, therefore the smallest sum granted will be thankfully received and your humble petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

EDWARD DIXON, GEORGE TALLOW, ABRAHAM CLEMENTS, JOSEPH JACKSON, FREDERICK HILL

These early Inglewood residents were likely responding to government legislation passed in 1836 which provided monies to assist poor school districts in establishing schools for Black children. That the petition was responded to favourably at that time is not known for certain although we do know from the Annapolis County 1864 map that a school house existed in that year, and that school was in session in Inglewood by the late 1870s "*taught by Walter Grayson, a coloured man.*"[8]

Until the mid 1860s, when provincial legislation established free and compulsory primary education for all children, education was largely outside the means of most rural Nova Scotians and was particularly inaccessible to most children of Black families. In the *History of Black Education in Nova Scotia*, Volume 2, Section 1, we see that even when families were able to raise the required monies to build a school and pay a teacher's salary, it was often difficult to attract a qualified teacher to the Black schools for reasons tied to racism.

Inglewood was an exception in these times. The limited records which exist indicate that not only was Inglewood able to raise sufficient monies to construct a school, the community was also able to attract licensed teachers to its one-room school. Furthermore, the school was in operation for the usual half year school term and attracted all children from the community of school age.

Rev. Armstrong, the School Inspector for Annapolis East who wrote the following in 1865, could well have been thinking about the community of Inglewood:

When education is highly prized by a community or a people, difficulties will be resolutely met, the needed sacrifices cheerfully made, and proffered helps gladly and gratefully accepted, in order to obtain her rich and imperishable treasures.[9]

School registers dating from 1889 indicate that the Inglewood school was in session from May 6 to October 31 for a total of 101 days, that the teacher was a Miss C.B. Raymond who held a Class III license and who received an annual salary of $38. There were 28 children from Inglewood attending school in 1889 broken by grade as follows: grade 1(11), 2(5), 3(3), 4(3), 5(4), 6(1), 8(1). All 28 children took instruction in lessons on nature, reading, health, moral and patriotic duties and temperance. Students from grade 2 up took lessons in spelling and students from grade 3 up took lessons in language and arithmetic. Students in grade 5 up took geography and history. The one grade 8 student in that year also took instruction in algebra and geometry.

In 1892, school records[10] indicate that the Inglewood school had only 17 students enrolled in grades 1-5 with no students attending grades 6-8. The teacher in that year was Julia R. Saunders who held a Class II license. She taught from May 2 though October 28 for a total of 109 days and received an annual salary of $40.

A third teacher, a Miss Annie Longley, was a former teacher in the Bridgetown school and taught some years in the Inglewood school before and after 1912.

The school registries for the Inglewood and Bridgetown sections are instructive in the details of a school's administration in Nova Scotia in the late 1800s. In 1892 there were a total of 33 children between the ages 5 and 15 in the Inglewood section and 181 children in the Bridgetown section. Figure 1 shows statistics relating to these schools.

Figure 1
Excerpts from Inglewood and Bridgetown School Registers[11]

School Registry Headings 1892	Inglewood Section	Bridgetown Section
Normal College teachers license	No	Yes
Period of service in other sections	8 years	11 years
Period of service in this section	6 months	9 years
Number children between 5-15	30	171
Number children over 15	1	11
Total number of children in school	31	182
Number boys	12	88
Number girls	19	94
New Students this year	13	28
Number children in section 5-15	33	181
Number who did not go to school	3	10
Number seats/students provided for	26	232
Number visits by Inspector	0	4
Number visits by MLAs	0	0
Number visits by clergy	0	5
Number visits by teachers	2	8
Number visits by others	9	36
Number students daily present on average	23.4	133.6
Percent enrolled daily present	75.6%	73.2%

It is interesting to observe from the figure that the number of students provided for financially in Inglewood was only 26 compared to the total number enrolled of 30 for a shortage of 4 seats. In Bridgetown on the other hand, there were a total of 232 seats or students provided for compared with only 182 enrolled for a surplus of 50 seats. This inequity in funding between the two school sections is likely explained by the Board of Commissioners' (a body similar to today's School Board) reluctance to provide adequate funding to Black schools.

Despite the view the Board of Commissioners took towards Black schools, the community of Inglewood was vigilant in sending its schoolage children to school with 30 of the 33 total eligible numbers (91 percent) attending in that year. The statistics also indicate that 75.6 percent of those enrolled attended school on a daily basis indicating a serious commitment to education and significantly exceeding the average school attendance of the County.

Attendance of schools was a matter of considerable concern to the school inspectors of those times with the subject appearing frequently in their annual reports:

> *The irregularity in the attendance of pupils at school and non-attendance reported on former occasions continue, I regret to say, as great as ever. These are most serious impediments to the attainment of progress. The number of pupils daily present at school on an average for time in session, per one hundred registered, was fifty-seven for the winter term and fifty-eight for the summer term. The percentage for the full term for the same periods was 53.9 and 54.3 respectively. The percentage of pupils daily present for time in session ought not, in any term, to be less than seventy-five... This reveals a vast amount of indifference to the claims of education which should not exist in any country whose inhabitants have established free schools by law.*[12]

The Registry also indicates the differences in curriculum between the children attending the Inglewood and Bridgetown sections. The children in Bridgetown received instruction in geometry (23 children), algebra (23 children), industrial drawing (21 children), bookkeeping (11 children), physics (9 children), botany (9 children), chemistry (12 children), physiology (2 children) and latin (5 children). In 1892 none of these subjects were available at the Inglewood school section with instruction confined to the basic curriculum of language, grammar, composition, geography, history, and arithmetic. Additional instruction for the Inglewood students was provided in health, moral and patriotic duties, temperance and singing.

These differences in curriculum can be largely explained by the fact that Inglewood, like most other rural one-room schools, could afford only one teacher responsible for the teaching of all grades, primary through grade 8. It was only in the larger schools found in towns with a broad tax base capable of supporting a number of teachers that the enriched curriculum such as that in the Bridgetown school was available.

By the turn of the century, the Inglewood one-room school was on its last legs. The Inspector's report for 1898 noted that "*Inglewood as a section has virtually ceased to exist. It has been partially included within the corporate limits of the Town of Bridgetown. This section was an anomaly in its formation and its existence was never formally sanctioned by the Council of Public Instruction. Its school house is unfit for further use and its origin as a section has ceased.*"[13]

A possible interpretation of this report is that the Inspector meant for Inglewood's children to attend the nearby Common School in Bridgetown. The Bridgetown elementary school had two years earlier undergone renovation; "*the old-fashioned method of heating the school rooms with stoves has been abandoned*" the Inspector reported, "*and furnaces have been placed in the basement for heating the whole building.*"[14]

While integration may have been the Inspector's intent, Inglewood's senior students were not to attend the Bridgetown schools until the 1930s and the elementary students until the 1940s, four decades later. The Inspector's 1902 annual report notes that:

> *A new section in Annapolis East has been sanctioned by the Board of Commissioners. Whether the Council of Public Instruction will consider the circumstances peculiar to this case sufficient to justify the Board in forming this section is problematic in view of the policy expressed in the public comments on this subject. As a general principal the formation of small sections should be resisted, and wherever practical, efforts should be made to consolidate rather than subdivide sections.*[15]

In the case of Annapolis East however, the Board of Commissioners desire for segregation won out over the policy of integration and Inglewood was formally established, in 1903, as a section responsible for providing education to its own children. Inspector Morse was not pleased with this decision commenting as follows:

> *During the summer of 1904 Inglewood section in Annapolis East repaired its school house making it virtually a new building. This is a negro section adjoinable to the town of Bridgetown. Its position is such that it should be attached to Bridgetown for school purposes. The coloured people, however, do not wish to become attached to the town, and the inhabitants of the town do not want them.*[16]

In these lines Inspector Morse clearly spells out the existence of a colour line between the communities of Bridgetown and Inglewood and provides evidence of systemic discrimination at the highest levels of the school administration in Annapolis East. Existing policies aimed at rationalizing school sections for economic reasons (amalgamating the smaller school sections where geography allowed) were disregarded because of race and only because of race. Inglewood was to remain responsible for the education of its children until the 1940s at which time the Bridgetown schools were finally opened up to the children of all nearby communities, including Inglewood.

Meanwhile the town of Bridgetown had, in 1904, erected a new school house at a cost of $10,000. "*It is built of brick with granite trimmings and is one of the finest school buildings in western Nova Scotia. The plan of the building and all its equipments are* up to date. *It is intended for a six department school with rooms in the Basement for Manuel Training and Domestic Science.*"[17]

At the same time that Bridgetown students were enjoying these modern facilities, Inglewood students were struggling to cope with the dilapidated structure which served as their school house until approximately 1905-6. The timing of its closure is suggested in the Inspector's 1907 Report which stated that "*the Inglewood school was not inspected in consequences of having been closed for the year previous to my tour of inspection in their vicinity.*"[18]

Two years earlier, in 1905, five family heads of Inglewood (Joseph Jackson, Edward Hill, Fred Hill, George Tyler and Abraham Clements) petitioned the Department of Education for financial assistance to reconstruct their school.[19] (It is interesting to note that three of these signatories had the same names as the earlier petition 46 years previous.) That this petition received a positive response is suggested in the Inspector's 1910 report that "*Inglewood has a neat and comfortable school house and maintains a school regularly at least one half of each year.*"[20] This was followed in 1911 by the report that "*in Inglewood, school was taught half the year very successfully by an experienced white teacher of Class C.*"[21] The school house had one room, was heated by a wood stove and had no running water. Toilet facilities were outdoors.

Inglewood's determined efforts to provide schooling for their children stand out at a time when other Black communities were facing closure of their schools for want of sufficient income for their upkeep or for the inability to attract teachers. The 1910 Inspector's Report noted that "*the Black community of Fundy had no school for the past four years and Joggins has had no school for two years.*"[22] This was followed by the 1915 report which noted "*Fundy and Joggins are negro sections, the inhabitants of which with only few exceptions do not appreciate education and consequently make no efforts to secure teachers.*"[23] Two years later the Inspector wrote of Inglewood: "*Inglewood had school the entire year, taught by a competent coloured teacher with a permissive license. The only way to obtain teachers for these sections is by means of granting permissives.*"[24] The following year this notation was made: "*I was well pleased with the work done in this (Inglewood) school.*"[25]

Until the late 1930s, the local municipality was responsible through taxation for covering most of their school's construction, maintenance as well as a portion of the teacher's salary. Inglewood, firm in its commitment to education, made the financial sacrifice to educate its children although as one Inglewood resident noted "*it was difficult to keep the school going as we didn't have the land base.*"

The history of education in Inglewood in the 1930s and early 1940s can be followed through the personal history of Mrs. Edith Cromwell, one of twelve children born to Elias Mitchell and Annie Clements of Inglewood. The Mitchells, one of the original families in Inglewood appearing in the 1860 census, remained in Inglewood until 1910 when they moved to Upper Granville for reasons possibly related to the availability of better educational opportunities. In that latter community the Mitchell children attended the Common School where White children sat alongside the Black children and where teachers had Normal College training.

The year Mrs. Cromwell completed grade 9 the family returned to Inglewood where she received her grade 10 in the one-room school built in the early 1900s. The Inglewood school in the 1930s had attracted a trained teacher, Mrs. Lillian McGill with Normal College credentials. The next two years Mrs. Cromwell attended the high school in Bridgetown where she took her grade 11 and 12. In 1934 Mrs. Cromwell graduated, the first Inglewood resident to complete her high school education. Two of Mrs. Cromwell's sisters also attended high school in Bridgetown and one brother achieved his grade 10. While the high school in Bridgetown was in theory open to Black students, few could afford the luxury of high school education costing as it did in those days $20 per student.

Mrs. Cromwell relates that there was no place for her, upon graduation from high school, to go. Teaching was the obvious choice for a young Black woman with a high school education but Mrs. McGill held the only teaching position in Inglewood and White schools were closed to Black teachers. In 1939, when Mrs. McGill moved on to teach at Bridgetown, the Inglewood school was finally offered to Mrs. Cromwell where she taught primary through grade 8 with a permissive license until 1943 at which time she left teaching temporarily to raise a family.

Integration of the Bridgetown elementary school occurred the year Mrs. Cromwell left teaching. She recalls approaching the then school inspector, Mr. M.C. Foster and asking if there was any reason why Inglewood's school-age children could not attend the nearby Bridgetown elementary and junior high schools. "*No Edith, there is not*" he is reported to have replied and the same year, 1943, saw all ages integrated into the Bridgetown school system. Approximately ten youth from Inglewood attended Bridgetown's schools that first year. The colour line had been broken.

Mrs. Cromwell's temporary departure from teaching and subsequent conversation with the school inspector coincided with the period of rural school consolidation in Annapolis County. A history of the Bridgetown schools records that:

> *Beginning in 1941 a programme of Consolidation was initiated when many of the area one-room schools were closed and all children were brought into the Bridgetown school. This included Carleton Corner, Morse Road, Centrelea, West Paradise, Inglewood and Beaconsfield. Later on, Dalhousie West, Dalhousie Lake, Clarence West, Clarence Centre, Upper Granville and Belleisle East schools were similarly closed.*[26]

It is interesting that Inglewood's memory of integration differs from the *official* history of the school consolidation. In the community's version, integration occurred at the request of Inglewood rather than from direction provided by the School Board. The community is quite certain that their children were the first of the outlying small communities to attend the Bridegetown schools. Regardless, from 1944 onwards, the children of Inglewood went into Bridgetown for their education and benefited from one of the strongest educations available in the province.

Bridgetown is known for its academic excellence, having produced four Rhodes Scholars and numerous other award-winning students who have gone on to successful careers. Many teachers from Bridgetown Regional High School have risen in the ranks to become school supervisors, principals and Teachers Union administrators. Students from the community of Inglewood were, as we shall see in the next section of this Case Study, well prepared to benefit from the educational standards of the Bridgetown system. According to one Bridgetown school administrator, the Inglewood community as a whole held "*good attitudes towards learning and the value of education.*"

Voices from the 1950s and 1960s

Growing Up In Inglewood

Stable two parent families were the norm in Inglewood with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins all living within the community. The family ties were very strong even with those who lived and worked away. There was an extended family atmosphere in the community and this also included the many foster children who were raised in Inglewood during these years. As one community member put it: "*You not only had your own family watching over you, you had the whole neighbourhood.*"

The community had a strong sense of pride in who they were and where they had come from. "*Youth always knew their history and where they came from. The elders would always relate stories of the past to the youth. We were proud of who we were.*"

The community also had a strong sense of self-esteem which rubbed off on all community members. Gainful employment was a large reason behind this self-esteem with no one within Inglewood on social assistance. Residents engaged in seasonal work such as farming and harvesting, worked in the lumber mills and in the woods. Graves Factory and Hicks Mill offered additional employment. Greenwood offered jobs in service employment and a number of families were active in the Armed Forces. Domestic work was always available for the women.

While these jobs may not have translated into large paychecks, they provided the adults with a strong sense of pride which they imparted to their children.

> *Our parents instilled a must work and need to become educated and employed idea in our heads. It was expected that we would do well as they had all worked hard and wanted us to become better educated and make better incomes than what they had.*

> *The adults were very resourceful; each family had a large garden and cut fire wood; sewing, knitting, quilting, canning and preserving food were routinely done by the women. I remember my mother and grandmother sending away clean woolen rags to be made into blankets. We still have these maroon and grey blankets.*

The closeness of the community was reflected in the social activities engaged in by all ages. Most were community-based and were either church or school-related. Men, women and children played softball, croquet, and horseshoes together, enjoyed the Sunday School picnic and cornboils in the summer and ice-skating in the winter. All took part in the Christmas concert with adults and children joining in the recitations, songs, plays and acrostics. Parties in the home usually included all ages. "*The family played together; there was not a lot of TV.*"

"*We were,*" stated one respondent, "*a community family, sharing and encouraging and the Church was the centre of most of our extra-curricular activities.*" Every child attended Sunday School and later joined the Baptist Youth Peoples Union (BYPU). The BYPU was formed in the early 1930s through the African United Baptist Association and consisted of Bible fellowship within the church and included the communities of Middleton and Annapolis as well as Inglewood. One respondent noted that the annual BYPU Conference was one of the highlights of the year providing an opportunity for the young people to travel away from home, meet and socialize with others from around the province (from New Glasgow to Yarmouth), and demonstrate their speaking skills in the annual oratorical contest. These church-based activities were key in developing and encouraging leadership ability among the youth as well as developing a strong sense of self-confidence and believe in one's own abilities. "*Even in Sunday School*" one respondent noted, "*we would compete amongst our peers about the Bible.*"

Daily Vocational Bible School was another church-related activity engaged in by all Inglewood youth. Started in the 1950s, this Bible School took place for a two week period every summer and included Bible study and crafts. The Bible School took in children from Halifax to Yarmouth. Later came Bethal Bible Camp, begun in the early 1960s by the North Street Mission in Middleton. The campsite was located on the South Mountain and took in different age groups for a one week period each over the summer months. This camp was also open to all Black children from across the province and offered a further opportunity for fraternizing and development of leadership skills.

Inglewood also had a 4H Club, thought to be the first Black 4H Club in Canada. Established in 1952 with the assistance of Mr. Ralph Morehouse of the Department of Agriculture, the Inglewood 4H Club was led for a period of 21 years by Mrs. Evelyn Jackson of Inglewood. Under Mrs. Jackson's leadership, the Inglewood 4H Club developed into one of the strongest garden clubs in the province. The group participated in the various County Exhibitions, the square dancing competitions, concerts and rallies and carried off numerous prizes. "*One particular year*" Mrs. Jackson noted, "*the kids did not seem to be paying attention and wanted to carry on. So by the time the Exhibition rolled around I decided that they were not going into competition. A few weeks beforehand, they came around but by that time I had had it – they were on their own. Well, for a few weeks they practiced with the ideas that they came up with themselves – they weren't going to let me down. In the end we pulled through with flying colours. That year we won Public Speaking, overall participation in the Rally AND the most awards.*" When Mrs. Jackson retired from the 4H Club in 1968, the leadership was taken over by Mrs. Rae Clements until the Club disbanded in the early 1970s due to the small number of young people left in the community.

During the 1950s, Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Thelma Mitchell were also leaders of a Cub Scout pack in Bridgetown so that Inglewood youth could participate under the leadership of Black role models.

During the 1960s Inglewood developed its own theatre troupe made up of adults and youth, known as the Inglewood Players. Members of the troupe came as far away as Wolfville and Halifax (including the well-known Wilhelmina Williams and Walter Borden). Their first play, entitled *Coming Here To Stay*[27] and written especially for them by David Giffen, was performed throughout the province and at Expo 1967. They later went on to do three more plays, one of which was co-produced by the Acadia Drama Club. As one Inglewood resident phrased it, "*There was nothing shy about the people of Inglewood.*"

The Role of Education

This strength and involvement of community in all aspects of life is seen by respondents as playing a large part in the success of the students within the educational system. "*We always knew we had the backing of the whole community and that support would counter any negative experiences we might have in school.*"

Respondents indicated that it was this support which "*probably made the difference in our succeeding at school.*" Students were continually told by their parents and other community members that "*we could be anything that we wanted to be*" and received the necessary support and encouragement to "*believe that whatever we set out to do in life it would be accomplished.*"

Education was central in the day to day life of Inglewood and the students "*took school quite seriously – we walked many times through snow-blocked roads so we would not miss the lessons.*" There was always the expectation that the students would go to school, do their best, graduate, get a job, and later go to college if they could not afford to go upon high school completion. "*It's what the whole community expected of us; if we didn't, we felt that we would be letting the whole community down.*"

Another respondent noted that "*Education seemed to be the basis of my life in Inglewood. Everywhere I turned education was being discussed.*"

Adult education was also a strong force in the community with Mrs. Cromwell teaching adult classes in math and English and Mrs. Hazel Johnson teaching sewing. These classes were established in the 1950s as part of Dr. Oliver's work in adult education when he was with the Department of Education. An example of life-long learning is given by Mrs. Evelyn Jackson who took adult education classes in leadership so that she could provide the required leadership for a number of the youth groups established as part of the community. Later in life (1970) Mrs. Jackson went on to obtain her grade 12, having attended school up to grade 11 in the 1930s. Possibly the example of her own children, 10 of the 11 Jackson children completing their grade 12, spurred her on.

Most students growing up in Inglewood in the 1950s and 60s worked during the summer to pay for school books, picking beans, berries and apples, housecleaning and baby-sitting. Those summer jobs (picking vegetables and berries) were performed alongside the adult members of the community with "*the adults showing us the ropes and helping us pick our quota.*"

Some students continued to work over the school year with one respondent noting "*through my three years of high school I worked before going to school on mornings (cleaning offices, a job which I took over from an older sister when she graduated and went to nursing school.)*"

Parents insisted on set times for homework and were vigilant in ensuring the homework was done and on time. "*Our parents showed an interest in our school activities.*" While some parents were able "*to check the homework and provide input on questions they thought might be asked on tests*" others with a lesser education at least ensured that "*our homework was done, that we were in bed early for a good night's rest, and that we were dressed properly and on time for the bus in the morning.*"

The mothers most times represented the family at parent-teacher meetings, open-days and school closing exercises although one respondent noted that "*anytime there might have been a hint of racism, my father was there in a flash!*"

Parents always attended the school concerts and any other special event. Graduation time in June was seen as a community event with the entire community in attendance. "*There were always special events around grading. We would give the children pens, sent cards, always did something through the church.*"

This emphasis on education resulted in a significant graduation rate among the Inglewood youth. Discussions with community elders, a review of the high school's year books from the 1950s through the 1970s and conversations with past administrators of the high school indicate that "*as high as 95 percent of Inglewood students graduated from grade 12 or achieved their high school equivalency.*"

These students did not not stop at high school but went on, as we have seen in the introduction to this Case Study (page 55), to a variety of post-secondary institutes to receive training across the trades and professions. Regardless of their chosen field, Inglewood residents learned the importance early on of setting goals and working towards those goals to the best of their ability. From discussion with community elders we learn that slightly more than half of these students subsequently moved outside of the province to seek employment for reasons due, in large measure, to racism. Of those who remained in Nova Scotia, the majority are employed in the Halifax metropolitan area with only two individuals remaining in Inglewood.

Discrimination Encountered and Overcome

Inglewood students, like their Black counterparts attending schools elsewhere in the province, faced racial discrimination on a daily basis both from some of their school colleagues as well as through the school system itself.

> *While our White peers were mostly respectable there was always one bad apple (I blame that on their parents' guidance). The name-calling usually would take place once we got on our bus for home. The next morning the individual(s) paid for his/her ignorant behaviour. I can recall us all coming off the school bus armed with frozen snowballs fighting our way to the school house door for refuge. The problem was, if you got the better of him or her, you got punished by a strap while your ravellor got off scot free.*

The inner strength derived from the community of Inglewood was instrumental in assisting the students overcome the racism that was in the education system and society generally. While the majority of respondents indicated that their teachers were *competent, dedicated* and *fair*, systemic discrimination did exist at Bridgetown Regional High School and was evident in the lack of Black teachers on staff, the lack of socializing between the White and Black students after school hours and in the lack of financial awards given to Inglewood's students at the graduation closing exercises.

One respondent talked about the invitation she and her cousin had received to attend a birthday party of one of the more affluent students in the school.

> *The invitation was a first and a surprise. We accepted and made arrangements to get there. My uncle worked on her farm so we asked him to drive us there. A few days before the party she told us we wouldn't be able to come because her father would not be home to come and get us. We got the message and didn't bother to say we had made our own arrangements. We talked about it in the community and actually laughed about the fact that they believed we bought the lame excuse for withdrawing the invitation.*

This example shows the cohesiveness and pulling together of the community to turn a situation of hurt and rejection into a matter of mirth and strength.

A second example of racism more closely tied to the school system occurred in 1967 when a grade 12 Inglewood student was elected Queen of the Bridgetown Regional High School's first Winter Carnival. Imagine her delight at being selected Queen, her thoughts of what to wear at the upcoming dance; and imagine her disillusionment when she learned that the King, a White student, "*declined to appear with the Queen because she was Black.*" Clearly this was a time for action on the part of school administration, in a year that was celebrating the diversity of Canada at Expo '67. Although the school did not insist on protocol in this clearly racist incident, later that year the young Black student who had been so badly treated was awarded the prestigious R.J. Messinger Cup for exemplary leadership skills. We can only speculate whether the two incidents were at all related.

The systemic nature of discrimination was reflected most strongly in the school's unwillingness to grant Black students bursaries or scholarships for post-secondary education. Inglewood produced students who competed head-to-head with White students for the top academic positions throughout the high school years yet these students were never officially recognized at graduation. The following experience related by one respondent succinctly states it all:

> *During the interviews with college reps in grade 12, the Acadia rep said* "with your marks you should be going to college." *In a (subsequent) meeting with the Principal he (the principal) remarked* "You know you don't have the money to go to university." *There was no suggestion of how I might be able to go to college. I did apply to Acadia, was accepted and awarded a bursary. Even though I had a good academic record all through school, at Grad June '56 I was not awarded a bursary far less any of the prizes. This upset everyone (a cousin in my class who was also a top student throughout was also ignored even though it was well known that we wanted to go to university) and they talked about it openly because they felt White students got all the awards because of the prestige of being recognized at Graduation."*

Respondents were mixed in their memories of the extent to which their teachers were supportive of them. One respondent wrote that "*One teacher (Mrs. B.) was the most helpful person! I am a medical transcriptionist, in part, because of her care. H.F.R. is another teacher that I give high marks to. I became interested in history (from a genealogy point of view) because of H. and received encouragement in that area from her long after I was married.*" A different perspective comes through the following comment made by a second respondent: "*they usually steered (us) to careers where Blacks were already successful – boxing, sports. They never spoke of us pursuing a career as a doctor, lawyer, policeman or successful businessman. Anywhere we could excel and get some power of authority was never mentioned much, if at all. Most, if not all of our support, came from our homes, or dreams that we thought of ourselves.*"

A third respondent reported that while her life's goal was to become a social worker, the school guidance teacher insisted on her pursuing a secretarial career. Despite his advice, this respondent applied to the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology for the social welfare program, and was accepted. Shortly before the fall term however a letter came indicating that the program had been withdrawn, leaving her with little alternative, she thought, but to pursue secretarial training. Years later, after working as a secretary but always knowing she was not being true to her dream, this individual entered the School of Social Work at Dalhousie University and after ten years of part-time studies, graduated with a BSW. The same individual is now studying for her Masters of Social Work. While this individual is presently actively involved in her chosen profession, the fact remains that 23 years ago she was actively discouraged from her career choice and spent many years employed in a job which gave her little satisfaction. This young woman has commented that her years in Inglewood gave her the perseverance to follow her dream and the "*belief that whatever I set out to do in life it would be accomplished.*"

Despite these incidents of discrimination, respondents were for the most part generous in their memories of the school system. There was a general consensus among respondents that teachers held the same expectations of the Inglewood students as their White counterparts. "*Most teachers and the administration seemed to give us the same opportunities to achieve not only in sports but in our work. Yes, we could have used better guidance and career counselling but that*

expertise was underdeveloped in those days." The fact that the school expected the Inglewood students to do well academically further reinforced the expectations coming from the home community and enabled the Inglewood students to compete on equal terms with their fellow students.

While acknowledging the existence of racism during their school years, respondents made the point that "*You can press on in spite of the negatives and dwell on more positive aspects of life, i.e: own self-worth, make best of educational opportunities available at the time, set goals and try to achieve them with encouragement from peers and elders.*"

This confidence and self-determination to succeed in spite of obstacles thrown up in the form of racism is reflected in the decision of the two families who moved from Inglewood to the West Indies to send their children back to Inglewood for their high school completion. These children lived with their grandparents while attending Bridgetown Regional High School and excelled academically, receiving the scholarships and bursaries denied their parents two decades earlier. One respondent spoke of her three children who left Trinidad (1979-81) to attend grade 12 at BRHS: "*Each graduated with honours at the top of their classes and coped many of the prizes – poetic justice.*" This was the woman who, in the mid 50s, held the hope of attending university but was denied the financial assistance of a scholarship. That parents would willingly send their children away for their high school completion speaks volumes of the confidence they held in both the supportive nature of the Inglewood community and of the high educational standards of BRHS.

Participation in School Activities

A reading of the Bridgetown Regional High School's year books, *The Blue and White*, for the period 1953 to 1983 suggests not so much a well-integrated school as it does the determination of the Inglewood students to compete as equals in every aspect of school life. Inglewood students were well represented on the school's sports teams with one Inglewood athlete, now a physical education teacher at Cole Harbour High School, still holding the Provincial title for the hop/step track and field event. Male and female students were members of the volleyball, basketball, soccer and hockey teams, participated in track and field, and to some extent, the curling and bowling teams. In the 1970s, Inglewood students joined the cheerleaders. A past principal of the school noted that the school always had the policy that students had to succeed in the classroom if they were to spend time in extra-curricular activities.

It is significant that Inglewood's student participation was not restricted to athletics as seems to be the case with many other Black communities. Inglewood students were equally represented in the school's cadet program, chess club, choral club, dramatics, operettas and year book committee. A number of Inglewood students also participated in Student Congress and World Affairs and held executive positions on the Student Council, indicating strong leadership ability and recognition on the part of their classmates. Other Inglewood students participated in the school's debating club and took part in various speech festivals demonstrating their oratorical skills developed in part through Sunday School and BYPU activities and honed through classroom discussion.

In 1956 an Inglewood graduate was the class historian, an experience recalled by her 37 years later as follows: "*The thought of public speaking overwhelmed me but after the opening paragraph I was at ease.*"

A reading of the individual comments on the Inglewood students compiled by their classmates for the yearbook suggests that, despite the systemic discrimination which existed both in the school system and the community at large, the Black students were held in high regard. Comments were made of one young woman's "*marked ability as a student and athlete*" and of another's "*great scholastic ability.*" A third student was noted as having attained her "*share of awards and honours*" while a fourth was noted as having maintained "*an above average academic record while being involved in numerous extra curricular activities.*" This was the student who received the R.J. Messinger Citizenship Cup in 1967 for her leadership ability, involvement in student politics and ability to work independently. No scholarship money, it should be noted, was attached to this award.

Another student, noted for his athletic prowess received this acclamation from his classmates "*Tops in every athletic aspect of school, he is also blessed with brains, brains, brains.*"

Of another Inglewood student with plans to enter the Nova Scotia Teachers College, her colleagues wrote: "*Who knows, maybe someday she might be teaching here in Bridgetown.*"

Opportunities After Graduation

That was 1976. Up to that point, and to this present day (1994), Bridgetown has yet to hire their first Black teacher. The Inglewood community has produced five Black teachers, a number of whom have applied for teaching positions in the school, but none of whom have obtained even an interview. Mrs. Cromwell, who graduated from the Normal College in Truro in 1957 as a fully licensed teacher, was never offered full-time employment in the Bridgetown school system. Her first teaching position after returning to the teaching profession was as principal of the Weymouth school, travelling to that community on Sunday night and not returning to her family until Friday night. The following year Mrs. Cromwell was offered a full-time teaching position in Greenwood, a community some 40 kilometers distance from Inglewood where she remained for the next twenty years. Having retired in 1978, Mrs. Cromwell remained active in the system, sitting on the School Board for Annapolis County for the past nine years. Mrs. Cromwell has also received Canada's 125 Anniversary Commemorative Medal for her work in the community, an honour which went unnoticed in the Bridgetown newspaper.

The other four teachers from Inglewood, all of whom came through the Bridgetown school system, were also unable to obtain employment in their local community and were forced to look elsewhere for a teaching position. One teaches in Yellowknife, N.W.T another in St. John's, Nfld., a third in Elmsdale, N.S. and a fourth in Cole Harbour, N.S. Even this latter individual, a physical education teacher and international volleyball referee who brought honour to the Bridgetown Regional High School throughout his student years as an athlete, was not even granted the opportunity for an interview by his alma mater. While the Bridgetown school system is filled with White teachers who graduated from its classrooms over the years, an ex-principal of Bridgetown Regional High School is reported to have said, on at least two occasions, of Inglewood's young Black teachers: "*We educated them out of the community.*"

The Annapolis County School Board has recently (June 1993) passed a Race Relations Policy Statement with an employment equity clause intended to open Annapolis County schools to Black teachers. Discussion with the Superintendent of Schools for Annapolis County has indicated that in the case of Bridgetown's schools, however, there is a clause in the teaching contract stipulating that "*only those teachers who have either substituted or have term-taught in the Bridgetown system*" can be considered for employment in Bridgetown's schools. This clause has effectively barred Inglewood's teacher-graduates from Bridgetown's schools. Located elsewhere in the province and other parts of Canada, they have been unable to juggle their classroom schedules to meet the requirement of one or two days substitution in Bridgetown's classrooms.

Summary

Accepted by the majority of their classmates as their equals, encouraged by their teachers to excel, and recognized and honoured as good citizens, Inglewood students upon graduation have found the town, its businesses and schools, closed to them. The line was drawn so that even today there is only one Inglewood graduate gainfully employed in Bridgetown.

The Inglewood community has attempted to redress these inequalities through individual discussions with the town leadership, involvement on the Annapolis County School Board as well as through formal meetings established solely for the purpose of discussing job equity. Residents relate that in the late 1980s the Board of Trade was invited to the community (the old one-room school now renovated) to discuss employment. Instead of job offers however, excuses were made such as "*in our stores we mostly hire family*" or "*We advertise but no one ever applies*". As late as 1990, one well-qualified Inglewood resident was turned down for a welding job with ACL (now closed) although an "*explanation*" was provided for his not being hired within 24 hours of his job application.

There is a touch of bitterness among the community elders as they discuss the various racial incidents which have occurred over the years. The observation was made that "*it's the ones at the top who could have done something for you – the teachers, the principals – but they didn't*". They further noted that "*no one was ever encouraged*" and finally that "*they want you gone.*"

Various respondents indicated that racism was a major factor in their re-locating to other parts of the province, and indeed to outside the province, to find meaningful employment. "*Racism played a part because to my knowledge (early 70s) I didn't see any Blacks working in the town. I worked at the High School from May to August, 1970 (term position) as a secretary to the Director of the Regional Summer Games. I was not visible to the public since I worked at the school during this period. I have often wondered if I was the first Black female to work in the town as a secretary...*"

Another graduate wrote: "*I felt there were no real employment opportunities for me in my home town as most businesses were family run (white). Being familiar with the area, it was obvious our education was for better opportunities in other areas (cities). Few if any Blacks had major or small businesses where we could work.*"

The only employment open to Blacks in Bridgetown during the 1950s, 60s and 70s lay in factory jobs, day labour, office cleaning and housework. As one 70s graduate put it: "*I believe racism was there and (still is) because ... there were/are no Blacks visible to me working in the stores, banks, post office or offices or holding management positions.*"

An Assessment of the Inglewood Experience

The Community as Support System

The involvement of community in all aspects of the young person's life is seen by respondents as playing a large part in the success of the students within the educational system. Adults, youth and children attended church together, worked together and played together "*in a unified manner with no fuss nor fighting. We always knew we had the backing of the whole community and that support would counter any negative experiences we might have had in school.*"

The community made sure that the children and young people had a variety of activities of their own to engage in after-school hours, on weekends and in the summer months. These activities, as we have seen, were mostly community-based, and included the various church groups and camps, the 4H Club, the scouting movement, the plays, the picnics and dances. In addition to providing an outlet for youthful energy and an opportunity for socializing, these activities also developed critical leadership ability among the youth and sharpened their oratorical and debating skills. Adults from the community sharpened their own leadership skills through various adult education classes to make sure that the youth of Inglewood had many of the same advantages as the youth of neighbouring Bridgetown.

As one respondent who went through the school system in the 1960s put it: "*Having many people who care about you as an individual, having a resource centre or people in the community act as a resource centre is always a help. Inglewood is very much like that. Being people-in-my-community-oriented is another way of describing Inglewood.*"

Students who passed through the education system in the late 1970s, 80s and 90s, have indicated the critical need for a support system within the community. These students were fewer in number than their older siblings, and by the time they reached high school, most of the community activities of the earlier period had been disbanded. As one 1980s graduate put it: "*For me, things fizzled out. I never went to BYPU, Bethal Bible Camp. I never participated in those activities. They seemed to have stopped. Yes, I attended Sunday School but by that time it was* "in town". *All the leadership had gone.*"

This and other comments indicate the need for a continuing cycle of community leadership and a strong base of social activities for the youth of the community to come home to after their day in school. "*A good education does not only depend on academic success but also on social and spiritual development.*"

Parental Involvement

Not only did the parents of Inglewood encourage their children academically, they were actively involved in all matters concerning their children's schooling. We have seen how their involvement ranged from an active participation in studying to at least ensuring that the homework was done and on time. We have also heard how parents were watchful and protective of their children, speaking to the school administration on their behalf over racial incidents. Parents were active in the Home and School, attended their children's sporting events, plays, concerts and celebrated graduation as a special community event. More than this, parents were nurturing, encouraging and took the time to listen to their youth's concerns. There can be little doubt that the students of Inglewood knew that their parents were interested in their achievements and cared for them deeply.

There is a powerful role for parents to take on in the education of their children and the parents of Inglewood are to be commended for taking on that responsibility so willingly and effectively.

High Expectations

A third critical factor in the success of Inglewood that was repeated over and over in the response to this research was the statement made by parents and other community members to their young people that *"if you discipline yourself, dedicate yourself and diligently apply yourself, you can be anything you want to be."* Students were continually being told by their parents and other community members that *"we could be anything that we wanted to be"* and received the necessary support and encouragement to *"believe that whatever we set out to do in life, it would be accomplished."*

The community always held high expectations of their youth and made these known to their youth. While *"the pastors of our churches and a few teachers were probably the most educated Black people with whom we would have come in contact,"* the standard of a high school education, with the possibility of that being followed by post-secondary education, was the educational goal for all youth of the community.

Strong Self-Esteem

The community had a strong sense of self-esteem which rubbed off on all community members. All were gainfully employed and imparted a strong work ethic to their youth. As well, all youth of the community grew up with an understanding of their history, who their forefathers were and from where they came. Knowing the history of Inglewood itself, and its ongoing struggle to obtain education for its children over the generations must have acted as a powerful incentive to succeed educationally.

Lifelong Learning

Education in Inglewood did not stop at the schools. We have seen how the adults engaged in adult education classes, sharpening their writing and numerical skills and further developing their leadership ability. They used the adult education classes to raise the social, educational and economic standards of the whole community and in so doing set themselves up as positive role models for the youth. It did not matter that in those days there were few Black professionals in the community; what did matter was the community's overall love of learning and respect for knowledge. This deep-seated and inherited respect for education has a history of over 150 years in Inglewood and is well reflected in the graduates of the period under study.

Summary

These then are the lessons to be drawn from the Inglewood experience:

- A strong and healthy involvement of the community in the life of its children;
- A strong involvement by parents in the education of their children;
- Establishment of high educational standards and goals for and with their children;
- Development of a strong self-esteem through an appreciation of history and culture; and,
- An understanding and pursit of life-long learning.

These are not new messages. Indeed, anyone involved in the field of education will talk about the importance of parental involvement, extra-curricular activities, a healthy self-esteem, and goal setting.

What is unique however is that a small Black community in Nova Scotia applied these messages consistently and with such great effect. That 95 percent of this community's students graduated with their grade 12 or high school equivalency, many of whom went on for further education, speaks volumes for the power of a community which values education. This is an important message to impart so that other Black communities throughout the province can see that education and its associated benefits – a healthy self-esteem and meaningful and financially lucrative employment – can be a reality for their children.

One of the messages which comes through clearly in this Case Study of Inglewood (and offered by one respondent to the research) is that *"you can press on in spite of the negatives and dwell on the more positive aspects of life... don't be daunted by other peoples' attitudes towards you and make them stumbling blocks to achieving success... We must recognize our own self-worth, take responsibility for our own development and advancement, and stop using racism and slavery as scapegoats. That is part of our history; now we move on."*

The most important message according to community residents concerns the importance of family values – the caring and sharing among a community that cannot be taught but can be emulated – the strength of community which has been passed down across the generations and which is still being felt today among Inglewood residents. It is from these values that the youth obtained their positive outlook on life, their self-reliance and their ability to set goals and succeed.

In the words of one Inglewood resident:

> *I am very proud when I look around my community today and see the successful graduates I can relate to... banktellers, civil servants, policeman, captain in the army, sailors, airman, cooks, secretaries, office administrators, probation officer, law enforcement officer, provincial health inspector, registered nurses, public health nurse, professor of nursing, social worker, school teachers, school principal, publisher, physiotherapist, psychiatrist, dietitian, lab technician, research scientist, nuclear engineer, meteorologist, soil analyst, computer programmer, land surveyor, carpenter/cabinet maker, mason, plumber, bodyman/car refinisher, upholsterer and an electrician... not to forget anyone, we must remember our own parents and relatives who guided us all through this long tunnel to show us that there was, in fact, light at the end.*

2 North Preston's Struggle to Obtain Equality in Education

Introduction

The community of North Preston is one of the oldest and largest Black communities in Nova Scotia. Originally established in the 1780s and subsequently dismantled by the Black Loyalist exodus to Sierra Leone, North Preston's present population of approximately 2,000[1] dates back to the Black Refugee settlement of 1815.

North Preston was one of seven distinct settlements making up what was known until recently as the Township of Preston. East Preston, Cherry Brook and Lake Loon were the other Black settlements in the Township while the remaining communities of Lake Echo, Porter's Lake and Lake Major were settled by persons of English and German descent from the New England States and French prisoners.[2]

Located well off major transportation routes, North Preston was geographically isolated from the surrounding community resulting in the establishment of a school system separate from the neighbouring White communities. Government policies which were established in 1836 and not struck from the books until 1954, forbade Black children from attending the province's Common Schools and ensured the maintenance of the separate system. Additional policies which denied Black communities adequate funding for their schools ensured their inequality.

Nearly two hundred years later, elements of this separate system remain in the existence of the all-Black Nelson Whynder Elementary School located in North Preston. This school is the sole remaining Black school in the province, left over from two centuries of systemic discrimination in Nova Scotia's education system. Other legacies of the separate school system include few high school graduates and no university graduates prior to the late 1960s and early 1970s, years of playing catch-up with their White peers, and ongoing high unemployment rates.

North Preston's situation is little different from that of other smaller Black communities across the province. The legislation which barred North Preston's children from the neighbouring Common Schools barred most Black children; the policies which maintained North Preston's schools in a constant state of poverty and neglect applied equally to most other Black schools. The Black Learners Advisory Committee would like to thank North Preston for agreeing to use their community as a symbol of government neglect in this Case Study as well as for their assistance with the research.

The Case Study focuses on the struggles of North Preston parents to obtain educational equality for their children. The first section of the Case Study provides an historical overview of education in North Preston from its early days of settlement to the mid 1950s (1815-1954) drawing upon sources available through the Public Archives of Nova Scotia and local histories.

The second section focuses on the post-integration period (1968-1988) with particular attention paid to the North Preston-School Board relationship which developed over this period. Issues addressed in this section include conditions at North Preston's elementary schools, reading levels of North Preston's elementary school children, the struggle to obtain Black-centered curriculum, the so-called class action suit of 1975 and the resultant agreement emerging from the suit. Data for this section were obtained through interviews with North Preston residents, past teachers and specialists at North Preston's schools and Graham Creighton High School, documents relating events leading up to and including the class action suit, and minutes of the Monitoring Committee.

The third section opens with the Cole Harbour incident of 1989 and ends in 1991 with the establishment of the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board's initiative on Race Relations and the Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations. Data for this section came from interviews with North Preston residents, newspaper files and government reports.

North Preston and Education: 1815-1960

The following section outlines the struggle of the North Preston community to obtain education for its children in spite of deliberate government inaction and disregard for the educational needs of Black communities. It begins with the Black settlers' early attempts to establish schools in the face of extreme poverty and ends with the call to action, 139 years later, by the director of the American Adult Education Division for improvements in the education of Nova Scotia's Black communities and in particular, North Preston.

Early Struggles for Survival and Schooling

North Preston's struggle for educational equality has spanned nearly two centuries. Originally settled in the 1780s by Black Loyalists, North Preston subsequently became home to approximately 1,000 Black Refugees seeking freedom and land in exchange for their loyalty to the British against the Americans.

Interest in education was present from the start of North Preston's settlement. In 1816 settlers took advantage of a government grant to construct both a one-room school house and a small house for the schoolmaster. The teacher at that time was provided through the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel.[3]

Ongoing government funding of the school and the school teacher, however, was tied to annual contributions from the community. The 1811 legislation providing grants only to those communities that could build a school house, supply a teacher and provide 50 pounds through local subscription was replaced by legislation in 1836 giving the Board of School Commissioners access to a small fund for poorer communities and the authority to open Black schools whether or not a Common School existed. Once the needs of the rural White communities were met however, few dollars remained to assist Black communities set up their own schools. This legislation had a double effect. Not only were Blacks banned from the province's Common Schools, the lack of finances for Black schools ensured that the Black population's education was both inferior to that received by the White children in the province and sporadic at best.

The eight to ten acres of rocky land allotted the Refugees were insufficient for anything more than mere sustenance with little left over to pay a teacher's salary, buy school books and provide for the upkeep of a school. North Preston's initial years of settlement saw back to back crop failures resulting from one summerless year and the next season overrun by mice. The inadequacy of the land base was further aggravated by government's refusal to provide full title to the Refugees, providing only "*licenses of occupation.*" In this way Preston's residents were tied to their unproductive land and unable to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Government records from the mid 1800s are filled with petitions from North Preston to the House of Assembly requesting aid to ward off famine. The 1830s and 1840s were particularly hard years. One letter written on the community's behalf by an Anglican minister speaks of:

> *The very great distress which is now prevalent among the coloured people of Preston – several have lately died in this settlement for want of sustenance and the common necessities ... many families pass the whole day without eating anything... of their cattle, scarcely any have lived through the late winter owing to the scarcity of hay...*[4]

Establishment of Church-Run Schools

Because of the ongoing extreme poverty experienced by most Black communities, and by North Preston in particular, education in these early years of settlement remained outside their means. To fill the void, various religious and philanthropic organizations such as the Associates of the Late Dr. Bray and the Society for the Organization of the Gospel stepped in and established a series of schools known as the African Schools in Black communities throughout the province.

They found in North Preston a community committed to the education of its children despite its daily struggle for survival. In 1820, a petition requesting support for a teacher was sent to the House of Assembly on behalf of "*the inhabitants of colour of Preston who wish to have their children instructed and being in a state of great indigence are incapable of supporting a school master...*"[5]

In 1825 another petition[6] was sent to the House of Assembly from the community of North Preston written by a Black teacher:

> *Your petitioner hereby shewth that there is a great number of coloured children in Preston which are growing up in a perfect state of obscurity for the want of being instructed how to read the Holy Bible which is one of the best books upon Earth for the instruction of mankind. Their parents are placed on very small lots of land by which their circumstances are very indigent and renders them incapable of paying a teacher such as he can live by. Your petitioner has expressed the same by keeping of a school six months at the aforementioned place. Your petitioner therefore humbly salutes your honourable Body for to take this obscure care into your wise consideration and allow such amount and assistance as may seem best to support a School as in duty bound he will pray.*
>
> JOHN PLEASANT
> A MAN OF COLOUR WITH HIS LEFT ARM OFF
> FEBRUARY 26, 1825

Attached to this petition was a letter signed by 18 household heads from North Preston in support of John Pleasant:

> *We the undersigned persons will contribute as much as our circumstances will allow us to support your petitioner to keep a school in our settlement. He has been keeping up a school in the aforementioned place for the space of six months and we have every reason to believe that he is as useful a man as we could have to keep a school. For the space of time that our children was entrusted to his care they made great proficiency. He was always very attentive and sober. We have known him for these nine years past. During that time we never knew anything disrespectful of him.*

By late 1825, two Sunday Schools were operating under the SPG's guidance attended by 80 children and by 1831 the frame of a new schoolhouse was erected. "*Before these schools*," Society reports note, "*these children scarcely knew the alphabet.*" The Society also held classes two nights a week with community members obtaining "*a fair knowledge of writing and arithmetic.*"[7]

Despite the financial strains of maintaining a school, parental commitment to education remained strong:

> *The terminal examination of the Preston school took place on Thursday last. The room was decorated ... and filled with children and their parents, the latter evincing a deep interest in the education of the youth of their community. The children aquitted themselves well with recitations and dialogues.*[8]

Curriculum of Church-Run Schools

The curriculum of the schools run by the religious organizations was not equal to that provided in the Common Schools. White students attending the Common Schools studied English grammar, Latin, Greek, the Classics, algebra and geography. The curriculum of the philanthropic organizations (reading, writing, arithmetic and the catechism) was overlaid with an emphasis on obedience and humility in an effort to maintain the Black population in a submissive condition to the dominant society. The African Schools did extreme damage to the Black learner in both their establishment of a segregated system and their choice of curriculum inferior both in quality and content to that taught in the Common Schools.[9]

Changes in Education Act and North Preston

In 1864, legislation was passed which established free tuition for all Common Schools with the teacher's salary and upkeep of the school to be raised through voluntary subscription or public assessment. In 1865 the bill was amended to provide free education and compulsory assessment. The North Preston community took part in the debate which raged over the passage of the Free Education Act, sending another petition to government in 1868:

> *The petitioners of the undersigned trustees of the school at Preston Coloured Section No. 52 humbly shewth that your petitioners have been watching the working of the Education Act in their locality and from the benefits which have resulted from its operations they are of the opinion that any alteration would be highly detrimental to the cause of Education that the present mode of assessment for the support of schools answers the requirements for the same... any alternations either by fees or subscription will be injurious to the cause of Education...*
>
> JOSEPH EVANS,
> RICHARD CROUD,
> WILLIAM CARVERY TRUSTEES

Schooling in North Preston remained under the responsibility of the SPG until as late as 1882 at which time the grant was discontinued and the school was closed.[9] For fifteen years after the Society had withdrawn their support of the North Preston school, North Preston was without education for its children. This situation was not, as is suggested by the Inspector of Schools for Halifax County,[11] because of community disinterest in education but rather the result of deliberate government neglect. Government funding, while available for the Common Schools, was withheld from the separate Black schools established throughout the province resulting in inferior education for Blacks. Peter McKerrow, clerk of the African United Baptist Association and a strong proponent of equal education for Black and White students, wrote of North Preston's educational needs in 1895:[12]

> *One of the most serious evils is the growing up of a young generation without an education. There is no day school. There are lots of children in schoolable age in both sections of the district who go without education. It is sad to think of it, but many of our older people can both read and write when the younger ones cannot. Someone is to blame. Here we see an immense demand for compulsory education that is not being met in a country with an army of teachers, for whom there are no positions to fill. We hope people will become cognizant of their needs and make an appeal to government for schools and education.*

Two years later a new school house was built in North Preston with assistance provided through two philanthropic individuals.[13] By 1898 the New Road (North Preston) school had 69 Black students whose ages ranged from 5-33.

Maintaining schools in the Black communities was another difficulty as few teachers were willing to locate to the rural Black communities. The annual inspectors' reports throughout the mid to late 1800s referred repeatedly to the "*overriding need for good teachers*" and "*calls for special aid to induce competent teachers to work in these isolated communities.*" Without them, the reports noted, "*children will be left to struggle in their own ignorance.*"[14] Schools in many Black communities were open only part of the year and many not at all.

Schooling in the first half of the twentieth century continued to be unavailable to Black children in many parts of the province and communities with schools continued to find it hard to attract teachers. One Canadian historian noted that between 1918 and 1954 in Nova Scotia "*only the most blind of school inspectors could have pretended that separate education was also equal education.*"[15] Black schools were poorly maintained, inadequately heated throughout the winter months and were without running water. Individual accounts of Black school teachers, now retired, are uniform in their condemnation of the conditions accorded Black teachers and students alike. This situation was permitted by government to continue well into the 1950s, and in the case of North Preston into the 1970s, at a time when White school children attended clean, well maintained and well supplied schools throughout the province.

Impact of the Adult Education Movement on North Preston

North Preston's struggle with education continued, largely unaided and ignored by the province well into the 1940s. At that time, the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP), incorporated in 1945, spearheaded the movement for government attention to the educational needs of the Black communities and in 1946/47, initiated co-operation with the newly established Adult Education Division of the Department of Education. Led by the Rev. W.P. Oliver, a series of visits were made to Black communities throughout the province to establish a program of adult education and self-help activities. North Preston and Upper Hammonds Plains were the first communities to become involved and commenced adult education classes in 1946/47. The program expanded under Rev. W.P. Oliver (later to be hired as head of the program within the Department of Education) to include over twenty Black communities. The early adult education classes grew from elementary classes, reading and discussion groups to self-supporting community organizations with problems of land ownership, housing, health and employment being debated and solutions sought.[16]

The Cooper Report

In 1954, North Preston received international focus. Eight years after the adult education program's initiation, Dr. William Cooper, the African American registrar of Hampton Institute in Virginia and vice-president of the Adult Education Association of the United States, was invited by the Nova Scotia Department of Education to undertake an assessment of the adult education program established among the Black communities of Nova Scotia.[17]

The resulting report was a powerful indictment of the province's neglect of education among Black communities in general, and in North Preston in particular. Cooper stated that:

> *The most urgent educational need among the coloured people of the Province and the most challenging opportunity for the adult education division is ... to immediately organize the New Road (North Preston) patrons and guide them in receiving the facilities and teaching staff needed to insure full-time elementary instruction for all pupils in the area. It has important implications for this segment of the population and for the Province as a whole.*[18]

It is clear from a reading of the report that North Preston, in the 1950s, was virtually without either elementary or secondary schooling for its children. The community at that time had a population of approximately 1,300 (the largest Black community in the province) and an elementary school-age population of 300. This situation was repeated in Black communities across the province resulting in only a handful of Black students graduating from high school and fewer still attending university. The segregated schools, it should be noted, provided education only up to grade 8 as lack of resources and trained teachers prevented the establishment of a high school program. Because of transportation difficulties and the racism that existed in the White schools, few Black students were able to complete their education. This led to the situation noted by Rev. W.P. Oliver in 1949 "*of no record of a Negro student from any of the Nova Scotia settlements either entering or graduating from any of the universities of the province.*"[19]

The Cooper report called for five specific short-term actions to remedy North Preston's immediate problems around education:

- The organization of the real leaders of the New Road district to concentrate on the provision of adequate school facilities and programs for all the children of the district at the earliest possible date;
- In addition to the construction of four to six new classrooms, new construction of facilities for a district meeting place for evening classes, for community music and drama, for community art and for wholesome community recreation;
- Establishment of the New Road School program as a district or community-centered program concerned with the health, vocational, civic, recreational and spiritual welfare and progress of parents as well as pupils;
- Hiring of a well trained principal who can do community work with adults including industrial arts and at least one outstanding woman teacher with special ability to teach reading on the elementary school level; and,
- Establishment of an instructional program to prepare those who are capable of continuing their education in the vocational or other high schools and in the university.

These recommendations, supported by the local community and financed by the NSAACP, province and municipality, resulted in construction of a new eight-room school. The school which it replaced dated back to the 1890s and remained standing until the early 1960s at which time it was torn down. The Cooper report also led to the construction of a teacherage in the community of North Preston. Because of the relative isolation of North Preston and the lack of transportation to the community, in order for the school to operate, teachers were required to live within the community. Establishment of a teacherage (similar to the concept of rectory or manse), provided incentive to teachers from outside the community to move to North Preston.

Construction was followed in 1956 by the hiring of Mr. Frissell Jones of Virginia as principal of the New Road school. Under his direction and supported by the local ratepayers association, the New Road school and community underwent substantial changes.[20] Quality teachers including Miss Shirley Morgan and Mr. Noel Johnston were brought into the school; a Glee Club which competed with schools throughout the Halifax metropolitan area was organized; evening classes were established for the adults; and a Men's Club and a Women's Club were set up. Efforts were also directed towards obtaining municipal infrastructure for the community. By adopting a holistic approach to community education, Mr. Jones and the community leaders enabled the introduction of street lights, postal delivery and milk delivery to North Preston. The isolation imposed by geography and maintained by successive layers of governments indifferent to the needs of the community was finally being broken down.

Impact of the Cooper Report

Mr. Jones remained in North Preston for a period of eight years, returning to the United States in 1964. Over this time major educational changes were seen in North Preston including the graduation of its first students from high school and their entry to university. A number of the young students who attended elementary school under Mr. Jones as principal continued their education at high school outside of the community and later went on to university. These were the first students to attend university from North Preston.

"*Mr. Jones was an inspiration to our family,*" one community member has related. "*He sponsored my older brother to go to university (St. Augustus and St. Augustine in Raleigh, North Carolina).*" A second brother was another of Mr. Jone's protégés. "*Mr. Jones started a fire in him. He went to Dalhousie University – the first who stayed here and he didn't go through the Transition Year Program.*"

The extent to which the municipality and the Department of Education actively supported Mr. Jones in his work is a matter for speculation. What appears clear however is that the energizing effects of Mr. Jones in his work around education in North Preston appear not to have been passed on to his successors. Progressive changes in North Preston's schools appear to have come to a halt with his departure. Community members who attended the North Preston school in the mid to late 1960s recall being taught by "*elderly white teachers with bad tempers*" and being "*beat with a rod across our backs.*" By the late 1960s these teachers had been replaced by East Indian teachers who were given schools in Black communities "*because no other teacher wanted to work there.*"

East Indian Teachers in North Preston

It is ironic that what drew these East Indian teachers to Canada was the promise of teaching jobs similar to the promises of land made to the ancestors of North Preston's residents some 150 years earlier. Like the Black Refugees before them, the East Indians who settled in the Halifax-Dartmouth area encountered discrimination in hiring practices and found the only jobs open to them were in schools in Black communities. In 1970, for example, of a teaching staff of 16 at the 2 elementary schools in North Preston, 6 were East Indian and one was Chinese Canadian.[21] It should be noted that colleagues of these East Indian teachers in the North Preston schools have stressed that the East Indians were excellent teachers, had high standards and expectations for the students and used their own money to buy supplies that were lacking in the classrooms.

Fifteen years later (1985), the Indo-Canadian Teachers of the Halifax County submitted a brief to the School Board on the subject of discrimination.

> *Systemic discrimination is a part of Canadian society. We find it extremely difficult to adjust to and to appreciate the board's formal approach to the human issues which we are raising. While a formal legislative approach can provide a justification for inaction, it cannot cause the problem to cease to exist. In our view the board and the administration of its employ have not demonstrated sufficient sensitivity in dealing with teachers who are first generation immigrants and who are not of the majority culture.*[22]

North Preston and the Era of Integration: 1960-1988

The focus of this section is with the quality of education received by North Preston's children during the so-called period of integration.[23] Special attention is paid to the actions and inaction of the Halifax County School Board in relation to the stated educational concerns and needs of the community.

Graham Creighton High School

In 1962, young people from North Preston began attending Graham Creighton High School located in Cherry Brook for grades 7-12. Other Black students attending the school came from East Preston, Lake Loon and Cherry Brook. The remaining students were White and came mostly from the Eastern Passage area of Halifax County.

Prior to Graham Creighton's construction, most Black students from North Preston were forced to quit school upon completion of junior high as there was no high school in the immediate area. Isolated geographically, deprived economically and with neither a transit system nor school bus system in place, the majority of North Preston's youth, as well as those from other Black communities in the area, were unable to find the necessary transportation to attend high school.

> *My Mom went to high school in Dartmouth. After school, she'd walk down to the ferry terminal and try and catch a ride with someone from home. They had to find their own transportation in those days – there was no bus, no one had cars. She finally quit school when she couldn't get a ride.*

The few young people who did manage in the 1950s and 1960s to locate reliable transportation continued their education and are now employed as teachers and other professionals within or nearby their communities.

Graham Creighton held out the promise of a new era – an era that promised a high school degree for all and opened the doors to university. The conditions which students encountered at Graham Creighton however dashed these hopes and led to student protest supported by a few teachers.

> *When we started visiting other high schools for sports events and seeing their sports equipment, we asked ourselves how we were supposed to compete if the School Board doesn't equip us? And as for the academics, with the exception of a few teachers, there was NO push, NO encouragement.*

Auxiliary Classes

Instead of providing extra resources to assist these students with their education, the Board established auxiliary classes and pulled even those students with potential out of the academic program.

> *The teachers took smart, I mean SMART kids, out of the academic classes and placed them in the auxiliary classes. They were told they would get through high school faster and easier and that they would get a job quicker. I knew something was wrong because education is not easy. The teachers tried to get me to join the auxiliary class and even wrote a letter to my parents asking them to sign me up. But I read the letter and signed for them – I stayed where I was. The auxiliary class shattered students.*

Black Student Union

The students knew they were behind their peers from other communities in reading and writing skills and actively sought extra help after class and tutoring sessions to improve their academics. In 1969-70, student leaders organized a Black Students Union (the first in Nova Scotia and possibly in Canada), and called upon all Black students from grades 10-12 to drop their extra curricular activities, cease going to the gymnasium and instead spend any free time in the library studying and working collectively. Their stated goal was "*to improve the academic standing of the school.*" Only three teachers offered support to the Black students in these efforts and acknowledged that the students "*were not getting the education that they should.*"

The Black Student Union repeatedly requested a meeting with the School Board to discuss their concerns around the education they were receiving. But the School Board refused this request sending instead a School Board member from the Preston area to meet with the students. The community saw this as yet another attempt by the School Board to deflect their responsibility by throwing it back to the community. The Human Rights Commission, on the other hand, offered to meet with the students to discuss their issues and promised moral support. The students also received an invitation from the Black students at both Saint Mary's University and Dalhousie University to discuss how to organize a student union.

In the face of the School Board refusal to meet with the students, a student boycott was called and a march held to bring attention to a number of issues. Newspapers of the day likened the student organization to then active American-based Black Power Movement. This brought the issue to a head. School Board administration allegedly threatened the then Student Union President with expulsion and placed him on suspension. The Union was effectively dismantled, formally ceasing operations two years later.[24]

Elementary School Conditions in North Preston

Meanwhile school conditions in North Preston's two elementary schools (Nelson Whynder and Allen W. Evans) had deteriorated to the days prior to Mr. Jones and the Cooper report. School absences were more the rule than exception with school registrars for specific students revealing the loss of almost a year of schooling through absence during the child's elementary school education. The behaviour of students, upon experiencing frustration with the learning program, was also a cause for concern. Teachers felt helpless in coping with discipline problems and schools reported that it was not uncommon to have the local board of trustees actively involved in meetings to discipline students for fighting and disrespect towards teachers.[25]

Added to these problems, the two school buildings were in a bad state of disrepair, toilet facilities were often out of working order, flies bred in the walls and the heating system was erratic. A report dated December 18, 1974 notes:

> *Heating and ventilation are poor, particularly in North Preston. The Whynder School in frequently chilly while the Evans School is often unbearably warm. Until November, the circulating fan at Evans had not been operating for five years. These conditions increase restlessness, fatigue and irritability of both staff and students... Dust and dirt are present to an unnecessary extent. Flies which were dying by the hundreds in classrooms at North Preston were often not cleaned up for days. Janitors are often absent during the teaching day and equipment, ladders, mops are locked up and inaccessible. There is often no toilet paper or towels in the washrooms. Lighting is always in need of repair.*[26]

These health problems, as well as others including the state of the schools' drinking water, were brought repeatedly to the attention of both the School Board and the Department of Health. A

past Teacher's Union representative from the North Preston schools reported bringing an official from the Department of Health to North Preston's schools to test the drinking water because of concern of oil in the water. "*You can really smell it*" the health official reportedly stated at the time the water samples were taken. Yet when the water report came back to the Union it stated "*No petroleum products.*" When the Union representative persisted in bringing complaints to the School Board about the state of the drinking water, the School Board sent "*old, cracked and dirty water coolers*" to the school. In the face of the School Board's refusal to deal adequately with the water problem, teachers and students were forced to bring their own drinking water to school.

Learning materials and supplies were also inadequate. One teacher from the 1970s reported other teachers "*ripping the math texts in two so that there would be enough to go around,*" using her own salary to buy the most basic of supplies, and children often sitting in their coats and hats during the winter months because there was no heating in the school. This teacher also reported being told by the curriculum supervisor for the sub-system that there was little point in having books in her classroom "*because the children can't read.*"!

Another teacher stated that "*the students did not receive the education that they should have*" with a third marveling at how any of the students from the North Preston community managed to graduate from high school at all given the conditions at school under which they were expected to learn.

These school conditions had an obvious impact on the students resulting in a disinterest in education and learning. Teachers at the junior high level reported that children from the North Preston community were for the most part illiterate and reading scores confirmed that most were reading grades below their level.

1973 Complaint to the Human Rights Commission

Complaints about the school conditions at Nelson Whynder, Allen W. Evans (North Preston) and Partridge River (East Preston) resulted in a number of School Board initiatives aimed ostensibly at raising the level of educational services. In 1973, a complaint lodged by the East Preston Ratepayers Association with the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, resulted in a subsequent investigation and discussions with the School Board. In response, the Halifax County School Board, with the support of the Provincial Department of Education, agreed to offer bonuses to attract better qualified teachers to the schools, increased the per capita allowances for the Preston schools and decreased the student-teacher ratio.[27]

Special Development Program at North Preston and East Preston

The following year, a special development program was put in place in the Preston's three elementary schools whereby "*parent and teacher, community and school, are involved in co-operative work which will result in the youth of the community being better able to acquire a desired identity and to participate fully in social and economic life of Nova Scotia.*"[28]

Six specialists were hired; they included music, art and physical education teachers, as well as a reading specialist, resources teacher and community development worker. Priorities identified for the specialists included:

- Increased personalized instruction on an individual and small group basis;
- Promotion of Black cultural identity and awareness;
- Establishment of after-school and extra-classroom programs to work in the area of social adaptation and life skills;
- Special emphasis on language skills; and,
- A greater liaison with the home.

Events Leading up to the 1975 Class-Action Suit

One of the first initiatives undertaken by the specialists was the testing of all North and East Preston students to determine their reading levels. *The resultant scores showed that of over 400 students, only eleven were reading at their appropriate level.* The remainder were reading from two to four years below the norm for their age and number of years in school.[29]

Early in the program, the specialists determined that the school administration and School Board staff were deliberately undermining the program. Roadblocks were increasingly being put in their way resulting in the specialists documenting the difficulties experienced.[30]

Meanwhile parents in East Preston and Cherry Brook had become increasingly concerned about the quality of education their children were receiving. At about the time that the specialists released the results of the reading tests, parents lodged complaint after complaint with the Human Rights Commission against the Halifax County School Board. In the spring of 1975, two open community meetings were held to discuss parental concerns over education at the elementary, junior and senior high levels.

The first meeting was convened by the East Preston Ratepayers Association in co-operation with the NSAACP on March 18, 1975 and held at the East Preston Centennial Centre. Specific topics discussed at this meeting included the reading levels of the children upon graduation from elementary school, the lack of and resources needed to run a successful continuous learning program at all levels of school, the lack of music, art, commercial courses, language labs, reading specialist or speech therapist, the inadequacy of the library facilities, the need for an auditorium, inadequate cafeteria space and physical education facilities, as well as the need for well-equipped rooms for audio-visual aids in teaching at the high school.[31]

This meeting was followed by a second held on the 16th of April 1975 at Graham Creighton High School.[32] It was organized by the Preston Area Education Task Force made up of members from each of the three Black communities and was attended by community members, Human Rights Commission representatives and the Black United Front. The meeting focused on the quality of education received by children at the elementary level with the suggestion of a class action suit against the School Board raised as an option to have the communities' concerns and requests dealt with seriously.

North Preston was initially reluctant to take the class action route and in the succeeding days efforts were allegedly made by the School Board administration to "*smooth things over*" with the School trustees "*taken out for lunch*" and discouraged from taking the political route.[33] Two community meetings called by the Trustees and Home and School were hastily organized in North Preston and held on April 24 and 29 to discuss the standards of education existing at the Nelson Whynder and Allan Evans Schools.

The 1975 Class Action Suit

On April 30, 1975, a formal complaint was lodged with the Human Rights Commission by the Preston Area Education Task Force against the Halifax County Municipal School Board. The complaint stated the county school system had discriminated against the communities of North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook and Lake Loon with more than 800 individual complaints presented to the commission alleging the school system provided an inferior standard of service on the basis of race and colour.[34]

As part of the investigation by the Human Rights Commission, the six specialists hired by the Board to work in the schools in North Preston and East Preston were interviewed. Their complaints, partially documented in their own report dated December 18 1974, were reviewed resulting in a document specifically addressing the special development program. With respect to the specialists program the Commission found that: "*the manner in which the implementation of the specialist program was changed from time to time leaves a great doubt in one's mind whether there was a deliberate attempt to ensure the failure of the program.*" In addition, the Commission found that "*supervisory staff of the board did not co-operate with the specialists and adopted an attitude of hostility towards them.*"[35]

Specific findings of the Commission regarding the implementation of the specialist development program are discussed below.

Misuse of Budget

One of the particularly damaging aspects of the report was the reference made by the sub-system's curriculum consultant that "*the four of us (meaning the two principals, the project's supervisor and the curriculum consultant) stick together in a solid front to make these people (the specialists) work, to get them involved in projects and to identify to them as well that there is no money left in the project.*"[36]

In fact, for the year 1974-75 an extra $20 per student was to be allocated for the North and East Preston schools for the provision of material resources. The specialists indicated during the investigation that not only had the full budget not been spent, the portion which had been spent had been allocated to purchase "*items like paper and glue which in any case the Board was obligated to provide.*"[37] It was also alleged that several of the items (accounting for a total of $2,600) for which invoices had been provided were never provided for the use of the school. In the words of the Commission's report: "*Even at the time that the Supervisor for the sub-system and the curriculum consultant were interviewed, they were unaware whether the amount allocated was fully exhausted and yet the minutes (of the meeting held among the two principals, supervisor and curriculum consultant) would seem to indicate a plot to deprive the students of what the Board had agreed to provide (the $20 per capita).*"[38]

The report of the Human Rights Commission ends with the statement that "*There is very strong circumstantial evidence that... some of the supervisory personnel were determined not to put into effect the good intentions of the Board.*"[39]

Reading Scores

The Human Rights Commission placed considerable emphasis in its report on the controversy surrounding the reading scores of the children from both North and East Preston. As noted elsewhere, only 11 of the approximately 400 students tested in the fall of 1974 were reading at their expected levels with the remaining at two or more levels below. Additional reading scores provided by the School Board on the Commission's request confirm the earlier scores. The following reading scores are from grades 5 and 6 of Ross Road Elementary School.[40]

Figure 1 below shows that for 67 grade 5 children from Cole Harbour who were tested in their 8th month in grade 5, the average reading level was at the 6th month of grade 5. The average reading level of 37 children in grade 5 tested from North Preston, on the other hand, was at a grade 3 level. Similar findings resulted from testing grade 6 students. Of 58 children (White) from Cole Harbour in grade 6, the average reading level was found to be at a grade 7 level. The corresponding average for North Preston children in grade 6, was at a grade 3 level.

Figure 1

Community	Grade 5 Average Grade Reading Levels 1974	1975
Cole Harbour	5.6 67 pupils	6.7 79 pupils
North Preston	3.0 37 pupils	3.4 37 pupils
East Preston	4.4 11 pupils	5.0 16 pupils
Lawrencetown	4.8 21 pupils	6.4 19 pupils
	Grade 6 Average Grade Reading Levels	
Cole Harbour	7.0 58 pupils	8.5 78 pupils
North Preston	3.2 38 pupils	4.2 37 pupils
East Preston	3.4 31 pupils	4.5 31 pupils
Lawrencetown	5.1 26 pupils	6.8 27 pupils

As the Commission noted, "*reading proficiency is a sine qua non for higher education and unless a child has the expected reading skills, he might as well forget ever entering university.*" The report continues: "... *a number of Black students who have graduated from High School and are presently attending university are still trying to master reading skills that they never achieved in the feeder schools.*"[41]

This weak grounding achieved in the early years in reading skills, coupled with the equally weak parent-school relations, resulted in students from North Preston entering Junior High School ill-prepared to handle course curriculum. A retrospective report prepared in 1985 sketches the dismal outcomes of the education received by North Preston students in their elementary years.

> *The students from North Preston tended to be older in age than the other junior high students. They were much more physical and were often involved in fighting. There seemed to be a tradition of intimidation that was practiced by many of the students. Money extortion and other acts of abuse to one another were common occurrences. Much of the Principal's and Vice-Principal's time was taken up with handling of discipline problems. The teaching staff, because many had started at Sir Robert Borden, did not understand what reasonable expectations of student behaviour should be and there was much inconsistency which gave conflicting messages to all students... Records indicated that the majority of Black students were placed in Developmental Reading classes and little integration took place.*[42]

Settlement of the "Class Action Suit"

Referred to at the time in both the Human Rights Commission records and the local newspapers as a "*class action suit*", the actual complaint never went to court. Instead an agreement was negotiated between the Human Rights Commission and the Halifax County School Board and the impetus for change originating at the community level came to a halt.

Just exactly how the community lost control of the process is not clear. People who attended the community meetings, for example, have reported that the impression which was given by the Human Rights Commission at those meetings was that the community would play a central role in the negotiation process, would be consulted on all aspects of the case and would be given the opportunity to shape the resulting agreement. In short, the community was to play a substantial role in shaping the settlement.

Between the time these commitments were made however and the resultant settlement was reached, the community process was derailed. Who was responsible for undermining the community process is not clear but by electing to drop the suit in exchange for negotiation, the School Board was released from its legal responsibility for the inadequate education received by the four communities.

In hindsight, community members and others involved at the time feel that the Human Rights Commission was upset that the issues, supposedly put to rest by the recommendations resulting from the 1973 complaint, had re-emerged. Certainly the School Board and other top school administrators were upset. In one community organizer's words: "*That was when the riot act was read to us. Two teachers at Graham Creighton were called into the Superintendent's office (head of education for Halifax County) and told to shut up or take a hike.*"

The six specialists were also called into a meeting with the Superintendent and warned against taking "*the political route.*" "*Road blocks*" it was insisted "*were not deliberate;*" "*to suggest that the Board has scuttled the program is incredible after efforts made by the Board in past year;*" and "*Publicity will do more harm than good and will not get the desired results.*"[43]

The settlement was portrayed as having important implications for Black communities across the province. George McCurdy, the then Director of the Human Rights Commission, was quoted as saying "*The settlement publicly acknowledged that Blacks in the province have endured an educational system not designed to accommodate the special problems of minority groups and that compensation was needed to overcome the problem of education for Blacks.*" He also made the point that "*the weakness in the provision of education for Blacks has not materialized only in the last few years, but has been an on-going result of discrimination since the first education act in 1811.*"[44]

The Settlement: The Monitoring Committee and the School Board

On August 10, 1975, the Human Rights Commission came out with its recommendations to the Halifax County Municipal School Board regarding class discrimination complaints by residents of Cherry Brook, Lake Loon, East Preston and North Preston. They are summarized in Figure 2.

The Monitoring Committee, resulting from the final recommendation of the 1975 Settlement, was given the mandate to monitor the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Settlement. The makeup of the committee, however, dictated its direction and effectiveness from the start.

A press release issued by the Halifax County School Board on August 11, 1975 made clear under whose authority the Monitoring Committee would proceed. It was to be comprised of "*the School Board and its staff, and the Board of Trustees, together with representatives of the Preston Area Education Task Force (of the four Black communities), the Black Educators' Association and the (Human Rights) Commission.*" Over the life of the committee's establishment, the Chair and Recording Secretary positions of the Monitoring Committee were held respectively by the Chief Executive Officer and the Sub-System Supervisor of the Halifax County School Board.

One would have expected items arising from the Monitoring Committee to be reflected in the School Board minutes. One would also expect, given the existence of the Monitoring Committee and the fact that the Black population makes up a large segment of the County's student population, that there would be a regular place on the Board's agenda to discuss issues relating to the Black community. Neither was the case. A reading of the Board's minutes indicates that only infrequently were issues raised at the Monitoring Committee brought to the Board's

Figure 2
Summary of Agreement Emerging from Settlement

- The Board agreed to request an increase in the number of presently-employed specialist resource teachers (remedial reading, resource, and part-time art, music and physical education teachers) for the staffs of North and East Preston schools.
- The Board agreed to provide maintenance for current schools and to bring them up to acceptable standards until new schools are constructed.
- The Board agreed to explore ways to continue the teacher aids in the schools.
- The Board agreed to assist the preschool programs on a consultative basis.
- The Board agreed to re-offer adult education courses at North Preston.
- The Board agreed that if the need could be substantiated that increases in special funds for teaching and learning materials would be provided.
- The Board agreed to seek Ministry approval to establish a full-time principal for Partridge River School in East Preston.
- The Board agreed to monitor and expand the Special Skills Program at Graham Creighton as required.
- The Board agreed to examine the need for additional speech therapist services.
- The Board agreed to continue providing reading material that reflected a cultural representation of the Province of Nova Scotia.
- A monitoring committee was established consisting of representatives of the School Board and its staff, and the Board of Trustees, together with representatives from the Department of Education, the Education Task Force, the Black Educators Association and the Human Rights Commission.

attention. Further, a reading of the minutes sheds no light on the fact that the County has large numbers of Black families among its numbers or that concerns continued to exist among the Black communities over the quality of education their children were receiving.

Indeed there is no evidence that the Board ever admitted responsibility for the sub-standard conditions that existed in Black schools before and during the 1970s. The language used by the Board in the settlement – "*the Board will continue*" and "*continuing efforts*" – suggests that the Board had been working all along on the issues raised by the communities instead of avoiding their responsibilities as the investigation clearly showed.

The School Board's lack of goodwill is further evidenced in the report of the conciliation meeting held August 11, 1975. In that report, the Supervisor for the Board repeatedly stated that while the Board agreed with the various measures being recommended, that there were "*no funds*" for their implementation. The resultant document outlining the so-called agreement was dead before it was released to the public.

A reading of the School Board minutes for the period 1975 through 1988 confirms that the Board never took the agreement seriously. Over the succeeding 15 years few or no actions were taken on the Board's own initiative to advance the educational opportunities of the Black communities. Any progressive actions that did occur in the County schools over these years came through the efforts of the Monitoring Committee, individual teachers' efforts, or organizations like the Black Educator's Association.

Progress Reports

On May 27 1980, the first progress report on Black students as a result of the terms of the 1975 agreement, was tabled by a sub-committee of the Monitoring Committee. The report focused on six areas: progress within the reading program, number of students extending their education through to high school, age of students within particular grade levels, general student discipline, general attendance patterns, and student attitude toward school.

Within the elementary schools, the sub-committee noted significant improvement in the areas of attitude and behaviour and attributed the improved motivation to the specialist personnel provided through the Agreement. Attendance in the elementary schools was also greatly improved. Less improvement was noted in junior and senior levels with "*a lack of motivation and poorly developed attitudes and work habits*"[45] noted in particular. The report added that "*schools have expressed the opinion that by the time students reach high school, it is too late to bring about any significant change in discipline, behaviours and attitudes.*"[46]

A second student assessment, this time focusing on elementary students attending Nelson Whynder School in North Preston, was tabled in February 1985. Attendance remained a problem at Nelson Whynder with particular students missing as many as thirty to forty days of schools and with more than 50 percent of the student body classified as having "*poor attendance*" meaning that more than 15 class days were lost. Eighty percent of those students were reported as "*achieving at low levels.*"[47]

The report also noted that "*maintaining an appropriate learning environment is a very difficult task. North Preston students, to a large degree, find it difficult to sit and take instruction without being distracted by their peers.*"[48]

In response to the reports on continuing difficulties with attitude, behaviour and attendance, the Monitoring Committee, time after time, questioned the appropriateness of the curriculum for the Black students. Specific questions asked of the School Board were: "*What is being taught? How is it being taught? How suitable is the learning environment within the classroom?*"[49]

School Board staff however did not follow up on the Monitoring Committee's suggestions to explore alternative teaching curriculum or methods. A review of the events surrounding the Black literature course, now in place at Cole Harbour High School, is a prime example of the Board's reluctance and recalcitrance to implement real change.

Black-Centered Curriculum

The need to establish Black-centered curriculum was identifed by a teacher at Graham Creighton in the late 1960s resulting in his development of a high school level Black literature course. The timing was also favourable as the Federal government had made dollars available at this time for course development and teachers were encouraged to develop new courses on a pilot basis. The resultant Black literature course was well received by the Black student body with as many as three grade 11 classes signed up for the course at one time. Adults today remember waiting all through their junior high years to take this course.[50]

The introduction of a Black-centered curriculum to the high school had a powerful impact on the students. In the words of one North Preston resident: "*All of a sudden I became interested. All of a sudden I was doing good in history and literature. I was making 88, 95 where previously I was making in the 50s and 60s. Finally I began making the connections – that's what the Black history and literature did for me.*"

Despite the fact that a pilot course is usually granted status or taken off the curriculum after two years, the Black literature course at Graham Creighton retained its pilot status for about eight years. Each year curriculum consultants would ostensibly review the course (without, it is observed, interviewing the course's creator as part of that process) and each year the recommendation was to leave the course as a non-compulsory elective. Despite repeated requests from the community and staff, the Black literature course was never given university preparation status and never became compulsory. While students and parents fought to maintain the course, "*officialdom did not seem to want it, use it, take it or give it to other schools.*"

The importance of offering a Black-centered curriculum cannot be overstated. In the words of one North Preston leader: "*The average Black child is learning about the life lived by the White student while the White student is living the life he is learning about.*"

Despite all efforts by the community to maintain and enhance the Black literature course, by 1983 it had been completely dropped from the school's curriculum. Monitoring Committee minutes indicate that a letter from the Supervisor of Schools to the Black Educator's Association who had written expressing concern that the course was dropped explained that "*curriculum material related to Black literature will be incorporated within all English and history courses at the high school.*"[51] Subsequent Monitoring Committee minutes indicate that parental concerns around Black-centered curriculum remained an issue. Black culture was not adequately included in the English and history courses and on-going requests to have the Black literature course re-instituted were repeatedly ignored.

Not until the Cole Harbour incident was the concept of a Black literature course revised and a Black teacher given a leave of absence to create a new course. Black Literature 441 was finally approved as a provincial course effective September 1991 with the Board minutes indicating that selections of Black literature would be integrated into the grade 10, 11 and 12 programs over the 1991-92 and 1992-93 years.

This example clearly shows the Board's unwillingness to follow the directives of the Agreement and their even greater determination to ignore the repeated advice and recommendations of the Monitoring Committee.

Racial Guidelines

A second example, this time concerning the need for racial guidelines among the County schools, further underlines the Board's recalcitrant attitude towards the Monitoring Committee. An incident at Gordon Bell High School in the fall of 1980 involving name-calling prompted the beginning of a document, *Racial Guidelines*, setting out handling procedures for such occurrences.[52]

Three of the Monitoring Committee members, including Board staff, met with the principals to discuss the incident at Gordon Bell High School and how it was handled. From this meeting a set of guidelines was developed for discussion with principals and vice-principals. Reactions and input were received in the spring of 1981 resulting in a document containing eighteen strong statements on harassment, graffiti and racial slurs. The initiative was positively supported across the system.

Throughout 1981 and 1982 the Monitoring Committee repeatedly urged adoption of the *Racial Guidelines* by the School Board. In January 1983, the Human Rights Commission went on record urging their adoption because of an increase in the number of reports of racial name-calling. Three years later a January 1986 report of the Monitoring Committee was still recommending the adoption of the guidelines and their implementation within the sub-system policy manual for principals; within each school's policy book or staff handbook in Eastern Suburban; and within all schools in the system.

In December 1986, the Monitoring Committee again stated that the implementation of the *Racial Guidelines* across the entire system "*is a priority.*" That was the last reference in the minutes to the Racial Guidelines. The School Board never acknowledged the *Guidelines* existence nor the need for their adoption. Three years later, the lack of formalized racial guidelines came back to haunt the School Board.

North Preston: 1989 and Beyond

The events of January 1989 triggered a Canada-wide response to the educational inequities existing between the Black communities in Halifax County and the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board. Despite attempts by individual Board members and government ministers to deny that racism played any part in the incident, or that racism was a factor in the County's schools, there was a growing recognition by other key players that systemic discrimination had always been a part of the County's school system. Changes finally were agreed to in the areas of curriculum, hiring practices and policy – changes which had been advocated by the community for years and only now, through peer pressure and embarrassment, were being made.

The Cole Harbour Incident

On January 9, 1989, an incident which started with a snowball thrown at Black students as they were waiting for buses at the end of the day escalated into a full-fledged confrontation. On the following day, almost 300 Whites (some of whom were non-students) gathered outside Cole Harbour High School to antagonize Black students resulting in a scene of fear and name-calling.[53]

A confrontation ensued between 50 and 60 students, with Blacks outnumbered by Whites three to one, resulting in three students being sent to hospital and the RCMP being called in. As a result of the incident, four students, all Black, were suspended from school for the remainder of the year. In addition, 18 people, 9 of them from North Preston and one from East Preston, and 8 Whites, faced charges ranging from causing a disturbance and unlawful assembly to possession of weapons.[54]

While the incident was reported by the media as a "*racial riot of international interest*", school administration and government ministers initially denied that racism was involved.

The principal of Cole Harbour High was quoted as saying "*It has been years since we have had a racial incident here*"[55] with the Nova Scotia Minister of Health (whose riding Cole Harbour District High School was in) affirming "*There's no problem with racism in the educational system. It simply doesn't exist.*"[56] The Minister of Education reflected a similar stance stating "*It was difficult to define problems at the school as racist at this point, but the incidents suggest there may be problems in the communities surrounding the school.*"[57]

Continued tensions at the school led to classes being cancelled and the calling of a public meeting on January 13 attended by over 1,500 parents, students and teachers. Among the issues raised at this meeting was the subject of racism and prejudice among administrators, teachers and the Department of Education. The chair of the Board, however, reacted strongly to any suggestion that the incident arose out of racial problems and defended the Board against all charges of racism. "*Unfortunately these things happen*" she said. "*But I think it is unfair for anyone to start pointing the finger.*"[58]

By the following week, school administration began to admit some responsibility for the tensions leading up to the Cole Harbour incident and announced they would be looking into the need for a race relations officer. In addition they announced their intent to examine school facilities, in particular the Bell Annex which housed predominantly grade 10 Black students. A third area they agreed to consider was how to expand the small number of Black teachers working at the school. These were areas which the Monitoring Committee had raised repeatedly over the years but which had never before received consideration from the Board.

The government's stance, however, remained firm that racism was not responsible for the incident. The Minister of Health was quoted in the paper at month's end stating:

> *To ever make any kind of insinuation that there's an inferior education system or some kind of underlying racial problems among the teachers and the students is simply not fact and it's about time it was put to rest.*[59]

Establishment of the Parents Students Association of Preston

The Parents Students Association of Preston (PSAP) was organized as a direct response to the disturbances at Cole Harbour District High School. The organization was primarily concerned with ensuring that those charged received a fair judicial process. Its concern was that the manner in which those who were charged was racially motivated and that the White students involved were overlooked in the process. The PSAP asserted that the Cole Harbour RCMP were selective in prosecuting Black lower-class youth from and ignoring students from middle-class Cole Harbour. They called for the charges to be dropped and hired two lawyers to assist in getting the charges repealed. A related concern lay in ensuring their children would not be subjected to further intimidation, harassment and isolation when they went back to school.[60]

The PSAP remained in the public eye throughout the following year, maintaining that the incident arose from long-standing systemic discrimination. The appropriate solution, they held, was for the Province to institute a public inquiry to examine racism and discrimination in the education system.[61] Specifically the PSAP called for the inquiry to examine:

- causes of events which led to disturbances at Cole Harbour District High School;
- racism and discrimination which exists in the educational system, including the high drop-out rate of minority students;
- the practice of streaming Black students into non-academic courses;
- the absence of Black and ethnic content in school curriculum;
- under-representation of minorities in the teaching and school administration positions; and,
- how better quality education can be delivered to members of minority and ethnic communities.

Meanwhile the Board approved in principle several recommendations designed to improve cross-cultural understanding and relations within its jurisdiction. Black studies were to be given greater priority; a grade 12 Black literature course was to be given equivalent credit to the current grade 12 literature; in-services were to be given on cross-cultural training; and cross-cultural activities were to be offered regularly in all schools.[62] Four committees were subsequently established designed to promote cross-cultural understanding: a Board-Trustee Committee, a Curriculum Committee, a committee on School-Wide Promotion of Cross Cultural Understanding, and a committee on Staff Professional Development.

The Attorney General, who refused the PSAP request to establish a racism inquiry, pointed to these Board recommendations on cross-cultural understanding as the best means of diffusing tensions.[63]

A week later, a fast was called by the PSAP designed to pressure the provincial government into calling an inquiry.[64] The Attorney General's response was unsympathetic and decidedly unfriendly:

> *Quite frankly, I'm getting a little fed up with these people making everything into discrimination. Here we are attempting to be as fair as we can and yet they shoot off and holler and shout about wanting an inquiry.*[65]

The response of the PSAP was consistent in its belief that:

> *The charges were selective and racially motivated and should not have been laid. Why do we have five people paying the dues for 70? It has been clear from the beginning that our kids have been portrayed as armed trouble-makers. We can't allow our children to be used as scapegoats.*[66]

The RCMP probe charged ten Blacks and eight Whites. Of those, 14 were acquitted or had charges dismissed, and three Black men were found guilty of causing a disturbance. One of these three later had his conviction erased when it was discovered he had never been formally charged. The final man charged was acquitted nearly two years after the incident.

A number of points are clear in the aftermath of the Cole Harbour incident. First there was denial on the part of government and the School Board itself that racism existed within the educational system or that the incident had any links to racism. Secondly, there was a clear attempt to link the so-called trouble makers to the Preston community and to establish the more affluent White community of Cole Harbour as victims. Third, as the year unraveled, there was an increasingly hardening of position on the part of the Attorney General that racism was not a factor in the RCMP investigation.

Aftermath to Cole Harbour

One year after the Cole Harbour incident, the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board released its report on the promotion of cross cultural understanding. Along with the report, came an appointment of Supervisor of race relations and staff with the mandate of developing and implementing a comprehensive race relations strategy for the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board.

After 170 years of petitioning government for equal education, the concerns of North Preston and other Black communities were finally being heard by government and actions taken.

In July 1991, a new urgency entered the arena of race relations within Nova Scotia. In response to a race-related disturbance outside a Halifax nightclub, the Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations, proposed by the Federal Minister of Multiculturalism, was established. One month after its establishment a report was tabled containing 94 recommendations, 19 of which dealt specifically with education.

The report confirms the long-standing struggle of the North Preston community, and many other Black communities, to obtain equal education for their children. It reads in part:

> *The educational history of Black Nova Scotians is characterized by a legacy of institutional racism. This continues to be demonstrated by exclusion, insensitivity, cultural genocide, stereotyping, discrimination and segregation... Attempts have been made by the Black community and other institutions to make education in Nova Scotia relevant to the Black experience. Some school boards have formed committees linking them to the Black communities they serve. Some school boards have developed race relations policies and practices, while others have taken piecemeal and ad hoc approaches designed to make changes in support of the Black population. There remains however no provincial race relations policy in the area of education; disproportionately few Black teachers; insufficient references to the Black experience in the curricula; and the undermining of the self-esteem of the Black child. The Black perspective, the Black experience and Black contributions to Nova Scotia society must therefore be institutionalized in the provincial education system.*[67]

In these two reports (the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board's and the Advisory Group's respective reports on race relations), not only did the School Board finally agree that the history of Black education in Halifax County has suffered under racist and discriminatory policies, but the Province of Nova Scotia, led by the Federal Government, admitted publically that the Province's education system has been characterized by a legacy of institutional racism. There must be no going back.

A New Era in Education for North Preston

The community of North Preston has undergone a 175 year struggle to obtain equal education for its children. Over those years parents maintained their commitment to education to the best of their ability, striving to provide their children with what was available and within their means financially.

The 1990s appear to have ushered in a new era of hope for the Black communities of Halifax County. Vigilance will be necessary however to ensure that the battles won at the School Board level will translate into victories in the classroom. The role of the Monitoring Committee is more critical than ever and the responsibilities of parents and school trustees are greater than ever.

Community Response to the Cole Harbour Incident

The Cole Harbour incident had both negative and positive outcomes within the community of North Preston. Some parents report that the incident had a devastating effect upon their high school children with a number feeling pressured to drop out rather than return to an environment which they found oppressive and demeaning. Black students felt they were blamed for the incident both by their White peers and teachers and felt intimated by the police presence at the school. Neither parents nor students understand why the School Board did not immediately put in place counselling services for students under stress as is common in other situations. Instead, parents report that Black students were treated as potential troublemakers with groups of Black students routinely broken up in the corridors by teachers and the administration. White students on the other hand continued to congregate in groups throughout the school. There was also alleged pressure from teachers on White students not to fraternize or socialize with Black students.

"*What hurts me so bad,*" one parent stated, "*is that there are teachers in the school, the education system, who outwardly lied about our children. Teachers gave false statements to the police and lawyers and they have to meet our children every day.*"

On the positive side, the incident sparked a great deal of interest among community members in the justice system. The head of the PSAP, for example, entered Dalhousie University Law School as a direct result of the incident and graduated with her law degree in the spring of 1993. About five young men applied to the City of Halifax's Policing Minority Recruitment Program. None was selected for inclusion in the program however with community leaders viewing the young men's rejection as a reflection of the outside community's distrust and ongoing stereotyping of North Preston. "*They have stereotyped our community as a community of criminals and do not think we are capable of policing ourselves. They see us as a tight community and they think that sense of community is stronger than a duty to law enforcement.*"

North Preston community leaders are disheartened by the stance taken by the justice system vis a vis their community and state: "*We are the people living with the problems and we should be dealing with the problems. Yet we are not represented in the solutions. Things that are born of our issues (the Cole Harbour incident, the so-called race riot in downtown Halifax) we are not even getting jobs out of.*"[68]

Yet the children of North Preston remain inspired to become part of the solution. School children from grades 5, 6 and 7 are talking about becoming lawyers and judges and others about joining the RCMP. Community leaders are concerned that these children be given the chance by the outside community to turn these aspirations into reality instead of having the "*door slammed in their faces*" as happened with the Policing Minority Recruitment Program. There is real concern that the outside community has given up on North Preston and that this will only serve as incentive for the disenchanted youth of North Preston to further break the law.

A Move To Community Control Over Education

Community leaders have determined that for change to come to their community, it must come from within their community. They talk about a new era and point to recent educational initiatives undertaken by the community, including the newly renovated Nelson Whynder Elementary School, as indications of change.

In the late 1980s the community started an adult literacy program (Preston Area Literacy Services. This was followed by the Pre-Able Program geared at providing Pre-GED courses and the Able Program geared at providing GED. The community has responded positively to these educational initiatives. Waiting lists exist for each program with participants ranging in age from 17-70 years. Direction of these adult education programs comes from the community-based director of the Continuing Education Program with support coming from the Halifax County–Bedford School Board's Continuing Education Department.

In January 1993, a Stay In School Program initiative was established in North Preston which provides tutoring, moral encouragement and confidence building to children presently in school. This program was established by community initiative out of concern for the high numbers of their youth, particularly young men, dropping out of school. The Program director, a strong and positive male role model and one of the community's leaders, works with these students one-on-one and on a group basis in an endeavour "*to turn their attitudes around.*" Reports back from Sir Robert Borden, the local Junior High School, point to improved behaviour among the students from North Preston since the Stay In School initiative has begun, indicating the Program director's emphasis on confidence building and improved self-esteem may be paying off in the classrooms. In addition, the Program director talks about a genuine concern among parents in the community over their children's education and a greater receptiveness and willingness to discuss education-related matters. The Program director attributes this parental interest to the fact that the program is a community effort, developed and run by community members.

The Sunday School at North Preston's St. Thomas United Baptist Church also plays an important role in the education of the community. With an enrollment of over 200 children, the Sunday School stresses the importance of moral values and the necessity of achieving an education.

The newly renovated Nelson Whynder Elementary School has given the community a much needed shot in the arm. Promised them since the mid 1980s, the school was refurbished over the 1992-93 school year with the first day of classes in the new building commencing on October 14, 1993. The school is a community school providing an evening program to community residents five days a week. Plans are also underway to establish an adult education day program in the new school.

The North Preston Community School Council established to oversee the operations of the community school, is playing a major role in the education of the community. The community has agreed that it wants more control over the education their children receive and more say in its development and delivery. The days are gone when parents relinquished control over their children's education to the system, being replaced by an era in which parents and the education system are partners in the education process. The North Preston Community School Council sees its mandate as that of informing the School Board both "*what is to be taught and how it is to be taught.*" The role of the School Board is to facilitate the process. This relationship is in sharp contrast to the relationship which existed over the 1970s and 1980s. The bottom line for the North Preston Community School Council is that the education system teach children how to be strong Black people. Without the community's input, that message cannot be delivered.

North Preston and the New Era in Education

Prior to the renovations, the Nelson Whynder School was often referred to as the sole remaining segregated school in Canada. Run-down, inadequately financed and poorly maintained, the school was a symbol of the earlier years when Black schools across Nova Scotia were victims of a discriminatory educational system.

Today, the Nelson Whynder Elementary School is second to none in the province in terms of physical facilities and staff. While only Black children attend the school, the community refers to the school as an all-Black school rather than a segregated school. This is an important distinction and one that points to the community's pride in its Black heritage and hope for its children's future. The community is determined to retain its all-Black school as a reminder of from where and how far North Preston residents have come.

3 Black Incentive Fund

Introduction

Established in 1965 as a strategy to encourage Black Nova Scotians to complete their school education, the Black Incentive Fund was a good idea that went wrong from day one. Because of the poverty which surrounded many Black families, Black students, it was argued, were often forced to leave school early to assist with family income. It was hoped that the financial assistance offered would alleviate some of the pressure, reduce student embarrassment and result in more students completing their high school education. The Fund remained the provincial government's sole strategy for 25 years for redressing the inequities faced by Black students in this province.

Yet even the most cursory examination of the Fund shows that it has failed to meet its stated objectives. Indeed, studies carried out in the late 1970s and mid 1980s suggested that the Fund was responsible for building young Black students' dependence upon another form of welfare as well as contributing to an increase of racial tension between Black students and White students and teachers.

Purpose of the Case Study

This Case Study was prepared in an attempt to answer some pertinent questions surrounding a government initiative directed at enhancing Black students' position within the eduation system. Why was the Education Fund allowed to continue basically unchanged for over 25 years? How was it that only recently has the Fund been established as a true incentive program? But in attempting to answer these questions, more questions than answers were found in the research for this Case Study.

- Why, for example, were Black students paid an incentive to remain in school starting at grade 7 when children by law must remain in school until they are 16 years of age?
- Why did the Department of Education not promote the purpose of the Fund and communicate clearly its monetary worth so as to alleviate the growing rumours around the Fund?
- Why did the Department of Education not establish a registration process for the Fund that maintained Black students' respect and dignity?

The Fund stands as an example of the peculiar position that Black Nova Scotians hold in this province. Some feel that the Fund was established on the part of Government as an attempt to provide compensation for the years of discrimination the Black community faced in the education system of the province. They believe that because of the relatively powerless position held by the Black community at the time of the Fund's establishment, the Government, through this one action, felt relieved of further responsibility for the past and present failure to provide quality education to the Black community.

Whatever the truth as to the original motive behind the Fund, this Case Study holds that the Fund was never a true incentive until it was established solely at the post-secondary level. Awards were based initially on attendance, not merit, and became a source of embarrassment and ridicule for many Black students over the Fund's existence. In addition, it can be argued that the Fund, administered initially under the auspices of the Nova Scotia Department of Welfare, created a welfare mentality over its life span and contributed to the growth of young peoples' dependence upon government for assistance.

It is true that many Black Nova Scotians were poor in the period that the Fund was first established. But the Fund, with its payments ranging from $20 to $30 a year for junior high students and $90 to $120 for senior high students could not and did not serve as a successful *Stay in School* strategy for most Black students. It is true, that for some, the Fund assisted in the buying of basic school supplies and meant the difference for others between winter boots, track shoes or none but few will claim that the Fund made the difference between staying in or dropping out of school.

Organization of the Case Study

The first section of the Case Study examines the purpose of the Education Fund, places it in a socio-economic context, and traces its evolution from its early days of providing financial assistance to needy Black families to its present role of rewarding excellence. The period examined goes from 1965-1994.

The second section examines the Fund's stated purpose as incentive to remain in school and draws upon research carried out in the late 1970s which clearly showed the Fund had little impact on reducing the drop-out rate among the Black student body.

The third section discusses some of the problems encountered through the administration of the Fund and in particular the lack of adequate information and education on the Fund.

The final section presents a summary and recommendations on the Fund.

Data for this Case Study have come from the minutes and files of the Advisory Committee established to oversee the administration of the Fund; and discussions with the Fund's present chairperson, Advisory Committee members (past and present) and a number of Black students and parents. Assessments on the Fund undertaken in 1979 and 1985 were also reviewed.

The Black Incentive Fund

> *It did make a difference. Several students wrote to thank the committee – if the rest of the kids had a good pair of boots and we had to wear castoffs, well, how we dressed made a difference. If you were on the track team now you could afford a new pair of sneakers.*[1]

Socio-Economic Context

The Black Incentive Fund, originally known as the Education Fund for Negro Students, was established in April 1965, for the purpose of assisting promising Black students to continue their education in high schools, vocational schools, technological institutes, nursing schools and universities.[3]

Established at the initiative of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights, the forerunner of today's Human Rights Commission, the concern was that few Black students were remaining in school past the grade 9 level and that even fewer were entering university or other post-secondary institutions. The crisis in the education of Black Nova Scotians had been brought to public attention by a Dalhousie University study.

At the end of 1962, Dalhousie University Institute of Public Affairs completed a comprehensive study on the position of Blacks in Halifax. The report focused on housing, education, living standards and employment. It found that Black Nova Scotians were living "*under depressed conditions*" and "*self-help efforts by Blacks were not enough to offer the Black community economic and social betterment.*" It noted that "*if historic wrongs and the conditions...were to be undone,*" the time had come "*for the White majority to reach out and give the Negroes full acceptance, opportunity, and social equality.*" In a forward to the report, Dalhousie President Dr. A. E. Kerr added his voice to the call for change: "*We must create a new atmosphere and give the Negroes the same fair deal – not more, not less – as to any other human being.*"[1]

The 1960s was the period of school integration both in the United States and Nova Scotia following the United States Supreme Court ruling in the *Brown vs Topeka Board of Education* case. African Nova Scotian children entering the Common public schools had two strikes against them. First, they were alienated by the racist attitudes of the educational system which had excluded them for over 100 years; second, they were further embarrassed by their own appalling poverty manifest in their inability to purchase scholastic supplies and appropriate clothing. These two factors were viewed by some as the major contributing factors to the extremely high school drop-out rates in the Black community.

The Dalhousie report had pointed to the need for improved educational standards among the Blacks of Halifax as "*one of the most crucial factors governing their future.*" Without further education, it added, "*the future of Halifax Negroes is bleak indeed.*" The researchers also linked the educational inequities to the socio-economic situation by asserting that "*unless there was outside help and more employment opportunities for Blacks, the situation could not be expected to improve.*" Moreover, the report concluded, Blacks were "*hit harder than anyone else in the economic backwardness*" of the Maritimes. The report received extensive publicity and set the stage for the discussions of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights.

Data from the late 1960s indicate that at that time there were approximately 35 Black Nova Scotian university graduates and that public school education was limited (ranging between grades 4 and 9) in most Black communities in the province. As a member of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights, Dr. W. P. Oliver was asked to develop a proposal to assist Black students. The result was the Education Fund for Black Students which started with a budget of $25,000 and assisted 350 students in its first year. Initially administered by the Nova Scotia Department of Welfare, it was transferred seven years later to the Department of Education with Dr. Oliver as secretary, responsible for carrying out the terms of reference for the Fund.[4]

Awards were given mainly in the form of bursaries rather than scholarships with the emphasis of the Fund in its early days on financial assistance to families "*in relatively straitened financial circumstances.*" Responsibility for administration of the Fund was given over to a seven person Advisory Committee appointed by government and made up of representatives from the Departments of Education, Welfare and Labour and at least three other persons. Three were to be members of the Black community chosen for their "*integrity and community-mindedness.*"[5]

At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, it was decided that the Fund should be given wide publicity and that a public information release should be prepared by the secretary and submitted to the next meeting of the committee. The release was to be forwarded to school principals, MLA's, newspapers, radio and TV stations, clergy and chairmen of all adult education and community development committees becoming the basis for the Fund's public information policy for the next 20 years.

The Fund was moved over to the Department of Education in 1972 and a budget of $100,000 was allocated to the Fund. At that same time the minutes of the Advisory Committee meeting record that "*Commitment was given by the Deputy Minister of Education that all services within the Department would be made available to the Committee.*"[6]

Despite this assurance of support for and commitment to the Fund and its objectives, all did not proceed smoothly. Criteria for obtaining the Fund over its early years were based on attendance and not on merit. This meant that any student who attended school regularly, regardless of effort or interest, received the Fund. Teachers complained about the Fund for this reason, commenting that it became a disruptive force in the classroom rather than a positive force as intended. Some students reportedly bragged about receiving money for attending school causing embarrassment for those students who were deserving of the Fund.[7]

Intervention of the Black Educators' Association

In 1974, the Black Educators' Association (BEA) began an inquiry into the Fund. The BEA had a number of specific concerns including the fact that students up to the age 16 were required by law to attend school so why then was an incentive required for junior high school students to remain in school? The BEA also argued that given the facts of the job market which discouraged the hiring of young Black Nova Scotians, awards in the grade 7-9 level should not be necessary to encourage them to stay in school rather than taking employment.

For over a year the BEA lobbied the Advisory Committee and the Minister of Education to consider revisions to the Fund. "*We are concerned that the Fund, designed to assist needy Black students, is apparently available to all Black students; a practice which is causing considerable apprehension among the needy non-Black students in areas served mostly by Black students. The BEA wants to meet with administration of the Fund to review criteria for eligibility, objectives and the distribution process of the Fund.*"[8] One of the revisions the BEA had in mind was to move some of the monies of the Fund over to the post-secondary level.

Some of the difficulty the BEA experienced in getting its opinions heard was due to the make-up of the Advisory Committee. Being for the most part senior members of the community, they did not necessarily share the same vision as the younger members of the BEA who some considered "*an elite*" and not representative of the Black community. It must be remembered that for many Black Nova Scotians in the 1960s, a high school education was a great educational achievement. To establish university education as the aim of the Fund was considered by some of the Advisory Committee members as unrealistic. In their opinion, the BEA was attempting to build an elite in its own image, neither a necessary nor a desirable objective as post-secondary education at that time was not considered by many within either the Black or White community an appropriate goal for most Black students.

By the following year the BEA, at the invitation of the Minister of Education, had achieved a seat on the Advisory Committee. In the face of increasing hostility around the Fund, the BEA sought as its first objective to establish the Fund as *an incentive* rather than *an award* for remaining in school. The BEA was helped in this regard by an organized effort on the part of teachers around the province petitioning against the Fund.

Community interviews have indicated that the Fund was never well accepted by some Whites and that every opportunity was taken to undermine the Fund.

The Black Incentive Fund came under attack from the moment it was introduced. Whites felt that Blacks were gainig something. Many of the people who attacked the Fund were teachers and administrators.

> *Blacks always tried to improve the program but it was Whites who controlled the money, and many of them didn't feel that Black students deserved it.*[9]

In March 1976, a bid was made by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union to discontinue the Fund and prepared the following resolution to present to council:

> *Be it resolved that the present Education Fund for Black Students be expanded to cover all students in the province, regardless of race, color or creed, and that a Joint Committee be set up to establish suitable criteria.*[10]

The day the petition was to go before council, the secretary of the Fund met with the BEA representatives and an agreement was worked out on building a merit system into the Fund. This was also the start of the push for directing the emphasis of the Fund towards post-secondary education and away from the public school system. The Fund was saved but the animosity on the part of the White community concerning the Fund did not disappear.

The Fund as Incentive

By the late 1970s, the BEA had ensured that the Fund was reconstituted on an *incentive* basis. Monies at the junior high school level were now distributed to students who achieved an average mark of 70 percent and returned to school the following year. At the senior high level, merit awards were available to students who displayed exceptional ability, leadership qualities, good scholarship and had achieved an average mark of 70 percent or more. The awards at the high school level were more substantial than those in the lower grades reflecting greater financial requirements for personal needs and related school costs.

In 1979-80, the BEA drafted a proposal to the minister to shift dollars in the Fund over to a university scholarship. The following year, 1980-81, the government responded positively with the establishment of a $3,000 university scholarship for any Black student who achieved an average of 75 percent in grade 12, demonstrated leadership qualities and was recommended by his/her school principal.

With the establishment of the scholarship, the Fund became known as the *Education Incentive Program for Black Students.*[11] It had more rigorous criteria and was significantly different in the area of post-secondary scholarships than its predecessor. This shift represented years of effort on the part of the Black Educator's Association to move the program away from the public school system towards a true incentive for Black students to enter university and enable the development of leadership ability. The explicit aim of the newly designed fund was to provide financial incentives for Black students to go beyond elementary school, develop leadership potential and to meet educational, career and professional objectives. The rationale for partial funding at the post-secondary level was that after students have invested time, effort, and some of their own resources, they will have an incentive to find other sources of income to pay for the remainder of their education.

The BEA it should be noted had pushed hard for a 80 percent average being set as the minimum required for the scholarship but the minister at the time had overruled that suggestion replacing it with the 75 percent average. Eight Black students achieved the scholarship in its first year.

The establishment of the scholarship fund was a very significant step as historically the Black Nova Scotian community had not invested in Post-Secondary education. Black students were not encouraged to take out student loans and if their parents were unable to obtain either a car loan or a mortgage, the chance was slight that they would be able to incur debt to ensure their children's university education.

The following year, 1981-82, saw a change in the membership of the Advisory Committee with greater representation from communities across the province (Sydney to Yarmouth) and a greater openness to using the Fund as an incentive to acquire post-secondary education.

Yet despite the best efforts of the BEA to establish the Fund on an incentive basis, animosity around the Fund among Black and White students and teachers continued. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the radio shows in the early 1980s featured the Fund as a focal and hot topic of debate. Parents were reportedly encouraged to phone in with their opinion as to the "*fairness*" of the Fund and letters appeared in the local newspaper against the Fund.

Recognizing that the idea that some students "*were being paid to attend school*" had created a backlash over the years, the Advisory Committee now placed its efforts on dismantling the Fund within the public school system.

Removal of the Fund from the grade 7 level occurred in the 1986-87 school year and from grades 8 and 9 in the 1989-90 school year. In 1990-91 the Fund was discontinued altogether at the high school level with all funds dedicated to post-secondary education – university, as well as other post-secondary institutions. The goal of the Fund was to provide the initial stimulation of students to promote enrollment in post-secondary training.

The Fund Today

In 1991-92 the scholarship was raised from $3,000 to $4,500 where it remains today. In that year, 29 students received the university scholarship climbing to 35 students in the 1993-94 academic year. The post-secondary promotion awards, ranging in amounts from $1,000 to $1,200, have been awarded to approximately 100 students annually over this same period. Statistics on the Fund are summarized in Figure 1 for the period 1980-1994.

Today the objective of the Fund is aimed entirely at encouraging high school graduates to continue their education. From the perspective of the Advisory Committee, those students who drop out at the end of their second year have no real financial excuse. "*They can look around and see their class mates applying for Student Loans and working during the summer months to raise the dollars required to complete their education. We wanted to be sure the Fund was set up as a true incentive. The scholarship monies are in place for the first year only – not all four years. It has never been an attempt to establish a level playing field – but it is a ramp up to that playing field.*"[12]

Recent changes under consideration for the Fund include both organizational and structural changes. The management audit recently undertaken within the Department of Education has raised the possibility of moving the Fund's operations from the Student Aid office over to the authority of the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC). In addition, the Advisory Committee is looking to further broaden its membership by including two representatives from each of the seven regions established through the BLAC organization (the Valley, Southwest Nova/Digby, Cape Breton, Antigonish/Guysborough, Cumberland/Pictou/Colchester, Halifax and Dartmouth). The Advisory Committee is also trying to put in place a strong promotions policy for the Fund, recommending that the scholarships be awarded at the grade 12 graduation ceremonies in June and be presented by members of the committee.

If implemented, these will be positive changes, reflecting the growing recognition by government of the need for system-wide reforms to eliminate barriers faced by Black students in the education system.

Figure 1
Numbers of Awards Granted for the Period 1980-1994

Years	University Entrance Scholarships	Post-Secondary Promotion Awards	Secondary Promotion Awards
1980-81	8	66	1,728
1981-82	14	77	1,672
1982-83	17	75	1,660
1983-84	16	75	1,641
1984-85	13	78	1,497
1985-86	14	100	1,352
1986-87	23	71	1,206
1987-88	22	87	1,083
1988-89	21	77	1,041
1989-90	26	88	670
1990-91	29 ($3,000)	101 ($1,000)	492
1991-92	17 ($4,500)	99 ($1,250)	N/A
1992-93	25 ($4,500)	87 ($1,050)	N/A
1993-94	35 ($4,500)	109 ($2,000 Univ.) ($1,000 Other)	N/A

The Fund as Stay In School Strategy

The Fund certainly wasn't the reason to keep going to school. Do they really think that $70 a year is going to keep us in school?[13]

To test the effectiveness of the Fund as a *Stay In School* strategy, a report (referred to in this study as the *Lewis Report*) was commissioned in 1978 and a statistical analysis carried out on students who had received the Education Fund between the years 1971 and 1976. Relevant findings from the Lewis Report are presented below.[14]

The *Lewis Report*

The *Lewis Report* provides an enlightening analysis of drop-outs among Black students for the five year period 1971-1976. Data for the *Lewis Report* were obtained through a review of the Fund's files held by the Department of Education. The files, running from 1971 to the present, contain information about the Fund recipients' grade level each year, school, board, award received and marks received.

The purpose of the *Lewis Report* was to determine the effect of the Fund on Black students' school attendance from year to year. The study elected to follow groups of Black grade 9, 10 and 11 students in 1971, 1972 and 1973 over their high school years as well as a group of Black students from grades 7 through 11 in 1973, 1974 and 1975. Results of the two analyses are described separately below.

Grade 9 Group

Figure 2 presents information on the progress of a group of 852 Black grade 9 students over a five year period. They started grade 9 in 1971, 1972 or 1973. Of the 852 students, 542 (63.3 percent) were promoted to grade 10 after completing grade 9. Ninety-eight students (11.5 percent) repeated grade 9.

Twenty-two students (2.6 percent) entered special programs such as vocational school or adjusted classes. *One hundred ninety students (22.3 percent) dropped out of school one year after starting grade 9.*

Figure 2
Progress of Certain Grade 9 Students Over A Five Year Period*

Year	Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12		Special		University Program		Left School	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
First	852	100.0												
Second	98	11.5	542	63.6					22	2.6			190	22.3
Third	10	1.2	89	10.4	364	42.7			22	2.6			367	42.1
Fourth	1	0.1	12	1.4	49	5.7	217	25.5	11	1.3			562	66.0
Fifth			2	0.2	8	0.9	28	3.3	31	3.6	2	0.2	781	91.7

*Students in Grade 9 in 1971, 1972 or 1973.

During the second year after completing grade nine, only 42.7 percent of students entered grade 11, their expected grade. Ten students (1.2 percent) remained in grade 9 while 89 (10.4 percent) remained in grade 10. *The drop-out rate rose from 22.3 percent the first year to 42.1 percent after the second year.*

After three years, one quarter of the students (25.5 percent) were in the expected grade and two thirds of the students had dropped out (6 percent). Eleven (1.3 percent) were in special programs and 63 students (7.2 percent) were repeating some of the high school years.

After four years, most of the students should have graduated. Over ninety percent (91.7 percent) had left school. Two students were enrolled in a university program, 31 students were enrolled in special programs while 38 students were enrolled in the various high school grades.

These figures indicate that two-thirds of students did not complete their schooling. Most of these students dropped out of school between grade 9 and 11 almost uniformly at just over 20 percent per year. It would appear that only 30 percent completed high school after receiving the Fund for five years.

Grade 10 Group

A similar analysis was carried out on the progress of a group of grade 10 students for four years. Of the 619 students in this second sample, 408 (65.9 percent) were promoted to grade 11 during their second year in high school. Thirty-seven students (6 percent) repeated grade 10 while 13 students entered special programs. *Over one-quarter of the students (26 percent) dropped out of school after grade 10.*

During their second year, after completing grade 10, 265 students (42.8 percent) entered grade 12, the expected grade. Fifty-five students (8.9 percent) repeated grade 10 or grade 11 while 18 students (2 percent) entered special programs. *Just over 45 percent dropped out of school during their second year of high school following the completion of grade 10.*

During the third year in high school following their completion of grade 10, 87.2 percent of students either finished school or dropped out of the educational system. Only five students received post-secondary awards. Forty-one students were still completing some grades of high school while 33 students were completing special programs such as vocational or adjusted programs.

Students who received the Fund in grade 10 dropped out at a slightly faster rate than students who began receiving the Fund in grade 9. Where grade 9 students had dropped out at only the rate of about 20 percent per year, the 26 percent of the grade 10 students left after completing the grade 10. After 2 years, 45 percent had left. In contrast, after two years, only 42 percent of the grade 9 students had left.

Grade 11 Group

Of the 510 students in the third group, 309 (60.6 percent) entered grade 12 following grade 11. Forty students (9.8 percent) returned to grade 11 while 16 students (3.1 percent) went to special programs. *Just over 2 percent (145 students) left school immediately after grade 11.*

Two years after grade 11, most students had left school. The figures indicate that 75.5 percent of students left school two years after beginning grade 11. This would be expected since those students would be expected to have finished grade 12. Eighty-five students were still completing some grades of high school while 37 students were enrolled in special programs. *Only three of the original 510 students received university or post-secondary scholarships.*

Overview of Progress of Students

The data show that in general, as students advance in school, fewer students remain in school. For instance, two years after grade 7, just over 30 percent of students dropped out. However, two years after grade 9, almost 60 percent of the students who began grade 9 had dropped out.

After grade 7, 71.2 percent of students were promoted while 6.5 percent repeated grade 7 and 20.2 percent left school. Two percent of students went to vocational school. In the third year after beginning grade 7, 53.9 pecent of students were promoted. Further *31.5 percent of students dropped out* while 12.9 percent repeated and 1.7 percent entered vocational school. As the *Lewis Report* commented, "*the number of students leaving school without completing grade 9 is somewhat surprising since many of the students would not be of the legal age to opt out of school.*"

The grade 8 percent of students passed into grade 9 while 6.3 percent repeated grade 8. Almost 2 percent entered vocational school and 18.9 percent withdrew from school. After two years, 53.1 percent of students were promoted while 11.2 repeated grades. A further 2.5 percent went to vocational school or a similar program and *33.3 percent dropped out.*

The grade 9 group shows dramatic changes. After grade 9, 64.4 percent were promoted, 5.6 percent repeated grades, 3.3 percent went to vocational school and 26.7 percent dropped out. After two years, only 26.2 percent of grade 9 students entered grade 11 (their expected grade) while 9.6 percent repeated grades, 4 percent went to vocational school and 59.9 percent dropped out. The drop-out rate is almost twice that of the two lower grades.

The grade 10 group data indicates that the trend to dropping out continued. Only 46.4 percent of students were promoted to grade 11. Almost 5 percent repeated some high school grades; 2.3 percent entered vocational school and 46.4 percent dropped out. After two years, just under three-quarters of students (71.7 percent) had dropped out while 4.4 percent repeated grades and 2.4 percent entered a special program.

Over half the grade 11 group were promoted to grade 12 the year after they completed grade 11. Just over 40 percent (43.6 percent) dropped out and 5.8 percent repeated grades. Two years after grade 11, most students would be expected to be out of school. The data indicate that 91.2 percent had left school. But only 4 percent were promoted, and a further 4 percent each repeated grade 12 or attended vocational school. Four students (1 percent) received awards for attending post-secondary training.

The data in Figure 3 shows some interesting trends. As a student progresses in school, the likelihood of remaining in school seemed to decrease. The drop-out rate rose from 31.5 percent two years after grade 7 to 71.7 percent two years after grade 10 indicating more pressure to drop out after completing more than three years of junior high.

Figure 3
Progress After Completing Each Grade (7-11) for Certain Students*

		Percent Promoted	Percent Repeating	Vocational	Drop-outs
Grade 7	Year 2	71.2	6.5	2.1	20.2
(no. 815)	Year 3	53.9	12.9	1.7	31.5
Grade 8	Year 2	72.8	6.3	1.9	18.9
(no. 831)	Year 3	53.1	11.2	2.4	33.3
Grade 9	Year 2	64.4	5.6	3.3	26.7
(no. 846)	Year 3	26.2	9.6	4.0	59.9
Grade 10	Year 2	46.4	4.9	2.3	46.4
(no. 614)	Year 3	21.5	4.4	2.4	71.7
Grade 11	Year 2	50.6	5.8		43.6
(no. 395)	Year 3**	3.8	4.0	3.8	91.2

* Starting years are 1974 or 1975.
** Four students (1%) received post-secondary awards.

The success rate of students also appears to decline steadily. Where in grade 7, 71.2 percent of students were promoted, this figure decreases to only 46.4 percent being promoted from grade 10. The decrease in promotion rate was not a steady decrease. Instead, the great change occurred in grades 9 and 10, the junior to senior high school transition.

SUMMARY OF THE *LEWIS REPORT*

The overall finding of the *Lewis Report* was that the Fund did not keep students in school during the period examined. For a group of grade 9 students, only 25.5 percent progressed from grades 9 through 12 at the expected rate with two-thirds of students dropping out before completing grade 12. While the drop-out rates for the group of grade 10 students was not as high as the grade 9 figures (45 percent) they also indicated that the Fund did not provide the incentive to remain in school. Finally, statistics on students from grades 7 to 11 for three years starting in 1974 and 1975 indicated that after three years of receiving the Fund, between 31.5 percent (grade 7 group) and 71.7 percent (grade 10 group) had left school.

The reason behind these high drop-out rates was not, according to the *Lewis Report*, related to finances. *Instead, the lack of relevance in the curriculum was the reason given by the majority of students as the reason behind the large numbers of Black students leaving school before completing grade 12.* Students expressed the desire for knowledge which they would find useful in their career and in their everyday living. Many students felt that the curriculum was useless for their situation with no relationship to reality.

Students made it clear that monetary rewards for grading would not encourage Black students to do better. Further, the Lewis report indicated that 74.5 percent of students interviewed felt that students should not receive awards for attending school and that as a student advanced by grade, students should not be subsidized to attend school. Of grade 7 students interviewed, 53.8 percent indicated that students should not receive aid, while at the grade 12 level, 87.5 percent had the same response. *Clearly, money alone is not a sufficient motivating factor to keep students in school.*

Given these findings, why was the Fund continued relatively unchanged for another decade? The *Lewis Report* had been commissioned by the Department of Education specifically to address issues which had arisen around the Fund but its recommendations went unheeded. The Education Fund was to remain in place with any changes in its mandate coming through the initiative of the Black Educators Association rather than through government.

Communication and the Fund

The Incentive Fund was used by some elements in White society to "dehumanize" Black learners. Almost from inception the Fund was controversial and misunderstood. It was portrayed by its opponents in the White community as a "welfare package" for Black students. Despite attempts by the Advisory Committee to make the Fund known throughout the schools and the community, its purpose and content were never clearly understood by the teachers, the parents or the recipients themselves. The Department of Education made no effort or had no effective communication program to counter the negative commentary in the mass media or to explain the purpose of the fund. Thus Black students were called upon to justify the fund without really understanding it and hostility developed between Black and needy White students.

The Black Educators Association attempted to explain the importance of the Fund at teacher conferences and community meetings. The Association, as we have seen, also sought to deflect some of the criticism, especially from

teachers and school administrators by attempts to move the Fund towards an incentive system but in spite of its best efforts, controversy continued to follow the Fund.

In addition, some Black parents felt that the merit requirements proposed by the BEA was unfair for it required victims of the system to overcome institutional barriers before they could get assistance. The lack of understanding around the Fund did not only cause tension between Black and White parents and students, it was felt to be a major contributor in Black students under utilizing the Fund at the post-secondary level.

The *Dalhousie Report*

In 1985, six years after the completion of the *Lewis Report*, students within the Public Administration Department at Dalhousie University undertook an evaluation of the Fund (to be referred to as the *Dalhousie Report*) as part of their curriculum.[15]

The following two findings of the *Dalhousie Report* are of particular relevance to this Case Study:

- Communication about the types of awards and their criteria, and the aims of the program is inadequate; and,
- In general, only those students receiving high grades are made aware of the university entrance scholarships; therefore the Fund does not act as an incentive to strive for a high level of academic achievement and to make a university education a personal goal.

In the schools with a large Black population, students were advised applications were available over the public address system by the announcement, "*Would all Black students go to the library.*" Past students report being humiliated by this announcement...

> *You had to get up in front of everyone and leave class wondering why you being summoned by the principal to the library.*

In schools with a smaller Black population, students were contacted individually by a guidance counsellor. In neither case were the students fully informed of the scope of the program or the criteria involved. This is especially critical at the senior secondary level where it is required that students maintain a 75 percent average in grade 12 to be eligible for the university entrance scholarship.

The *Dalhousie Report* indicated that there was no clear knowledge of the post-secondary promotion award or the scholarship among the Black students they consulted. While some knew that money was available for post-secondary studies, none were aware of any details or criteria. Most damaging, students were not aware of the requirement to maintain a 75 percent average to qualify for the University entrance scholarship.

If the student does not know such a scholarship exists and what criteria is required to receive it, it cannot serve its purpose of acting as an incentive for Black students to enter university. Similarly, if there is no knowledge of the two $1,200 promotion awards, they cannot act as an incentive to finish grade 12 and continue on in a post-secondary institution.

The *Dalhousie Report* provides hard data on the lack of communications around the scholarship fund. Contact was made with 42 students who received the promotion award on the completion of their grade 12 in 1984 to learn whether they had applied for the scholarship award. Of these 42 students, 35.7 percent had applied for the scholarship but had been turned down because they did not have a 75.0 percent average. *Of the remaining 64.3 percent of respondents, a full 37 percent indicated they did not know about the scholarship.* This is a significant finding and indicates inadequate communication around the scholarship. It also suggests that likely candidates for the scholarship are more actively sought out by guidance counsellors or other administrators than other possible candidates. As the *Dalhousie*

Report stated, this tends to reduce the effectiveness of making the scholarship an incentive for students with lower grades to strive for a higher level of scholastic achievement and to undertake a university education.

SUMMARY OF THE *DALHOUSIE REPORT*

The Fund's Advisory Committee endorsed the *Dalhousie Report* at its meeting in June 1985 and a number of actions were taken by the committee to implement the report's recommendations.

Specific actions taken and noted in the minutes included *"Full promotion of the program in the Department of Education publications, provincial newspapers, universities and other post-secondary institutions, Black organizations and all junior and senior high school students through principals and guidance counsellors."*[16] Yet communications around the Fund remained an issue coming up for discussion at the Advisory Committee level four years later:

> *One of the main concerns is about the lack of knowledge in the communities and schools about the program and the negative attitudes which have been built up concerning the program.*[17]

Committee members stressed the need for more work with schools and guidance counsellors in particular and discussed the need for a presentation to the Nova Scotia Counsellors Association regarding problems involved with and sensitivities to the program.

The Advisory Committee was limited however by budget and resources in its development and implementation of an education program for the Fund. While the Committee may have had the responsibility for this function, the task required far exceeded the Committee's ability to execute it in a consistent and effective manner.

"How Come You are Paid To Go To School"[18]

The lack of adequate communication on the Fund operated in yet another way to undercut the Fund's purpose, turning it into a disincentive rather than an incentive. When the Fund was established, there was the assumption that Black students should be given the same opportunity to continue their education as White students and in the long run, provide a leadership function in reducing economic and social disparity. The Fund's establishment was recognition on the part of a few politicians at the provincial level of the inequities in education faced by Black Nova Scotians. The philosophy underlying the Fund however was never communicated in a concerted or clear manner to the general population of the province. Instead of announcing a package aimed at providing compensation to Black Nova Scotians for the over 150 years of discrimination within the public school system, a news release was distributed which was widely interpreted as a program *to pay Black students to stay in school.*

Twenty-eight years after the Fund's inception, and three years after its removal from the public school system, the Fund still held its sting as is evidenced in the following letter written by a Black Nova Scotian mother of three public school students.

> *When some members of the White community became aware of Black students receiving a sum of money that White students were not eligible to apply for, greed set in and the rumors started. Through ignorance and misinformation, White teachers and students began whispering that* "Black students are paid to go to school." *What started out as a whisper soon became a chant. Many of these people believe that Black students are given up to $3,000 a year to attend school. Individually, Black students tried to stop this rumor without even knowing why they were receiving the money. Most of us know that not every Black*

student received something, and that those that did had to achieve a certain mark, and that even then, it was perhaps $50.00. Now here it is 1993. Black high school students are no longer offered the monetary incentive to assist them with their high school expenses. Though this was stopped a few years ago, the rumor still lives and the chant grows stronger. Two months ago a White student who moved to (community's name) from Toronto heard this chant and asked my oldest daughter if "Black kids are really paid to go to school!" *My daughter enlightened her. She's used to it. Because (my daughter) has been and is an informant and promoter of her Blackness, White students think this gives them, the right to question her and make her accountable for all the wrongs of the whole Black race. Thank God she's up to it. However, it's time to kill the rumor and lay it to rest.*[19]

This letter succinctly addresses a number of the issues which have revolved around the Fund since its inception. The Fund, it can be argued, was set up to cast the recipient in a negative light as no effort had been made over the years to put the record straight in terms of the Fund, its purpose, amount of monies or duration.

Nor was the Department of Education unaware of the difficulties caused by the lack of communications around the Fund. Two separate evaluation reports (1979 and 1985) refer to the need for a communications policy which clarified the purpose of the Fund and a process which alleviated the embarrassment of calling all Black students into the office to complete the application form for the Fund. The Advisory Committee was also aware of the difficulties facing the Black students with minutes reporting that "*The Incentive Fund in high school has made our children at this level targets of further race discrimination and dependence upon another form of welfare.*"[20]

As late as November 1990, the Minister of Education for the province wrote to a disgruntled Nova Scotian to clarify certain misunderstandings around the Fund and in particular "*that students were not paid $120 monthly to attend school but once a year upon promotion from grade 11 into grade 12.*" "*The Fund,*" he wrote "*was initiated to alleviate a long-standing problem of racial discrimination. It was designed to assist and encourage young Black students to stay in school beyond the levels which most had been forced to accept by their circumstances and to become role models and more successful members in their community.*"[21]

This statement is a formal acknowledgement, at the highest level within the Department of Education, of discrimination faced by Black students within the provincial education system. The letter is also an indication that by the 1990s, embarrassment around the Fund had reached the highest level. It is somewhat surprising that the minister felt obligated to personally defend the Fund on an individual basis. It may have been more effective for all concerned had he directed resources within his department to develop and implement a province-wide education program on the Fund's purpose and procedures. A legacy had developed around the Fund which should have been dismantled by the same powers that had created it.

Summary and Recommendations

Present Day Stay In School Initiatives

Today, few would question the wisdom or the need for strategies to encourage young people to remain in school. Since the 1980s, a variety of programs have been developed across the province, cost-shared with the Federal Government, aimed at keeping students within the education system. In-school counselling, work experience programs, vocational guidance, tutoring, support workers, in-school daycare centres are different approaches taken by school boards in their efforts to work with youth under pressure to drop out of school.

The Education Incentive Fund however was not an effective strategy for keeping Black students within the public school system. Apart from the fact that the amounts of grants were negligible, there was no mechanism for dealing with the increased racial tensions as a result of school integration. Early school leaving persisted. The *Lewis Report* provided rigorous evidence of the Fund's ineffectiveness as a *Stay in School* mechanism yet the Fund was to continue for another decade basically unchanged.

A more valid and appropriate strategy for encouraging young Black Nova Scotians to remain in school is one based upon an anti-racist approach to education. This would include making systematic changes including the hiring of more Black teachers and guidance counsellors, promoting appropriate Black teachers into administrative positions, the development of an inclusive curriculum, the establishment and implementation of policies regarding race relations including name-calling, race relations training for teachers and making the whole education experience more relevant to real life experiences. These were some of the recommendations put forth by Black students in the *Lewis Report* and remain the backbone of the strategy presently being developed by the Black Learners Advisory Committee in meeting its mandate of addressing the barriers faced by Black learners today.

Impact of the Black Incentive Fund

Only the Fund was removed from the public school system and established at the post-secondary level, did the Fund, it can be argued, become a true incentive. The $4,500 in scholarship monies for the first year of university can be seen as a significant incentive for any student considering a university education. Since the establishment of the Fund as an incentive for post-secondary education, approximately 280 Black Nova Scotians have been accepted into university directly from high school. In addition, approximately 1,190 Black Nova Scotians have received post-secondary promotion awards either for university or other post-secondary institutions (refer to Figure 1).

The Education Fund as presently constituted provides the initial motivation for many whose parents are unable to foot the increasing cost of tuition and related expenses. Once at university, and with a year under their belt, students will find ways of raising the additional dollars required to complete their education either through student loans, summer work or part-time jobs over the year.

The Fund has in recent years served the dual purpose of encouraging young people to enroll in post-secondary institutions and of providing role models for younger students still in the public school system. These are valuable functions and should be continued as part of an overall government strategy to redress the failure of the education system to the Black learner.

There is a feeling that people today, in general, see merit in the Fund and realize that the Black community in Nova Scotia is receiving no special treatment other than what is owed them based on past inequities in the public school system, similar to the Federal Government's financial support of First Nations students. Members within the Black community are optimistic that the Fund has been finally established on a positive footing and recommend its continuance as one strategy to encourage post-secondary education among the Black population of Nova Scotia.

Recommendations

Systemic racism persists. The educational inequities between African Nova Scotians and other Nova Scotians remain unchanged after 30 years of school integration. The socio-economic conditions in the Black communities across the province remain deplorable. The Black community's ability to access post-secondary education, especially at professional schools remains very limited. Therefore the Fund has become a critical key in accessing post-secondary education for young Black Nova Scotians since it was established at the post-secondary level as a source of scholarship monies and bursaries in 1990. Its' importance to the Black community in attaining educational equity cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, we recommend that:

1a The Black Incentive Fund must be maintained and expanded as need arises, to continue to allow African Nova Scotians the financial access to university and other post-secondary institutions. Adjust the scholarship amount in accordance with the escalating university fees.

1b Review eligibility rules to include all Black learners, including adult learners in post-secondary programs.

2 The Black Incentive Fund should be applied in a more flexible manner to allow African Nova Scotians access to professions hitherto closed to them such as medicine, engineering, dentistry and to undertake doctoral studies.

3 Promotion of the Fund must be heightened so that all students from the junior high level up are aware of its existence, purpose and criteria. Students need to know of its direct applicability to them as it may be their key for entrance to university.

4 In keeping with the recent changes around the Fund, it is recommended that the name of the Fund be changed to one more accurately reflecting its existing status. A name change will also serve to disassociate the Fund in the public's mind from its predecessor.

5 The Advisory Committee's proposal to incorporate presentation of the Fund's awards into the grade 12 graduation ceremonies across the province should be adopted at the School Board level as part of their race relations policy. The graduation exercises provide an excellent opportunity to profile the Fund and its recipients in a positive light.

6 Administration of the Fund should be turned over to a Black organization such as the BLAC within two years.

4 Case Study on the Transition Year Program

Introduction

The Transition Year Program (TYP) stands as a symbol of the inequity facing Black learners in the province of Nova Scotia. Conceived and established in the late 1960s to enable Blacks and Natives access to a university education, the TYP remains a key tool in providing young Black and First Nations adults access to post-secondary education. But it also provided the provincial Department of Education with an excuse not to overhaul the education system thereby "*perpetuating systemic discrimination within the schools.*"[1]

Purpose of the Case Study

The purpose behind this Case Study is to provide further detail on the history of the failure of the Nova Scotia public school system. The fact that the TYP was established at all is evidence that the public school system fell short in its responsibility to the Black and Native citizens of this province. The fact that the TYP is still in business nearly 25 years after its establishment underlines the critical need for sweeping change within the public education system, proactive measures on the part of the entire university community, and redress at the community level.

This Case Study deals with the TYP only as it affects the Black learner. While the TYP was set up to work with both Black and Native students, the emphasis of this research lies solely with the Black learner; no attempt has been made to provide an analysis of how the TYP affects the Native learner or the Native Community.

Limitations of the Research

It should be noted from the outset that the present TYP Director has been most cooperative with the researcher and has spent valuable time explaining recent steps taken under her direction to place the program on a stronger footing. Where program documentation exists, the Director has made it available.

Many documents around the program however are not available. Several program files were stolen some years prior to the present Director assuming office. This has made the present research project difficult. Even statistics on student results are lacking so that we are unable to either determine exact numbers of students enrolled in the program since its inception, the number who successfully completed the TYP or the number who went on to graduate from university. Some statistics on students in the 1970s are available through secondary sources but the researcher has been unable to locate any similar analysis for TYP students in subsequent years. Knowing the importance of this data, the present TYP Director has engaged a student researcher to compile statistics on TYP graduates. The results from this research however are not yet available and thus are not included in this Case Study. This lack of statistics on the program is revealing suggesting inadequate management procedures were in place under past administrators of the program.

In addition to the lack of hard data available on the program, there has been a great reluctance on the part of key individuals to discuss the TYP, its role, strengths and weaknesses. In undertaking the research for this Case Study, many people questioned the need for the research: "*Leave it alone; it's a valuable program for our people*" or "*We do not want the program jeopardized*" were common responses encountered. Indeed, this reluctance to speak openly about the program was displayed both by community people, past graduates and past staff associated with the TYP. This reluctance to comment on the TYP reflects the apparent fragility of the program and the uneasy liaison between the community and the university in general. The Case Study has made every effort to respect the community's integrity while at the same time attempting to understand the very real complexities, controversies and contradictions which have surrounded the TYP almost from its beginning.

Organization of the Case Study

The first section of the Case Study deals with the early history of the TYP; its origins and orientation with a particular focus on the initial role played by the community in the program's development and its subsequent demise.

The second section looks at the many reviews carried out on the TYP over its 24 year history.

The third section looks at the impact of the program largely through the eyes of past TYP graduates.

In the last section we look at the TYP today, commenting on its mission and vision and presenting suggestions for strengthening the role it plays within Nova Scotia's Black community.

An Historical Overview

> *The Transition Year Program is one of the greatest things ever to have happened to the Black people in the Province.*[2]

From its inception, the Transition Year Program has been the subject of controversy. Established initially by a group of enthusiastic and dedicated graduate students and professors, the program was never able to obtain the support of senior administrators within the university. Referred to often as an anomaly, a foster child and in one report as a *polluting* presence, the TYP has nevertheless survived some 24 years to offer its program to over 250 Black students.

This section traces the origins of the Transition Year Program and the program's early years with an emphasis on the role of community and the official university position on the program.

Educational Attainment Among the Black Community in 1969

At a conference held in 1969 at St. Francis Xavier University, Dr. W.P. Oliver stated there were at that time "*perhaps 35 (Black Nova Scotian) university graduates.*"[3] The following year, a survey of 13 Black Nova Scotian communities indicated that the lack of high school training is characteristic of Black communities throughout the province. Statistics showed that 30 percent had between grades 9-11, 42 percent had grades 5-8 education, and 22 percent attended only through grades 1-4. This finding was substantiated by an earlier survey carried out among the Halifax Black community which indicated the majority of Black respondents surveyed had attained between the grade 4-9 range.[4]

What were the reasons behind these low educational standards? A reading of the history of Black education within Nova Scotia makes it clear that Black learners have been systematically denied an education within this province over the past two hundred years. Discriminatory legislation written in the early nineteenth century preventing Black children from obtaining an equal education remained on the books until well into the twentieth century. Indeed, the legislation which established separate schools for Black Nova Scotians was not removed from the books until 1954 with so-called integration occurring over the next ten years. As late as the early 1960s, Black children attended segregated schools throughout the province which had neither running water nor adequate heating. While it is accurate that some schools in the province had been integrated earlier, the attitudes which surrounded the education of Black students were, for the most part, discriminatory reflected in policies such as streaming, the reluctance to hire Black teachers and the routine guidance of Black students away from university into vocational school.

One of the results of the Black community's disenfranchisement from the education system was a parallel disenfranchisement from the mainstream economy of the province. Limited in their education, and viewed with racial prejudice by many employers, Black Nova Scotians were provided with only the most menial of jobs. In 1949, Dr. W.P. Oliver stated that "*The Negro today is employed in the major industries of the Province, in the heaviest and lowest paid jobs.*"[5] Survey data collected in the Halifax area from the 1960s indicated that nothing had changed over the intervening period; Black Nova Scotians were still heavily concentrated in manual and low-end jobs, were unemployed longer than the average for all unemployed, and earned less than the mean city income.[6]

This *ghettoization* of Black Nova Scotians to menial jobs conditioned most Black youth to believe that post-secondary education was not for them. With few Black role models in professional positions, neither the Black student nor parent seriously believed that employment options other than those traditionally held by Black Nova Scotians were available to them.

This then was the context into which the TYP at Dalhousie University was born. University was a distant dream of only a handful of Black learners within Nova Scotia and high school was considered a major accomplishment. Two hundred years of persistent institutionalized racism had served their purpose in maintaining a sharp division between the educational dreams of the Black community and their reality. Economic disparity ensured the division.

Birth of the Transition Year Program

The Transition Year Program was developed in response to the institutionalized racism described above. A few Black graduate students attending Dalhousie in the 1960s analyzed the patterns of prejudice affecting their community and called upon the university to provide a program that enabled educationally and economically disadvantaged youth to develop to the point where they could be admitted to university degree programs. These were also the years of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the rise of Black Power.

In making their case for the development of an access program, they wrote:

> *There is a higher proportion of poverty among Blacks and Indians, and a long history of discrimination and social injustice directed against both these peoples. There is a special need for university trained people in this segment of the population. There are very few Black or Indian Nova Scotians with a university degree, and very few currently enrolled here at Dalhousie.*[7]

The program as they saw it, would attempt to redress the harm done by the public education system and offer Black and Native students a strong grounding in basic university entrance requirements denied them in their earlier schooling. The program was *not* designed to work with the limitations of Black or Native individuals but rather with the limitations of an educational system. This is an important distinction and one which was to be lost in future years of the program.

Two objectives were initially set forth for the TYP:

- To help alleviate poverty through increased educational opportunities; and,
- To help develop latent leadership abilities among the disadvantaged so that they will be able to help themselves.

Through these objectives the TYP had a clear mandate to become proactively involved with the Black and Native communities across the province and in particular to promote leadership within these communities.

The initial document continues:

> *The program is designed to provide the student with a knowledge of the social and welfare services available to the disadvantaged. With this knowledge the student could make a contribution to solving some of the problems of the poor.*[8]

The concept was first put on a formal basis before a meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Science on April 17, 1969. Some of the benefits of the proposed access program put forth at that time included:

- The eventual development of a cadre of trained individuals with leadership potential;
- The involvement of members of the targeted communities with a non-religious oriented institution;
- A model program for other universities in the Maritimes;
- An awareness among White students of the problems of minorities; and,
- A demonstration of Dalhousie's concern for the members of the communities.

Those in attendance responded positively to the program and a planning committee was struck to further develop the concept. Members included a representative from each of the History and Mathematics Departments and two students.

The program designed by this initial Advisory Committee provided 8-11 hours of classroom work weekly with tutorial help provided on an individual basis. Curriculum was to consist of three class hours given over to Reading and Study Skills, three hours in Communication Skills and one hour familiarizing students with the various fields at Dalhousie that they could specialize in and the services offered by the university. A further hour per week was designed to be spent on the Community, acquainting students with the various social services and agencies available within the community.

By October 28, 1969 the Faculty of Arts and Science had accepted the TYP in principle and moved that the necessary steps be taken for its implementation. This was followed on February 26, 1970, by a recommendation from the TYP that the program be instituted as a special division of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Senate approval for the program was granted the following month with a recommendation that it be established as a division of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

An Advisory Committee, made up of faculty and graduate students, was established with responsibility for the program. It was to report directly to the Vice President, Academic.

Community Support for and Involvement in the TYP

The Black community's response to the program was both immediate and positive. Over 100 people attended a hastily called meeting at the North Branch library on 16 December 1969 to discuss the fledgling program. At that meeting both the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP) and the Black United Front (BUF) threw their wholehearted support behind the program and 13 individuals identified themselves as potential program applicants. The community agreed that the central focus of the program should be to develop basic writing skills and improve reading comprehension and saw in the program two broad objectives:

- to prepare students for entering into university on a regular ongoing basis; and
- to stimulate cultural self-awareness, individual interests and recognition of rights and prerogatives within the present socio-political framework.

By July 1970, over 82 applicants were received for admission to the TYP and of this number 72 were from the Black community. The program was hailed as "*one of the greatest things ever to have happened to the Black people in the Province.*"[9]

It is important to affirm that the community was not a passive player in the development of the TYP. Initially involved to test the waters through public meetings, the community was soon actively engaged in the planning process with elected representatives sitting as members of the TYP Community Committee. All major Black organizations were involved in the planning process including the African United Baptist Association (AUBA), the Black United Front (BUF), Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NSAACP) and the Negro Education Committee (predecessor to the BEA).[10] In planning for the first intake of students and program content, the community had six members involved in determining the plans, the curriculum, the students and the staff for TYP 1970-71. Further, it was interpreted by University Administrators and community representatives that the TYP was to be supervised by a Management Committee composed of University personnel and Community members.

Problems over community input in the development and implementation of the program arose one year into the TYP. In the summer of 1971, based on differences cited as arising from "*personality conflicts,*" the TYP Director severed the participation of elected Black representatives in the program. In response, the Black and Native communities presented a brief to Dalhousie stating their position that the Black and Native communities "*must share equally with the University in the control of all aspects in the TYP.*" In particular, the brief focused on the need for the community to have input into the student and staff selection process for the program. They recommended establishment of a Management Committee made up of six University personnel and the same number of community representatives and mandated with the responsibility for the management and direction of the TYP in all its aspects (including policy decisions, staff selection and evaluation, student selection, curriculum policy, budget allocations, and the general development and improvement of the TYP).

The Dean of Arts and Sciences responded by offering the community seats on an Advisory Committee but refusing to provide that committee with any responsibility for the program. "*So long as the program is run within, the University's regular bodies and officers responsible for academic programs must ultimately have full responsibility for them.*"[11]

The resultant fallout was reported in the *Chronicle Herald* under the by-line "*Program Re-evaluation Sought by Major Black, Indian Organizations.*" Community members argued that:

> *When the program was originally conceived, the intention was to involve the communities directly in the choosing of students for the program, the hiring of staff and the general operation of the project... Last January the Director made it very clear that he no longer had any intention of working with the community representatives... other university officials responsible for the program... have backed the Director's position of community non-involvement.*[12]

From the community's perspective, community involvement in the TYP was crucial because the program was attempting to do something about the community as a whole, not just a single individual. Without community input, they argued, the university would be unable to determine the real needs of the community, the community would be unable to understand what the university is doing and the program would be meaningless.

In a letter of support received from the President of Howard University in the US, the principle of community involvement was upheld:

> *It is my firm conviction that community involvement, community participation, is a very vital component and there is an awful lot to be gained in terms of enhancing the ultimate success of the program by virtue of having that kind of involvement. It is certainly my judgment that the hard and fast distinction between professional educators and lay people in trying to bring about real solutions to hard core educational problems will have to disappear and I would certainly urge for whatever it's worth that on the aspect of community involvement that community participation be preserved.*

In spite of pressure to provide the community with meaningful involvement in the program, the University maintained its position of limited community involvement. The community eventually withdrew and the program resumed under the direction of the Advisory Committee made up of faculty.

Funding and the TYP

A second critical issue which arose in the first year of the TYP concerned the funding base for the program. Indeed, one of the questions raised at the public meeting held at the North Branch library in December 1969 was what amount of financial support would be given to the program? This question raised by the Black community over 24 years ago haunted the program for the next twenty years. It has been temporarily put to rest by President H. Clark's 1990 commitment to long-term funding (to a minimum of 10 years) for the TYP.

Funding was the TYP's first major crisis. Even while applications to the TYP were being received from the community, major problems arose. While on the one hand, Senate recommended the establishment of TYP, there was no corresponding commitment made to provide funds for the program, leaving the Advisory Committee on its own to raise the approximately $83,000 required to operate its first year.

A letter from then President Henry Hicks to W. A. MacKay, Vice President, Academic sets out the official University position regarding funding of the TYP:

> *While I am aware that the University has given general approval to the Transition Year Program for certain disadvantaged students from the Black and Indian communities in this Province, it was my understanding that we would only do this if funds to support the program were forthcoming.*
>
> *I was somewhat unhappy, therefore, to be waited upon by a committee concerned with the TYP on Friday afternoon last and to be informed by them that, in addition to providing the teaching services, we had, at least by implication, committed ourselves to provide board and lodging for these students and that (except for the Indian students) we would receive no tuition fees and very little support from any other source.*
>
> *I do not think Dalhousie can afford to make this contribution single-handedly in an area of education which is not strictly the responsibility of the University and, particularly, if other elements in the community, who have professed great interest in, and concern for, these students, ultimately prove unwilling to make a financial contribution.*
>
> *Accordingly, while we must live up to our commitments for this year, you should, as soon as appropriate, advise all those concerned that Dalhousie will discontinue this program after 1970-71. Naturally if funds to support the program should be forthcoming, I would be happy to reconsider our position. As it is, this year, with the enrollment quotas fixed by the University Grants Committee, we will not even be able to draw down the normal capitation grant for these twenty-two students.*[13]

Hicks maintained this position over the program's first year of implementation, writing to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration on February 25 1971:

> *... this program has been rather expensive and the amount of funds provided from non-university sources disappointing. No matter how worthwhile such a program may be, it is probably not basically the responsibility of a university to direct specific amounts of general university funds towards it... It looks to be as if Dalhousie may not be able to afford to carry on the Program unless we can find substantial increased financial support from sources outside the University.*

Meanwhile a local funding drive was established canvassing businesses for commitments of $100 to $500 apiece. The Chair of the Advisory Committee himself took on a commitment of raising $3,000 for the program. Thoughts were even given to approaching the Black United Front for monies to pay the Director's salary but were quickly discarded "*as unwise.*"

Funding difficulties continued well into the program's first year with the Chair writing frantically to the Citizenship Branch of the Department of Secretary for State and the Department of Manpower. By June of 1971 these two federal departments had committed a total of $20,000 to the TYP "*with the understanding that no commitment is expressed or implied for responsibility for further years.*"[14]

Such obvious reluctance by the University to take responsibility for its own creation adversely affected the program for the subsequent 24 years. The lack of a stable funding base has had serious ramifications for the program over its existence. Placed on a tenuous footing from the start, the TYP was never in a position to develop and implement its program within a stable environment.

The Transition Year Program: 1972-1989

The makeshift, ad hoc, nature of this program has been its greatest weakness. The university's limited and short-run commitment has handicapped planning, recruitment, community relations and program development.

This is a quote from a 1972 report (known as the Misick Report) mandated to review the Transition Year Program after its first one and half year of operations. Almost 20 years later similar comments were being written about the TYP:

Although Dalhousie has provided some support for the TYP in terms of salaries, housing and financial assistance for students, this program has never been able to overcome its marginal status. The marginalization of the TYP is attributable to the fact that it was never supported by a well-articulated philosophy. It was experimental in nature, and consequently, this program lost legitimacy within the university community and became ghettoized *This reinforced the perception that Dalhousie did not have a serious commitment to the TYP. Chronic lack of both financial and human resources, which could allow the TYP to develop into a better mechanism to facilitate access to Dalhousie for Black and Micmac students, are further signs of the lack of commitment.*[15]

Reviews of the TYP from 1972-1987

An array of reports and reviews were compiled on the TYP over the intervening 18 years. Figure 1 presents an overview of these reports including their mandate, recommendations and outcomes. The common thread tying the reports together is the call for commitment to the program and specific changes intended to enhance its effectiveness. None of these reports have appeared to receive serious consideration by the University. Despite hardhitting recommendations which could have turned the TYP into a serious program, the TYP remained experimental, becoming over time a source of embarrassment to both past and present TYP students and a thorn in the side of the University.

Figure 1
Reports On The Transition Year Program 1972-1987

Report & Year	Recommendations	Outcomes
1972 Misick Report mandated to review the TYP and propose recommendations for its continuance or re-direction.	That Dalhousie make long-term commitment to the Black and Mi'kmaq communities; if such commitment were "deemed impossible in the long run," the TYP should be continued for only one more year. Dalhousie provide financial assistance to all Nova Scotian Black and Mi'kmaq students enrolled at the university. April 30, 1973 be set as the termination date for the existing TYP. If Dalhousie to continue with the TYP, a new approach required to take into account Black and Mi'kmaq differences, admission requirements, recruiting methods, duration and content of programs.	Program continued but individual recommendations of Misick report seemingly ignored.
1973 MacKay Report mandated "to consider the TYP and report at the next meeting of the Senate Council."	The review committee found there was enough support for "the original assumption that there is a sufficient number of financially and/or academically disadvantaged students to warrant the University offering a Transition Year Program. Recommended that a "long term or continuous commitment be made to the TYP."	Resulted in Senate Council recommending to Senate that the TYP be approved on a continuing basis subject to review at end of four years operation.

Report & Year	Recommendations	Outcomes
1976-77 Hayes Report mandated to review the TYP.	The report concluded that "despite the TYP's modest success with Black students, it has fallen short of its original objectives. Recommended a modified and enlarged TYP and commitment from academic departments (in terms of provision of classes, instructors and tutors) and university administrators (in terms of finances).	Resulted in Senate Council recommending to Senate the Hayes Report including a revised program of studies (English, Science, Math, and a regular university course). Some attempts made to implement recommendations.
1980 Dalhousie's Academic Planning Committee mandated to review status of TYP.	Recommended the university should not withdraw from the TYP because it was recognized and valued within the communities it serves in Nova Scotia and beyond.	In 1982, the TYP became a department in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and a full-time director (from the French Department) was appointed.
1987 McGee Report (External unit review) and **Kwak Report** (Internal unit review)	The External review found that the TYP was unsupported by senior university administrators which led to a marginal status of the program on campus. The Internal review listed 14 recommendations: 1. Supports continuation of the TYP to address barriers which lead to underrepresentation of Blacks & Mi'kmaq in university. 2. Develop a clear mission statement in cooperation with the Community Liaison Committee. 3. Offer Black and Native Studies as a full credit. 4. Rearrange TYP timetable to build in a university preparatory program over summer months. 5. First year TYP to include 1 or 2 credits (including Black/Native Studies), a preparatory English class and Math 001. 6. TYP students to participate in the September Dalhousie Orientation Program. 7. TYP to develop an interest in the sciences. 8. Appoint a designated counsellor to maintain regular office hours in the TYP facilities. 9. Develop an appeals procedure immediately. 10. Establish clear terms of reference for the Community Liaison Committee. Should be involved in recruitment and screening of staff and policy development. 11. House TYP under the Dept. of Education and develop working relationship with Henson College. 12. Appoint a full-time director and a full-time secretary. No need for assistant director. 13. Establish policy to recommend its graduating student from TYP for admission to university. Those not ready to enter university should be clearly identified to the students in question and to the Registrar. 14. Provide adequate facilities including private office for each faculty member, conference room for classes and a common room.	Reports apparently disregarded.

Breaking Barriers: Report of the Task Force on Access for Black and Native People

The *Breaking Barriers Report* completed the fall of 1989 is the most well known of all the TYP assessments. Hailed as the single most important document on the TYP, it is seen as the blueprint for success of the program.

Figure 2 summarizes the recommendations from *Breaking Barriers* and the actions taken on those recommendations between its publication and 1994. It is interesting that a number of the recommendations contained in *Breaking Barriers* were raised in earlier reports but for reasons that are unclear, but which must relate to an overall lack of commitment for the program, were ignored. For example, the inclusion of the TYP in the university's orientation activities, the provision of better classrooms, and making the TYP's Black and Native Studies class into a credit course were recommendations cited in the 1987 Kwak report.

Figure 2
Recommendations and Outcomes from Breaking Barriers Report

Breaking Barriers Recommendations	Actions Taken
1) Dalhousie commit itself to offering the TYP as a program for access to university for indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq people for a period of at least ten years.	a) Commitment given to continue the TYP for a period of at least 10 years in President Clark's response to "Breaking Barriers" report, February 1990. b) This was followed in Sept. 1992 by comments made by President Clark at an open university meeting that "operating funds for the TYP... should continue."
2) The University make the TYP an access program principally for mature students.	2) Effective as of 1992-93. Principally, not exclusively.
3) First priority for the position in the TYP be given to indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq.	3) Always been unwritten policy, now written.
4) Dalhousie commit itself in supporting the TYP at a level consistent with the effective performance of its role.	4) In the TYP director's assessment, the present budget is adequate to meet this goal.
5a) The appointment of an Administrative Secretary for the program be restored on a full-time basis.	5a) Full-time secretary restored 1990.
5b) The TYP have both a director (with a half-time appointment) and an assistant director (with a full-time appointment).	5b) Full-time director appointed effective August 1992. There has been no appointment of an assistant director yet workloads and responsibilities find the director operating over capacity. This situation should be rectified by the appointment of an assistant director, possibly one of the present Native staff.
5c) The appointments of teaching staff within the TYP recognize (in terms of time commitment, renumeration, qualifications and experience) the multiplicity and intensity of the instructional, advisory, administrative and cross-cultural demands on them.	5c) There are serious problems with one staff in his dealings both with TYP students and the director. Findings from the investigative report undertaken by the University's Employment Equity Office should be acted upon immediately by Henson College.
5d) A member of the staff of Counselling and Psychological Services, preferably a Black or a Mi'kmaq, be cross-appointed to the TYP in order to offer the Study Skills Class, to participate in instructional development and coordination, and to be a source of advice and support to students.	5d) Effective 1992-93.

Breaking Barriers Recommendations	Actions Taken
6) The budget for the TYP be increased in recognition of the need for effective recruitment, individual tutoring, and staff training and to provide financial support for more than one "non-status" Native student.	6) Adequate budgetary resources are in place for the TYP.
7) The TYP become part of Henson College of Public Affairs and Continuing Education, reporting to the College's Dean, and through him to the Vice President (Academic and Research).	7) Effective 1991-92.
8) Representatives of the Black and Mi'kmaq communities be appointed to the Board of Henson College at the earliest possible opportunity.	8) One representative from each of the two communities has been appointed to the Henson Board.
9) The budget of the TYP be separate from those of other units in Henson College.	9) The TYP has a separate budget.
10) The Vice President (Academic and Research) initiate a search for a Black or Native director of the TYP with academic credentials which would justify cross appointment to an academic department.	10) Black director appointed Aug. 1992.
11) The Vice President (Academic and Research) inititate the appointment of a faculty member who has worked with the Black and/or Micmac communitites to the Directorship on a half-time basis for a period of three years, and then search again.	11) Action not required.
12) The Vice President (Academic and Research) assist the TYP in arranging cross or joint appointments with academic departments for members of its teaching staff.	12) Cross appointments now exist with the Departments of English and Math.
13) Those responsible for classroom scheduling ensure that suitable classrooms are made available for instruction in the TYP.	13) Senior administraton refer to Phase Two at which time the TYP will be physically re-located to the Henson College building on University Avenue.
14) The Registrar and the Assistant Director of the TYP take steps to further integrate the recruitment and admission processes of the undergraduate Faculties and the TYP.	14) Work is ongoing on this recommendation.
15) An advisory board be established for the TYP, consisting of representatives of the Black and Mi'kmaq Communities, particularly educators, the University, and the TYP Students Association.	15) Advisory Board established as recommended effective 1993. TYP Students Association at present do not sit on this committee; past students of the program are members.
16) The advisory board recommended above, assist the TYP in developing a detailed set of policies conducive to attainment of the goal of enabling students to succeed in regular university programmes.	16) The Advisory Board members are part of a Steering Committee established by the present director to review the mandate of the TYP and prepare a set of policies for the TYP.

Impact of the Transition Year Program

We demystified a lot of the stereotypes. We were able to prove ourselves on the sports field, in debates and academically.[16]

An Analysis of the Early TYP Results

A review[17] carried out on the TYP for the period 1970-1980 indicates that the program had its largest impact on social services and related organizations. Of the approximate 140 students (probably two-thirds of whom were Black) who went through the program over this decade, 50 obtained undergraduate degrees; 3 obtained MSWs, one a MEd and one an MA in Sociology. These outcomes clearly point to an emphasis on the social sciences in the early years of the program commensurate with the program's mandate to develop the leadership potential of the two communities.

Of the 50 undergraduate degrees, 28 were B AS with a major in Sociology, 10 were B EDS, 5 were BSWS, 4 were B COMS, 2 were B PHYSICAL ED and one was a B SC. Not surprisingly, employment upon graduation was in related fields – human rights officers, RCMP officers, government employment programs, counsellors, teachers and parole officers – the common thread being service in the community.

Because no records exist on TYP student outcomes from 1980 onwards a similar analysis for that period has not been compiled. Interviews taken with past graduates of the program however shed some light on changes that occurred in the program over the next decade and how those changes affect the program's impact.

The TYP Then and Now

A number of alumni of the TYP from the early 1970s remember the program with pride. In their assessment the program was at its strongest in the mid to late 1970s after which the program "*lost its strength.*" When asked the reason for the breakdown in the program's effectiveness, those spoken with indicated a change in program philosophy from one of the TYP community to one of assimilation within the overall university. "*In our day the TYP was a community - people were proud to be part of it – now it's a stigma.*" Others spoken with indicated a greater Black and Mi'kmaq presence among staff of the program in the earlier years and a correspondingly greater sense of commitment to the program by staff.

In the 1970s, the TYP had its own intramural basketball team and hockey team. These TYP teams competed against those from Arts, Sciences or Engineering and often came out on top inspiring confidence among the TYP student body. Self-esteem was high and if individual cases of racism emerged on campus, the TYP community responded as one, leading to a strong cohesiveness and solidarity which "*impacted on the individual student's self-confidence and academic ability.*"

The TYP students of that era were strong academically with most going on to graduate from university in a variety of fields. This group of TYP students also believed they had a responsibility to give back to the community. They worked in their home communities over the summer months with most choosing an area of community service as the focus of their career.

When I look at the people who went through the program in the 70s, I see people who are achievers, who are socially responsible, have a conscience, and who represent themselves and the Black community in a very positive light. The program as we knew it and experienced it died sometime in the late 1970s.[18]

When asked what happened to the 1970s version of the program, respondents indicate that the University carved out a deliberate policy of assimilation for the TYP. For example, in the late 1970s a policy stating the TYP was not permitted to enter its own teams in intramural

sports was written and enforced. If TYP students were to play sports, they were to do so as individuals on teams within their faculty of choice – Arts, Science – which the TYP team had frequently challenged and beaten in previous years. Currently there is a policy which excludes TYP students from university teams unless their average is in the 65-70 range.

Past students also commented that the TYP House used to be a centre of activity. "*You would go there to find out what was happening on campus, where the intramurals were being held, what speakers were on campus.*" There is a belief that over the 1980s there was a deliberate effort to diffuse the strength of the TYP students. "*Now the students are assimilated to the point that they see something wrong in a group of Black students sitting down and talking and laughing.*" The stereotype developed by the White community has become that of the Black community.

Another significant difference in the TYP noted by past graduates revolves around courses for credit. Under today's program, TYP students can take at most one elective for credit with most taking none. Today's program is aimed at *upgrading* rather than providing students with credits towards their degree. In the 1970s, TYP students took two and in some cases three electives a year thereby providing TYP students with a sense that their year was little different from other students attending Dalhousie. This whole area is under review by the present program Director and the Advisory Board.

The move to assimilation and the cutting back of electives have, in the assessment of some, taken a heavy toll on the program. The Black culture thinks and acts in terms of community rather than individualism. But the University is set up to celebrate the individual. This basic clash in philosophy has caused tensions between the University and program over its life. It has also been suggested that the University, when realizing the TYP was meeting with considerable success in terms of leadership development, took a step backwards, uncomfortable with the role of developing social activists "*who might challenge the establishment.*"

Misuse of the TYP

There is a second school of thought among the Black community on the value of the TYP. This school sees the program as a "*band-aid, segregated approach to education,*" a "*bastard program*" and an "*excuse for the provincial education system.*"[19] The proponents of this view see the program as an easy means for competent high school students to enter university rather than maintaining a high average and entering university the regular route. They maintain that guidance counsellors encourage Black students to pursue TYP rather than encouraging them to strive to their ability and that the financial incentive attached to the TYP may also be a contributing factor to Black students opting for TYP as opposed to the regular entrance to university. The second criticism is that the existence of the TYP provides the provincial Department of Education with an excuse not to overhaul the education system thereby "*perpetuating systemic discrimination within the schools.*"[20]

Advice to the TYP Director

The majority of those spoken with still see the value of maintaining the program. The fact is that the TYP has provided students with the academic skills necessary to conduct a normal academic life, contributed to the growth of self-esteem and confidence in the program participants, provided a support mechanism for the students within the university, increased the students' ability to operate successfully in society and contributed to the development of a large body of leadership within the two communities. The role of developing individuals with a community conscience, leaders who have a sense of need "*to give back to their own,*" is still seen as a valuable role for the TYP and one that should be fostered under the new Director.

These proponents of the program have specific advice for the present TYP Director.

- "Develop the program into a faculty of the university rather than a side program. Allow students to start earning credits in their first year so that they are working towards their degree the same as any other student. Change the present upgrading courses into tutorials."
- "Give the students an identity that they can be proud of and empower them to make and take decisions. Allow them to operate as a community within a bigger community. Show the University that it is not going to lose anything by the students operating as one. "They will still be travelling the same route; the difference is that the students will be travelling it together."
- "Keep on with what you are doing; plan, implement and take the lead. Do not stop and wait for the University to catch up."
- "Retain separate premises for the TYP as it is important to have a place of one's own to congregate and organize. If the building is too small, push for a larger building. But maintain separate identify."
- "Encourage Henson to move out into the greater community to assess needs and establish relevant programs."

A Vision for the Transition Year Program

Where there is no vision, people perish.[21]

The focus of this final section lies with the TYP today and into the future. What is the present day mandate of the TYP and does it meet the needs of today's Black community? Is there a vision in place for the TYP which will lead the program into the 21st century?

Appointment of First Black Director

In the summer of 1992 a momentous event occurred in the history of the TYP. This was the appointment of the program's first Black Director – the first time in the history of the program that the TYP was headed by a Black Nova Scotian. This appointment, in combination with the earlier release of the *Breaking Barriers* Report and the commitment of stable funding over a ten year period, had the potential to set the program on a fast track for success. This did not happen. The Director was faced instead with opposition both from without and within.

An example has been the opposition generated against the Director from one staff member of the program. The difficulties encountered by the Director from this individual grew to such an extent that the Director lodged a formal complaint with the University's employment equity office. An investigation was subsequently carried out which found in favor of the Director. No actions have been taken against the staff member in question.

The question has to be asked as to why no action has been taken. It has also been suggested that students were reportedly manipulated in an attempt to undermine the Director's authority. Clearly there are no winners in this type of controversy. All are losers – the University, the Director, the staff, and most importantly, the students.

The lack of support from the University for the Director in this instance is untenable. The program is in place specifically because of reasons relating to systemic discrimination yet no action is being taken on matters relating to the systemic discrimination occurring within the program itself. This lack of action is demoralizing, undermining and defeats the very purpose of the program.

The University cannot have it both ways. In denying the community input into the decision-making process for the program, it falls to the University to stand firmly behind their choice of Director, deflect criticism and openly support the choices of committees under the Director's direction.

In spite of the numerous hurdles placed in the Director's path over the first year and a half in the job, much has been accomplished. Coming into the position of Director as a past graduate of the TYP, the Director is committed to return the program to a position of strength and source of self-esteem for participants. The Director has encouraged the continuation of the TYP Student Association, the development of a TYP newsletter, the creation of TYP T-shirts, awards of student recognition and TYP scholarships for those former graduates who are studying at Dalhousie. During the first weeks on the job, the Director saw that the TYP house which was in a bad state of repair was refurbished with a common room set up where TYP students can meet on an informal basis.

From a policy viewpoint, the Director has adopted the *Breaking Barriers Report* as a blueprint for the TYP. Many of its recommendations were set in motion over the Director's first year and a half in office. One of the most important of these is the establishment of an Advisory Board made up of community members and past graduates of the program. Although this committee's mandate still only formally extends to an advisory role, members from that committee have been involved in ongoing policy development around key issues affecting the program.

Policies are being developed under three categories: Program, Faculty Staff and Student as detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 3
TYP Policies Under Development

Program Policies	Faculty Staff Policies	Student Policies
Vision	Instructor accountability	Academic responsibility
Mission	Director accountability	Attendance
Statement of Principles	Staff accountability	Awards
Statement on Racism and Discrimination	Committees	Complaints process
General Operating	Contract/non DFP	Academic probation • Dismissal • Appeals
		Student/instructor advising
		Grading
		Student association
		University recommendation

Need for Clear Mandate

This report sees value in the TYP undergoing a planning process that will result in the establishment of a clear set of goals and objectives for the program. For over 20 years the TYP has been struggling with a variety of mandates depending on the constituency canvassed. The *Breaking Barriers Report*, for example, noted the difficulty it had in pining down a mandate for the TYP. In many instances the Black, Mi'kmaq and university communities all have quite different views about the proper role for the TYP. Some see the TYP as a means to compensatory education, others see it as a training ground for social activism, while still others see it as a place to develop the self-esteem and the identity of the students. Many see it as being designed for all three purposes and many more.

There are a number of reasons for the TYP to engage in a planning exercise. First, it should help to clarify the program's role enabling all players to confront the future based on the same understanding of the program and its intent. Second, such a process should provide the community with an opportunity to build their needs (both existing and future) into the program. Needs around social activism and leadership which were real in the late 1960s and early 1970s may need to be replaced by needs for role models in the professions such as law, medicine and engineering. Third, it should serve to re-position the program both within the University and the Black and Mi'kmaq communities. That is, a common understanding of the goals of the program may serve to de-marginalize the program by providing it with a strong identity based on community need.

The Role of Community Within the TYP

The community, as we have seen, has been limited in the role it plays within the TYP. Unwilling to provide the community with a direct role in policy making for the program, the University has instead accepted friction between the community and the program and is first to admit that "*a certain amount of tension has always existed.*"[22]

The obvious question is whether such friction is necessary? Are there not models already in place at Dalhousie University which encourage community involvement in policy making as well as community ownership of certain programs?[23]

To rebuild a sense of pride into the program and to provide students with role models from their respective communities, the TYP should reconsider the establishment of strong community links through the structure of an Advisory Board mandated to formally participate in policy and decision-making. The Board should meet frequently (on a monthly basis) and be expanded to include a greater number of community-based organizations working in the field of education.

Towards the Twenty-First Century

It can be argued that the TYP in 1994, is in a prime position to re-position its role vis a vis the educational needs of the Black community. The TYP has been given a secure funding base until at least the year 2000. Further, the TYP has been provided with a new home, Henson College, responsible for bringing the University's resources to constituencies beyond its traditional student population.

The move of the TYP to Henson College, has the potential to strengthen and broaden the role of the program. Mandated to make the University more accessible to a wider range of students and to involve the University more deeply in the life of the external community, Henson College is capable of providing the TYP with the credibility and support so evidently lacking over its first 20 years of existence.

One of the aims of the planning exercise presently engaged in by the TYP Director and the Advisory Board should be to obtain consensus among all concerned as to (a) the educational needs of the Nova Scotian Black community in the 1990s and (b) the appropriate role of the TYP in meeting those needs. It may be useful for the Director and the Advisory Board to take stock of the community's existing strengths (growing numbers of trained Black teachers, social workers and lawyers) and identify areas of weakness (medicine, engineering, physical sciences, accounting, management consulting).

A third outcome should be (c) a list of educational needs that fall outside the mandate of the TYP but which could be met under the umbrella of Henson College. Are there areas where Henson College could partner in the provision of community education such as entrepreneurial training and personal and professional development within Black communities of the province?

In the assessment of this report, the extent of the commitment of Henson College, and indirectly that of Dalhousie, to the educational development of the Black community of Nova Scotia, will be measured against its willingness to explore in partnership with the Black community a variety of community-based and university-based educational programming.

Summary

This Case Study shows a program that was set up to fail. Because of the lack of student data over a period of ten years, this study was unable to pinpoint the success rate of the program but an evaluation of previous studies indicates that the success level was average. Lack of stable, adequate financing and commitment from the senior official of the University undermined the effectiveness of the program over its first 25 years. The TYP was a program with the odds stacked against it from the start. Despite these and other roadblocks, the program has survived and indeed for the first time in its history has obtained a modicum of stability.

It should always be remembered that the typ was not designed to work with the limitations of Black or Native individuals, but rather with the limitations of an educational system. The fact that TYP is still operational nearly 25 years after its establishment underlines the critical need for sweeping change within the public education system.

Members of the Black community stress that the TYP is as much needed today as it was 20 years ago because the public system has not changed significantly. As demonstrated throughout the BLAC report, the public school system continues to deny equal learning opportunities to Black learners. Until the public school system makes the adjustments needed to accommodate the learning needs of African Nova Scotians, there is need to broaden the program so that:

- more students can be admitted annually; and,
- students have a wider range of academic options and professions to choose from such as engineering, medicine and the sciences.

The challenge now facing the Director, in consultation with the Black community, is to lead the program into directions that best meet the post-secondary educational needs of Black Nova Scotians today. The challenge facing the University is to support the Director and Advisory Board in those decisions. In addition, other Nova Scotians universities such as St. Francis Xavier University, College of Cape Breton and Acadia should develop similar programs for their local Black communities.

Notes for Section 2

Inglewood

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21 Interviews with past teachers of Nelson Whynder Elementary School, August 1993.

22 Brief by Indo-Canadian Teachers of Halifax County with the Support of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, May 9, 1985, PAGE 5.

23 The issue of integration is a complicated one and merits its own separate research. For the purposes of this Case Study let it be said that integration in Halifax County came grudgingly, on the terms of the neighbouring White communities and in a one-way direction.

24 Data on the Black Student Union was obtained through community and teacher interiews, June-July 1993.

25 Monitoring Committee Report on the Progress of Black Students, May 27, 1980, PAGE 4.

26 Beckett, Marilyn ET AL, Evaluation of the Specialist Program in the Preston Schools, December 18, 1974, PAGE 17.

27 Preston Elementary School Support Services, Description of Project, October 7, 1974.

28 _____, PAGE 3.

29 Beckett, OP CIT, PAGE 2-3.

30 _____.

31 Meeting notice prepared by the NSAACP and scheduled for March 18, 1975.

32 Notice of Public meeting, scheduled for April 16, 1975.

33 Community interviews, June-July 1993.

34 Press Release from the Nova Scotia, Human Rights Commission, August 11, 1975.

35 Report of the Human Rights Commission, re Halifax County School Board, July 31, 1975, PAGE 3.

36 _____, PAGE 4.

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40 _____, PAGE 8.

41 _____, PAGE 10.

42 *The Progress of North Preston Students*, A Report to the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board, February 1985, PAGE 9.

43 Interview taken with one of the specialists, June 1993.

44 Newspaper clipping, *The Mail-Star*, Halifax, Nova Scotia, August 11, 1975.

45 Monitoring Committee Report on the Progress of Black Students, May 27, 1980, PAGE 7.

46 _____, PAGE 8.

47 *The Progress of North Preston Students*, A Report to the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board, February 1985, PAGE 1.

48 _____, PAGE 2.

49 _____.

50 Interviews with teachers and community members, June-July 1993.

51 Monitoring Committee minutes, May 12, 1983.

52 Review and Analysis of Halifax County-Bedford District School Board Initiatives in Race Relations (1970-1991), June 1992, PAGE 14-15.

53 Various articles, *The Mail Star*, January-February 1989.

54 _____.

55 _____, January 17, 1989.

56 _____, January 27, 1989.

57 _____, January 27, 1989.

58 _____, January 13, 1989.

59 _____, January 27, 1989.

60 _____, January 26, 1989.

61 _____, June 22, 1989.

62 _____, June 23, 1989.

63 _____, July 14, 1989.

64 _____, July 21, 1989.

65 _____, August 12, 1989.

66 _____, August 12, 1989.

67 *Report of the Nova Scotia Advisory Group on Race Relations*, Halifax, September 1991, PAGE 5.

68 In 1993, two North Preston residents obtained employment as a result of initiatives arising from the incidents.

69 Meeting notice prepared by the NSAACP and scheduled for March 18, 1975.

70 Notice of public meeting, scheduled for April 16, 1975.

Black Incentive Fund

1 From an interview with a past member of the Advisory Committee of the Fund.

2 *Mail Star*, OCTOBER 4, 1962.

3 *Education Office Gazette*, VOL 19, NO 1, NOVEMBER 1969, PAGE 34.

The fund was initially divided into five categories:

- **Special Needs** (such as boarding away from home, special transportation, tuition, books and scribblers.
- **Promotion Awards** (students who were promoted from grade 10 to 11 and from 11 to 12 and passing 12 in the amounts of $50, $75 and $100 respectively. Supplementary awards of $20, $30 and $50 were given for averages 65- 69.9 %, 70% and 79.9% and 80% and over respectively.)
- **Achievement Awards** made to a limited number of outstanding students at the junior and senior high level who excel academically and who are judged by their teachers and principals to have the potential to become leaders in their communities.
- **Vocational and Technical Education Awards** cover the expenses of students attending vocational or technical institutions in Nova Scotia when financial assistance is not available through other government training programs.
- **University Education Awards** provide assistance at the university or college level after the student has applied for a loan from the Canada Student Loan Fund.

4 *Education Office Gazette*, VOL 19, NO 1, November 1969, PAGE 34.

5 Province of Nova Scotia Inter-Departmental Committee on Human Rights, Financial Aid to Further the Education of Negroes, Terms of Reference approved April 2, 1965.

6 Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee, Education Fund for Black Students, August 15, 1972.

7 Interviews taken with community members.

8 Letter from Mr. VanRoy Tobitt, chair of the Committee on Student Aid, Black Educators' Association to Dr. W.P. Oliver, Secretary of the Education Fund for Black Students.

9 Interview with community leader.

10 55th Annual Council Minutes March 16-19, 1976, Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

11 The Education Incentive Program was divided into two categories:
(a) **University Entrance Scholarship** valued at $3,000 – for Black students who successfully completed grade 12 in Nova Scotia with an average of 75% or higher; demonstrated leadership qualities through participation in community affairs, student activities or athletics; recommended by principal or guidance counsellor; be accepted or registered in a recognized full-time university or post-secondary degree program.
(b) **Promotion Awards** received by students in junior and senior high and post-secondary institutions to encourage them to continue and complete their education. The promotion award varies upon grade level. Secondary Promotion Awards: Students entering grade 7 - $20, grade 8 - $25, grade 9 - $30, grade 10 - $90, grade 11 - $100, grade 12 - $120. Students entering first or second year of a vocational program – $50. **Post Secondary Promotion Awards:** Students

entering first or second year of a post secondary program – $1,200. Criteria for the promotion awards was based upon promotion from one grade to another in June; and in the case of the Post Secondary awards, successful completion of grade 12 and enrollment in an approved post-secondary program.

12 Discussion with the chair of the Fund's Advisory Committee, March 1994.

13 From an interview with a Black parent and past high school graduate.

14 Lewis, Richard, *Assessment of the Education Fund for Black Students*, Nova Scotia Department of Education, June 1979.

15 Evaluation of the Education Incentive Program for Black Students, Dalhousie University, March 1985.

16 Advisory Committee minutes, June 19, 1985.

17 Advisory Committee minutes, June 14, 1989.

18 Reported by almost all interviewed over the course of this Case Study as a common question raised by White students of Black students.

19 Letter written to the Black Learners Advisory Committee, March 11, 1993.

20 Advisory Committee minutes, November 8, 1990.

21 Minister of Education Ronald C. Griffin to Robert Payzant, November 13, 1990, Fund files, Student Assistance Office, Nova Scotia Department of Education.

22 Interview with Mr. VanRoy Tobitt, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee in charge of the Fund.

Transition Year Program

1 *Breaking Barriers: Report of the Task Force on Access for Black and Native People,* 1989, PAGE 95.

2 From a letter written to the Secretary of State by W.A. MacKay, Vice President Academic.

3 *The Black Man in Nova Scotia Teach-In Report,* Saint Francis Xavier University, January 1969.

4 Henry Frances, *Forgotten Canadians; The Blacks of Nova Scotia,* Canadian Social Problems Series, Longman Canada Limited, 1973.

5 Dr. W.P. Oliver, "The Negro in Nova Scotia," *Journal of Education,* December 1949, PAGE 433.

6 *The Condition of Negroes in Halifax City, Nova Scotia,* Dalhousie University, Institute of Public Affairs, 1962.

7 Report to the Faculty of Arts and Science on a Transition Year Progamme, TYP Committee, October 7, 1969.

8 _____, PAGE 8.

9 From a letter written to the Secreatary of State by W.A. MacKay, Vice President Academic.

10 Brief to Dalhousie University on Transition Year Program submitted by the Black and Indian Coalition, PAGE 4.

11 Dalhousie University draft press release, July 1971.

12 *The Chronicle Herald,* July 23, 1971, PAGE 5.

13 Correspondence, Dalhousie Archives, August 11, 1970.

14 Letter from Citizenship Branch, Secretary of State, January 17, 1971.

15 *Breaking Barriers,* OP CIT, PAGE 89.

16 From interview with past TYP graduate and representative of the Black community.

17 Moreau, Bernice and Rans, Peter, "Influence of the Dalhousie University Transition Year Program on the Work Patterns of its Alumni," *Work, Ethnicity and Oral History: Issue on Ethnicity and Multiculturalism,* Series NO 1, International Education Centre, 1988.

18 From interview with past TYP graduate and representative of the Black community.

19 *Breaking Barriers Report,* PAGE 94.

20 _____, PAGE 95.

21 Taken from a community interview.

22 Interview taken with senior university personnel.

23 The Native community has managed to establish community involvement in policy making for the Micmac Bachelor of Social Work program as well as the Micmac Professional Careers Project.

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Section 3

A Literature Review of Experiences and Activities in Other Jurisdictions Related to the Educational Needs of Black Learners in Nova Scotia

1 Introduction

The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

One of the major aims of the Research Project of the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) was to gather information on issues, activities and situations affecting the Black learner in Nova Scotia. This information would be used to develop strategies and actions to meet the needs of the students. While the major emphasis of this research was on the Nova Scotia situation, it was valuable to identify and assess the experiences and actions of those concerned with the needs of Black learners in other locations and jurisdictions. By knowing the results of activities elsewhere and comparing these with the Nova Scotia situation, the BLAC is in a better position to advise and recommend the most effective ways to meet the needs of the Black learner in this province.

The objectives of this working paper, as set out in the Research Design[1] were to *assess how others have identified problems and developed strategies to resolve issues in the educational system.* This was done by presenting the results of a comprehensive literature review that examined educational issues and experiences both nationally and inter-nationally. The study research process is described later in this chapter.

Following this introductory section, the report briefly describes the major issues addressed by the Research Project. This discussion is followed by an overview of several major educational issues that have a bearing on the educational needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. The chapter concludes with a description of the research process used to compile the information in this report.

Chapter 2 presents the major findings and themes that have emerged as a result of the research process. It examines other approaches and includes specific conclusions on experiences in other jurisdictions and relates these to the Nova Scotia situation. Examples of individual projects and programs are provided as well.

The report concludes with observations and recommendations related to the role and mandate of the BLAC, based on the major issues in the report. A significant number of printed reports and articles were obtained during the research process. These have been provided separately to the BLAC.

Study Context and Issues

A Global Perspective

Educational reform is one of the global issues of the 1990s, with strong links to economic and social change internationally. Even a casual observer of the media in Canada and the United States could not have failed to notice the significant reporting on education during the spring and summer of 1993, particularly items related to major changes in the educational system of provinces and states. Recent announcements and reports include, for example:

- The announcement by the *Conference of Atlantic Premiers* on August 25, 1993 concerning a common public school curriculum in Atlantic Canada based on specific outcomes and standards;

- The introduction of *common curriculum* approaches to education in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta; as a result of this approach, Ontario is moving away from curriculum streaming used for the past several decades;
- The establishment of a Royal Commission on Learning in Ontario, along with the announcement on September 7 of an 18 person provincial Parents' Council on Schooling;
- Major studies and commissions on educational change, learning and curriculum in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland; and,
- The Guide to Education Supplement in the *Globe and Mail* on August 5, 1993 as well as additional articles describing Outcome-based Education on September 6 and 7; and
- Radical reform of the education systems of several American states; in August, Michigan canceled $6 Billion in school system funding that is raised from property taxes and gave school administrators one year to come up with alternative programs, funding sources and funding requirements; one alternative being investigated is the school choice approach described below.

Why Educational Change?

The current interest in educational change has several sources. At the broadest level, educational change is related to changes in the world economic system, with its increased emphasis on globalization, competitiveness and technological growth. At the same time, government deficits and unemployment have increased dramatically. The decline in the North American economy, in comparison to Japan, Germany and the Pacific Rim countries, is seen by many as a direct result of an education system that has not adequately prepared our societies for the major structural economic changes now underway.

Educational reform, in other words, is a direct result of the failure of the educational system in many Western countries to meet the needs of its stakeholders – students, parents, employers, funding agencies and society as a whole. This lack of accountability has prompted major and significant reviews with subsequent changes to educational funding and curricula.

From the 1960s until recently, money has been seen by governments and the educational system as the way to solve problems related to a lack of educational performance or relevance. In spite of increased educational funding during this period by governments in Canada, the United States and Europe, the quality of education did not improve and if anything, declined in the United States. Schools with limited resources in many Asian countries, on the other hand, were able to successfully educate their children. *In North America, the money has run out.*

The current changes in North America and Britain are meant to focus the educational system on the economic, social, cultural and technological needs of a society concerned with results. To paraphrase a common theme, the educational system must be able to educate our children to meet the globally competitive, technological, multicultural world of the next century, the knowledge-based society.

Models of Educational Change

While *program changes* are almost characteristic of the educational system, the underlying models of instruction and administrative structure in most jurisdictions have not significantly altered in the last century. This traditional system has been criticized with ever increasing vigour over the past several decades, and alternative models have developed in a number of jurisdictions.

The United States has been the world leader in bringing about these changes, influencing Britain during the late 1980s, and now Canada. Regardless of the approach or model for change, several important themes are apparent:

- educational change is a long term, development process originating at a grassroots or bottom-up level;[2]
- the most successful programs actively involve and require the dedication and commitment of students, parents, and teachers, as well as the larger community; and,
- the school system alone, while necessary, is not capable of meeting the educational needs of students, particularly those of the Black learner and other minorities; additional support programs are required.[3]

The educational change or reform movement is a multifaceted approach to revising the system to meet the needs of stakeholders. The terms *voucher systems, magnet school* or *focus school* are three different ways to describe the best known American response to poor educational attainment and related factors – the school choice model. The approach has achieved some notable success, at least amongst educators, in improving educational results.

The magnet school concept, for instance, began in East Harlem in the mid-1980s as a response to several factors including a lack of educational achievement by students, exceptionally high drop-out rates of up to 46 percent, funding cut-backs for education under the Reagan administration, and a general decay within the school administration.[4]

The two key components of the school choice approach are:

- decisions about curricula and teaching methods are made locally; and,
- parents decide which school their children should attend within a school district.

Magnet schools are essentially *alternative models* designed to meet the needs of students, and are based on local decision making and per-capita funding. The former implies that principals and teachers are able to establish personalities for their schools; the latter means that schools are funded based on the number of students that are enrolled. A major thrust of the magnet schools is to develop schools with a strong sense of mission and identity, along with strong bonds between teacher and students. *The practical implication behind magnet schools is that by making decisions about students' needs locally or at a community level, schools are better able to meet student's needs; the resulting success attracts more students which increases funding, in turn allowing the schools to fund more local programs.*

The local autonomy aspect of the magnet school concept, where curricula are decided by school principals, was an important element in the 1988 Educational Reform Act in Britain. Singapore and Sweden, amongst other countries, are seriously considering the idea of giving successful schools more decision-making autonomy as well as the power to increase student fees.

It should be noted that while educational reform has largely been a *bottom-up* process in the United States and Canada, the British system underwent swift *top-down* reform through the introduction of the national core curriculum of the Educational Reform Act. The national curriculum is an attempt to improve education without increasing spending. The system also provides for a national, common assessment of students, while still providing a strong element of local management and control.

While the financial and administrative elements of the Canadian educational system are quite different, and more progressive, than the American model, some important elements of the American approach are making their way into the Canadian educational system. The strongest thrust across the country is towards *local decision-making* and the *active involvement of parents* in the development of education policy and other education decision-making.

A related element of the change process is the emergence of business-education partnerships. In general, the intent of these programs from the business perspective, is to directly influence or provide feedback to the learning process and course content so that students will be better able to meet the needs of business and industry when they graduate. This is accomplished through a variety of approaches, including direct funding of school programs and projects. Several examples of these programs for the Black learner are described in Chapter 2.

The benefits to schools and the education system from these partnerships include program funding from business as well as opportunities *to stay in touch with the real world*, thereby stemming criticism by business of the relevance of education. Criticisms of these partnership arrangements often focus on the funding element – schools are so strapped for funds that what is best for students educationally may be overlooked in efforts to obtain funding. The proposal earlier in 1993 by the Youth News Network to put paid television advertising in Nova Scotia schools in exchange for private sector educational funding, is a case in point.

Educational Change and The Black Learner

The education revolution in education in the United States was not explicitly designed to meet the needs of the Black learner even though the program started in areas such as East Harlem where there are 14,000 Black and Hispanic children enrolled in the elementary and junior high schools.

Since educational attainment was often below average in these Black communities, Black learners were the major beneficiaries of the changes. Improvements to the image and psychology of a school, along with curriculum changes focused on the academic needs of students, have improved the educational experience for all students, the majority of whom were Black learners. According to results reported in *The Economist*,[5]

> *Black learners from general neighbourhood schools score 30 percent below the national mean. In focus schools, they score 40 percent above the mean.*

In some jurisdictions with a large Black learner population, the school curricula are often able to recognize and place some focus on issues related to the particular educational needs of Black students.[6] In many communities in the United States, however, the Black learner is in the minority of students. The situation often remains that the educational needs of the student as a Black learner are not specifically addressed within the system.

There are, however, several additional approaches to the education of the Black learner which have been introduced internationally. The first generally takes place in the setting of an alternate school program; the second is incorporated within the regular school curriculum. The first approach is an *Afrocentric philosophy* that can empower the Black learner; the second is the broader *multicultural* approach to education.

Afrocentricity is a philosophy that believes in the "*centrality of Africans in post modern history.*"[7] Originating in the United States, Afrocentricity stresses the important contributions of Africans to the culture, history, religion, science, politics and other areas of development in the world. From an educational perspective, *Afrocentricity is designed to shift the educational framework for*

Black learners away from a Eurocentric approach to one that recognizes and celebrates the needs and perspectives of the Black learner.

The education of minorities is an important concern throughout the world, although the degree to which governments are addressing the issue varies considerably. Many countries throughout the world, including Canada, have been gradually adopting a multicultural approach to educating cultural minorities. A multicultural approach forms the basis of educational programming designed to meet the needs of minorities in both Britain and Australia.

According to the comprehensive definition provided by Suzuki,[8]

> *Multicultural education is an educational program which provides multiple learning environments that properly match the academic and social needs of students. These needs may vary widely due to differences in the race, sex, ethnicity, or social class background of the students. In addition to developing their basic academic skills, the program should help students develop a better understanding of their own backgrounds and of other groups that compose our society. Through this process the program should help students to respect and appreciate cultural diversity, overcome ethnocentric and prejudicial attitudes, and understand the socio-historical, economic and psychological factors that have produced the contemporary conditions of ethnic polarization, inequality and alienation. It should also foster their ability to critically analyze and make intelligent decisions about real-life problems and issues through a process of democratic, dialogical inquiry. Finally, it should help them conceptualize and aspire toward a vision of a better society and acquire the necessary knowledge, understandings and skills to enable them to move the society toward greater equality and freedom, the eradication of degrading poverty and dehumanizing dependency, and the development of meaningful identity for all people.*

A primary consideration with a multicultural approach is ensuring that minority groups in a society are treated justly, with equal access to the educational programs and resources of the majority, while still retaining their group identity, no matter what the basis of the identity – race, colour, religion or language.

The critical importance of this issue is reinforced in a report on educational reform by Dr. Israel Tribble of Florida:

> *The need for a multiculturally based curriculum that recognizes the contributions of African-Americans and other minorities is absolutely essential in a pluralistic society. When children cannot relate to not only the subject matter, but also to the purveyors of that subject matter, the inability leaves a negative effect on their ability to learn.*[9]

For the Black learner in North America and Europe, one of the challenges of a multicultural approach to education is that multiculturalism often focuses on issues and approaches most relevant to recent immigrants rather than indigenous peoples or those who have lived in an area for centuries. This approach often ignores or overlooks the historical treatment of the Black population within the majority culture.

BLAC and the Nova Scotia Context

In many ways, the situation with respect to the educational needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia reflects that of Black learners in many other locations. The majority of Black interest groups in the province have expressed a concern that far too great a proportion of Black children are being allowed to fall through the cracks of the education system. Educational issues such as a lack of role models in integrated schools, a lack of sensitivity and awareness amongst both educators and the educational system, alienation of Black learners within schools and other factors, are as prevalent in Nova Scotia as elsewhere.

In many ways, these issues are the indicators or results of a much larger problem, *systemic or institutionalized racism*. This racism affects the Black learner in different ways and at different levels but the results reflect the inability of the educational system to address the needs of the Black student. These results are similar no matter where the student lives, the failure of a human person to reach their full potential.

The mandate of the Black Learners Advisory Committee is specifically designed to identify and address these and similar issues. The mandate of the BLAC, provided in its Terms of Reference, sets out the following aims:

- Advise government on policy for all levels of education, including literacy upgrading.
- Determine the effectiveness of educational services and programs for Black students.
- Research accessibility, effectiveness and quality of education for Black learners, and make recommendations for improvement.
- Visit Black communities to gain their input into education and the training process.
- Work through regional educators to improve cross-cultural understanding and race relations and assist Black communities.

These activities are to be undertaken in cooperation with the Nova Scotia Minister of Education, with the financial assistance and support of the Department of Education. The success of the BLAC in achieving its mandate depends on the support of all Nova Scotians.

The Terms of Reference for the Research Project were directly related to the activities of the BLAC described above. Our original proposal indicated that the Research Project encompassed three major themes, namely:

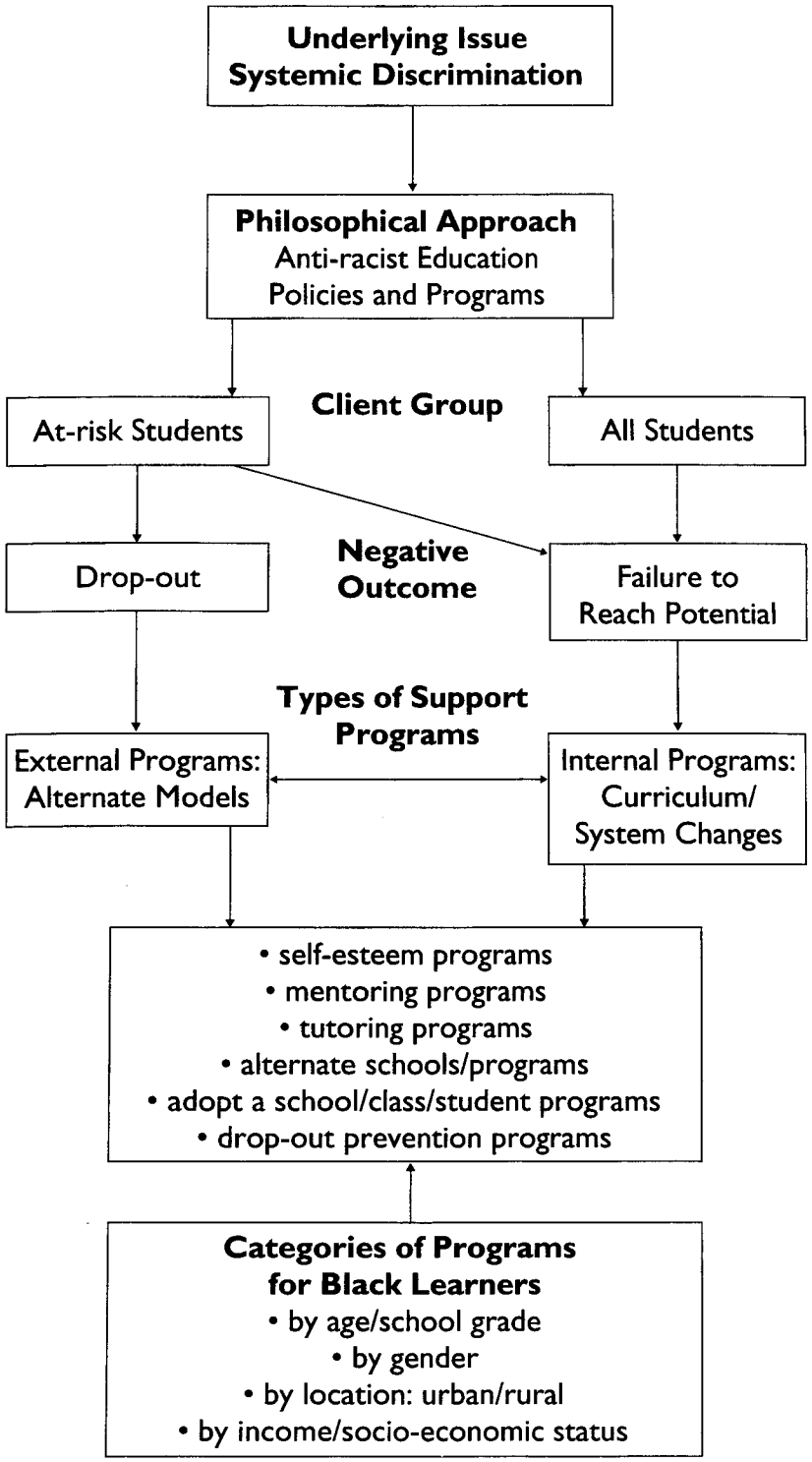
- Anti-racist education
- School dropouts
- Alternative school models

As the research progressed, it became apparent that the themes are interrelated. Alternative models, for example, are often designed to deal with drop-out related issues, which are in turn linked to systemic discrimination in the school system.

To better understand the relationships between the themes, we developed an educational *model* or framework that indicates the program relationships examined in the literature search. The model in Figure 1 is meant to provide a simple and straightforward framework rather than a definitive, analytical system.

The "Client Group" category includes two main groups of students – at risk students and "all-others". The latter category are those that, although they are not "at-risk" of dropping out, may not reach their full potential within the school system. Support programs designed to meet the needs of "at-risk" students have a different purpose and approach than those meant to assist all students. Several program categories focus on the particular characteristics of a client group. The drop-out review for example, examines issues related to young Black males and the educational system. Other programs are mainly designed to assist students in urban centres.

Figure 1
Educational Program Model for Assisting Black Learners



The Research Process

Our Methodology

Since the issues that the Research Project had to address are not unique to Nova Scotia, it was important for us to know how persons in these other areas have identified problems, the kinds of activities and programs they have developed to deal with the problems, and the strategies and approaches that have been successful. Based on this information, and an assessment of its relevance to Nova Scotia, the BLAC, the Regional Educators and the Black communities would be better able to develop their own strategies and recommendations, in partnership with the education system, government and business. The idea is not to reinvent the wheel but to learn from the experiences of others.

The research in preparing this report evolved over several drafts, based on input from the Board, Research Committee and staff of the BLAC. Each draft prompted suggestions for additional research and areas of inquiry arising from the experiences of the reviewers.

To obtain as comprehensive a listing of information on the issues as possible, we relied on several research methods. The following list itemizes our main sources of information:

- initial information which guided our thinking and provided examples of research was obtained from the BLAC office, along with general direction from the BLAC Research Committee;
- materials, reports and additional sources were acquired from persons we interviewed in Nova Scotia during the preparation of the draft Perceptions and Experiences Working Paper; these persons provided information from research that has been completed in various locations, and suggested researchers to contact;
- based on all of this information, we conducted an initial literature review for general research and studies related to racism and the education system, using the ERIC[10] on-line computerized database. The information we obtained and reviewed, along with feedback in January 1992 from the Research Committee and interview results, prompted us to search for more specific information on anti-racist education, school dropouts and alternative school models.

The following research activities were also undertaken:

- a review of journals, books and reports using various periodical indices such as the Canadian Index for Education from 1988-93 and Novanet;[11]
- a review of sociological abstracts for relevant research; and
- telephone interviews concerning the research with program officers in government, non-profit groups and program delivery groups. These include, for example, race relations and curriculum development officers at the Metro Toronto School Board and Toronto Board of Education, directors of the National Urban League, the Office of Educational Research in the United States, and the National Association of Black School Educators in the United States.

The geographic focus of the research was initially on the United States, and a great deal of information was obtained on American experiences, since the United States has played a lead role in educational change. Time was also invested in examining the experiences in Canadian provinces and major urban centres, particularly Toronto. On the advice of the Research Committee, the work was later expanded to Australia and Britain since these areas share some of the cultural, social and educational characteristics of the Canadian system. The information obtained from these sources was not as relevant as that acquired from Canadian and American sources, although the same themes were encompassed in the research materials. At the request of the Research Committee, we also searched for relevant material developed in Cuba and Grenada, but did not find any.

As part of the research, we looked at research reports on survey design and methods that are relevant to the Research Project. For example, a number of the American and British studies that were uncovered during the literature search include information on survey design and questionnaires that were useful in the design of the Survey of Black Households in Nova Scotia. During the research, the need to examine and assess different methods and approaches for calculating drop-out rates, academic streaming and other numerical information became apparent. The literature review found four different ways to calculate drop-out rates; each method requires different kinds of data and has different implications for assessing the extent of the drop-out problem. This information was helpful in the preliminary work in early 1993 on assessing ways to estimate drop-out rates in the Nova Scotia school system.

As noted in the previous sub-section, educational reform and related issues are receiving considerable attention. As the work of the BLAC moves forward, it is important that the staff of the BLAC keep informed of these activities as part of the learning and research processes. Although the information obtained through this study is both timely and pertinent, new material becomes available on almost a daily basis. If the issue of the educational needs of the Black learner is examined within the broader context of educational change, the need to *keep up* with the research becomes even more important.

The State of the Research in Other Jurisdictions

The bottom-up, community-based approach to educational change and to program developments designed to meet the needs of the Black learner creates a problem for researchers attempting to learn from "experiences elsewhere". First of all, the scarcity of funding for alternative programs typically means that available funds are aimed at solving problems, not reporting on the process used to solve the problems. Secondly, funds are not often committed to evaluating or measuring the results of the programs or projects. Finally, the research and evaluation skills required to accomplish these research tasks are seldom developed adequately in community-based programs.

Our findings concerning the availability of material on alternative education models mirrored those of education researchers in the United States. In testimony before the Congressional Subcommittee on Select Education, Dr. Norma J. Ewing noted that:

> *An institutionalized, national, systematic approach that supports authentic, practical, legitimate research, focused on minorities is warranted. A thorough ERIC search revealed an extremely limited amount of information available to those who either demand or desire a new kind of academic empowerment to engage in substantive change strategies that will have a positive impact instead of continuing to perpetuate myths and stereotypes that denigrate the African-American male ... A national clearinghouse, such as an Institute for the Education of At-Risk students is needed to focus national efforts and support as well as collect and disseminate information in an area that has the masses stymied or confused in terms of knowing what exists, where to go to access a repository of information, access strategies, models or innovative practices that exist.*[12]

Our review of the education literature from Canada, the United States and other countries reveals that there is a considerable amount of academic and conceptual research going on concerning alternative education models for marginalized groups. However, there is little information on practical models that have succeeded in improving academic achievement, graduation rates, and retention rates of Black learners over the long run.

We sometime heard about successful programs in other jurisdictions but follow-up often found that the results are not available or reported for reasons listed above. There is no repository or information depot for this information so that interested individuals and groups can obtain relevant material. In several cases, we identified programs in other jurisdictions only to find the programs have been cut due to funding cuts.

As Dr. Ewing notes:

> *There is a definite void in terms of information available to colleges, universities, schools, social service agencies, etc. regarding efforts and the impact of attempts to support or enhance the status of African-American males in schools and society. There is an absolute minimal amount of information circulating regarding models that have succeeded ... Those referenced in the literature are usually mentioned in a brief manner without substantive description.*[13]

We made considerable efforts to contact, by telephone, the key individuals who were involved in projects that appeared to be relevant to this Research Project. Our objective was to determine the results of the program and any other relevant information on program implementation. Many of the projects described in earlier drafts of this report no longer exist. Moreover, the majority of the project initiatives were community-based. For reasons cited above, there are little, if any, formal evaluation of program results.

In the words of one project director, "*it is all we can do to keep our programs running from month to month. We have neither the time nor the resources to formally evaluate our programs.*"[14] Discussions with officials from the Toronto Board of Education who have been dealing with the issue of minorities and the education system since the early 1980s parallel this finding from the United States. Although there have been a number of interesting policies and programs implemented in Toronto area schools, much of what has occurred and is presently in place has not been committed to paper. This was cited by officials as a major weakness since any results and related information are dispersed; there is no central data base to identify relevant projects or proposals.

In spite of these constraints, we have obtained considerable information on projects and programs. Several of these have a great deal of relevance to the needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia and are described in the following chapters.

2 Findings of the Research

Educational Themes and Visions

The process of identifying research in other jurisdictions revealed a number of approaches and projects designed to address educational issues. As the research progressed it became clear that the model projects were not as complete and comprehensive as we anticipated, resulting in less information. The most valuable information was not the models alone, but the themes that have guided these model programs, approaches and projects. In fact, there are several themes that consistently arise in the literature and in the various strategies advocated by groups and individuals, no matter where the location of the project. The lessons that we can draw from other jurisdictions focus on these themes that have guided alternative education practice.

The themes really are conclusions about the activities related to educational changes in other locations. An important conclusion of the research is that *there is no single model that now meets or will meet the needs of the Black learner; the most successful approach is a multi-faceted one that works with various elements of the system.* It is also worthwhile to note that while the following themes focus on the needs of the Black learner, a number of the themes are universal, applying to all students, no matter what their race or where they live. These same themes are often referenced in materials related to educational change or reform.

The following list presents the main themes and conclusions from the research. These are elaborated on with specific examples in the remainder of this chapter:

- the process of changing the educational system to meet the needs of the Black learner is largely a bottom-up process;
- the most successful approaches or models cooperatively involve the student, parents and teachers as well as the educational system itself;
- the educational system will not, and indeed can not, make any changes of its own accord, without the support, encouragement and push from parents, the community, and the students themselves;
- the main objective of alternative models or approaches is to lower or eliminate barriers that affect learning, and to motivate students to learn;
- successful programs clearly set out expectations or goals for students, provide a disciplined environment, and motivate students to achieve their goals; and,
- successful programs and models are responsive to diverse student needs, recognizing that each person learns in one's own way; every person has their own preferred learning style.

The following quotation summarizes these points and points to the need for change within the educational system:

> *The key to good education, almost totally overlooked by the putative reformers, is to be found by taking the viewpoint of the learner, and, more particularly, by focusing on the interaction between the learner and the learning environment. We can say that the effectiveness of any learning experience depends on the frequency, variety, quality and intensity of that interaction. Unless the interaction is improved, any and all proposals to improve education are moot. With this premise in mind, one can easily see why school is doomed.*[15]

The problems facing Black learners are complex and, in some instances, transcend the role of the education system. An analysis of the research documents reveals that the issue is multifaceted and the analysis multidisciplinary. The problems facing Black learners involve socio-economic and political issues that raise wider public policy questions. This fact was recently amplified by the release of the United Nations 1993 Human Development Report. The UN report is based on factors such as income, life expectancy, literacy and education and makes special mention of the development gaps in the United States. If the United States were divided into countries based on race, the White population would rank number one while the Black population would rank 31st alongside Trinidad and Tobago.[16]

There is a clear *cause and effect* relationship amongst the issues. The drop-out issue is a clear example. According to *A Lot to Learn*, the recent report by the Economic Council of Canada, "*dropping out, just like education itself, is a cumulative process.*" This process is influenced by factors such as role models, appropriate curriculum and learning materials, family and community support, teacher sensitivity, the need for anti-racist education; all issues that are important to this study.

The implication of the themes is that strategies, recommendations and any plan of action must ultimately be based on the needs and experiences of Black Nova Scotians. The experiences of those in other areas who have acted on similar problems facing their communities provides a useful framework for this process.

Anti-racist Education Approaches

Efforts during the 1970s and 1980s to promote and achieve racial equality in society and within the school system in many different jurisdictions including Canada, the United States, Australia, Great Britain and Europe have generally not produced the results expected by those most affected by racism. These include the Black community throughout the Western world, as well as Aboriginal peoples, and the various minorities and ethnic groups reported on virtually each day in the media.

Past efforts such as affirmative action programs and some multicultural programs have failed because these have often addressed racism at an attitudinal or visual level, without addressing the more fundamental structural causes of these problems – institutionalized racism or systemic discrimination. This form of racism lies at the very core of many of the social, economic and educational problems experienced by Black persons, and perpetuates an ongoing cycle of underachievement, inequity and a failure of persons to reach their potential.

As noted in Chapter 1, governments attempted to solve some of the socio-economic problems of the Black learner with programs that concentrated on increasing the representation of Blacks in government, in the media and even in textbooks. While the Black middle class in the United States has increased over the past 30 years to one third of the Black population,[17] other American statistics paint a grim picture:

- in 1988, 63.7 percent of Black children were born out of wedlock;
- 44 percent of Black children live below the poverty line;
- Blacks account for 45.3 percent of the inmates in state and federal prisons, while only 23.4 percent of 18-24 year old Blacks were enrolled in institutions of higher learning in 1988; and,

- 56 percent of all Black households were headed by women and 56 percent of these households had incomes below the poverty level.[18]

Systemic discrimination promotes negative racial stereotypes that sap the energies of the Black learner, undermine energies, retard risk-taking and lead many to see academic achievement and excellence as a *white thing* and failure as a *black thing*.[19] According to the African-American historian Carter G. Woodson:

> *When you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary.*[20]

During the last few years, an *anti-racist* approach to education has evolved that focuses on systemic discrimination or ways to address the underlying issues. The information obtained on projects that incorporate an anti-racist education approach have a stronger and more comprehensive recognition of the underlying issues, the problems and new ways to deal with these. These approaches and strategies address the educational needs of students from pre-school all the way to university.

Most attempts at educational change during the previous decades focused on educational content such as the new math; teaching methods including programmed instruction and open classrooms; or school processes and systems such as competency-based learning. Anti-racist education programs focus on the needs of the learner through the school environment, the curriculum and staff development programs, and the teaching and learning process itself.

Although there does not appear to be any standard definition of what constitutes anti-racist education, there is a strong emphasis on curriculum and on dealing with issues designed to improve the self-respect and dignity of the Black learner. The literature review indicated a number of common elements that underlie an anti-racist education approach. While many of the examples from the review, particularly from the United Kingdom and Australia, are based on multi-cultural education, there are important points that are relevant to this study. These include:

- the recognition of the importance of Black culture and history as factors shaping the learning experiences of Black students;
- the need for cultural role models for the Black learner; and,
- the need for teaching methods, learning materials and curricula that recognize the particular needs of the Black student.

These items, and others identified in this chapter, all point to the need for education to reflect the real and lived experiences of students.

A 1990 study in Australia noted the important link between education and the struggle of Aboriginal peoples in Australia in the 1870s, noting the importance of literacy and arguing "*that literacy enables individuals and groups to retain greater control of their lives and to respond more effectively when that control is threatened.*"[21]

A 1989 study examined racial bias in textbooks by reviewing the content of a geography text common to the school system of Australia and the United Kingdom, concluding that the "*problem of racism in textbooks is pervasive and in violation of United Nations standards for anti-racist education.*"[22]

The 1990 report published by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the United States[23] found that "*anti-racist education and conflict resolution address racism by allowing teachers and students to analyze the inequalities in power and economic status that determine race relations.*" The study provides the following recommendations for evaluating and reforming curricula and school policy:

- issue policy statements that cover broad school district philosophy, hiring practices, and the handling of bias-motivated incidents;
- maintain racial and cultural diversity among school personnel;
- provide services for victims of bias-motivated violence;
- report and monitor trends in racial attitudes;
- establish school-wide committees on human relations;
- use the arts to encourage critical thinking about social issues;
- check textbooks and other resources for bias;
- reflect the cultural diversity of the school in teaching strategies; and,
- affirm racial and cultural differences with regular and special activities.

Dr. Karen Mock[24] has completed a number of important studies in Ontario over the past decade on cultural biases in curriculum, teaching methods, materials, and educators' assessments. She has developed a list of anti-racist education strategies for teachers, similar to that prepared by Vernay Mitchell. Her 1988 report recommends that teachers:

- review child development materials;
- attempt to accommodate different learning styles and background experiences with a flexible format; and,
- incorporate concepts from the child's background in activities.

Her 1988 report includes a series of questions designed to help teachers formulate a base for understanding the learning needs of children from a variety of cultural backgrounds. These focus on:

- the child as an individual;
- the child as a member of a family;
- the child's perception of authority patterns;
- the child's familiarity with forms of self-expression;
- the extent to which differences in customs and cultural values are likely to affect the child; and,
- the potential of the child's community as a resource in the school and/or classroom.

The report includes a list of expectations describing characteristics that would be evident in a school in which the staff were aware of the practical implications of multicultural, anti-racist education. This report is included as a separate document as part of the materials provided to the BLAC.

Work completed in 1986 by Godfrey Brandt in the United States strengthens the work of Dr. Mock.[25] According to Mr. Brandt, a number of activities need to be undertaken by the educational system in order to develop an anti-racist approach to education. These include:

- the development of new educational materials, and an assessment of the appropriateness of the ones currently in use;
- alterations to curricula and examinations to help consolidate anti-racist change;

- the provision of in-service teacher training, along with the space and stimulation that it provides, in order to develop anti-racist teaching;
- an urgent need for research into classroom processes in relation to anti-racist aims and objectives; and,
- the need for more curriculum development projects that engage the community.

Dr. Karen Mock's 1990 report on Race and Ethnocultural Equity Policy in Ontario School Boards[26] provides an update on the earlier work of Houghton. Mock found that less than half of all Boards in Ontario had developed and implemented policies dealing with race and ethnocultural topics, although half of those without policies were at the draft stage of development.

In 1986, a research paper presented by Harry S. Houghton at the Annual Conference of the Ontario Educational Research Council described the findings of a 16 year longitudinal study dealing with cultural selection within the Ontario school system. The major research findings represent the result of an extensive survey of the literature related to the under-achievement of visible minorities in the school systems of Great Britain, the United States, and Canada. The study indicates that these groups have little input into the control of the curriculum process of Ontario schools. Other findings are:

- despite the initiatives taken by most boards of education and the Ontario Ministry of Education in the area of multicultural education, the concept of anti-racist education has not been attended;
- because of the failure of multicultural education to move society to the position of equity, the Ontario Ministry of Education is involved in preparing a provincial race relations (anti-racist) educational policy for all;
- policy making which would seek to eliminate any kind of racial, cultural, or sexual harassment in the schools has not been addressed;
- education authorities have not conceded the limitations of multicultural education in the matter of staff development;
- school-community relations are a one-sided flow from the school to the community, but not from the community to the school;
- leadership continues to be defined from an Euro-Canadian perspective;
- curriculum development and implementation are still matters which exclude visible minorities;
- teacher and teacher training programs are inadequate for the multi-racial classroom;
- guidance counselors have not been able to respond meaningfully to the visible minority student;
- most boards of education and even the Ministry of Education itself have no policies or programs to guide personnel in responding to racial incidents;
- cultural diversity and the implication for cognitive styles have not begun to receive the serious attention which a society preaching multiculturalism should display; and,
- the education system has legitimated minority exclusion from the labor market altogether in times of high unemployment.

A number of the problems identified by Houghton have not been resolved to any large degree, such as the development of a program of anti-racist education training and staff development; and curriculum development. Reasons given by the boards for the slow progress include:

- a lack of guidelines from the ministry;
- scare resources – money and personnel;
- all are treated equally, therefore there is no need for the policy;
- other policies and philosophies encompass this area; and,
- people do not need this because they are experiencing no problems in their area.

These responses are indicative of systemic discrimination; the view by the cultural majority that the system is working in the interests of the Black learner and other minorities. The results also strengthen the finding presented in the previous section that the school system will not change from within. It should be noted that the school boards with the largest Black learner population did have policies.

Mock makes additional recommendations to deal with the problems encountered in the research. Several of the ten recommendations in the report are particularly relevant to the Nova Scotia situation and the work of the BLAC:

- In order for the development and implementation of policies and implementation of policies and procedures for race and ethnocultural equity to become a priority among school boards, the (education) ministry should make such policies mandatory, including responsibilities and accountability.
- Information on existing policies and support documents should be made available in a format that is easily accessible to every board in the province.
- Local resource centres should be set up by the ministry in each region to provide a clearinghouse of information, specialized resource collections, and local speakers and resource persons for workshops, committees and task forces.
- Funds should be made available to conduct research on the efficacy of policy and procedures in effecting change in social attitudes and behaviour in children of various ages in schools, as well as research on employment practices in school boards.
- Since many school boards are looking to the Ministry of Education for leadership and guidance in this area, the basic tenets of race and ethnocultural equity should be practices by the ministry itself. That is, the ministry should conduct a review of internal policies practice and programs within its purview so as to develop and implement procedures to achieve race and ethnocultural equity. These would include:
- enhancing the curriculum of all ministry courses (especially those for supervisory officers and principals) to include adequate preparation in this area;
- developing employment policies and procedures to eliminate barriers to equality in employment within the ministry;
- providing in-service training to all ministry personnel to enhance their awareness, understanding, and skills in managing and valuing diversity;
- providing intensive training to all education officers with responsibilities for race relations, so that they can provide resources, leadership, and guidance in the regions;

- establishing criteria for evaluation and monitoring of policy development and implementation;
- funding research and providing incentives both in the ministry and in school boards to determine the effectiveness of policy development in effecting change in all areas addressed by the policies;
- including knowledge and experience in race and ethnocultural equity issues as requirements for teacher certification in the Province of Ontario.

An important, successful challenge to the practices of a school board recently concluded. In 1989, a group of parents and concerned citizens took the Rockford Board of Education in Rockford, Illinois to court on charges related to the discriminatory policies and practices of the Board. The judgments in November 1993 and March 1994 found in favour of the Black community of Rockford.

The issues raised by the Rockford parents, who incorporated a community group called *People Who Care*, included the intentional use of segregation and discriminatory practices against minority students through the use of ability grouping and tracking practices or academic streaming. The Court found that the Rockford School District used invalid testing procedures and made arcane assumptions which effectively locked minority students in lower track classes with *"little or no hope of moving upward."*[27]

The Court also found that attempts to set up alternative education programs, to meet the needs of minority students, were defeated by the intentional acts of the Board of Education.

The Court ruled that the Rockford School District:

> *...engaged (in) intentional and purposeful discrimination in regard to the operation of the District's purported desegregation programs, tracking system, Special Education Program, Bilingual Education Program, magnet school program and its various alternative educational programs. This intentional conduct resulted in systemwide segregation. The stigmatizing effect on the students is considered by this court to be a cruel act perpetuated by the Rockford School District on its students.*[28]

Discrimination by the School District continued in the areas of school closures and boundaries, the assignment of facilities, equipment, materials and supplies, and school closures undertaken as a result of a 1989 re-organization plan. The Court found that the School District had unlawfully failed to hire minority teachers and staff and failed to meet its own hiring goals and affirmative action obligations as well. The District had also failed to undertake any serious efforts in the areas of *"recruitment, hiring and promotion of minorities."*[29]

The findings of the Court in favour of the community on these comprehensive issues show that a strong community-based organization, coupled with a comprehensive analysis, can successfully challenge the discriminatory practices of educational systems.

Dropouts and Streaming

The high level of school dropouts, or early school leavers has become an issue of national importance in many Western countries in the past several years. In fact, the issue is almost on a second round; dropouts were an important issue in the 1960s and early 70s, but subsequently declined from the agenda for a number of reasons, such as the introduction of training programs, the growth in the labour force and the continuing need for unskilled labour.

A number of important changes in the labour market, government programs, and a growing realization of the impacts of dropping-out have increased awareness of the issue. At the North American level, these changes include the need for a more technologically literate work force, competition amongst immigrants for low-skilled jobs that would have traditionally employed dropouts, and the loss of good blue-collar manufacturing jobs to either technology or offshore manufacturing companies. Declines in federal funding support for education and training in both Canada and the United States have further increased the problems.

This big picture perspective overlooks the fact that drop-out levels have always been high in the Black community – rates of 50 percent or more have been quoted for areas in Canada, the United States and Britain. Some American state and national reports, including a study by the State of Florida,[30] indicate that one minority student drops out of school for every two who graduate. Minority students are three times as likely as White students to be physically disciplined in school and minority children are three times as likely as White children to end up in vocational education or lower level academic classes. Some of the factors that contribute to problems encountered by Black learners include:

- a lack of multicultural curricula, instructional materials and library books;
- a shortage of Black role models among the school system's teaching and administrative staff;
- over enrollment and streaming of Black learners into special education classes and lower level courses; and,
- the absence of a standard in teaching in multicultural and multi-racial environments and a shortage of teachers with training multicultural and multi-racial environments. A significant number of teachers receive their degrees from predominately White institutions and have limited training to teach in multi-ethnic/multi-racial schools.

The drop-out problem had never really been addressed until recently when members of the Black community began to deal with the fundamental issues of racism and systemic discrimination that are at the heart of the drop-out issue.

Several methods are commonly applied to the drop-out issue. One method deals with the educational system and works to eliminate the elements of systemic discrimination. Approaches include curriculum changes, teacher sensitivity and race relations training. Other methods focus on the learner; these are invariably more successful in decreasing dropouts.

These successful programs really are alternative models. The examples presented in the following section are all designed to address the drop-out issue, through improved self-esteem and personal development; parent involvement in education; cooperation between students, teachers and parents; and other factors described in this chapter.

Before examining several programs dealing with the drop-out issue, we should also note the issue of school *pushouts*. The 1989 study on school retention sponsored by the University of Nebraska noted that:

> *...the issue of school retention has two dimensions: children who fail to learn or dropouts; and schools that fail to teach, or pushouts. Although the two are related, the dropout is seen as more due to factors beyond the school's control or influence, while the pushout is linked to school policy, programs or procedures, and the general school environment.*[31]

According to this definition, pushouts really are a result of systemic discrimination; the failure of the educational system to understand and meet the needs of its minority students. According to the definition, most minority students in Canada, the United States and Britain are pushed out of the school system through a long process that begins at the outset of their education. Studies have repeatedly found that key contributors to early school leaving, pushouts in fact, by Black students are feelings of isolation, disconnectedness and rejection.

These problems stem from a failure of the system to develop policies and undertake measures to support the Black learner. Students experience these feelings because the system does not identify, let alone celebrate, the positive achievements of other Black people; it does not train teachers to educate the Black learner and other visible minorities; it does not reflect the Black student in learning materials.

The Nebraska report cites the major recommendations from the 1987 report by the Omaha Public Schools Superintendent's Task Force on Student Dropouts. In addition to recommending the development or continuation of a variety of program initiatives similar to those stated in the following section, the task force concluded it:

> *...believes the most important factor in preventing students from dropping out is a community of caring adults.*[32]

A 1991 study of 12 schools in New South Wales, Australia sought to identify factors affecting the motivation of non-traditional Aboriginal students in school settings. The importance of *parental and school support*, as well as factors such as confidence and self-reliance were noted as important elements in successfully motivating urban Aboriginal children.[33]

The literature we reviewed noted that while dropping-out affects all students, regardless of race, the consequences are particularly damaging for Black students. Moreover, while a number of the factors that cause students to drop out of school cross racial boundaries, Black students face a distinct set of additional problems within the educational system that tends to increase their risk of dropping out. These problems, again resulting from systemic discrimination, including stereotyping, under representation within the system; in texts and other learning materials, in the identification of role models, in the number of Black teachers.

For the uneducated Black person, the consequences of no education are unemployment, poverty and, in the larger urban centres in North America, a host of social problems.

Data on drop-out rates are both complex and conflicting. At the national level in the United States, the drop-out rate for all students increased between 1968 and 1989, based on Census results. According to recent data, the American high-school drop-out rate is at least 14 percent, compared with 9 percent in Germany and 6 percent in Japan; some estimates place Canada's rate as high as 30 percent.

However, 1988 data for the entire United States indicates that overall drop-out rates, particularly for Black students, have declined in the last decade; differences in drop-out rates of Blacks and Whites have decreased significantly; drop-out rates for White and Black studnets are similar when individual and family background are taken into account; and drop-out rates are higher in the South and Western United States.

A recent study of Pennsylvania public schools between 1986 and 1989 found that more than 40 percent of Black students in grade 9 in 1986-87 were not seniors when their classmates reached grade 12 in 1989-90. The comparable attrition rate for White students in grade 9 was 13 percent.

Poor Black young people in rural Mississippi contemplate their schooling with the same feelings as their friends who dare to jump the local ditches filled with alligators: the odds are against escaping the alligators, and the advantages of getting to the far side are not very apparent. Living in conditions of extreme poverty, these young people have few expectations for change in the future, and the school system reinforces their views. In Mississippi the high school drop-out rate exceeds 50 percent in one of every four districts and exceeds 75 percent in some districts. Students who get through to the end must pass a competency test to get a diploma. Only 20 percent of Black graduates took the college preparatory curriculum; the rest find little opportunity for employment in small towns.

In Canada, evidence suggests that drop-out rates are increasing, with as many as 30 percent of Canadian students not finishing high school. Methods to calculate drop-out rates vary a great deal, leading to inconsistencies in interpretation. Regardless of the differences in the rates, all sources and rates indicate that the drop-out rate for the Black student exceeds that of White students, as well as that of many ethnic minorities. The rate for young Black males is the highest of all rates.

The recent report by the Economic Council of Canada notes the changes in dropping out over the past forty years:

> *The process and nature of dropping out have changed over the past three or four decades. Until 1955, most students who dropped out did so when they reached the age when schooling was no longer compulsory. This has changed in that most students today attempt to continue beyond the legal school-leaving age, but some soon find they do not have the ability or motivation to keep up with their peers in the accumulation of credits needed for a secondary-school diploma. They may miss a credit or two in the first year of senior high school, then another in the next year, and they give up completely in the third. But well before they drop out de facto, they have dropped out psychologically. Dropping out is, just like education itself, a cumulative process.*[34]

These findings, and the result that dropping out is a process, have important implications for this study. Since dropping out is a process, there are a number of activities that can influence this process, at a number of stages along the way, from early education through to university. Some of the activities and strategies successfully used in other communities are described in the following pages.

A key point in all of the strategies is the recognition of the need for communication and collaboration between the student, parents, and the school system – teachers, administrators and policy-makers. Another common theme in virtually all of the literature reviewed is that any strategy must ultimately influence, in a positive way, the motivation, self-esteem or self-concept, and responsibility of students.

Some of the programs and strategies found in the research are included in the following listing. These strategies are designed to address the issues of racism and systemic discrimination; in most cases the projects reported have been initiated by the Black community, rather than by the educational system.

We have obtained copies of most of the material referenced in the list; these have been provided to the BLAC. Many of the reports cited in the literature were not available when we attempted to track these down; these are noted by double bullets (••) in the list. In studies that we did receive and follow-up, we found that the results of the project have often not been determined in any formal way.

- The use of all-male Black classes may be one way to prevent this group of students from dropping out of school. While this may have some practical limitations in Nova Scotia, there may be lessons to be learned from the results of experimental classes in a Newark, New Jersey private elementary school.
- The setting up of cultural centres within schools and at universities in some American institutions has been shown to improve Black students' lives by enhancing ethnic pride and closing the gap between cultures. This is the approach used in several of the alternative models described in the following section.
- A 1988 study titled *Black School Pushouts and Dropouts: Strategies for Reduction* lists a number of successful strategies for preventing Black students from leaving school before graduation. The report argues that the best solution to this complex problem is to ensure that Black children learn the necessary academic and cognitive skills in school before proceeding to the next grade level.
- •• The 1991 masters thesis by O. Ajamu Jumal examined the junior and senior high school system in San Bernardino, California in order to compare the results of that school system with findings in the literature and to be able to recommend ways to improve the school's performance. His thesis, *The Vanishing African-American Male Student in Middle and High School College Preparatory Classrooms: Present Condition – Probable Causes – Intervention Strategies* found results that have some relevance to this Research Project. The analysis of the school district's statistical data indicates that the academic progress of the African-American male student is closest to other groups at the first grade level. As grade levels increase, the African-American male's academic progress begins to separate from other groups. This trend may begin in first grade with students grouped for reading according to ability; a process called *streaming.* The data in this project indicate a pattern of multi-generational school failure with parents, who performed poorly while they were in school, now influencing the next generation of students.

- *The Scholarship Builder Program*, an adopt-a-class program for *at risk* students, started in the United States in the late 1980s. The aim of the program is to encourage selected students to complete high school; upon graduation they are awarded scholarships to attend university or a one-time stipend if they become employed full-time following graduation. Funds are provided by the private sector. In Atlanta, 25 students were selected, including 3 White males, 10 African-American males, and 12 African-American females. A social worker from the Atlanta Public Schools and a social worker from the Atlanta Urban League were assigned to work with these students, their families, and the teaching staff. At the end of the two program years, four students originally deemed at-risk academically remained in the at-risk group, while three were no longer in this category, and one had moved into this category.

- The 1991 US study *Meeting the Goals of School Completion*, sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, examined a number of programs aimed at preventing school dropouts. According to this study, student engagement with school has emerged as the single most important factor in dropout prevention and school completion. The following categories of dropout prevention program characteristics were found to be essential to promoting student engagement:
  - relevance of school to the experiences of the student;
  - the academic success of the student;
  - students' positive experience of the school environment – how does the school system treat the student; and,
  - school accommodation to outside factors – does the school system understand and deal with external social, economic and health related issues, such as family situations.

  In addition, it was found that a successful drop-out prevention program must include clear school completion goals, which must be regularly monitored, and district and school accountability. Long-term improvements in school completion rates require both school improvement and improvements in larger social problems, such as health care, housing, unemployment, and job discrimination.

- In 1990, the United States Hearing on the Office of Educational Research and Improvement examined programs across the United States dealing with the situation of Black males in the country's educational system. The subsequent report focuses on ways in which educational research and reform can address the problems of equal education, high drop-out rates, poor student attitudes, low academic achievement, and the need for educational improvement for minority children generally.

- A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication dealt with *Classroom Techniques for Improving Black Male Student Retention*. According to the report, "*by developing and implementing a plan, any teacher can foster retention of at-risk students, even in the absence of institutional support*". Twenty effective techniques for supporting post-secondary students are included. While some of these techniques may not apply to younger students or to the Nova Scotia situation, some of the following skills appear to be helpful:
  - learn students' names;
  - use peer tutors and counselors;
  - use collaborative learning frequently;
  - use five minute *get acquainted* sessions;
  - encourage club and campus activity joining;
  - vary instructional mode;
  - make very short-term assignments;

- set very short-term goals;
- include everyone in classroom discussion;
- make a scrapbook about successful role models;
- be fair, firm, demanding, consistent, and predictable;
- teach a memory skill; and,
- be up beat and cheerful.

The basic needs of at-risk students are essentially the same as those of any student – the only difference is that these students need more of the above than the others. "*Serving at-risk students well will mean serving all students well.*"

- We have obtained a copy of the 1990 *Special Report on Mentoring* from Project plus (Project Literacy us)and the National Urban League, Inc. The report describes mentoring programs that have been successful in improving the academic achievement of at-risk African-American youth. The report identifies seven basic elements in a successful mentoring program:
  - Mentors and mentees are matched by needs and resources.
  - Mentors are committed to providing consistency, caring, and concrete help for at least one year.
  - The goal is to help mentees develop self-confidence and independence.
  - Both mentors and mentees benefit and learn.
  - There is a support system in place for mentors and mentees.
  - The parents of the mentees are involved and supported in their role.
  - The program is evaluated to determine its impact over time.
- Other examples of mentoring programs reported in the study include:
  - *Mentors Play Role in League's Education Push*, J. E. Jacob describes the key role of mentors in the Urban League's Education Initiative.
  - *Mentoring: Effective for Youth*, L. Sullivan discusses the importance of adult role models in helping disadvantaged young African-American adolescents make important educational and career choices.
  - *Rhode Island Program Targets At-Risk Students* uses a case study to describe the mentor-mentee relationships developed in a Providence, Rhode Island program.
  - *Role Models Important for African-American Youth*, L. Edmonson discusses the need for role models to help African-American youth develop positive expectations.
  - *Church-Based Group Helps Young Males* describes a health promotion program for African-American boys in the District of Columbia.
  - *Florida Group Encourages African-American Excellence* describes a program that uses parents as mentors to foster high achievement.
  - *Aim High*, G. E. Curry emphasizes that mentors must have high expectations of their mentees.
  - *Mentoring Has Group Focus in Michigan Program* describes a Flint, Michigan program that uses a group approach and peer counselling.
  - *PBS Mentoring Documentary Now Available* describes an hour-long videotape about mentoring.
  - *From Doubt to Friendship*, M. B. Maxwell describes the mentor-mentee relationship from the student's perspective.

- A mentoring program for Black male high school students was the subject of a study by Michael Laughrey in Florida in 1990, titled *The Design and Implementation of a Mentor Program To Improve the Academic Achievement of Black Male High School Students.* The report describes the design and implementation of a mentoring program to improve the academic achievement of Black male urban high school students. Most of the program was funded from the regular school budget, with supplementary funds provided by the Parent Teachers Association. The program utilizes Black adult mentors from both the community and the school's faculty. Mentors function as role models, advisers, and resource persons. The program design includes the following components:
  - a school-based committee responsible for identifying student participants and for program implementation;
  - training for mentors;
  - periodic progress reports prepared by mentors;
  - after-school tutoring;
  - small group counselling;
  - career planning; and,
  - program evaluation based on improvement in student test scores.

- In 1987, the National Education Association in the United States released the results of a study titled *Black Concerns.* The study was based upon site visits to schools and testimony from representatives of community and civil rights organizations, the business community, Black parents, sororities and fraternities, Black educators, and educators of Black children. The following challenges are cited:
  - high drop-out and teenage pregnancy rates;
  - financially poor and segregated schools;
  - lack of early intervention programs;
  - limited support systems and positive role models for Blacks in general and Black males in particular;
  - shortage of college scholarships;
  - shortage of Black teachers;
  - inappropriate testing;
  - racial discrimination; and,
  - poverty.

  The study provides recommendations in seven areas:
  - students;
  - curriculum and teaching;
  - teacher/school personnel;
  - parents/family/community;
  - employment;
  - collaboration/coalition building;
  - legislation/policy; and,
  - leadership training.

- The 1989 report by Elsa Nunez-Wormack titled *The National Agenda for Higher Education into the 21st Century* stresses the need for educators to improve minority student retention and preparation for post-secondary education. The following strategies are recommended:
  - improve high school student retention by increasing the quantity and quality of time that students must spend in an enriched, supervised environment supplemented by college student interns;
  - improve the preparation of high school graduates by creating school-college collaboratives specifically designed to increase minority student achievement on standardized tests and to encourage them to elect and persist in academic programs;
  - increase the number of minority students in the top ten percent of their high school class by developing special academic and financial incentives;
  - improve retention of minority college students by hiring minority faculty, monitoring the attitudes of White faculty, and developing a system of financial rewards and punishments for colleges based on their minority graduation rates; and,
  - encourage social tolerance of cultural diversity by developing a comprehensive long-range strategic plan on each college campus to ensure a diverse and tolerant environment.

- Finally, a special program in Florida should be noted. The research abstract indicates that public schools in a county in Florida have developed a *Mayo Clinic* approach to education that treats students as individuals with unique circumstances. The research paper, *Closing the Education Gap: A Mayo Clinic Approach to Academic Achievement* by Herb Sang, summarizes successful features of the program and evaluates its progress.

  The schools in the program eliminated social promotion factors by implementing a plan requiring students to master specific competencies before progressing to the next grade level. To address the gap between Black and White students' Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, the Stimulating Aptitude Skills project was developed. Students electing to participate in the test preparation program were evaluated to determine particular deficiency areas, and an instructional program was developed based on the diagnosis. Black students taking the course scored significantly higher on the SAT.

  The program was found to be useful in identifying and assisting potential dropouts and retrieving school leavers. The biggest project to emerge from the gap study is Project BASE (Blacks for Academic Success in Education), which involves parents, churches, and businesses in helping students adopt beneficial lifestyle changes. According to the report, the program has succeeded in changing teachers' attitudes, expectations, and instructional approaches. Black students' achievement gains continue to be remarkable, and more are joining Project BASE each year.

Before leaving this section, the 1987 report by George Radwanski for the Ontario government should be noted.[35] The emphasis of the study was on how well the Ontario school system was responding to the needs of its students, both in terms of curriculum and teaching approaches. The study makes 22 major policy observations as well as 35 recommendations for action. These are designed to change the whole approach to public school education in Ontario. Observations and recommendations that are relevant to this Research Project include:

Summary Of Policy Observations

- Education should be child-centered, in the sense of recognizing that the development of each individual child – each with his or her own predispositions, strengths and weaknesses, interests and learning styles – is the whole object of the exercise.

  But it should at the same time be content-oriented, in the sense of recognizing that the whole object of the exercise is to develop each individual child by bringing him or her into possession of the specific knowledge and skills that every young adult coming into our society should have. (#6)

- There can be no effective pursuit of excellence in educational outcomes without meaningful accountability, and there can be no meaningful accountability without measurable standards of accomplishment. (#11)

- It is a finding of this study that the high school drop-out rate in Ontario, as precisely as it can be usefully identified, is between 31 and 33 percent. (#12)

- While various specifically targeted initiatives may be useful at the margins, it appears highly unlikely that a major reduction in the drop-out rate can be accomplished by drop-out prevention programs carried out in isolation from the rest of what is happening in our system of education. What must be addressed, rather, are those structural and attitudinal characteristics of the education system itself that can cause great numbers of young people to feel alienated, bored, rejected or unable to cope academically. (#13)

- The importance of school-related factors in the decision to dropout means that our current drop-out rate does not exist simply because a certain proportion of students come from socio-economically disadvantaged homes, live with a single parent, are slow learners or have difficulty with English and Mathematics. It exists because of what happens when those students come into contact with the high schools as they currently function. (#16)

- Whether it takes visible forms or is more internalized, a sense of alienation appears to be the key factor in school-related decisions to dropout. Students are turned off by a sense that nobody cares, by the impersonal and bureaucratic structures of today's large high schools, by the lack of a clear sense of purpose or intended outcomes in their programs of study, by the inconsistencies of a system that treats them as adults in some respects and children in others, by rules and disciplinary measures that they perceive as arbitrary or unfair, and by the perception that they are scorned or rejected rather than helped if they encounter serious learning problems. (#17)

- As an absolute minimum, any serious attempt to reduce the alienation that is a major cause of dropping out must begin by providing every student with an assured and regular relationship with at least one caring adult within the school system. (#19)

Summary of Recommendations

- That the emphasis of the educational philosophy in Ontario be shifted from process to outcomes, and that the objectives of education be defined in terms of the acquisition of specified demonstrable knowledge and skills by all children, through the application of pedagogical techniques appropriate to each child's needs. (#1)
- That it be made an explicit and vigorously pursued goal of education policy in Ontario to have all students, except those precluded by severe mental or physical disability, continue in high school until graduation. (#4)
- That all high schools in Ontario be required to assign every student to a teacher who will be responsible for monitoring that student's progress in all courses, for promptly identifying any signs of academic or personal difficulties, and for initiating interventions as appropriate to assist the student with any such difficulties. (#9)
- That all high schools be required to provide regular weekly individual mentoring sessions with teachers at the very least for students whose background or academic characteristics indicate a risk of dropping out, and that mentoring also be provided to other students to the maximum extent possible by recourse as necessary to qualified mentors from the community at large. (#10)
- That all high schools be required to provide high-quality remediation and tutoring services for students who are experiencing academic difficulties. (#11)
- That every school board be required to provide infant-care and child-care facilities for students in at least one of its high schools or – in areas where the need is insufficient to justify in-school facilities – to provide students with fully subsidized and accessible infant-care or child-care arrangements outside the school. (#13)
- that policies and practices in Ontario's elementary schools be founded on the premise that all children, except those with specific and insuperable mental or physical handicaps, can be brought to a common necessary level of knowledge and skills through the application of appropriate pedagogical techniques. (#18)
- That the practice of homogenous ability grouping for instruction in any subject be discontinued by all schools in Ontario and , if necessary to achieve this result, that it be expressly prohibited by the Ministry of Education. (#19)
- That the current policy of streaming high school students into academic, general and basic courses of study be abolished, and replaced by provision of a single undifferentiated high-quality educational stream for all students. (#27)

The recommendations in the report have taken some time to be studied and addressed by the Ontario government. During the summer of 1993, however, some major recommendations with respect to streaming and curriculum were acted upon. The Ontario provincial government has essentially eliminated streaming as a practice.

Researchers in the United States who have studied school organization, instruction and the streaming of students have concluded that:

- The grouping of students by ability is the most common approach used by schools in the United States to organize reading instruction in the elementary grades. This tracking/streaming results in a greater disparity of achievement levels between Black and White students after the third grade as the performance gap between students in high groups and those in lower groups widens the longer they remain separated.
- Students streamed into lower groups leave elementary school without the necessary skills or knowledge to take more challenging courses, such as upper level math and science, which tend to contribute to success in high school and entry into post-secondary studies.
- The effects of streaming and ability grouping for higher achieving students are inconclusive and can not be justified considering the harm that this process inflicts on students left in lower achieving groups.
- The practice of streaming erodes the confidence and self-esteem of those students in the lower groups.

Much of the educational research in the United States has identified the negative impacts of streaming that result from current evaluation and report card practices that tend to punish students who are performing poorly without recognizing their growth and progress. A major issue often discussed in the literature concerning the impact of streaming centres around the *attitudes* and *self-esteem* of the learner. *Streaming students into lower groups stigmatizes them which ultimately leads to a loss of interest in studying and learning which further erodes their achievement.*

Studies have indicated that teachers stress high levels of conceptual learning with so-called high ability students. However, the quality of teaching and learning experiences offered to students who are labeled slow or streamed into less challenging courses is not comparable to that offered to higher level students. This suggests that the expectations of the teacher have a considerable bearing on the performance of students. In many instances, teachers have limited expectations for Black learners who, as a result, tend to be streamed into lower achieving groups in the school system. Students assigned to these groups tend to expect less of themselves and respond accordingly. Evidence indicates that when a teacher expects much of a student, the students produces much; but when a teacher expects little of a student, the student produces little.[36]

Teacher and staff development is seen as one important means of providing teachers with a broader range of effective instructional strategies and infusing the curriculum with the experiences, perspectives and contributions of other cultural and ethnic groups. Training should focus on the many ways in which the self-concept of students, especially minority students, may be damaged by unintentional insensitivity of the educational establishment.

Training programs that offer teachers new strategies and programs to help those students in the lower level courses, who often end up being at risk of dropping out, help in developing a more positive attitude and better self-esteem among students. At-risk students need to view teachers as partners who have mutual respect for each other. This means that educators should have high expectations for all students which will raise self-esteem. Emphasis must be placed on the importance of positive attitudes and high expectations on student achievement.

Alternative Models

Alternative schools and school programs provide the opportunity for a community to meet the cultural and educational needs of their children that are not being provided in the formal school system. The programs are designed to deal with specific problems or issues being experienced by students within the school system, because of this failure of the formal system. These include, for example, factors that lead to students dropping out from school or from achieving their full academic and human potential. Another factor is that because of systemic discrimination as well as administrative complexities, the formal system is often unable or unwilling to respond to the particular learning styles of Black learners and students with varying socio-economic backgrounds and experiences.

The material presented in the previous sections has identified the issues that result in the development of alternative models. The sections also cover a number of the strategies and approaches employed by alternative schools. This section provides additional details on alternative school models that have been uncovered to date. Much of the work focuses on the American experience; the literature review indicated similar themes and approaches in several other Canadian, Australian and British experiences.

The successful alternative programs that emerged over the research all stress the themes described at the beginning of the chapter. The projects all include a community-base and parental involvement, for example.

The Yale-New Haven Primary Prevention Project

Dr. James Comer is a Black psychiatrist with a strong, successful and continuing interest in early school experiences of children. He developed a long term program in 1968 to deal with a number of problems experienced by two inner city schools in New Haven Connecticut. These were the Martin Luther King Jr. School (kindergarten to grade four elementary grade) and the Simian Baldwin School.

The results of the program are described by Dr. Comer in a 1985 study.[37] The schools were experiencing a 25 percent drop-out rate, little trust between staff and parents, and severe behavioral and discipline problems. As a result of the program, by 1980 the two schools exceeded the national average for academic achievement, and experienced a marked decline in truancy and disciplinary problems. That success has since been duplicated at more than 50 schools around the country.

Although an educational model, the program is primarily based on psychiatric principles of wellness and the link between home and school environments. The basis for the program is the theory that the contrast between a child's experiences at home and in school deeply affect their psycho-social development and that this in turn shapes academic achievement. In the New Haven model, parents are involved at all levels of school life, through general support of educational programs, participation in daily activities, and school planning and management.

Dr. Comer's work was described as a case study by Lisbeth Schorr in her work *Within Our Reach.* She notes that "*schools that take deliberate action to recognize the critical role of the family as educator, and to establish a climate that promotes learning, reap ample...benefits.*"[38] Elements of Dr. Comer's program include:

- individualized instruction;
- strong parental involvement;
- small class sizes;
- tutoring programs;
- personalized teaching; and,
- special teachers and teaching aids.

Dr. Comer continues to be very active in the area of school-parent-child relationships and the roles of each in educating the student. There may be some scope for inviting Dr. Comer to Nova Scotia at some stage to share his insights and experiences.

SETCLAE: Self Esteem Through Culture Leads to Academic Excellence

Another noteworthy alternative model is the SETCLAE program developed in the late 1980s by Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu in Chicago. We obtained program materials as well as a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the program in Centennial School, Roosevelt, New York from 1989-92. The SETCLAE program is part of the basis of the ACEP Saturday School Project, a program being developed by the Halifax-based African Canadian Education Project.

The following material is excerpted from the Overview of SETCLAE provided by Dr. Kunjufu's organization, African American Images.

> *SETCLAE is a model curriculum that provides a mechanism with which educators, youth workers, and parents can teach children the positive aspects of their cultural heritage while simultaneously increasing self-esteem and academic performance.*
>
> *The three major components of SETCLAE are: Self-Esteem, Culture, and Academic Excellence. African American Images believes there is a relationship between these factors. We believe a major reason for the underachievement of most children and specifically African-American children is the lack of strong self-esteem. Further, we posit that knowledge of culture enhances self-esteem and this can be taught in the classroom.*
>
> *We must begin to realize that schools can't be separated from the larger society. Macro conditions affect our students in many ways. One-third of the Black and Hispanic community live below the poverty line. Seventy percent of African-American children are born out of wedlock and live in a single parent home. In most large urban areas the drop-out rate for people of colour hovers near 50 percent. One-tenth of all students will become pregnant before their sixteenth birthday. It is predicted that one- third of this age group will be regular users of alcohol and other drugs. SETCLAE provides a holistic approach to address these issues through prevention in the classroom within the existing curriculum.*

The evaluation examined the achievements of students in grade 4 in Centennial School in Roosevelt, New York as they progressed from grade 4 to grade 6. For each of the three years, the students met every Wednesday for one and a half hours to share a special time called *Harambee time*; 30 minutes was spent in SETCLAE and one hour learning specific math skills.

The results over the three year period indicate specific positive measurable achievements, both in Math scores as well as qualitative areas such as self confidence. For example, 92 percent of the grade 6 students scored above the identified state reference point for mathematics.

By 1992, students in grade 6 were noticeably "*more confident, more opinionated, and more self-assured than previous six graders as a whole. They appeared to really accept and take ownership of their culture.*"[39]

Project GOLD: Garfield Options for Leadership Development

This project, by Catherine Howard of the Virginia Commonwealth University, is an after-school and summer program designed to serve African-American, middle school-aged youth in Richmond, Virginia. The youths are residents of public housing, are primarily from female-headed households, and are typically at least one school year behind their age mates. Program components include: a 6-week summer program held at Virginia Commonwealth University, an after-school enrichment program, and a parent education and support program. The program is a collaborative effort between the University, the Garfield Childs Memorial Fund Tutorial Program, and private, community, and state agencies. While the program centres on youth, it also has an important focus on the parents. The program is based on the conceptual framework of the *Athletes Coaching Teens* program, which uses a life span developmental model, emphasizes prevention of problem behaviors, and focuses on teaching new skills for living.

CLEAR Alternative: Creative Learning Environment for Academic Redirection

Possibilities for a NABSE[40] Demonstration School Project: The Creative Learning Environment for Academic Redirection (CLEAR) Alternative program was set up in 1987 in Ohio. Its objective was to educate adolescents who have the ability to learn but are dysfunctional in school. The program serves students in grades 9-12 whose behaviors conform to the profile of students most likely to drop out of school. Most of the students who have participated in this school-within-a-school program are Black. They have shown improvements in attendance, attitudes, and achievement.

The research abstract indicated that other program goals of CLEAR could be accomplished if the program enters into a partnership with the Demonstration School Project (DSP) of the National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE). The report indicated that elements of the DSP which can be of benefit to the CLEAR Alternative program are the following:

- building school leadership;
- developing a sense of mission;
- establishing maximum expectations for students and staff;
- developing academic and cultural excellence;
- defining clear and specific curricula;
- frequently monitoring student progress;
- building a positive school climate;
- involving parents and the community; and,
- promoting civic responsibility and participation by students and all school personnel.

Follow-up work for the project indicated that funding was not received.

The Work Group on Parental Involvement, Toronto Board of Education

We obtained a draft report copy from the BLAC office of this report, prepared by the Toronto Board of Education in March 1991. We followed up with phone calls to officials in Toronto.

The working group was established in response to research that clearly indicated "*the irreplaceable value of parental involvement in increasing children's achievement*". The Work Group was mandated to develop goals, a plan and a monitoring mechanism for improving parental involvement both at the school and at the system levels, and for facilitating partnerships of parents and staff to support students.

Three reference groups were set up to consider the following topics:

- Parental involvement in other school boards, with a focus on large cities in Canada and elsewhere;
- How to reach and involve parents who do not usually participate in home/school activities, with some emphasis on secondary schools; and,
- To identify the system's human resources which have a particular mandate or responsibility or have proved to be effective in working with parents and supporting community participation in all levels of the system.

Nova Scotia Examples

A number of studies related to the Research Project have been completed in Nova Scotia during the past 15 years. A partial listing of these research reports and papers reviewed to date is provided in the bibliography.

We obtained copies of the materials from the BLAC office, and directly from the authors of the research. We did not undertake a detailed assessment of the results as part of this report, nor are the results reported here.

One general observation from our work with the Nova Scotia research is that the Nova Scotia work is issue-specific. Each study focuses on an issue that is part of the mandate and/or of special importance or concern to particular groups or individuals. These include Black organizations, university researchers, teachers and those within the educational system, and evaluators of government programs. Amongst these groups are the Black Educators Association, the Black United Front, Dalhousie University, and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents.

There has not been any centralized issue identification for the studies; there is no big picture. Until the formulation of the BLAC, no organization has had a mandate to research and pull together comprehensive information on issues affecting the Black learner in Nova Scotia. This situation underlies the importance of the BLAC mandate.

The following chapter describes the role of the BLAC as the implementor of strategies and projects designed to meet the needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia.

Summary of Relevant Activities Elsewhere

The literature review identified a considerable amount of in-place community development and research activity, along with strategies and methods relevant to the issues of this Research Project. Much of the activity has occurred during the past five years. While most of the research has produced examples from the American experience, there are activities occuring in other parts of Canada, Australia and Britain.

The research materials share a number of common themes, no matter when or where the activity has taken place. Some of the key points to emerge include:

- the active involvement of parents and the community in the education of the Black learner are absolutely essential to effectively changing the education system to meet the needs of the Black learner;
- the curriculum, and the school system in general, need to incorporate methods and material that reflect the culture, learning experiences and learning needs of the Black learner;
- anti-racist education and teaching are important and essential tools for bringing about change in the classroom; policies and strategies for introducing and maintaining an anti-racist approach are key elements for change; and,
- teacher and teacher training programs, including in-service training and training for guidance counsellors, are essential if the needs of the Black learner are to be met.

3 Conclusions for the BLAC in Nova Scotia

This report presents some of the most promising materials obtained from research on activities in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. In reviewing the research material, we were careful to evaluate its usefulness and applicability to the issues and problems in Nova Scotia. Experience has shown time and again that *imported* solutions without local input never work. However, the information on how others have dealt with their problems raised several points that could be very important within the Nova Scotia context.

One clear message from the research is that the educational system will not change from within, and indeed is not capable of changing without the support of external forces. This explains the critical importance of a *bottom-up* approach to dealing with a variety of issues and problems affecting the needs of the Black learner. By this we mean the active and direct involvement of those most concerned with the education of the Black learner: the parents, the community, teachers and the students. Programs that do not involve these groups will not be effective in resolving issues.

In some cases, communities had to resort to legal means before the education system agreed to redress inequalities in education. The Rockford case is a clear demonstration of that process.

The community development focus of most alternative approaches and models projects, combined with an action-oriented approach, means that most projects do not attempt to measure or quantify their results. Efforts are spent making the projects work in a practical sense, rather than on producing reports. While the research did not find models directly applicable to Nova Scotia, many of the themes and approaches are very useful for planning in this province. There are no single solutions, but there are elements of a solution that are applicable here.

The study found that developments and program activity similar to those in other locations paralleled those already underway in Nova Scotia. These activities have been started by many groups concerned with the needs of Black students in the province including the Black Educators Association (BEA), the Black United Front (BUF), the Cultural Awareness Youth Group (CAYG), the African Canadian Education Project (ACEP), and the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC). A number of new activities are also planned or underway including the Saturday School Project and the Math Camp at Dalhousie University, developed with the support of the BEA. Both are good examples of programs aimed at the young Black learner.

The Nova Scotia efforts share the grassroots characteristics of successful models elsewhere – cooperation and commitment by parents and educators. While most of the activity is concentrated in the Halifax-Dartmouth area, efforts by the Regional Educators are designed to increase the level of community-based and initiated activity throughout the province. It is important that the skills and resources continue to be provided through the Regional Educators and others such as the BEA to encourage and support local educational development groups and initiatives.

We said at the outset that the BLAC should not try to re-invent the wheel; however, the findings of the research suggest that each community must assemble the parts of the wheel that are appropriate to its own needs. The framework can be developed through the research materials and associated themes presented here.

The BLAC is at the leading edge both nationally and internationally in working to meet the needs of the Black learner. Efforts in working with the communities combine many different methods to address the issues of racism and systemic discrimination. It is important that the results of this work, and the process itself, are documented, monitored and evaluated so that the stakeholders of the BLAC will be able to determine if they have received value for money. These stakeholders include government as well as the Black community in Nova Scotia. It is also important to help those in other jurisdictions learn from the BLAC experiences. The frustration arising from the lack of measurable results from the many activities in other jurisdictions cannot and should not be allowed to happen in Nova Scotia.

We recommend that the BLAC continue to undertake the following types of research activities in order to ensure that the results of the Research Project form the basis for on-going change:

- Continue to document the research process and its results in order to inform (and educate) the stakeholders of the BLAC;
- Work to establish and measure the results of the BLAC projects and activities within the Black community; and,
- Continue to establish linkages and networks with groups and agencies outside Nova Scotia that are active in working to meet the needs of the Black learner. This activity means follow-ups with groups such as the Florida Endowment Fund project, as well as attending workshops and conferences throughout North America.

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Volume 3

Participatory Action Research

Results of A Socio-Demographic Survey
of the Nova Scotia Black Community

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Section 1

Participatory Action Research

The Educational Experiences and Realities of Black Learners in Nova Scotia

Introduction

During the summer of 1992, the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC hereafter), initiated a community participatory research process intended to identify the issues, concerns and desires of members of the Black community with regard to the education system in Nova Scotia – past, present and future. The BLAC wanted to document the personal experiences and perceptions of members of the Black community in Nova Scotia regarding learning and the education system. To accomplish this, the BLAC created a strategy for a comprehensive community-based assessment of learning needs using an extensive community consultation approach Participatory Action Research (PAR).

This in-depth analysis uncovered the information needed to complement the statistical information collected in the socio-demographic survey of Nova Scotia's Black community to give a complete picture of the learning needs of Black Nova Scotians. The community research was grounded in a holistic perspective which explores the full range of learning needs of the Black community. It was expected that community members would also guide the BLAC by suggesting how their learning needs could be addressed in order to provide greater access and equalize opportunity for all.

We spent fourteen months interviewing groups of parents and students, community leaders, teachers and school administrators. In addition, we received written submissions from individuals and organizations. This report summarizes the stories and information gathered over the community consultation process as part of the overall research process. In all, hundreds of people contributed their stories and suggestions to our study throughout 1993. A partial list of the participants appears in Appendix A.

Their stories are synthesized in the following sections, grouped in themes that began to emerge early in our research. No theme is exclusive of other issues. As in the lives of those who shared the stories, the situation of Black learners in Nova Scotia is complex. Therefore, the issues and themes outlined in this report overlap and form a complex tangle which means failure for many Black students. While the report summarizes what people view as the major barriers to Black achievement in school, most important, it also includes their suggestions for strategies to improve educational opportunities for all African Canadian students specifically, and all Nova Scotian students generally.

The Process

To lay the groundwork for this participatory, community-based research process, BLAC provided training in participatory action research (PAR) for the Regional Educators and conducted a pilot project to assess and refine the methodology to fit the experience of Regional Educators working in Black communities in Nova Scotia.

All Regional Educators, the Director of Research and Field Operations and two process consultants took part in the PAR process which occurred over a six month period. The process was implemented through community-based education committees and involved consulting the communities and gathering the information, to summarizing and verifying the information, to analyzing and drawing conclusions.

Element	PAR (Participatory Action Research)	Traditional Research Approaches
1 Problem identification	• Done by community or group experiencing the problem	• Often done by outside person/ external researcher
2 Decisions about how the research will take place	• Done by community	• Usually done by the researcher
3 Methods of gathering information	• Wide variety of methods are used (group meetings, work-shops, surveys, use of drama and song, kitchen table meetings, story-telling. • Focus on collective/group response • Adaptable to each community or situation	• Usually interviews and questionnaires • Focus on individual responses • Usually very inflexible
4 Analysis and interpretation of data	• Emphasis on group problem-solving and interpretation	• Analysis done by external researcher often without consultation from the community/group
5 How results are used	• Direct application where possible by community, planned action to push for change in the system	• Not usually part of the process; a report is written to document findings and goes to *Halifax* with little ownership by people in the community • Perpetuates status quo
6 Feelings of community group involved	• Fun; lots of involvement and sharing; learning, enlightening process; informal	• Often makes no difference in the lives of people in the community; they feel exploited; process is stiff

During a training workshop in September, 1992, the Regional Educators and the Research Sub-Committee of the Board of BLAC:

- decided how PAR could be used as a method of empowerment in Black communities in Nova Scotia; and
- designed the PAR pilot including questions to be asked, groups and organizations to ask and sites where the pilot would take place.

As well, members of BLAC practiced some research methods used in PAR and planned how the information gathered would be analyzed.

Differences Between the PAR and Traditional Research Approaches

Participatory action research was chosen as an appropriate approach to the community consultation over other more traditional research approaches for several reasons. The table on the previous page illustrates the major differences between the PAR process and traditional approaches.

The Pilot Study

The pilot allowed the research team to:

- Learn about the PAR process, apply known skills and develop any additional ones needed for the process;
- Try out the process in two communities to assess how the PAR model would work best in Black communities in Nova Scotia;
- Become familiar with the questions and groupings within communities; and,
- Learn more about what needs to be done to summarize, analyze and verify information gathered using a participatory process.

Two Process Consultants, Dr. Wilf Bean and Dr. Deborah Castle, were involved whenever possible to allow them to observe the team in action and offer advice to improve skills, techniques and approaches.

The PAR included two phases. Phase I entailed data collection while Phase II reported back to the communities. Objectives of Phase I and II are described below.

The objectives of Phase I, the data collection phase, were:

- To enable affected Black people to describe their educational experiences and identify perceptions about the education system; and,
- To identify suggestions for improving education for Black learners.

The objectives of Phase II were:

- To report back to Black communities issues related to education as perceived by people in their regions; and,
- To explore ways that Black community members can participate in improving education locally, i.e: empowerment.

Phase II was designed as a method to provide community residents with the results of the data collection process. The BLAC staff returned to the communities to present a summary of the information collected in Phase I, to verify and validate it. The process also provided an opportunity for action planning, thus involving the communities in the change process at the local level.

Methodology

Organizing and Mobilizing

To maximize community participation and individual contributions, the team utilized a number of methods including focus groups, community meetings, workshops, interviews, written submissions and coffee houses. A major emphasis was placed on the group interviews as a way of creating an open and trusting forum for people to share their experiences, concerns and hopes. Open-ended questions were used to further encourage participation and sharing.

The Regional Educators worked closely with their Education Committees in identifying groups to be invited to participate in the research and contacting the participants to be involved. This ensured good turnouts for the sessions. Members of the education committees were also involved in either securing access to, or providing the venues for the focus groups. Their involvement successfully reinforced the principle of community participation and mobilization.

Focus Group Discussions

Six specific groups were identified to be the focus of separate group discussions:

- youth (students)
- early school leavers/upgraders
- parents/guardians
- unemployed/seasonal workers
- employed
- education committee/community leaders

For each of these groups, separate focus group discussions were held in each of the seven regions for a total of 42 focus groups. The number of participants in focus groups ranged from four to twenty-five. Twelve was considered ideal.

Tasks and Roles of Group Leaders

Each focus group required that various tasks be undertaken to ensure participation and a thorough discussion. These tasks were:

- Facilitator: whose main role was asking questions clearly and in a non-directive manner. Regional Educators carried out this role.
- Moderator: regulated the flow of the discussion; kept the group focused; and kept time. This role was carried out by the Chairperson of the Education Committee.
- Recorder: recorded everything said during the meeting. She employed different means to achieve maximum accuracy. In most of the focus groups, note taking was backed up by tape recording. Research assistants performed these duties.

Actual Sessions

Each session began with every person introducing themselves by name, community and whether they were a student, parent and so on. This afforded the BLAC staff an opportunity to have direct contact with each participant and to indicate to the group that each person's input was valued.

Following introductions, the Regional Educator/Director of Research presented an overview of the BLAC research project, explained its purpose and described the objectives of the meeting. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions. The rest of the meeting proceeded in four stages. People shared:

- Personal experiences in school;
- Perceptions of the education system in which participants described and analyzed their perspective as learners or parents;
- Suggested and recommended changes to the education system; and,
- Visioning meaning that participants reflected on their ideal future situation.

There was an evaluation at the end of each meeting during which the research team mingled and asked people what they felt about the meeting and what had been said. Repeatedly, people said they were pleased that these discussions were taking place and would like to see follow-up.

Individual Interviews

Individual interviews were held with over 70 people with priority given to people who work directly with Black learners: parents, teachers, school administrators, social workers and community leaders. Individual interviews followed the same format as the group interviews.

Written Submissions

Early in the process, a letter which outlined the Research project and solicited input was sent out to a number of Black organizations and individuals. In all, 15 responses were received, including eight from major Black organizations.

Information Management and Analysis

Because the data collected in the PAR is of a qualitative (perceptions and opinions) nature and not quantitative, it was essential to record all the discussions on tape. The next step entailed devising a system to organize the information into a useable format. To assist with that process, time was taken at two research workshops (one for the Board and one for the staff, May 1993) and the BLAC conference for the research team to review the comments gathered and group them according to theme. In this way, the research team was able to create categories general enough to anticipate some of the issues being discussed throughout the regions.

In preparation for Phase II, the reporting back phase, the research team organized and reviewed all of the data collected over Phase I. As the work proceeded, staff discovered that they were getting an excellent account of the Black community's experiences in the past and present but little on the future. In the first round of focus groups, it had been difficult to get people to make concrete suggestions, recommendations and action plans. This missing piece became the research team's main area of focus in Phase II.

Reporting Back

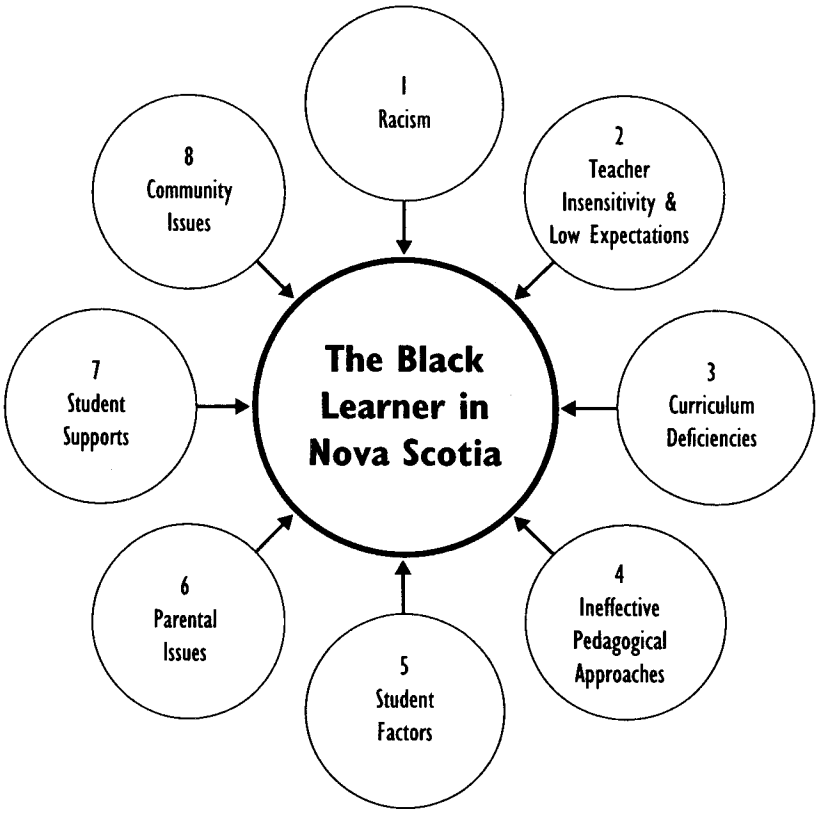
In reporting the results of Phase I back to the community, it was decided that only the small groups would be revisited. It was felt that reporting back to community meetings or workshops would mean starting from the beginning with the new participants seeking to share their experiences instead of moving forward. It should be noted however, communities had an opportunity to verify, validate and add to the information and analysis before the PAR report was finalized.

For reporting back, information was grouped by concerns, contributing factors, suggestions and action plans. This enabled the research team to identify information gaps and try to fill in those gaps in the second session. In this session, an emphasis was also placed on group problem solving with the following questions asked: *"Among the issues we have identified, which ones do you feel we can start working on? What resources do we need and what is available within the community? Whom should we approach?"*

What We Heard: Issues and Perceptions

The community consultation process identified issues, concerns and desires of the Black community regarding the education system in Nova Scotia. The information and stories gathered over fourteen months in 1992-93 through interviews, focus group and written submissions are organized in this section by theme. Eight major themes emerged during the analysis of the information, with each theme providing different insights into the Black community's perception of the education system and the Black learner's position within it. Quotes taken from the discussions and interviews have been used extensively in the report as a way of highlighting the themes. Many quotes speak for themselves in describing a situation.

The diagram below identifies the eight major themes which are described separately in the following chapters.

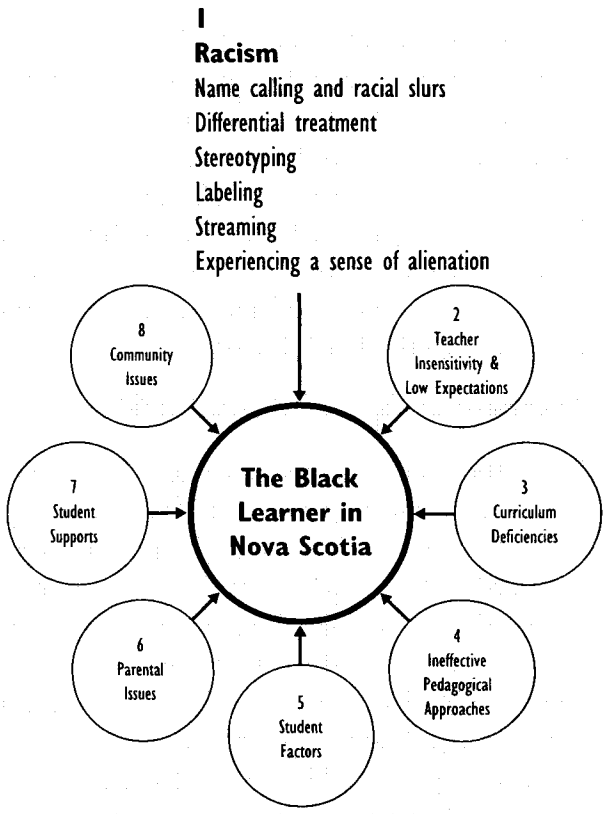


Racism and its Manifestations within the School Environment

The Nova Scotia education system fails in many ways to meet the learning and educational needs of the Black learner in particular and the Black community as a whole. People see racial prejudice and systemic or institutionalized discrimination as the root causes of the social, political and economic marginalization suffered and endured by generations of African Canadians in Nova Scotia.

In the focus groups, interviews and written submissions from across the province, racism emerged as a major, if long denied, force that affects the attitudes and behaviour of many Canadians – teachers, school administrators and students included. From speaking to parents and Black students across Nova Scotia, it was clear that racism remains one of the major concerns of the Black community. Whereas many White Nova Scotians and educators may want to debate the validity of these assertions, most Black Nova Scotians are certain:

> *You do not have to demonstrate to Black people that racism exists. They know that from their daily experience. They have known that since they landed here almost 300 years ago.*
> BLACK COMMUNITY LEADER



Similarly, Black Nova Scotians feel that racism in education significantly affects their life opportunities particularly in the area of employment.

> *First, we have been held back and stigmatized. We have faced every type of degradation that Whites have put in place. The barriers to education are poverty and unemployment, which prevent us from purchasing an education. By keeping us poor and uneducated, Whites have kept us at a disadvantage. They have kept us politically and socially disadvantaged. They have ensured that when people see us, they see us as Blacks, not as individuals and that they can target us.*
> PARENT

The educational issues facing the African Canadian community in Nova Scotia are complex. In order to address these issues, there is a need to closely re-examine what the education system has been offering to the Black learner over the past 100 years; how it was delivered; and whether those delivering the educational services appreciate and care about the needs of the Black learner.

Name-Calling and Racial Slurs

From the many discussions across the province, it was apparent that racism, in its different manifestations, is still one of the major barriers to Black educational achievement. One way racism is manifested in the education system is racial name-calling. Racial name-calling in school has been and still is, a major concern of the Black community. Many incidents were reported by both young and old, from all corners of the province. Most of the respondents felt that the education system is ineffective in handling racial incidents such as name-calling and racial slurs. They also felt that many White teachers are unable to relate to the humiliation and dehumanization of racial name-calling and therefore tend to treat it lightly as with forms of teasing.

> *If you take it to somebody, like a teacher ... they do nothing about it. They'll tell the kid not to say it again. They will just let it go and the kid will say it again.*
> JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT

Because students feel that nothing will be done about name-calling, most incidents are not reported. Many students try to ignore name-calling, but some victims may react inappropriately:

> *The first thing you think about is hitting because you are tired of hearing it... So all of a sudden* Boom. *You think if you hit them and they come back with their face all red, they will know better than call you names again.*
> HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Such a reaction however in many cases leads to suspension for the Black student. Data collected through the socio-demographic survey as part of the BLAC research indicates that fighting was the most common reason for suspension cited by respondents accounting for 38 percent of the suspensions.

Reason for Suspension
Source: BLAC Survey

Reason	Dropouts	Graduates	Students	Total	Total Percent
Late	75	23	17	115	12%
Talking in Class	115	26	41	182	19%
Fighting	179	62	110	351	38%
Missing Class	91	25	31	147	16%
Drinking/Drug	21	4	3	28	3%
Other	48	24	41	113	12%
Total	**529**	**164**	**243**	**936**	**100%**

In a newspaper article dated October 7, 1993, Joan Jones, a columnist with the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, stated from personal experience that:

> ... *there is no verbal retaliation that cuts as deep as being called* nigger. *There is not a single word in the English language that would or could be as humiliating or offensive to use as a means of retaliation.*

The reason this racial slur hurts so much is found in the historical significance of the word in relation to the dehumanization, humiliation and oppression of the African peoples – *negroes* – through slavery. Thus the word is a constant reminder of the most painful period of African history when the humanity of Africans was questioned, rather than the inhumanity of those condoning the oppression.

Two years earlier, the same columnist in describing a racial name-calling incident involving her daughter as the victim, wrote:

> *The effect of name-calling is like being slugged by a maul hammer to the stomach. Almost simultaneously you feel hurt, anger and rage, usually in that order. It hurts emotionally and physically.*

Older people recalled that in their days, name-calling was simply dismissed by the teachers as normal teasing by students. Racial incidents were simply ignored. One woman, now in her 50s, narrated her experience in one of the Halifax city schools:

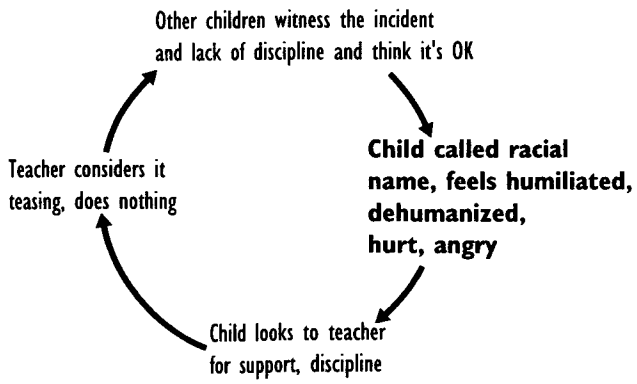
> *I got along with the kids all right but in grade nine, there was an incident. I was paired with a White girl called Lucy to do a manicure set. She refused to touch me and would not let me touch her. I informed the teacher and the teacher did nothing about it. In fact, the class laughed at me. I was the only Black person in the class. I told my mother about it but back then there was no Black organization or the Human Rights Commission to go to make a complaint.*
>
> EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR
> AND BLACK COMMUNITY LEADER

In some cases, the word "*nigger was all over the school*" and administrators "*never did anything.*" Parents and Black students felt that many teachers and school administrators still "*have no knowledge or understanding of the effects of racism*" despite attending race relations sensitivity training and having already approved Race Relations policies at the School Board.

Halifax County was the first School Board in the province to approve a race relations policy and hire a Race Relations, Cross-Cultural and Human Rights Coordinator in the aftermath of the "*snowball incident*" at Cole Harbour District High School. The Halifax City District School Board approved the appointment of an Anti-Racism Project Officer in 1992 who is helping to develop a comprehensive anti-racism policy. In the absence of policy guidelines, teachers and school administrators are unable to handle racial incidents on school premises effectively. By the end of 1993, about nine school boards out of a total of twenty-two had approved race relations policies. However, most had not allocated, dedicated, or appropriated any resources to implement the policies.

Many parents expressed doubts about the effectiveness of race relations policies. "*Anti-racism policies do not work because you are changing behaviours, not attitudes. All we are doing is teaching people to be more cunning.*" This cycle is outlined in the following diagram.

Racist, name-calling, negative consequences



Some believe that more effort should be spent on equipping African Canadians with coping skills to survive and make a viable Black community within a racist society. "*We must learn to be more cohesive.*"

Yet others felt that improvements are needed to make these policies work. Parents who have recently been involved with the education system in addressing racial incidents suggest several changes in areas such as the school orientation program, parents' preschool communication, distribution of information packages on the race relations policy, and the process for revising the school's race relations policies.

One parent whose grade primary child was being called racial names wrote saying that during the orientation she had been given the impression that:

> *My child was going to be attending a warm and caring school. However, it was not until she became a victim of racism that I realized something was missing from her orientation. The Principal was not there for her when she was being called a racial name.*

The mother continued:

> *I would like to state that any child who is not White is subject to name-calling. I know that White children also make fun of Oriental children simply because their eyes are shaped differently. I witnessed a grade one child's demonstration of this name-calling during a school outing. This was the same child who insulted my daughter.*
>
> PARENT

It is recommended that during primary class orientation, principals should take time to explain to all parents the school's anti-racism policy as part of the school's philosophy. In addition, principals should take at least five minutes at the start of the school year to explain to each class the race relations policy in a way that the children can understand because:

> *A grade one child is not capable of reading a race relations policy which is handed out in their school manual/bulletin at the beginning of the year.*
>
> PARENT

The exercise would help all the children in that school understand what is expected of them while attending school. Another way to reduce the incidents would be to ask the parents of the aggressive child to come to the school and meet with the school officials regarding the school policy. The child should be asked to apologize to the victim in front of the whole class. The child may also lose a privilege, for example, recess. Some parents felt that a penalty even for the first offense is necessary to fight racism:

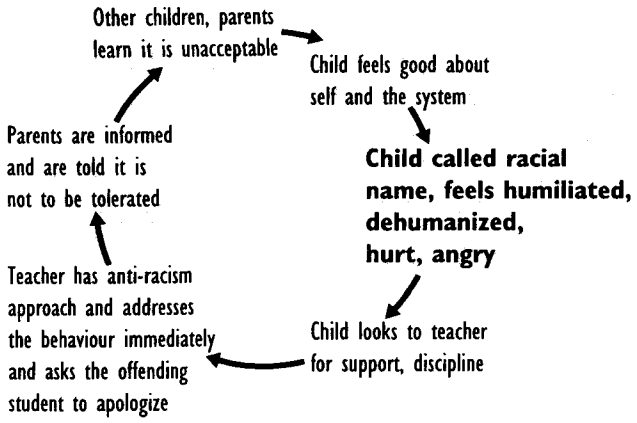
> *By not having a penalty, the school authority is telling the child and his parents that it is okay to be a racist if it is your first offense. It is never okay. Using the schools' existing policy, that would mean that 31 children in my daughter's class have the go-ahead to call her names one time without punishment or corrective measure.*
>
> PARENT

Multicultural and anti-racism education should be part of any solution that might be adopted. There should also be school-based committees to foster better human relations, and a human rights/anti-racism education. The committee would allow students to discuss and address racial issues, resulting in increased awareness. Increased awareness by the teachers and students should lead to better human relations. People felt that school boards must view the elimination of racial harassment as priority and work consistently towards harmonious human relations because:

> *Whatever problems Black children are having, the root cause is racism. I dropped out of school when I was very young. Yes, I'm smart enough to get my Masters degree now and I was smart enough back then. We need to instill in the children that they are bright and can do it.*
>
> BLACK PARENT AND EDUCATOR

The psychological damage done by name-calling can be as brutal and painful as any physical attack. The fact that many students interviewed never actively challenged these incidents of racial harassment reflects a lack of confidence in the education system to assist them. To create confidence for the Black students that something will be done, teachers and school administrators must think about what they can do.

Racist, name-calling, positive alternative action



Louise Derman-Sparks, in her article *Racial Slurs Hurt: Dealing with Racial Slurs*, offers parents and educators strategies to help children who are victims of name-calling respond appropriately and to help change the behaviour of the name-callers. Some of the strategies are:

- Reinforce the child's racial/cultural identity. Encourage the child to talk about her/his feelings and be supportive.
- Confirm that you think use of such words is wrong. Even if the name-calling occurs because of anger about something the child did, it is crucial to make a distinction between the child's specific act and the fact that the use of racial slur is *never* OK. Children are apt to use racial name-calling in anger, because adults and older children often name-call during angry exchanges. This point should also be discussed with those who use racial epithets.
- Explain why racial name-calling occurs. Very young children can best understand explanations that focus on the behaviour of the specific person, i.e, the person is mean; the person thinks Whites are better. Many adults tell children people who name-call don't know better. This as a reason is confusing to children. Indeed, many name-callers do know better and use a term because they understand its hurtful nature.

As soon as possible (when the child is seven or eight years old), it is important to begin providing explanations that communicate an institutional and historical perspective about racism; i.e, people behave in a racist manner because racism exists in society; that children learn how to act and think in racist ways from their families, from television, books, movies; that racism breeds aggressiveness, ignorance, guilt, rigidity, fear, hate, superiority; that some people exploit or use racism for economic and social benefit.

Ms. Derman-Sparks further suggests that teaching children not to use racial slurs against others is an important task for teachers and parents. Take the position that racial name-calling is not acceptable for any reason because it perpetuates racism. This can be reinforced with an explanation that racial slurs like other hurting behaviours are not permitted in the family or the classroom.

All parents, teachers, school employees and community members need to know the school policy concerning racial incidents and that the school will not tolerate any expression of racial bias by school staff, students or the community. The principal must not only be articulating the message, he must stand behind it should incidents occur. The school's race relations policy should be included in the school handbooks for students and all school personnel. The principal could use the PTA as an avenue to educate parents about the policy.

In addition, each school should have a written policy developed by the school community (administration, teachers, staff, parents, students' representatives and community organizations) to deal with racial incidents. This would be a very effective means of developing policy to address racial harassment and name-calling. As well, school boards must give their monetary support and guidance to ensure that schools act on the policy.

School boards have an obligation to create a conducive learning environment for all students regardless of gender, religion, colour or social background. It is disappointing that the Department of Education, which is expected to set the example, still lacks a well publicized and effective policy on the handling of racial incidents.

Differential Treatment

The school environment reflects segments of society. Because we have a racist society, we therefore have a racist school environment; hence the need for Anti-Racist education for a non racist society.
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

People felt that school administrators and many teachers apply different standards for White and Black students. It was reported that whenever there was an incident, the Black child was "*always accused of doing wrong. Blacks are always the ones being kicked out of class, not the Whites.*" Black students felt that their White peers got better treatment and more attention from the White teachers. Notably, people who left school twenty years ago feel the same way as current students, indicating how little things have changed.

Students complained that teachers do not take the time to investigate incidents, and most of the time blame Black students. Teachers also seem to apply double standards in reprimanding Black and White students for loitering in the hallways. Teachers do not seek opinions of Black students. Teachers do not call on Black students to answer questions when they have their hands up. Students eventually get discouraged and stop raising their hands. People feel the preferential treatment given to White students is due to teachers "*feeling more comfortable with White students.*" They can connect to White students culturally in terms of daily experiences.

Black students feel invisible in the classroom. Students indicated that differential treatment is also exhibited in the way teachers and professors pick students to respond to a question or participate in a class discussion:

We are not called upon, or when we are, it is to answer the easy questions because it is assumed we can't answer the hard questions.
UNIVERSITY STUDENT

People felt that some teachers provide preferential treatment for those who excel academically and tend to ignore those who need help with their work. Students reported that some teachers are more likely to give assistance to White than to Black students. When Black students ask questions in class, they are ignored but when a White student asks the same question moments later, he receives an answer. As a result, some Black students ask their White peers to ask questions for them, or give up and do not ask at all.

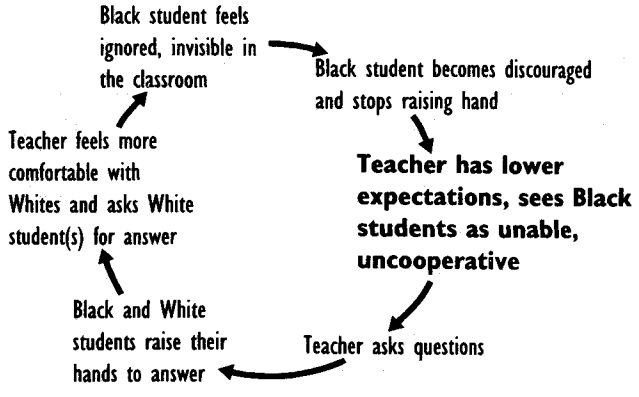
Furthermore, Black students feel they are picked on in the application of the disciplinary process. As one parent put it:

White kids say something smart to the teacher, and nothing is done, but as soon as a Black says something smart, they are thrown out of the class.
PARENT

Students suggested that teachers should investigate before they point a finger:

Before teachers point the finger they should get the facts. My friend and I were in the same class and some White guys were in the back of the classroom talking. As soon as we say something she turns round and says something to us. But she won't say anything to them. Yeah, whenever we talk it's like we're on a microphone.
STUDENT.

Differential Treatment



Parents agree that the education system tends to deal harshly with Black students. They suspect that Black students are suspended more frequently from school and buses than other students. Parents believe that suspensions either from class or school for reasons perceived as unfair by the student may contribute to developing feelings of alienation. Some suspensions occur without proper investigation of the incidents or prior warning. Parents cannot avoid feeling that racial prejudice is a contributing factor.

The BLAC recently obtained suspension data for Halifax City schools for the academic years from 1987 to 1992, as shown in the following figure.

While there is no evidence of a trend towards an increase in the percentage share of Black learner suspensions amongst all learners, the figure does indicate a strong upward trend in the number of suspensions, for all learners in the Halifax school system.

Suspensions Within the Halifax School System

	Total Suspensions	Total Black Learners Suspended	Percent of Black Learners
1987-88	386	76	19.7%
1988-89	370	58	15.7%
1989-90	477	80	16.8%
1990-91	581	98	16.9%
1991-92	739	152	20.6%
Average	2,553	464	18.2%

The estimated number of Black learners in the Halifax District school system in 1991-92 was approximately 1,100 students, compared to an overall student population of 14,245 students,[1] a ratio of about 8 percent Black learners.[2] The results on suspensions indicate that Black learners accounted for 16 percent to 21 percent of all suspensions in Halifax. This rate exceeds, by a significant amount, the actual share of Black learners in the Halifax school system. *The clear conclusion is that Black learners are more likely to be suspended that other students.*

All these acts lower the motivation and self-esteem of the student. Trust and respect for the teacher are lost. But parents can help children cope:

> *The most important thing is that their self-esteem is there; that they feel good about themselves; they feel needed; they feel loved; just like the rest of the kids. That they're not singled out.*
> SCHOOL TEACHER

People noted the difficulty of identifying acts of subtle or systemic racism. Parents on one hand want to believe that the professional will do what is best for each student; on the other hand they would like to support their children.

Differential treatment does not stop at school. Black students reported being harassed by police and security guards in shopping malls, fast food restaurants and other public places on a more frequent basis than their White peers.

Being Black in Nova Scotia is qualitatively different than being White. As a Black person, skin colour is more significant than being a person, whereas if you are White, skin colour seems not to matter as much. For Black youth in Nova Scotia, being Black matters significantly, for it indicates that they will be treated differently and have different opportunities. Because African Canadian children perceive that they are viewed differently, labeled, and receive different opportunities, consciously or subconsciously their educational and career aspirations are affected.

Prior to integration, parents hoped that if their children could get into the same schools and sit next to White students, they would have equal opportunity to quality education. But experience has shown that this was naive. Black students in White schools encountered and still face two difficult institutional barriers; teacher insensitivity and low expectations which result in different treatment.

To provide more equitable treatment, the teacher will need to be sensitive to the child's cultural environment and try to gain a better understanding of each child. Teachers and administrators should allow themselves to view the child in her culture by attending cultural events and functions.

Parents should monitor what is happening at school by listening carefully to what a child says about their school experience. Does the teacher call on her when she raises her hand? Does the teacher criticize her for the wrong answers? Does the teacher expect her to do the best work or accept work that is unsatisfactory? Does your child get bored? Does she act out in ways that she doesn't at home?

Stereotyping

A stereotype is defined as "*An exaggerated belief, oversimplification, or uncritical judgement about a category.*"[3] Most stereotypes originate in the wider society. These stereotypes are also promoted by the media and pseudoscientific studies.

People in the focus groups felt that society, and some teachers as extension of society, have a stereotype of Black learners as stupid:

> *Often I feel the teachers have a preconceived idea of what the abilities of certain students are... You have to challenge the students because if they get the idea that we don't think they can do it, then they won't apply themselves.*
>
> SCHOOL VICE PRINCIPAL

Consequently for a long time, many Black students were and still are streamed into general and other non-academic programs. People said that once placed in a certain category, however hard a student may work, teachers would not reward or recognize the effort. It is very rare that a student is moved from a low level to a higher level class.

Teachers assuming that Black students are experts on multiculturalism, directing most of the questions on the topic to the Black child, is another form of stereotyping. This is often the case in Black History classes. Children feel embarrassed if they cannot answer the question about their own history to which they have not been exposed but about which they are expected to know.

People felt that stereotypes about a particular community affects the way the school treated the children from that community. Parents were also concerned about teachers who name families as examples when discussing certain incidents in the community. In one incident, a teacher started a conversation with a Black parent visiting the school by naming Black residents who had recently been arrested on drug charges. The parent's visit was simply to discuss her child's academic progress and was not in any way related to drugs or crime. Needless to say, the mother was deeply embarrassed and offended. Is it any wonder that Black parents feel uncomfortable visiting the schools?

In addition to racial stereotypes, Blacks also suffer gender stereotypes. One of the damaging stereotypes of the Black male is the expectation that Blacks can only excel at sports. Therefore teachers condition many Black males to believe that their success can only come from sports. Consequently, there seems to be a difference in the way Black males are treated in the education system compared to Black females.

Because of the pervasive stereotype of Black learners as stupid, those who achieve academically and make it to the honor role are viewed as different from the rest. They are not seen as part of the group experience, but are viewed instead as the exception.

The Black male also suffers from media images. Society, through the media, portrays Blacks as bad and to be feared. In school plays and in movies, Blacks usually play the devil or a villain. Blacks are viewed as aggressive, intimidating and violent. As a result many White teachers and students are afraid of Black students. The situation is worse for Black boys who may be physically massive when they reach junior high. Being muscular at this age means most female teachers approach them with fear. Black students spoke of sensing the teacher's discomfort. Communication between teacher and student is damaged. Students also reported that some teachers stereotype Blacks as being loud. Some students recalled hearing their White peers making comments like "*do all Blacks carry knives?*" While White students may encounter similar stereotypes, without significant damage, the dynamics of racism incur a more damaging effect on Black students.

Labeling

In all the group discussions we attended as well as in individual interviews, parents, students and educators expressed concern about the effects of labeling, tracking and streaming in the education system on the Black community in Nova Scotia.

While there are many intellectually gifted Black children, hardly any ever achieve recognition. In the classes for gifted children, Blacks are rarely represented. On the contrary, in the classes with children with learning disabilities or behavioral disorders, African Nova Scotians are over-represented.

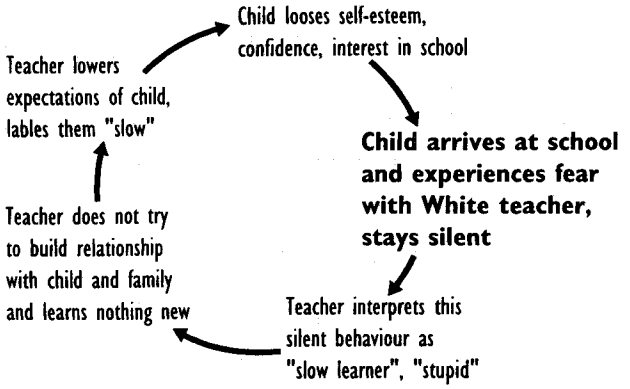
Black educators and parents of Black learners stated that based on education testing and evaluation results, Black learners by the thousands were, and still are being, labeled slow learners or behavioral problems, and then tracked, counselled and placed in lower levels, special education and other forms of diluted school programs. Parents and students complained that some of the labeling occurs without any proper professional testing and evaluation.

> *They thought you were a dummy. Being Black, period. Some children are irritable and they are made to look stupid.*

Parents were also concerned about some teachers and professionals' misinterpretations of behaviours, for example shyness as being slow.

This unfair labeling is described here:

Unfair labeling



There is also a general perception in the Black community that student records are sometimes misused to label students. Labels are based on the student's performance in the previous years. A child with one bad year will have a permanent stain on his record which is passed on from year to year with the result that teachers do not respond to the child. Teachers come to expect bad behaviour and one incident leads to further labeling. Parents described several instances in which Black learners were labeled as *bad*, *gangs* and so on. Because these records travel from school to school, parents believe the child has a limited chance of starting over with a clean slate.

The double standards established by the school system in the labeling process results in disproportionate numbers of African Canadian children being identified with behaviour problems, as being slow learners, and other designations. This labeling, which is consciously or subconsciously motivated by ignorance and racial stereotyping, finally lowers the expectations that school personnel have of Black learners. Consequently, proper nurturing and guidance of Black youth does not take place. These lower expectations eventually reduce the child's chances to work toward or achieve his full potential.

Participants in the study, particularly from Spryfield, North End Halifax, and the Prestons, described their frustrations of living in communities which are viewed negatively by outsiders. Children from these communities are also stereotyped and labeled.

Subconsciously, every person's estimate of themselves is largely a reflection of what they perceive other people think of them and what they are taught. If a child is labeled and treated as *inferior* or *stupid* by adults, she will tend to lose some of her self-esteem, self-confidence and ambition. Consequently, regardless of class or background, African Canadian children face a difficult task in reaching their full potential in Canadian schools as they exist presently.

Streaming

Parents of Black students have always suspected that the procedures for assessing and placing students are culturally biased. The pervasive problem of over-representation of Black learners in lower, less challenging programs instead of higher achieving programs has been and remains a major concern across the province. A majority of people interviewed felt that Black students are often pushed or guided into the adjusted programs mainly because they are Black. This trend may begin in the first grade with students being grouped for reading according to reading readiness. This is called streaming or tracking.

Students reported being told that they could not cope with the academic workload. Years ago, students tended to be put all together in classes where people looked at them as being different, slow, stupid. This lowered the students' self-esteem. Many parents believe that schools still separate children into groups based on academic aptitudes. Some Black students with behaviour problems are assigned to these special education classes, instead of receiving help to improve their behaviour, outlook and aspirations.

> *I think it is important that teachers encourage these people to improve at their level. It happens that, if a student gets a feeling that he's stupid and can't do it at a very young age or junior high, he just stops trying. One school, we had the hardest problem with one grade seven student. He was acting up and not really working hard. I asked him what was wrong. He said* "I'm stupid," *I said* "Why Tony, why are you stupid?" *He said that a teacher had told him in grade 4 that he was stupid. We got him in grade 7 and he was using that as his excuse for not working and believing it. He dropped out in grade 8.*
>
> SCHOOL VICE PRINCIPAL

Others felt that many Black students are *pushed through and pushed out* of the school system. People believe that the low expectations held for Blacks by the education system and society in general contribute to teachers and guidance counsellors stereotyping and streaming Black students into these programs.

Some students felt that they are neglected or pushed aside if they experience any difficulty in their work. They are not encouraged to try harder. Some of those who had taken the general, vocational or special education programs said they were not challenged academically. They were not expected to perform and the courses demanded little more than attendance. They were allowed to get by. Many felt neglected. They became disillusioned. Others became alienated. Nobody in the school made an effort to include them. As a result, many developed disrespect for their teachers.

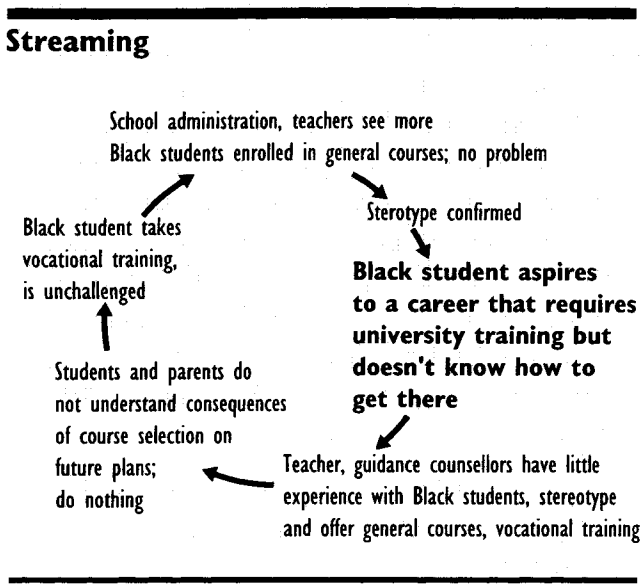
People were gravely concerned about the negative impact of streaming. Streaming *makes students feel like second class citizens.* Children with academic difficulties typically receive little help from the teachers and education system. Consequently, there is no justification for separating the children if extra support is not provided.

Many educators question the benefits of tracking:

> *I don't think streaming is a very good policy in itself. I think what is needed now is a process whereby due to different levels, the teacher will need help using additional resources and materials.*
>
> BLACK EDUCATOR

People talked about some high school guidance counsellors who streamed Black students into general courses, special education and vocational programs. "*A guidance counsellor once really encouraged me not to go to university,*" a Black teacher told us.

The following diagram demonstrates a common experience for the Black student:



Black students felt the counsellors showed little interest in them.

> *They didn't care to assess the students' interests. It was just a routine. They wanted to get you in and get you out (of their office) as fast as they could. They told you what you should be instead of asking you what you wanted to be.*
>
> EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER

In some cases, students select general courses without proper regard to their future plans or career considerations. Some teachers try to manipulate less sophisticated Black parents. Many parents are unable to help students with high school course selection because they do not understand the codes or their limitations.

In the past, most school administrators did not ask what high school program a student wanted; most Black students were simply placed in general and did not contest it. Some were persuaded into taking programs they did not like; to many the principal's word was law. Some students simply left school in frustration:

> *I wanted to be a social worker but was told by my high school principal after the career testing that because I was Black, I would not be able to get a job as a social worker. Although my test results indicated that I would be an excellent social worker, he suggested that maybe I should be a nurse. However, because of my race, that field would also be hard to penetrate, so he suggested that I become a teacher. At that point I felt there was no need to continue school and I quit in grade eleven. I believed what my principal said and quit school as many other students did.*
>
> EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLOR

Some teachers automatically placed Black learners in general programs because of the lower standards attained at the junior high level. There was racism here too.

> *I didn't see as many Black students in the academic program and I am not saying that going to university is the be all and end all, but graduating from high school with a non-university preparatory certificate limits your options. It was interesting that some came back and did academic courses. I think that's a problem. I also did not see as many Black males as females. I do not know if there are young people that don't go to school, my assumption is that they do. Those who were in my school had great difficulty academically. I do not know what type of programs they were in during junior high. I would suspect they were in some type of adjusted program. I would say that they were very weak academically and had to have had a great deal of assistance along the way in order to go through an academic program.*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL VICE-PRINCIPAL

It appears that Black learners have been disproportionately subjected to the social injustice of streaming. In addressing this issue, one can consider the referral, assessment and placement practices, and the socio-economic factors. Research clearly indicates that the attitudes of teachers and parents affect the referral of students for special education services. For instance, Black students who are considered lacking in language – not English proficient – are sometimes placed in special education. Inappropriate assessment tools and practice include problems with examiner competence and techniques in testing children from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Poverty is another factor affecting both the quality of life and the academic performance of a student. Inadequate diet for children and expectant mothers or poor physical environment in the home could lead to lower performance capabilities.

Teacher attitudes towards culturally diverse students appear to have the most significant affect on referral rates. For example, behaviours which may be within acceptable ranges within the ethnic group, may be viewed as aggressive by educators who then may be more prone to referring these students to special education placements.

The double standards established by the school system in its labeling process results in large numbers of African Canadian children being identified with behaviour problems, as slow learners and other designations that eventually reduce their chances of reaching their full potential. It seems at the core of this problem is the institutionalized low expectations for Black learners. The stigma attached to being in these classes is a likely killer of student ambition and motivation.

Experiencing a Sense of Alienation

Many students said they feel alienated in their classrooms or school. This isolation was felt more when they are the only Black student in a class, sometimes the only visible minority: "*I feel I don't belong. I feel that I am in the wrong place.*" The sense of alienation felt by Black students is much deeper than loneliness. Students claimed that issues that concern them are not discussed by the staff or administration. Whenever the students tried to raise issues such as the introduction of a Black history course, teachers responded sarcastically. "*They think you are trying to be smart.*"

This study also found that the school environment in Nova Scotia is still chilling for many Black learners

> *The environment in many Nova Scotia schools and classrooms is so cold that many Black students say to themselves,* "I don't want to be here."
>
> UNIVERSITY STUDENT

The feeling of isolation is experienced by Black students of all ages:

> *Sometimes I don't feel comfortable because I'm the only Black person in my science class. I wish there could be more Black students in our class. I feel that I have to stand up and make Black people look important. I have to answer all the questions.*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Often, the feeling of alienation is compounded by the negative feedback from the teachers, school administration, and education system in general.

Even Black parents have been alienated by the school system. In order to help Black learners, people felt that it is important to address the issue of parent alienation.

We have to get to know the community and families involved. Try to get them to come into the school. A lot of these parents have had negative experiences at the school and they don't want anything to do with it. They pass this down to their children and the children drop out. We have to get the parents involved. When you have the parents working with the school, you have a better success rate with the child.

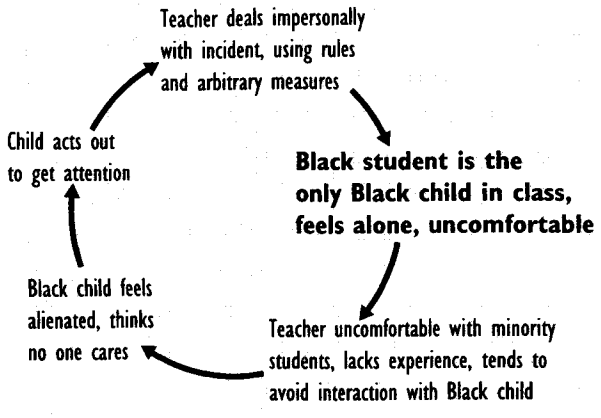
SCHOOL VICE PRINCIPAL

Through talking with early school leavers, it was clear that many students were turned off by feelings that nobody cares and by the impersonal structures of the large high schools. As well, Black students are alienated by the perception that their teachers do not expect them to achieve; that they will not receive academic assistance when they need it and are scorned rather than helped if they encounter serious learning problems. They are also alienated by rules and disciplinary measures which they perceive as arbitrary or unfair.

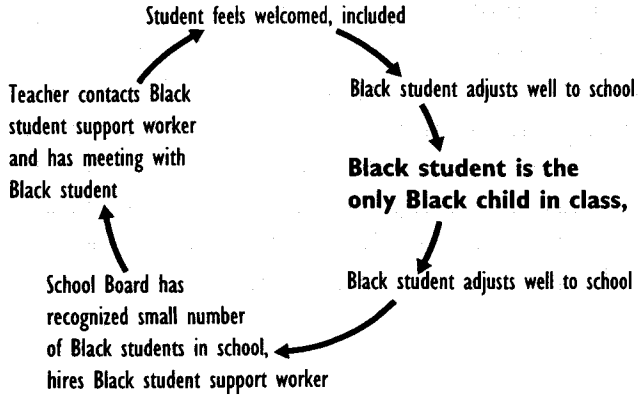
The inability of middle class White teachers to understand or cope with the behaviours of Black students is often of paramount importance in alienating these students from the public schools. If a teacher does not understand the specific kinds of behaviour of a certain child, he or she will make this feeling known to the child. Sometimes the child may not intend to act up in class; what starts as a simple act to attract attention then escalates into a power struggle between the teacher and student. Teachers need to be sensitive to these factors when considering discipline.

There is urgent need for changes to make the school environment more conducive to learning, more inclusive and welcoming. School boards will need to institute and support programs such as peer counselling, mentoring, and hiring Black student support workers to liaise among the students, the school staff and the home.

Sense of Alienation



Alternative System



Numerous studies (John Goodland, 1984; Lisbeth Schorr, 1988), have indicated that educational testing and evaluation put a premium on information and ability developed in middle class homes. Discipline is administered by middle class teachers. The conduct thought proper and rewarded by the school: "*is to stay on the job, learn your lessons, budget your time, obey authority, develop self control, and a good character.*" This ideal conduct contradicts that of the Black child's culture and often socio-economic background. As a result, many Black children face a problem of adjustment in school.

There are other factors which make adjustment more difficult for the lower class Black children. In her book, *Within Our Reach,* Lisbeth Schoor, 1988, noted that:

> *Urbanization and increased mobility, greater family stress and the sapping of family authority by television, have all widened the gap between home and school. That distance is of course greater still for children whose class, education, and family income differ most from those of the school staff.*

Another aspect of alienation is language. Some people felt that the lack of standard English skills is another factor which limits the achievement of Black learners. Research indicates that dialect speakers frequently perform poorly on verbal tests of standard English. African Canadian students, as dialect speakers, are likely to perform worse than their White peers on verbal tests of standard English. It is the emphasis put on these test results which has placed Black children at a disadvantage in such testing.

Because of the stereotypes that a Black child is not as smart as the White child, any failure on any test is bound to further damage his self-esteem. Parents noted that students from one community in particular, North Preston, are stigmatized because of their speech patterns. Language therefore is another area where the Black child, as a dialect speaker, is vulnerable.

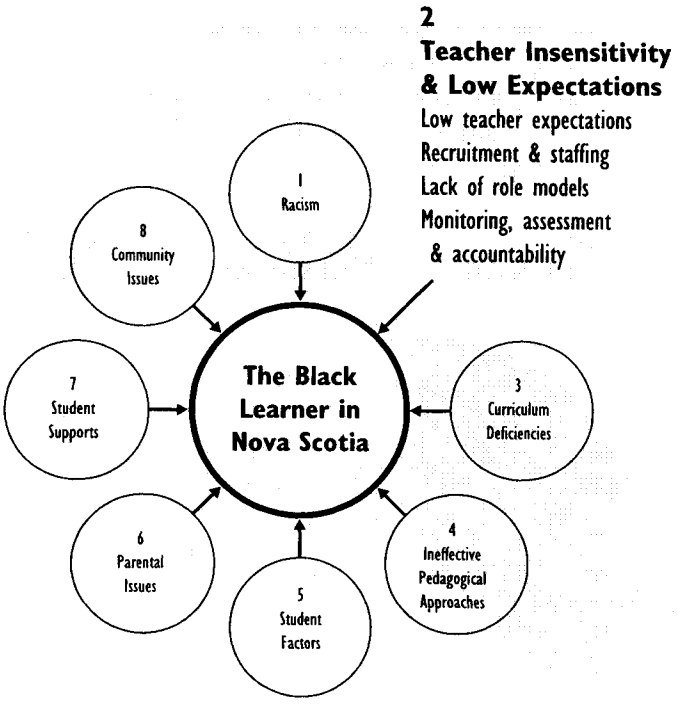
People felt that Black males suffer greater rejection by the dominant society than any other group in Canada. Black male students are often viewed as a threat to the school staff: "*Many teachers are intimidated. They fear Black students.*" This partially explains the greater alienation of Black males in school.

Black males today yearn for recognition and acceptance, something that can affirm their existence and identity. For Black males, sports provides the easiest vehicle for this recognition as an attempt to connect with the school and education system, while fatherhood grows in importance as a measure of manhood.

As eluded to the description of differential treatment, Black males have a peculiar experience. "*The education system is a minefield for Black males; they are expected to fail.*" All indicators suggest that more Black males than females in Nova Scotia leave before their high school graduation. A simple glance at the high school graduation lists and admission to post-secondary institutions demonstrates this trend. A possible explanation is that the education system does not understand the Black male and thus tends to judge him more harshly, treat him less fairly and thus push him out more quickly. Even without any display of extraordinary behaviour, teachers especially White females, often feel intimidated or threatened by Black male students.

Clearly, any school, school system or institution wishing to meet the needs of minority students, specifically Black learners, must address these issues of alienation.

2 Teacher Insensitivity and Low Expectations



Teacher insensitivity is one of the greatest barriers that Black learners face. There is a strong feeling among parents and students that the education system is insensitive and unsympathetic to the needs of Black students. They pointed to the absence of Black role models in the school system. People recognize that there are a lot of good and caring teachers but there are also many with racial biases.

> *One prejudiced teacher can cause a lot of damage; sometimes leaving a lasting effect on children. Black students must overcome assumptions that they are not as bright, that they are poor and perhaps do require a different way of learning. But nobody learns in one standard way.*
>
> BLACK EDUCATOR

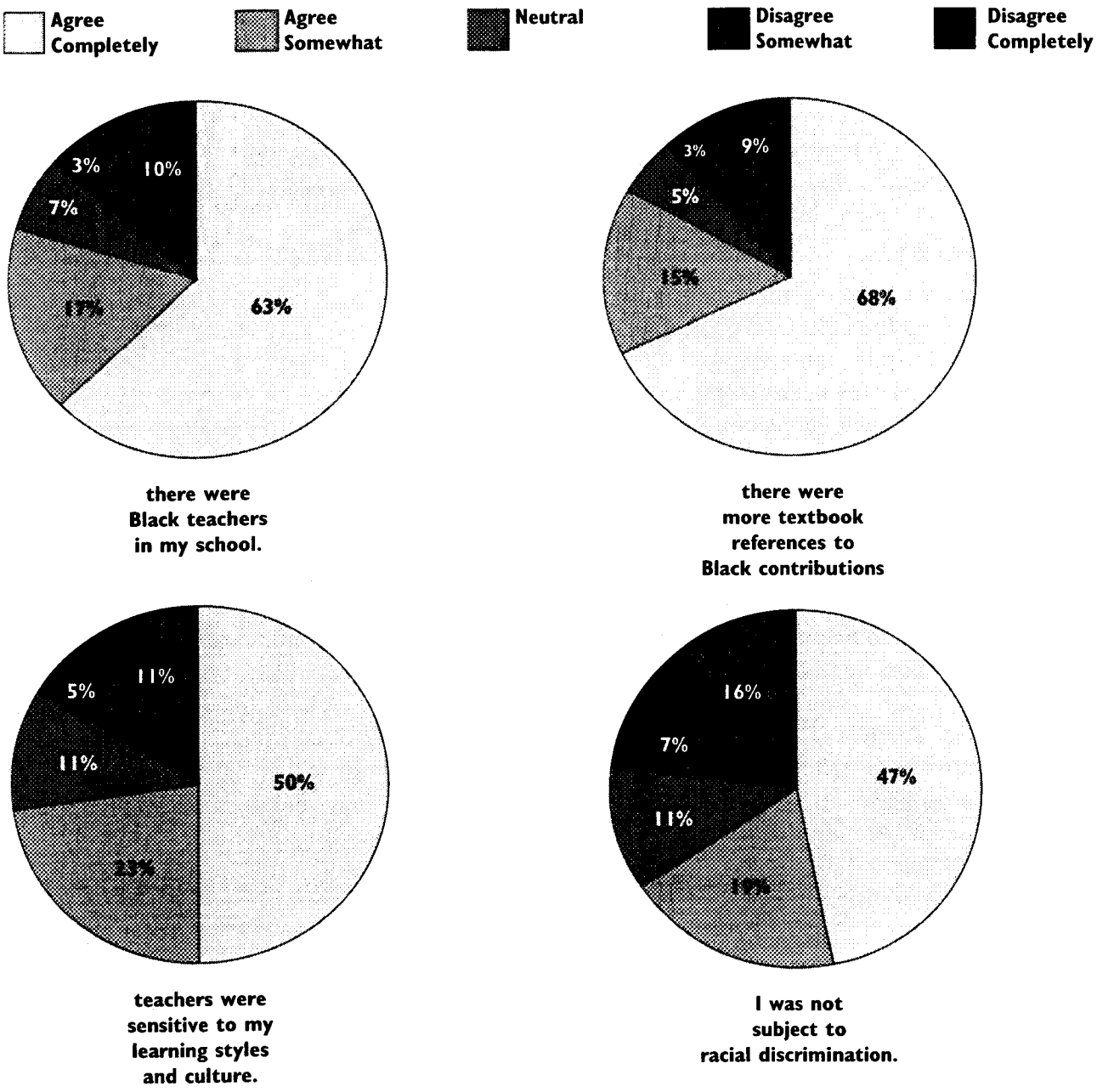
Another common complaint was that some teachers are not supportive; that they don't care and are not interested in helping Black students. "*The school system does not address the problems of Blacks*" one student commented. Students also complained about the schools' lack of interest in individuals who need academic assistance or encouragement. Many parents and students expressed frustration with teachers who view teaching as just a job. Teachers need to show more interest in their students.

Many teachers, because of lack of relevant training in cross-cultural understanding and Black history, have little appreciation of the enormous challenges Black learners face on a daily basis both in school and at home. Teachers do not take into consideration the cultural environment from which Black learners come. They tend to view and treat all students the same. Teacher insensitivity is also demonstrated in their response to racial incidents. Students stated that teachers concentrate on the Black learners' behaviour and response to certain situations. One teacher was quoted as saying "*I know what it feels like to be called nigger but you have to turn your back.*"

The School Environment

My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if:

Source: BLAC Survey



The socio-demographic survey collected data on student assessment of teachers' attitudes as depicted in the figure above. The data, based on more than 3,000 respondents, indicates that there was strong appreciation for teachers in their general support to students. Respondents indicated however that teachers were less likely to make efforts to understand the culture of Black students or the specific needs of the Black learner.

Educational institutions and systems can improve the understanding of Black learners through mandatory sensitivity training for all new teachers and inservices for serving teachers. Moreover, teachers must develop a sense of responsibility to becoming sensitive to their students' psychological, emotional and physical needs.

> *Racism, in any form, is psychological and emotional abuse and no teacher should either inflict or tolerate such abuse to his or her students.*
>
> PARENT

But some people felt that sensitivity training by itself was inadequate. Others felt that education is a slow process and insufficient to combat racism. It must therefore be reinforced by legislation and a system of rewards and consequences for displaying sensitivity or failing to do so.

People were deeply concerned that the education system is producing large numbers of illiterate or poorly educated graduates. They feel that the education system ignores the under-achievers.

They also feel that some teachers do not care about the students' needs because they have "*burned out, having been in the system too long.*" Some teachers and administrators can stay in one school from ten to twenty years. When this happens, most tend to become insensitive to the changing needs of the community and students. To counter this insensitivity teachers and administrators should be rotated every five years.

School orientation of new teachers should include a profile of the school community so that teachers are clear about the specific educational needs of their students.

> *Knowing a bit of what causes a problem helps to deal with it. I think that you have to be aware of all the circumstances and background, not just the surface problem. The more you know about the community, the easier it is to handle some of the problems.*
>
> SCHOOL VICE PRINCIPAL

We also heard from students who said that rather than risk confrontation with certain teachers, they decide to "*stay clear of those teachers' classes and their hurting remarks and attitudes*" even though the courses taught were important.

Low Teacher Expectations

Low expectations of Black students by teachers is one of the main concerns of parents. Black learners live with the feeling that some teachers expect them to fail. "*Teachers feel that Blacks are dumb and incapable of doing the work.*" Students complained of not receiving encouragement or positive feedback from teachers.

Black students talked of having to prove themselves to others before they can be accepted as equals. The feeling that Black Nova Scotians have to constantly prove themselves in order to be accepted is not new. A brief explanation of the origins of this feeling can help us understand the phenomena.

Like anyone, Black students risk devaluation for any particular show of incompetence, such as a failed test or incorrect pronunciation. As Black Nova Scotians they further risk that such performance will confirm the broader, racial inferiority of which they are suspected. Thus from first grade through graduate school, Black students carry the added fear that in the eyes of those around them their humanity could be in question with a poor answer or a stupid question. Black students quickly learn that acceptance, if it is to be won at all, will be hard-won. Secondly, they learn that even if a Black student achieves exoneration in one setting with their teacher and fellow students, this approval must be earned over again in the next classroom and at the next level of schooling.

We heard that some teachers feel that helping Black students is a waste of time and show no interest in what Black students are doing. We also heard that some teachers and guidance counsellors often encourage Black learners to take general courses *so they can get by.*

People described personal experiences with certain teachers who advised them to take a low level course because it would be easier for them. Others recalled how a guidance counsellor had tried to steer them into vocational training. Parents recounted incidents when teachers tried to persuade them not to expect much from their children:

> *They told me my son was a slow learner and not to expect too much from him. I stood by him and taught him. Throughout high school, he got awards for the highest marks and finished his Bachelor of Commerce degree in three years. They said the same thing about my daughter who now has a Bachelor of Science degree. We must raise the awareness of parents.*
> BLACK PARENT

This tradition of labeling, low teacher expectations and tracking created a sense of distrust and suspicion between Black learners and the school. Some students decided not to seek guidance from the guidance counsellor, others followed the counsellor's advice only to find out later that they had been misled. One Black woman, now with over ten years teaching experience, told us how her guidance counsellor persuaded her that secretarial work was her best choice although this was not the student's preference. She followed the guidance counsellor's advice and completed a secretarial course. After working for three years as a secretary, she was convinced that she did not want to be a secretary. She wanted to be a teacher. She resigned her job and enrolled in Teachers College. Other students were unsuccessful in resisting placement in the low level course because the school managed to convince the parents that the child could not handle higher level courses.

Teachers agree that expectations impact on the child's motivation to learn:

> *As a teacher if you expect that because a child is Black he is never going to learn, then he probably never will. It is what you expect, and if I was teaching here (in the Black community) or in the mucky-muck section of the city my expectations should not be any different.*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Students can read teachers' attitude and expectations. Most teachers reject the notion that they have different expectations for their students based on gender, socio-economic background or race.

> *Well, I have very strong feelings about (teacher) expectations. As far as I am concerned, if a child is Black or White or Pink, I have the same expectations for that child; I have the same expectations for that child if he came from Tupper Street or if he came from Boulderwood. That really doesn't make any difference to me.*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Nevertheless, school administrators and teachers admit that some teachers have different expectations for students because of their colour. They still harbor doubt that Blacks have the intelligence to perform at high academic levels.

> *Hopefully they are in the minority. We call them racists. There are some. Racism by any means is not dead. It's unfortunate but it is not dead.*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Educating teachers to the fallacy of their assumptions can be as hard as educating children because *attitudes die hard.* These attitudes have played a significant role in the failure of Black students.

Regarding the apparent differences in the performance of Black and White students, everyone seems to shift the blame to someone else. Often parents blame teachers and vice-versa. But teachers also blame each other. Elementary teachers blame the junior and senior high school:

> *My experience is in the elementary school system. As far as the elementary children go, the Black children are on equal footing with White kids. It is different when they reach junior and senior high. In fact there was one child I heard about the other day who has dropped out of school. I taught that child in primary and I could not believe that child dropped out. He was bright and very willing to learn, very energetic about anything that was going on in class. He was one child that I remember and I was really disappointed when I learned that he was going to a foster home and had not been in school for a while.*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The junior and senior high teachers say many children arrive in junior high with a significant knowledge deficiency, sometimes unable to read and very little can be accomplished without reading skills. "*Junior high is too late to do anything*" for students who have not mastered the basics. If these low expectations are communicated to the child, the child gets discouraged, frustrated and if no assistance is provided, failure and withdrawal could follow.

Parents are also concerned that some teachers are giving Black students social passes/ promotion.

> *Teachers in Junior High just pass you on even if you are not ready. When you get at high school it is not that way.*
>
> EARLY SCHOOL LEAVER

On the one hand, students support this view. On the other hand, we heard complaints from other students who work hard but do not receive the marks they deserve. Some students felt that on average Black students are awarded lower marks than White students for the same quality of work. For example, we heard of a Black and a White student, in one of the Truro schools, who worked together on a project. The two students shared the same information but when they got their papers back, the White student scored 20 points higher than his Black peer.

We heard that some teachers tend to support Black students who are involved in sports but do nothing about the students' poor grades.

> *When you are into athletics, you are appreciated more. Expectations are different. School should be a place for more than sports. People feel that you will probably grow up to be a gas station attendant.*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Teachers should place equal emphasis on academic work and sports when they attempt to direct a child's energies.

Low teacher expectation needs to be understood in the context of the low expectations Canadians have of African Canadians generally.

> *School doesn't prepare you for the racism in the real world. They don't teach about Blacks. In the real world they look at you and tell you what job to do rather than asking you what you want to do.*

Clearly one of the main problems for Black learners is a self-perpetuating cycle of low expectations and low achievement, rooted in assumptions about race and class. Some teachers in the education system for various reasons believe that Black students cannot learn. One consequence of these low expectations has been watered down curriculum and instruction, which is self-defeating. The watered down curriculum of general courses and special programs such as *Creating A Career*, with trimmed reading assignments and simplified vocabulary, lowers the reading skill level of each child.

Moreover, the classroom atmosphere is influenced greatly by the academic expectations a teacher holds for students. All too often teachers have been socialized to hold lower academic expectations for minority students than for White students. Teachers express these lower expectations when they give simpler tasks to minority students than to White students; allowing minority students to get away with doing less academic work than White students. They focus more time on social behaviour among minority students and on academic behaviour among White students; attribute poor performance by minority students to factors outside the students' control while attributing high performance in White students to effort and other factors within the students' control.

Furthermore, teachers' behaviour often offers more encouragement to White students than Black students. To counteract this, teachers need to carefully monitor their own behaviour. One way to do this is to invite a friendly and honest colleague to observe one's classroom interaction and give feedback. In addition, teachers should make clear and positive statements of academic expectations to the entire class, sending a message that learning is valued for all students.

Teachers need to communicate to students not only that they believe the Black students have the potential to be successful in academic work but also that such work is worthwhile. As well, teachers need to give encouragement and specific suggestions about how to improve academic work to both minority and White students. Therefore, schools of education must produce teachers who believe that every child can learn. School boards must provide in-service for the practicing teachers to reinforce this principle.

Prejudiced teachers who are resistant to changing biased or racist teaching behaviours which impede the growth and development of minority students rarely alter their behaviour and practices without pressure from the outside. Parents, school administrators, school boards and the Department of Education must provide this external pressure.

Recruitment and Staffing

One of the many ways in which institutional racism has perpetuated itself has been through the almost exclusive recruitment of White teachers to the profession. The main issues surrounding recruitment and hiring of Black teachers is the failure of the system to recruit adequate numbers of Black teachers and the failure of training institutions to attract more Black student teachers. These low numbers of Black educators has ensured that White interests, cultural assumptions and the racial *status quo* are maintained.

As a result, Black students have been unable to see Black role models and have also failed to see any real valuing of themselves or the race to which they belong within the school system. On the contrary, they see the stereotype of Black people in service roles being reinforced as the few Black employees in the school setting tend to be in support jobs rather than in senior teaching positions. This exclusion of Black people from teaching jobs exemplifies some of the forms of racism which exist within the educational system.

Racial harassment, differential treatment, low teacher expectation, labeling, stereotyping, streaming and teacher insensitivity are all factors which decrease the learners' sense of trust, belonging, identification and security in the relationship with those in teaching positions. In turn these factors impact negatively on the learning process.

Lack of Role Models

Lack of role models in the community and the education system is of great concern for students and parents across the province. Black parents realize the positive aspects of having proper role models for their children. But what do we understand by role models and how important are they in the teaching/learning process?

We can define the term *role model* by breaking it into two parts. *Role* refers to:

> *The pattern or type of behaviour which the child – and adult – builds up in terms of what others expect or demand of him. It refers to the automatic, learned, goal-directed pattern or sequence of acts developed under the influence of the significant people in the growing child's environment.*

On the other hand, The Oxford Dictionary defines *model* as an exemplary person. For example, a model of self-discipline. Therefore by *role models* we refer to people who represent the best patterns of behaviour or achievement in their chosen field of study, vocation or profession. We often use role modeling in teaching. Modelling is:

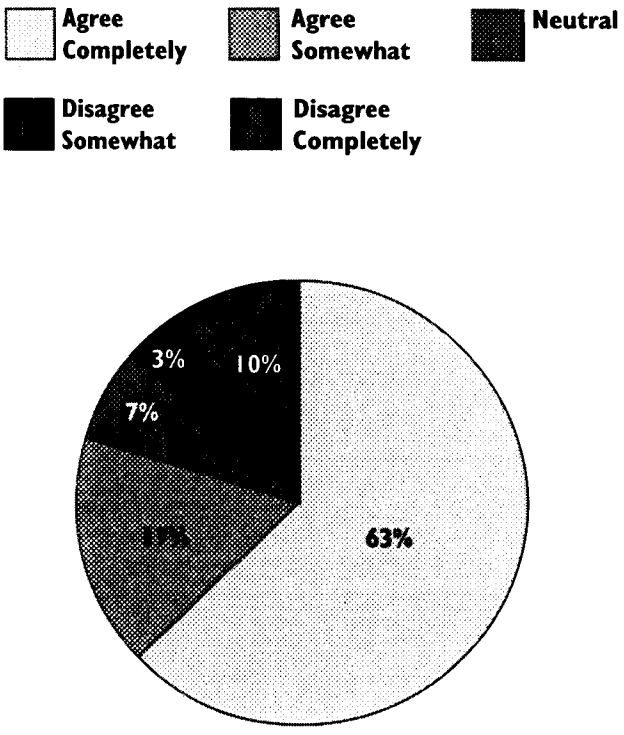
> *A training technique based on role-playing, and reinforcement that changes behaviour directly through the fundamentals of social learning rather than indirectly through traditional training approaches (such as lectures, the case method). It consists of imitation of effective behaviours, reinforcement or recognition for application of the specific behaviours, and transfer of training principles. Modelling consists of a concise and distinct display of the desired behaviour in a specific situation typically by a person whom the observer is likely to regard as competent.*

Children learn by imitation of adults. The best teachers teach by example. Using role models as a teaching technique is about teaching by using examples of successful individuals in their specialized fields be it farming or nuclear physics. Participants felt that often the role models presented are considered out of reach or unrealistic to the impoverished Black child. Role models should not only inspire toward power or wealth. They could be ordinary people who are caring, honest, courageous or selfishly give of their time to help others.

Data collected through the socio-demographic survey and summarized in the figure below back up the importance of ensuring Black students have role models available to them within the school system.

My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if there were Black teachers in my school.

Source: BLAC Survey



Few Black learners going through the Nova Scotia school system have had or will have the opportunity to be in a classroom where the teacher is a Black person. As a result many Black students feel isolated in the total school environment. It is important to have a teacher or counsellor in the school with whom students can identify and freely discuss their concerns. As one student commented, "*It is easier to talk to a Black person because they probably went through the same problem.*"

The schools have done little to encourage or to inspire Black learners to achieve. Parents felt that Black children are missing out. Some of the White teachers don't care at all. Some White people hear you talk but they don't listen to you.

> *I think Black students need to find someone in the system who cares about them. Teachers of any race can understand that situations may be different. Students need to have people say that the contributions made by Blacks are important. There are not enough Black teachers in the schools. Black students do not see enough role models in the places they should see them and school is one – the same goes for textbooks. It has to be that school is not a White domain. There needs to be someone who monitors very closely the programs that the Black students go into. It is scary for kids when you are the minority and I think it is a lack of information that causes incorrect decisions to be made.*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL VICE-PRINCIPAL

It was also felt that the absence of role models in other sectors of society and professions tends to limit Black learners' educational and career aspirations. They sense a glass ceiling in job opportunities.

> *I believe that good role models are very important. I think that all young people need to see people of their own gender and race in jobs and positions. All parents want their children to do better than them. But I think that part of an experience is the wishes of those who are important to you. Sometimes it takes a generation to change things. I am sure historically Black students were kept very isolated – my guess would be that they would not have had a great experience in school.*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL VICE-PRINCIPAL

A majority of Black people from the smaller communities and towns who get a good education usually have to leave for the larger cities. People realize that the lack of employment opportunities in the rural communities and small towns means that young people have to migrate to find work. However, this means that youth in these communities are left without role models to emulate. And without employment opportunities, it is difficult to encourage them to stay in their communities.

> *I suppose there are special problems for the Black male students. Pressure from peers has more of an influence than home life and family because there are many one parent families. Some little boys whether they are Black or White, don't have very good self-esteem sometimes because they have no male role models. It is worse still if you do not have a grand-dad or someone with whom your male child can be. I know here we have one male teacher and the kids just love him; male and female kids. They really think he is wonderful. It's too bad there are not more male role models. That way, maybe Black boys, Black kids could feel they have a big brother.*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The few role models who are left in the community find their free time taken up in committee work as representatives of the Black community or are too busy working on their careers leaving little time to spend with younger members of their community. As a result, children are exposed to the wrong type of model. Some of the people they admire have never worked a day in their lives.

Black students are not motivated to enter university because they perceive their job opportunities are limited by racial discrimination. The same feeling of limited job opportunities has discouraged Black learners from entering the teaching profession.

African Canadians and other minority children must feel accepted by their teachers and feel a sense of pride in their ethnic cultures and contributions to the positive development of the world. Minority groups whether they be elementary or mature students need similar people with whom to talk and share feelings. Black students have had few Black role models and have consequently failed to value themselves positively. The education system through its recruitment and hiring practices ensures that Black learners have no role models who look like them in the education system. The result is a continuing feeling of being *unwelcome guests.*

The learner's self-image can be influenced through the use of role models in the hands of a skilled teacher. Role models may be effectively used with all age groups and are found in all socio-economic groupings and across racial barriers. The North Branch Regional Library in Halifax has developed an extensive list of literature and materials for developing instruction around role models. The Black Educators Association can also be of help with local, national and international lists.

Some White teachers are very good role models. "*The bottom line is whether they care about kids.*" But it is important for Black children to have positive Black role models because children need to see people like themselves who are competent, able, caring and responsible. Dr. James Comer, the progressive educator at Yale Medical School's Child Study Centre, explains that :

> *Part of what happens to Black kids is that somewhere between ages 8 and 14, the identity issue is very great. The kid has to see himself or herself as a Black person, as a positive person, as a capable person. Race is tied up in all those issues. If you see only competence in Whites and incompetence in Blacks, then that makes your race a difficult proposition for you.*[4]

Black youth talked of being inspired by their parents, aunts, uncles, god-parents other relatives and Black public figures. They said that they admired these individuals "*for their determination and their strength of character.*" Many said that their parents had done a lot to help them succeed when they were young. Black youth often named their relatives as providing inspiration but in the majority of cases they named Martin Luther King Jr.

Without a doubt, role models are important. Although some school boards are hiring Black teachers, they are still under-represented in the teaching force.

School boards across Nova Scotia must address this imbalance at all levels of the school system. Each school board must make a serious effort to recruit Black teachers and administrators.

The Black Educators Association and the BLAC feel that the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) should amend, where necessary, its internal structure and philosophy to include a strong commitment to Affirmative Action/Employment Equity for Black teachers within the union. This is a necessary step which the NSTU can take to redress the under-representation of Black teachers within the system. In this way, we can make the schools more inclusive and a truer reflection of Canadian society.

Distribution of Black Teachers

BLAC Region	1988/89	1992/93	Total No. of Teachers 1992/93
Antigonish/Guysborough	3	4	434
Cape Breton	3	4	1,409
Dartmouth (DSB)	6	13	662
Halifax	13	28	1,014
Halifax County Bedford	40	45	1,927
North Region (Cumberland, Colchester-East Hants, Pictou)	13	10	1,769
Southwest Nova (Digby, Shelburne, Queen and Yarmouth)	7	7	659
Valley Region (Annapolis, Hants West, Kings, Lunenburg)	5	9	1,674
Other	1	1	819
Total	**91**	**121**	**10,367**

Percentage of Black Students/Teachers to Other Students/Teachers

BEA 1989 Survey, BLAC Database, and the Department of Education Statistical Summary, September 1993.

	Black Students	Other Students	Percent
1988-89	3,666	163,930	2.2%
1992-93	4,192	161,920	2.5%

	Black Teachers	Other Teachers	Percent
1988-89	91	10,766	.85%
1992-93	121	10,246	1.17%

Black Student Enrolment

BEA 1989 Survey, BLAC Database, and the Department of Education Statistical Summary, September 1993.

BLAC Region	1988/89	1992/93	% of Increase
Antigonish/Guysborough	183	221	20.8
Cape Breton	184	498	7.6
Dartmouth (DSB)	483	531	9.9
Halifax	997	1,088	9.1
Halifax County Bedford	955	1,179	23.5
North Region (Cumberland, Colchester-East Hants, Pictou)	286	338	18.2
Southwest Nova (Digby, Shelburne, Queen and Yarmouth)	318	345	8.5
Valley Region (Annapolis, Hants West, Kings, Lunenburg)	260	292	12.3
Total	3,666	4,192	14.4

Monitoring, Assessment and Accountability

The monitoring, assessment and accountability of programming and student achievement must be continuous. However, to determine the actual achievement of goals, predetermined tools for gathering such data should be administered as scheduled. Are the teachers practicing the new non-racist behaviours everyday and with what results on student motivation, attitudes, and achievement? What changes are needed in the program design? What happens to those teachers who choose not to or appear unable to successfully implement the programs after staff development? The answers to these questions are critical. Nothing can be reformed, restructured or transformed successfully unless the teaching-learning environment and behaviours are changed.

Areas to be monitored should include movement towards the stated vision, the school philosophy, school and classroom organization, staffing, curriculum and instruction, reinforcement and enrichment resources and parent involvement.

Resources should be identified prior to implementation of the program design. Should resources not be available to fund the entire program, priorities may have to be established and the program phased in as resources become available.

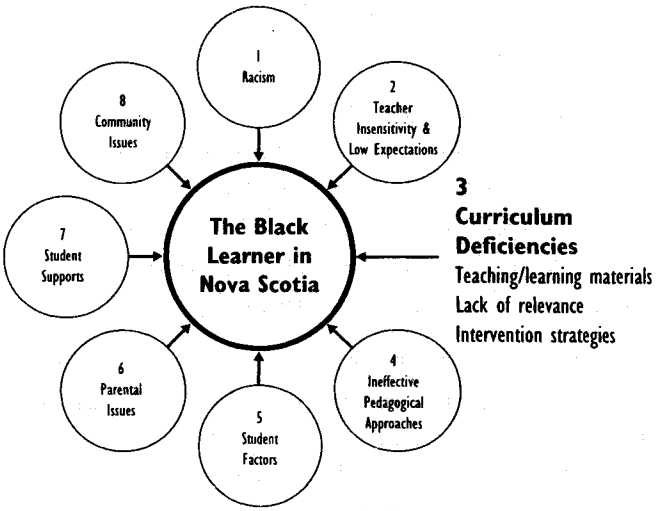
3 Curriculum Deficiencies

Education is that process that we go through to enable us to deal with our life. That is what education is. The education system does not give Black people the tools to deal with everyday life because it is not part of the experience of those who are handling the education process. If you are Black, you've got to deal with hostility as well as covert and overt discrimination on a day to day basis. There is nothing in the education system that equips you to deal with that.

Our education system, overall doesn't deal with positive aspects of Black History; both the experience here and elsewhere – it is just not part of the instruction. It does not truly deal with the composition of community; Blacks are so under-represented as teachers, administrators and policy makers. Until policy makers become sensitive to the problems that Black people encounter, the system cannot address the problems of Blacks.

BLACK EDUCATOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER

Education has often been seen as a major vehicle, if not *the* major vehicle, for transmitting a society's heritage and the accumulated knowledge of the past. But in the case of Canada, and the Nova Scotia school system, Black Nova Scotians do not seem to be part of that heritage. Black history and culture are not part of the core school curriculum. Thus cultural isolation is one of the major barriers to Black achievement as the education system does not provide cultural education for Black learners.



Not surprisingly, the lack of Black content in the curriculum was one of the major themes in the discussions about the curriculum in Nova Scotia:

Traditionally, the image of Black people as portrayed in film and in legislation has been a negative one. Black children have not seen themselves presented in a positive light. Within the school system any Black history taught dealt mainly with the slave trade, and the institution of slavery. They were not taught the glorious history of civilizations of Africa dating back to ancient days. Knowledge of their roots which would have made them proud was denied to them.

BLACK CULTURAL CENTRE

There is no visual cultural affirmation of African Canadians within the school system; from textbooks and teaching materials to teacher representation. Most teachers have little or no knowledge of Black culture. There is a lack of African/Black studies in school curriculum.

In every community people talked about this omission and its impact. People felt devalued by the education system which refuses to recognize their existence:

> *We go to school but we do not learn anything about ourselves. We need to learn more about ourselves so that we can counter stereotypes. Black history and culture needs to be incorporated within the total school system. All students should learn about our history.*

There is a lack of culturally relevant books at all levels from elementary to post-secondary education and in adult education. There are few if any books on African Canadian history and culture in school libraries. The exclusion and absence, from the curriculum and teaching materials, of Black history and culture in the schools is an issue that was repeatedly mentioned. The effects of this exclusion on the Black students were clearly articulated by a fourth grader:

> *Going to school and not hearing anything about your experience is very isolating. I feel I am not important. It doesn't give me a sense of self-esteem. It makes me feel invisible. It makes me feel less than others.*

In many cases, attempts to include Black history or history of other cultures has been considered ridiculous. Many schools do not recognize the existence of Black learners until February – Black History Month. Inclusion of other cultures is limited to a half-day Multicultural or Human Rights Day. Even then, the program is marked by cultural displays, tasting of exotic foods and "*nice costume!*" comments.

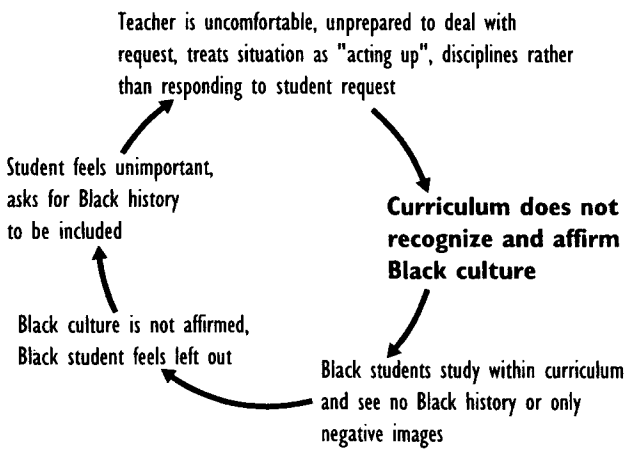
Students observed that when African/Black studies are included, emphasis tends to be on the negative aspects. Events are presented without context or follow-up. Some students commented that whenever the word *Black* is mentioned in a textbook, they expect something negative to follow. Thus what is intended as inclusion turns out to be isolation. Respondents recalled that whenever the film *Roots* was presented in class, increased name-calling followed. Consequently, some Black learners shy away from Black history lessons and courses because they have been conditioned to expect negative comments. "*The teacher emphasizes the bad and never the accomplishments*" noted an Elementary school student.

Concern was expressed by all groups that the education system, by the omission of Black history from the curriculum, devalues the contributions of Black people to Nova Scotia and humanity.

> *When we asked about Black history in class the teacher thought that we were being smart.*
> HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

According to Black students, some teachers believe Black people have not made any significant contributions to humankind. In some cases, teachers get upset when their students request the inclusion of Black or African history. Students think that these teachers act in this way because they have no background in Black history. "*Teachers do not know about Black History, so, how can they teach us?*"

Curriculum



It is clear that there is still resistance by many White educators to considering race and culture as factors associated with the schooling process. Yet dissonance between cultures limits teachers' ability to recognize, promote and generate activities and events which may impact Black learners positively.

The issue of exclusion of African Nova Scotians and the contributions and achievements of African people in the curriculum came up in every focus group and every interview we conducted. Most people felt that not enough has been done to incorporate Black history into the classrooms of Nova Scotia's schools and colleges.

The way educators handle pluralism affects the atmosphere of the classroom and the school. Multiculturalism is typically acknowledged in schools by devoting short concentrated periods of the school year to the *celebration* of some minority group's history and culture. After this period is over, teachers and administrators get back to the *important* subjects of school.

Black history or literature courses where they are offered remain apart from the mandatory curriculum. This lack of appreciation and sharing of African Canadian history and culture has hindered the progress of Black learners by depriving them of inspiring images and motivating achievements.

Schools need to do more than simply recognize the existence of other cultures. They need to incorporate them into the classroom every day. Non-European cultures must be presented not as adjuncts to the regular curriculum but as part of the total curriculum presented to the child. This could include discussions of African or Chinese fiction, world history including the history of Africa and Asia and demonstrations of Canadian history which include the perspective of First Nations people, Black people and White people.

Teaching/Learning Materials

People talked a great about negative racial and gender bias in learning materials particularly textbooks. Enid Lee describes negative bias as "*any portrayal either visual or linguistic that invites the interpretation that certain groups of people are inherently inferior while others are superior.*" (1985, page 40). Exclusion and insensitivity was also noted in the pictures and posters in the schools. One parent noted:

> *If all you see on the walls of your school is a big Black male wrapped in chains, looking like he is ready to kill someone, that is not going to give you a positive feeling about who you are and it definitely will reinforce the negative stereotype image White society has of Black people. I saw this picture in a grade two classroom in a school which felt they were including the Black child's culture by depicting this poster. Granted it was several years ago when Mr. T. was the rage. However, it was not a positive experience for me and I am sure it was not positive for the children attending the school everyday.*
>
> PARENT

It is important to address the issue of bias. There are some who feel it does not matter what we teach while others would like everything questionable to be removed. Undoubtedly, there are some texts which do so much damage that they should be withdrawn. Just as *Little Black Sambo* had to be removed, most Black parents, students and educators believe *To Kill A Mockingbird* should also be withdrawn. Placing a text in its historical and social context would be one way of helping students to address bias. But if we are to help students we need to understand how biased books and audio-visuals materials work.

Biases work because they reflect some social realities and they fit already held views. Significantly, the transmission of the majority culture is often pursued subliminally. This

subliminal transmission is what people mean when they say that children's attitudes and behaviour are influenced by what they see around them. Materials such as murals, paintings and posters are often used to make students feel welcome and part of the school environment. Yet a Black child may well not conceptualize that the lack of pictures in the textbooks and on the bulletin boards about Black people in important roles perpetuates the concept of majority intellectual and social superiority. Minorities have been slow in recognizing this function. Hence this exclusion or relative absence of contrasting role models, messages and value systems was never actively raised as an issue until recently.

Research indicates that the school environment plays an important role in the student's motivation to achieve and produce at a higher caliber. The use of racist and outdated material in the curriculum concerns many parents and students. Some of the materials included in the curriculum help to perpetuate racial stereotypes if not handled with the necessary sensitivity. It was recommended that such materials should be discarded from the Departmental approved list, replaced or supplemented with up-to-date materials. The book *To Kill A Mockingbird* has come to symbolize all the frustrations Black learners and parents feel about the curriculum. As one parent put it, there needs to be a balance between "*quality education and the emotional upset Black children feel*" when reading this text.

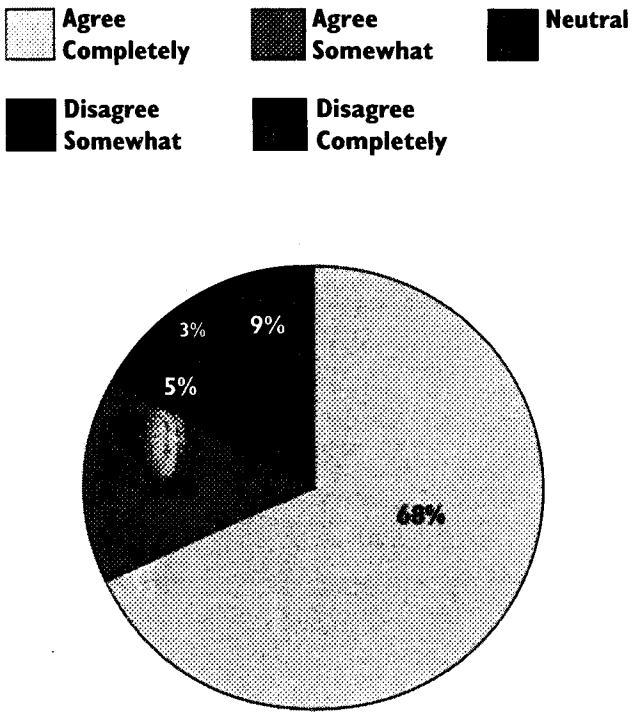
People stressed the need for materials on Black studies. There are almost no books on Black history in the school libraries. Despite all the talk about inclusion of Black/African History in the curriculum, little exists. In many schools, Black history lessons are offered only during Black History Month.

Sixty-eight percent of respondents in the socio-demographic study carried out as part of the BLAC research commented that more text book references to Black contributions would have made school more meaningful.

Respondents felt that every effort must be made to obtain culturally relevant materials to reflect the Canadian human mosaic.

> *Reading is a matter of priority not a money issue. Finding culturally relevant material must be a priority. The province should provide information and resources to all teachers so that they can teach and have appropriate information on all people in the world.*
> PARENT

My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if there were more textbook references to Black contributions.
Source: BLAC Survey



Above all, the teaching materials used in the classrooms and lecture halls must reflect our diverse society in a positive light. They must relate to the experiences of the students while aiding the extrapolation to a global perspective. They must also challenge inequality, injustice and racism. Teacher training institutions must re-examine their own curriculum for evidence of non-racist teaching approaches and materials.

On the positive side, we were informed that the Black Educators Association is currently working with Media Services within the Department of Education to provide posters for schools that depict Black people who have contributed to our society. Biographies will also be developed around the persons on the posters. The Curriculum Committee has also just completed a review of 85 resource books that have positive images and stories teachers can use. More such initiatives are needed.

Lack of Relevance

We found that many early school leavers and students felt that what they learn in school is irrelevant to the real world. Sometimes the work is neither challenging nor interesting and this contributes to boredom. One student remarked: "*Work in grades 8 and 9 looked the same.*" But when they drop out to join the real world, they soon discover that the real world demands a real education, nothing less than a high school diploma.

Some people also believe that Black males face a stiffer battle in attaining education: "*Males, more so than females, have no motivation to learn.*" But others disagree that gender plays any role: "*If the appropriate learning environment is created, then gender is not a problem.*"

Attendance is not a major cause of poor performance. According to one Vice Principal of a high school, "*Black students come to school on a regular basis. They do not cut school but yet they still have difficulties with academic success.*"

> *We have to contend with the high levels of disillusionment. But we continue to hold on to this hope that things will change without the other groups, agencies and structures playing their part.*
> VICE PRINCIPAL

It was suggested that parents and educators need to be specific about their expectations of Black youth. We should provide students with alternatives. Mentoring, peer tutors or counsellors, conflict resolution and behavioral modification programs could be used to assist students survive the system. Recognizing that all learning does not take place in the school is crucial. Black youth need a vision.

Parents believe that teachers do not give children incentives to learn or do their homework. When parents request the teachers' assistance, they are told that because of budget restrictions, "*schools can't afford paper to send home extra work.*" Parents also feel that many teachers don't want to give up their free time at recess or lunch hour to tutor students or talk to parents.

Educators must find a way to make school more relevant to the real world for those students whose immediate plans may not include university study. We must find ways to make school more inviting.

One message from a heated debate on motivation was that youth need safe and challenging opportunities during the after-school hours and Saturdays. Parents and students indicated strong interest in after-school programs that would offer activities such as life skills, study skills, tutoring, homework assistance and Black history.

Anyone who works with children or, indeed, learners of any age, must be familiar with the ages and stages of cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. When activities or learning materials are above or below the child's appropriate level, problems will usually arise. A bored child is often disruptive in order to put some life into the program and to attract the teacher's attention so that something more interesting will happen. The child for whom the material is too difficult may become very frustrated and behave disruptively or may become bewildered and withdrawn. In any case, learning does not take place. By contrast, materials that are age-appropriate and which build on the child's cultural background will be stimulating and motivating from a cognitive perspective, and will thereby enhance learning.

Parents and educators see education as leading to future success and fulfillment. They appeal to children to forego temporary pleasure for future rewards. But many Black children do not understand success in the future and fulfillment in terms of long-term commitment to education. They have few role models around them to confirm that school education and book learning leads to success. The Black child today sees Black men and women unemployed, hanging around the streets, local bingos and getting involved in illegal activities. Even among Black adults employed full-time, the wages received are often not sufficient to raise a family. Poverty is everywhere. Crowded conditions in the home and idleness create stress. As a result, alcoholism, drug abuse, and family instability are prevalent. This creates a sense of hopelessness among Black youth.

As well, motivation for the majority of middle class children is based upon the realization that school is the single most important tool for entering the affluent world. The evidence is everywhere. Without education and good grades one cannot make it. Many of these children don't like school but they need it; often they do not like their teachers but they know they need them. They are academically talented because the pressure to be so is overwhelming. On the other hand, in the absence of role models, where is the evidence to the Black child in Nova Scotia that formal education leads to an affluent life? This partly explains the indifferent attitude some Black youth display towards education. In order to change attitude, we clearly need to bring Black youth in contact with positive role models. They need a vision. They need hope.

To provide hope, schools, parents and the Black community must create a supportive environment. In a supportive environment where each child's needs are met, they will be motivated to achieve their potential. The teacher must develop a sensitivity to determine what need is not being met when a child seems to be behaving inappropriately. The more the teacher knows about the child's background and family life, the more readily she will be able to assist the child in a warm, supportive manner. This caring for Black learners will enhance feelings of security, belonging and self-esteem which in turn will facilitate learning.

Intervention Strategies

Extensive research in drop-out prevention indicates that to support students who are *at risk*, there is need for a comprehensive approach which includes:

- More communication and mutual support between parents and school; and,
- Early intervention strategies (academic/non-academic) to assist student achievement and boost self-esteem.

School systems which have tried various strategies over the past twenty years have concluded that "*It is the context within which these strategies are carried out*" that will determine how effective they will be for high needs students.

The most effective approach coordinates the efforts of the school, the family, the community and social services agencies. Such a co-ordinated approach incorporates a comprehensive set of strategies that mutually reinforce each other in order to enhance the achievement of students.

The National Drop Out Prevention Centre, Clemson University, South Carolina, after analyzing 350 drop-out prevention programs, identified 10 successful approaches to drop-out prevention.[5] They are:

- Parental assistance and involvement;
- Quality early childhood education;
- Concentrated reading and writing programs;
- Individualized instruction;
- Mentoring and tutoring;
- Work force readiness and career counselling;
- Summer enhancement programs;
- Flexible schedules alternative programs;
- Staff development programs; and,
- Community and business collaboration.

In yet another significant study, R.C. Morris, 1991, identified school and nonschool related factors that appear to make a significant difference in drop-out prevention.[6] These include:

- early intervention (counselling, curriculums)
- school administrators, teachers, and staff that care about individual students and refuse to give up on them;
- remedial reading and basic mathematics offerings in supportive environments;
- academic and extra-curricular activities that afford opportunities to succeed and cultivate a positive self image; and,
- active parent participation.

The earlier the grade level the intervention programs are in place, the more effective the strategy. Ensuring mastery of the basic skills at the elementary level is one way to assist Black learners through the system. This assistance can be achieved with encouragement, proper motivation and appropriate intervention strategies such as the Four Plus program. For long lasting benefits, it is crucial to continue academic and non-academic early intervention strategies all the way through the elementary school to retain the strong positive academic effects of preschool programs.

Secondly, feeder schools need to be in communication with each other and know strengths and weaknesses of students as they progress from elementary to senior high. Schools need to be more aware of the students who need assistance and provide it before they get lost. Most of the high school teachers and administrators we interviewed stated that the Black students' academic problems start in elementary school and worsen in junior high. It is in junior high that remedial courses, academic assistance, motivation and career counselling should be emphasized. "*If a child has not mastered reading and writing by the time they arrive at high school,*" said one Principal, "*I would say it is too late.*"

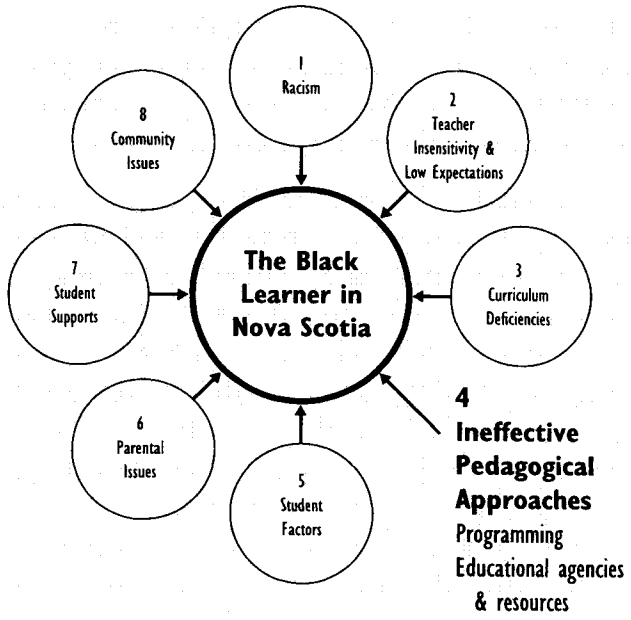
4 Ineffective Pedagogical Approaches

Some students complained that the lessons and teaching materials in the Nova Scotia school system are presented in a boring way. They described the lecture method as some teachers "*talking to themselves.*" People felt that teachers could place more emphasis on group work. This group work approach should be designed in such a way that students with low academic performance can benefit by working with their more advanced peers. "*Make school more fun,*" students said.

Others stated that some teachers "*do not tell you why you have to learn various subjects.*" They recommended that teachers link the subjects to employment and the real world. In line with this, parents suggested that schools should develop or expand co-operative education programs with businesses so that high school and college students can apply what they learn in class to work settings. This would provide relevance for the subject material. The fact that students would also get the highly prized work experience would make it very attractive to the youth.

When asked why Black female students seem to do better than Black male students, some teachers stated that there are more differences between males and females than between Black and White students:

> *Boys are different. Teaching them is different. Teaching boys and teaching girls, they are totally different. They learn differently, they mature differently.*



Teachers try to address these differences in many ways:

> *We compensate in a lot of ways. Like giving boys the extra encouragement. They need the encouragement. We work on their self-esteem if we feel they have low self-esteem. We try to get them interested in different things. Maybe to read more. Offering them more things or different things because basically boys do not mature and are not as ready for school as the girls. I suppose when I look back, I think it all stems back to the family and the home life and we could only do so much in school.*
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Historically, some teachers have acted as a filter to help differentiate the elite from the masses in the social structure. This filter philosophy places the responsibility for learning entirely upon the student. Those who survived the academic endeavour were differentiated from those who lacked survival skills.

This has resulted in an ongoing debate between advocates of two leading, competing pedagogical styles. In fact these two teaching approaches are not mutually exclusive but complementary.

On the one hand, educators have recently been speaking of a curriculum for every student. The assumption is that each learner has a unique learning style. This emphasis on the individual necessitates a demand for re-evaluation and change of traditionally accepted professional roles. Quality of instruction can be defined in terms of the degree to which the presenting, explaining and ordering of elements relate to a given individual. The burden of responsibility is shifting from the student to the school, from differentiating learning readiness between students to bringing many students up to an equal level of competence and knowledge.

In addition, the teaching style that recommends itself most strongly to the realization of *anti-racist teaching* which all good teaching should be is collaborative, group-centred learning. This approach does not deny the usefulness of other teaching methods but rather serves to highlight the numerous benefits from the collaborative approach to teaching and learning.

> *We learn 10 percent from what we read, 20 percent from what we hear, 30 percent from what we see, 50 percent from what we see and hear, 70 percent from what we discuss with others, 80 percent of what we experience and 90 percent if we are able to teach what we learn. The best way to study is to teach it to someone else.*[7]

The group-centered, collaborative approach to learning is broadly accepted. This approach demonstrates a means of effective mixed-ability teaching, whereby members of the group can learn from each other not only subject matter but also real life knowledge of themselves and their counterparts as they apply the lesson at hand. This learning approach also encourages interaction between students in the classroom and the outside world. This approach opens the door to a cultural education that is expressed through the lived experiences of others. Given the stimulation, students can be encouraged to learn respect for each other.

In fact, the group-centered approach develops in the learner the collaborative and democratic skills of listening, negotiating, and compromising. Through the absence of both whole class and individual only pressure, students can, in their groups, develop their critical powers crucial to any emancipatory education. Within this approach, the teacher is cast in the role of consultant, arbitrator and facilitator.

Of course one pedagogical approach throughout the term, even throughout a lesson, can be ineffective and therefore counter-productive. The challenge can be met most effectively by combining individualized instruction, wherein alternative methods and techniques are used to manage alternative modes of learning styles and alternative cultural backgrounds, with group-centered, collaborative learning activities.

The teaching process should be amenable to the cognitive styles of students. Some parents want teaching practices to change to allow for more creativity. "*Now the students must take in the material and give it back. This stifles creativity.*" Also, teachers should include group work as a major instructional component and design so that students with low academic achievement can contribute effectively.

I am not sure that the education system meets the needs of all learners. Having looked at a few Black students, I could see that they needed a different teaching style that would not depend on certain things having happened before they got to school. I am sure if that had anything to do with it, that was more economic than anything else.

HIGH SCHOOL VICE-PRINCIPAL

Research indicates that when a total group's performance is evaluated, group members take on an active interest in their fellow students' knowledge and mastery of the tasks.

The ability of teachers to relate the curriculum to elements of daily life to which their students are familiar is critical. Jamaine Escalane, as portrayed in the film *Stand and Deliver* displayed an uncanny ability to humanize calculus, a normally abstract distant subject to poor youth.

Schools should enable students to discover connections between disciplines and between their studies and the world outside. Programs should help students apply what they learn in school to experiences outside the classroom, often in the context of internships in the community.

Programming

People felt that the current programming is not very stimulating. As one parent stated, "*school could be more exciting and rewarding on a daily basis.*" But first, "*we have to recognize that school as it is, as we know it, is not great.*" To make school "*more fun,*" boards and school will have to consider "*some sort of creative programming, perhaps more integration of cultural programming and industrial programming, along with academic programming.*"

In programming, educators and parents need to recognize that Black Nova Scotians are bilingual.

There are two languages in the Black community – there is the language in your community and then there is the Queen's English you learn in school. Most Black children are not fluently bilingual. They have learned the language in the community but they have not mastered the second language, the language of the education system.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATOR

Failure to recognize this factor may have contributed to labeling of many Black children as *slow learners.* When Black learners entered the integrated schools, they experienced anxiety over verbal expression. Students had not been taught to enunciate and pronounce words properly. Consequently, they were ridiculed by classmates when they spoke. It was suggested that a program be developed to help children become truly bilingual at an early age.

There were a number of concerns regarding upgrading and Adult Education programs. These included:

- Long waiting lists and waiting periods to get into programs;
- High qualifications for admission to programs which result in many Black learners being excluded;
- Inadequate financial assistance;
- The fact that many CEC funded programs require participants to be on Unemployment Insurance. This is an enormous barrier for Black learners as unemployment rates in many Black communities are high;
- Lack of follow up and employment opportunities for participants after training. There is a feeling that CEC is pushing people into training which does not necessarily lead to jobs;

- Lack of culturally sensitive curriculum and Black instructors in upgrading and literacy programs;
- Some programs at the community colleges do not recognize the GED diploma or general math credits;
- Lack of flexibility in the structure of adult education programs; and,
- An indication that many adult learners prefer one-to-one tutoring within their own communities.

Most training programs lack flexibility to meet the needs of clients. Many of the programs are too short and have strict time schedules. As a result, instructors try to cover course materials rather than ensure that students grasp the concepts being taught. This inflexibility means that many participants are not allowed to achieve their learning objectives at a rate appropriate to them.

In addition, respondents stressed the need for Black learners and their communities to recognize the increasingly important role computers will play in the Canadian and global economy. It is therefore crucial that all Black learners are exposed and become proficient with computers as soon as possible.

People indicated that they would like more information sessions on how to access the programs and services available to their group or community. In Metro Halifax-Dartmouth for example, people were aware of the educational resources available at the North Branch Library but indicated that such resources are less accessible to students in outlying areas like Lucasville, Beechville and Hammonds Plains.

One of the areas addressed in the BLAC socio-demographic survey was the overall awareness of educational programs and agencies designed to help meet the needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. The following figure lists five programs identified in the questionnaire, along with the percent of respondents who reported they had heard of the program.

From this figure we can see that the overall level of awareness of these five programs is low. Although more than half of those interviewed were aware of the Black Incentive Fund, this result appears somewhat low, given that the program has been in place for over 20 years. The levels of awareness of the other programs is even lower, ranging from 14 percent to 29 percent.

Respondents were also asked to rate each program with which they were familiar. The rating was based on their assessment of how well the programs were meeting the needs of Black learners. The results of this rating, shown in the following figure, indicate high approval ratings for four of the five programs with approximately half of those who were aware of the programs rating them as *good* or *excellent.*

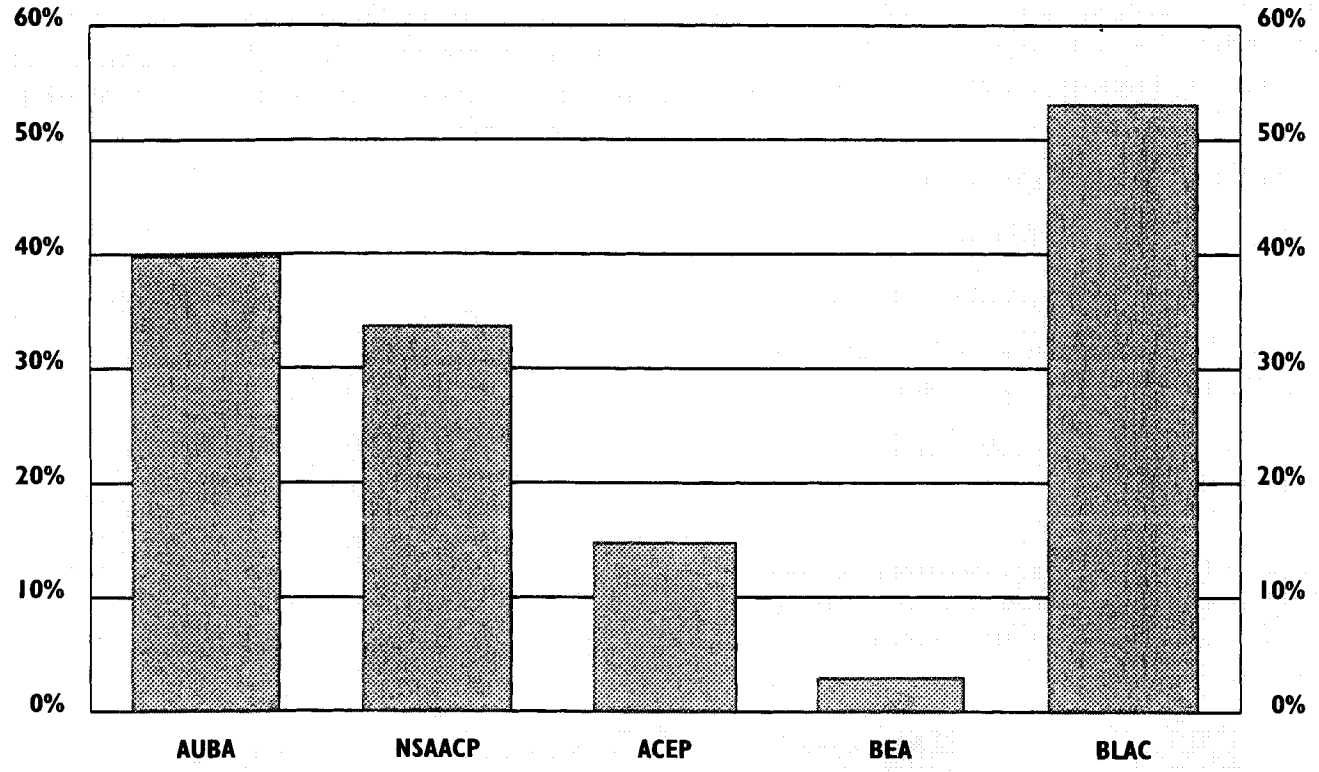
Program and Agency Awareness
Source: BLAC Survey

Program Name	Persons Reporting Awareness of Program	Percent Awareness
Black Incentive Fund	1718	51%
Transition Year Program (Dalhousie University)	921	27%
Supervisory Career Paths Program at Dalhousie University	460	14%
Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq Law Program at Dalhousie	761	23%
Dartmouth East Black Learning Centre	981	29%

BLAC is The Most Widely Known Resource

Percent Awareness

Source: BLAC Survey



Educational Agencies and Resources

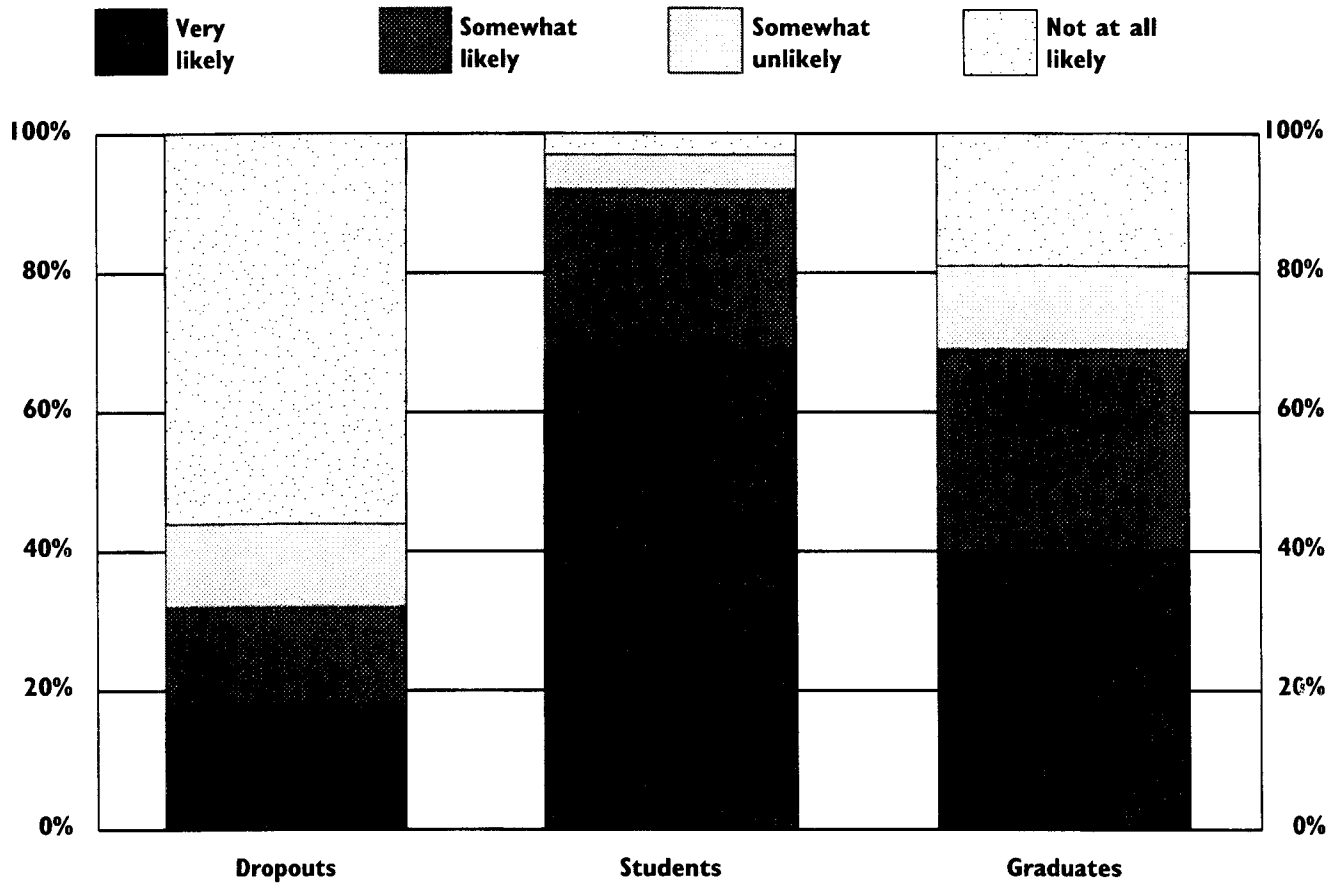
The socio-demographic survey also asked respondents about their awareness of the following agencies or resources that assist Black learners in Nova Scotia:

- Black Learner's Advisory Committee;
- Black Educators Association;
- African Canadian Education Project;
- Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Scholarship Fund; and
- African United Baptist Association Scholarship Fund.

As shown in the following figure, 53 percent of the 3,400 persons who answered this question indicated that they were aware of the BLAC. The AUBA Scholarship Fund was the second most well known program, cited by 40 percent of the respondents followed by the NSAACP Scholarship Fund at 34 percent.

Respondents' Expectations of Continuing Their Education in the Near Future

Source: BLAC Survey



5 Student Factors

The big problem with most Black youth is the fact that they don't know who they are. If I don't know who I am, and if I'm not feeling really good about who I am; and don't know anything about my history, then I don't feel good about myself.

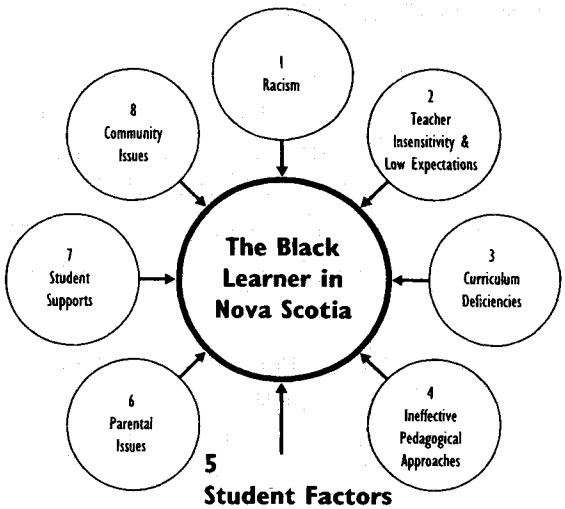
BLACK EDUCATOR, PARENT

Parents acknowledged that many Black learners often display negative attitudes towards teachers, school administrators and authority figures generally. It was felt this was mainly because many Black learners experience low self-esteem. Sometimes students are simply reacting to what they sense as negative attitudes towards them: "*When children are treated negatively, they react negatively.*"

It was stated that many teachers do not want to teach in the inner city schools and the students can sense that. Some teachers demand respect without showing the children respect. Some children are not taught respect at home or at school.

Additionally, parents felt that Black learners have been made to feel inferior by the education system. Many students have been conditioned to believe that only White students can or should excel.

People stated that the negative way in which Blacks are portrayed in the mass media including films, television and books undermine the way Black people and children feel about themselves. They felt negative publicity affects Black children psychologically and emotionally. For example Black students, especially males in Metro Halifax, felt intimidated and victimized by the publicity



Student Factors

Positive self-esteem
Question of Black identity
Poor motivation
Poor academic achievement
Peer pressure
Boredoom
Early school leavers
Teenage pregnancy

on pimps in 1992. Parents felt that this negative bombardment eroded the self-esteem of the Black learners. When Black learners are constantly surrounded by negative attitudes, hostility grows, learners get turned off from academics and become negative themselves. Negative publicity also contributes to the disrespect some teachers and White students display towards African Canadians. Many people expressed anguish that society has failed Black people, then turns around and blames them.

Parents and educators agree that any program for raising educational achievement must emphasize self-esteem enhancement. As a first step, the community must initiate and maintain on an ongoing basis programs and activities geared towards instilling positive attitudes and self-confidence.

Positive Self-esteem

Learning about one's culture is essential to developing a positive self-esteem. People felt that it is important that children are made aware of the contributions of members of their race to the arts, sciences and political life of North American society. It is also important that Black children:

> *become proud of the ongoing accomplishments of their people – the hard work, self-sacrifice, integrity, and ability to survive in a hostile land.*
>
> BLACK CULTURAL CENTRE

People commented that what happens in the community has an impact on the child's self-esteem saying "*it begins within.*" Further, when children enter school, other factors impact on self-esteem. For example, name-calling can damage one's self-esteem. It was noted that from time to time, racial tensions have developed in our public schools and that self-esteem has played a part:

> *Young people with low self-esteem, filled with anger and despair, are likely to react to these situations quite differently from young people who are secure in their own being and feel good about themselves.*
>
> BLACK CULTURAL CENTRE

The absence of positive Black images in the school curriculum was noted many times. It was said that Black children feel unrepresented. Their existence is not validated. They do not feel worthy. This is reflected in some Black children participating in self-abuse, putting each other down or engaging in racial name-calling.

Question of Black Identity

The school system has never provided and still fails to provide Black learners with a cultural education. The absence of positive Black images in the school curriculum contributes to a lack of cultural identity. This in turn results in confusion, identity crises and low self-esteem among many African Canadian students. Many young people told us that they were puzzled with all the different names used in reference to Black people. They noted that the names keep changing – Blacks, Afro-Canadians, and most recently African Canadians.

Very light-skinned children often face discrimination from both their White and Black peers. On the other hand, Black children adopted by White parents also face a similar problem. They are raised in a White culture but may wish to identify with other Black children. Culturally, where do they belong?

Many White parents explained that it is difficult to meet the Black child's identity needs because in most cases parents do not know where to go for information or support. Until the recent formation of a support group in Halifax called Support, Education and Appreciation of Race, Culture and Heritage (SEARCH), there was nowhere multi-racial families could easily turn for help.

Multi-racial families and White parents who adopt Black children are often overwhelmed by anger when they first encounter racism. White parents recounted that shock, hurt and anger turn into bitterness as one is repeatedly assaulted because of marrying someone of a different race or adopting a Black child.

SEARCH was founded by a Halifax social worker to help multi-racial families learn from each other how best to deal with problems of racism. The group holds social events for the children and parents, brings in special guest speakers from Black and other communities and provides

a support network. SEARCH also provides seminars focusing on the educational challenges facing Black and bi-racial students, instruction on promoting positive self-esteem in children, race relations in schools and promoting social change.

Because learning about one's culture is essential to developing a positive self-esteem, it is critical that Black children learn about the important contributions of members of their own race to, for example, the arts, sciences and political life.

Poor Motivation

One of the most serious problems facing Black learners is poor motivation for school achievement. The negative attitudes towards education and building their skills "*is holding them back*", one parent commented. Parents and educators view the challenge as keeping children motivated and interested in school and away from alcohol, drugs and teen pregnancy.

The poor motivation is caused by a number of factors which need to be addressed. First, because they are not represented in the education power structure, Black students do not feel any sense of belonging. Students reported that they often feel ignored by their teachers. They feel they are not treated fairly. Therefore, there is little bonding between the Black students with either the teachers or the school.

Secondly, parents mainly in cities, noted that there are too many attractions offering immediate gratification or a sense of excitement which the schools are failing to match:

> *The school system is not relating to the people who go to it. All it offers is a brass ring at the end. The brass ring is a diploma. But the whole way through is an ordeal. They suffer through it, then they get the brass ring. I think that school can be made exciting and rewarding on a daily basis and the brass ring doesn't need to be the only prize at the end. There can be rewards and reasons along the way. The school should relate to the people who go through it, but it does not. And that is the biggest reason for this feeling of alienation. That is the reason why we have large numbers of people dropping out. Because the brass ring at the end of grade 12 is a long way away when you are in grade nine and that's all you have to go for.*
> BLACK EDUCATOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER

It was suggested that one way school could relate to Black learners is to become more inclusive as opposed to being exclusive, welcoming people in as opposed to driving them out. Today many Black youth, frustrated by the education system and discouraged by what they see as limited employment prospects, do not view education as essential for survival or personal prosperity. People felt that the devaluation of education could possibly explain the poor performance in school.

Furthermore, children having difficulty with school work gradually get bored. Schools could stimulate the interest of Black children by integrating more culture-specific education. Others find the work is neither challenging nor relevant to the real world. Some students need teachers to explain the linkages between subjects to potential future careers and functional skills. Some students have no clear vision of "*what they want to do after they finish school.*" This could be due to lack of information on various career opportunities.

Other contributing factors behind the poor motivation of some Black students identified in the focus groups include low self-esteem, low parental expectations and the limited involvement of the Black community in schools. Some parents rarely show interest in the child's school performance and do not stress the importance of education enough.

Poor Academic Achievement

It was noted that many Black students experience a lot of academic difficulty especially at the high school level. Many need a great deal of assistance along the way in order to get through an academic program. Asked for a possible explanation as to what might have happened to these learners, one Vice-Principal replied:

> *I would suppose they cannot read and that is the single most important reason that prevents a young person from finishing school. These things must be taught at an early age. When children are sixteen or seventeen, in my opinion it is too late. That is why we get these* Stay In School *programs. The money needs to be spent when kids are five or six, by having extra help in class and tutoring programs. The community may take part in this. The inability to read, in my mind, is just devastating for a young person. I see this as a problem for all but more so for Black students.*
>
> HIGH SCHOOL VICE-PRINCIPAL

Moreover, some parents/guardians feel inadequate in assisting their children with their studies because the parents themselves may have little formal education. Many were early school leavers. This has created a cycle of low academic achievement which needs to be broken.

Establishing mentoring programs with a one-on-one component can help Black children master their academics. For instance, the Cultural Awareness Youth Group (CAYG) could team up with younger Black learners directly within the school environment, sharing their school experiences and helping with the younger students' studies.

Adults should take a positive approach with children. The most important thing we can do as parents and educators is build a child's self-confidence. Praise is important in developing the right attitude toward learning and school. We all know this in theory, but in practice, we often forget the importance of praise in dealing with children. We forget how sensitive children can be. Marva Collins, 1990, the renowned educator from Chicago believes in praising and handling errors by working individually with each child.

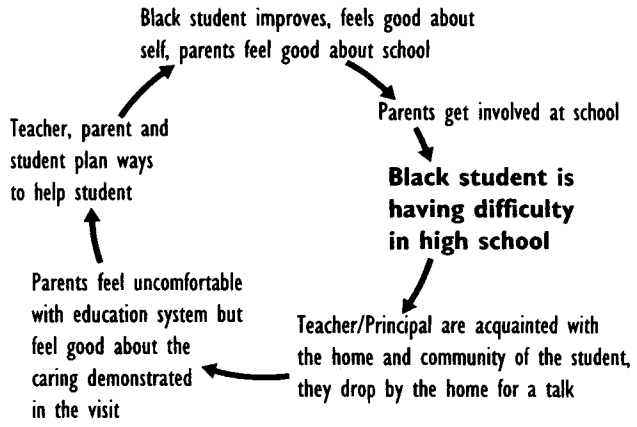
> *To me an error means a child needs help, not a reprimand or ridicule for doing it wrong. No child should ever be told "That's stupid" or "You can't do it" or "You don't know what you are doing."*

She also advocated using errors as a lesson for the whole class. If one child is having trouble with something, it is likely that others could also benefit from a review.

Marva Collins cautioned educators:

> *"It is too easy and convenient to conclude that bad students are poorly motivated or stupid."*

Parental involvement



Peer Pressure

One of the main obstacles Black students face may be negative peer pressure. Some people indicated that they had been influenced by peers to skip class and to start drinking alcohol and smoking. Others have engaged in fights at school to support their friends.

Furthermore, many students have peers who do not see academic achievement as essential to survival and prosperity. They do not see a link between a good education and prosperity. To the contrary, many of their peers who tell them to "*Get out and get a car*" have not completed high school. Most of those who have completed high school earn minimum wage if they find employment. There is little hope for a good paying job.

Many Black students attempting to complete their education find themselves reviled by their peers as trying to *act White* because many teenagers have come to equate *being Black* with alienation and indifference. The phrase *acting White* was once supposed to invoke the image of a Black person who had turned his back on his people and community. Now its application extends to those who aspire to middle class values.

In the junior and senior high schools, promising Black students are ridiculed for speaking standard English, having White friends, showing an interest in academically inclined student clubs or joining activities other than sports. The anti-achievement ethic championed by some Black youth declares formal education useless; those who disagree face isolation and scorn.

The right attitude, according to the targets of ridicule would be shown by skipping classes, talking slang and "*being cool, carrying yourself like you don't care.*" Social success depends on academic failure or mediocre grades; safety and acceptance lie in rejecting the traditional paths to self-improvement. The dismissal of dominant values is thus bound up in the question of Black identity.

The problem is unintentionally made worse by the reaction of teachers to Black students who excel or show promise. Black students who achieve academically and make it to the honor role are viewed as different from the rest. According to one Black student:

> *If a Black student breaks the perceived mold, he or she is put on a pedestal and is made to believe that he or she is better than other Black peers. Peers sometimes equate education with bourgeoisie attitudes.*

It is a sad irony that achievement should have acquired such stigma within the Black community. Hard work, scholarship and respect for family values have long been a cornerstone of Black identity.

The challenge for the educators, Black community and parents is to revive the value system that prizes education as a way of survival. Black youth need a strong family support system to counter negative peer pressure. The people in this support system should point out other people who have been successful.

Many respondents mentioned there is poor parent-child communication, especially with the youth. The need to bridge the generation gap through effective communication was stressed.

> *You have to be home with your kids. You have to talk to them everyday. Parents have to work against peer pressure. The young men are getting easily misled by bad friends.*
> PARENT

Black youth in Cape Breton, Guysborough, Digby, Preston and Metro Halifax/Dartmouth need safe and challenging opportunities during after-school hours. Parents indicated strongly that they would enroll their children in an after-school or summer program offering activities such as study skills, tutoring, homework assistance, Black cultural awareness and history, and life skills.

Boredom

The youth are bored. "*There is nothing to do after school or on weekends except watching television and hanging out with friends,*" they said. There are no after-school or summer programs to keep youth positively occupied. This is a serious problem in Black communities across the province, from Sydney, to Sunnyville, Guysborough, Digby, to Upper Hammonds Plains and Halifax. In the absence of activities and without adult supervision, youth are tempted to experiment with sex, alcohol and drugs. Others "*hang out around the mall*" where they are seen as a threat and are harassed by security guards and police.

Facilities where activities for youth could be co-ordinated are available in the communities but there are no programs and no funding. Everyone is waiting for others to do the organizing. Part of the problem is that many "*parents do not consider themselves leaders.*"

Children are bored with school too. One cause of the problem is learning difficulties. In school, when activities or learning materials are either above or below the child's appropriate level, problems arise. The child may become very frustrated, bewildered and withdrawn. A bored child is often disruptive in order to put some life into the program. In any case, learning does not occur.

Knowledge of development stages allows the teacher to plan activities at an appropriate level and to anticipate responses. When the behaviour is not anticipated, the teacher's reaction is often an emotional one, leading to blaming the child, raised voices, and often perpetuating the stereotypes and discipline problems. Material that is age-appropriate and that builds on the child's cultural background will be stimulating and motivating from a cognitive perspective and will thereby enhance learning.

Early School Leavers

Over the past ten years, there has been a growing interest in the problem of students who do not complete high school across Canada. A number of provincial studies that focus on this specific issue have been completed including the Manitoba High School Review and the Ontario study by George Rawdanski. In 1990, the Federal Government launched the highly publicized *Stay In School* program. As a result, people today are more aware of the issue of early school leavers.

The low number of high school graduates amongst the Nova Scotia Black population is even more pronounced in the Census (refer to the following figure) than in the BLAC survey. The 1991 Census indicates that of the 20-24 year old age group, less than 30 percent have graduated from grade 12. The BLAC survey, on the other hand, found that 49 percent of this group reported they had graduated from grade 12. One reason for this difference is that respondents to the BLAC survey may have overstated their education if they were interviewed by a person their own age; the census method is more anonymous than the BLAC approach.

The negative effects of leaving school before high school graduation are far reaching for the individual, the community and society as a whole. Everyone should be concerned. First, the so called menial jobs, those requiring little or no specific skills or training, are disappearing. Secondly, employers across Canada now stress high school graduation as a minimum requirement. Consequently, youngsters who leave school without basic skills pay a high price in self-esteem and severely curtailed economic prospects. Teenage parenthood, unemployment, poverty and engaging in criminal activities are some of the pitfalls.

Apart from widespread private pain, school failure has both social and economic implications on a national scale. It adds up to an enormous public burden: "*We all pay to support the unproductive and incarcerate the violent. We are all economically weakened by lost productivity.*"

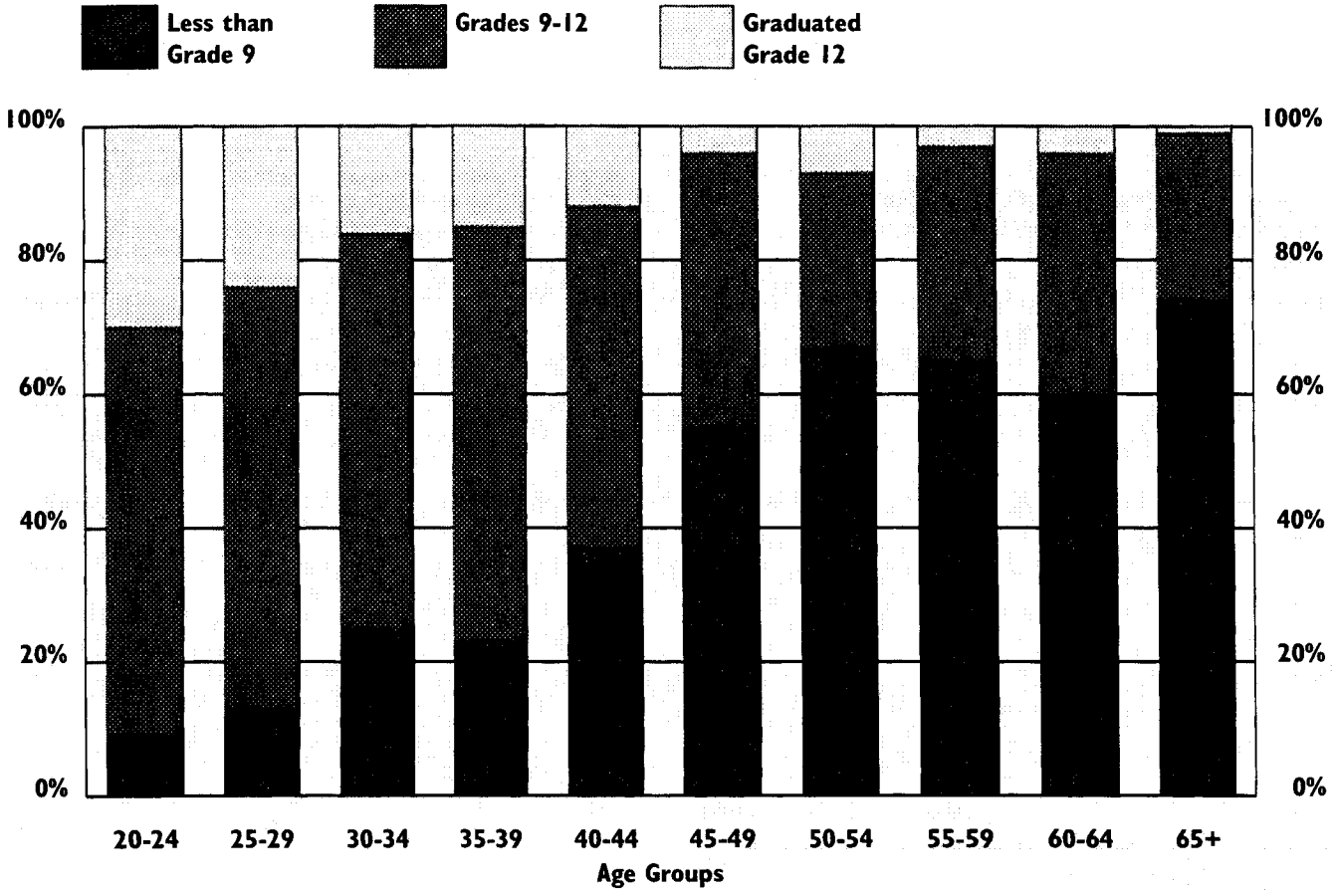
It is for these reasons that attempts are being made to understand the issue and design solutions. One way of understanding the issue is talking to early school leavers and their parents. The following is what we heard:

A lot of us drop out, and I include myself, and you don't know why. All you know is that you hate the system. The question is why? What is it that people hate? I know for me it was not based on lack of self-image but because I had such a positive self-image and the system was racist. The system was anti-Black; it did not accommodate anything of what I needed. And I didn't want to be part of it. I just couldn't be there.

BLACK EDUCATOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER

Highest Grade Completed by the Nova Scotia Black Population

Source: 1991 Census of Canada



The socio-demographic survey explored the issue of dropouts among the Nova Scotia Black population and found that the years from age 15 to 18 inclusive are those of the greatest drop-out risk with the average age at dropout being 16 years. On average, the highest grade completed by those who were no longer students was grade 9.

The BLAC survey also tells us the reasons why Black students dropped out with boredom and inability to relate to school cited by 76 pecent of respondents.

As we look for solutions, it is interesting to learn that it is not only the youth with a poor self-image who leave school but also those with a strong self-image. This tells us that programs to raise the self-esteem of Black youth without changes to the school system would not be sufficient to resolve the problem of early school leaving.

Factors which force students to drop out include: pregnancy and the parenting responsibilities which follow; lack of encouragement and guidance; a poor school environment which leads students to feel disconnected or alienated: "*Sometimes you felt like you were part of the class but most of the time you didn't feel that way.*" Other factors include economic need for work, boredom, academic weakness, poor attitudes towards school and personal problems.

A combination of any of these factors often results in motivational and behavioural problems. The school's response to these problems often determines whether the student stays in school or drops out. The school can react in two possible ways: positively by trying to find out the cause of the problems and assisting to resolve them or negatively by admonishing and suspensions and thus facilitating exit from the school.

Drop-out Age of Early School Leavers

Source: BLAC Survey

Age Group	Number of Persons	Percent
Under 15 years	323	19.4
15 years	227	13.6
16 years	376	22.6
17 years	312	18.8
18 years	268	16.1
19+ years	158	9.5
Total	1,664	100.0
Average Age 15.9 years		

Reasons for Dropping Out

Source: BLAC Survey

Reasons for Dropping-out	Number of Persons	Percent
Didn't relate to school/bored	1,438	76%
Employment	1,305	69%
Family/personal	817	43%
Racism	222	12%
Told to leave	75	4%

Failure in school was seen as one of the main causes of early school leaving among Black youth. Not being instructed at home or school on how to study leaves the Black child with poor study skills and unable to keep up in class:

> *When I was in high school, my writing skills were not the best. I did not know who to contact for help. The only people I could rely on were my sisters and brothers. But for others who do not have older brothers or sisters and who do not have good writing skills, it is hard for them to get a good mark in a course.*
> HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE

Another contributing factor to poor academic performance is poor study environments. Overcrowding in many homes in Black communities leaves no quiet space for the child to study, do his homework or read for pleasure.

Added to the disadvantages mentioned above is a lack of preparation for the transition from elementary to junior high and from junior high to senior high. Parents and many students are not clear about the expectations and requirements. In reality, there is a dramatic difference between the elementary and senior high school. And this is a big problem for many students:

> *One half of the education system is arranged so comfortably that students can never fail or at least are protected from noticing if they do. The other half encourages them to compete fiercely for a few places in the top schools and best universities. That leaves a lot of scope for failure.*
> ROSALIE BECK OSMOND,
> *HALIFAX CHRONICLE HERALD*, JULY 21, 1993

Indeed, when students experience failure in high school where the credit system applies, they become discouraged. Up to this point they may have been pushed forward by teachers, sometimes with parental consent. But after junior high, they have to pass their courses to graduate. It is not surprising that a great many Black students leave school after failing grade ten. People felt that there should be an orientation program to help students advance from one level to another, especially for grade nine students and their parents.

Many Black students also mentioned the lack of support and encouragement at school and at times at home. At times schools attempt to explain or justify the students' academic failure on factors related to home such as children missing breakfast. This may be so but there is much more the school system could do to support Black students.

Many Black students said they chose trade and vocational schools because of the lack of financial resources. Given the family's financial situation, many students considered university education well out of reach: "*Going to trade school was the cheapest way and the next best thing to going to university.*" As discovered in the socio-demographic survey as part of this research, GED and Trades Certificates/Diploma accounted for about 50 percent of the additional education for Black Nova Scotians.

Students indicated that some teachers are insensitive, others are prejudiced. Early school leavers felt that nobody in the school system cared about them. "*They don't care about Black students. They don't care if you are there or not.*" The education system does not provide adequate personal or career counselling to Black students nor do they support the pregnant students.

Many Black males drop out because of frustration:

> *Black boys get frustrated because doors are shut in their faces at an early age, as early as junior high when they try to get summer jobs. They can't get part-time jobs. On the other hand, some teachers go out of their way to get White students part-time jobs.*
>
> PARENT

Determining the educational levels of the Black population in Nova Scotia was one of the key goals of the socio-demographic survey. The household part of the survey asked all the respondents to state their highest grade completed at school as well as any other education they had received. The results include those who were students at the time of the survey as well as those who were no longer students.

In the figure opposite, we see that younger persons are more likely to have completed high school than older persons. Thus while 49 percent of those in the 20-24 and 25-29 year age range reported they had completed high school, the percentage drops quickly between age 30 onwards with only 4 percent of the 60-64 year age group reporting a high school education. The information also indicates that 51 percent of respondents between ages 20-24 and 25-29 are without their grade 12 indicating a significant drop-out rate exists among Black students in Nova Scotia.

To appreciate why Black students leave school we must focus on understanding the thinking which leads a young person to take such a step.

> *I often assume that those persons who had a real positive self-image would tend to stay in school longer than those who had a negative self-image. This wouldn't necessarily be based on economics within our community. It is based on something different. I know we attempt to become what people expect of us. So if the young people going to elementary school believe they have no future, and if they believe that they are not going to be professionals, then the hopelessness starts there.*
>
> PARENT

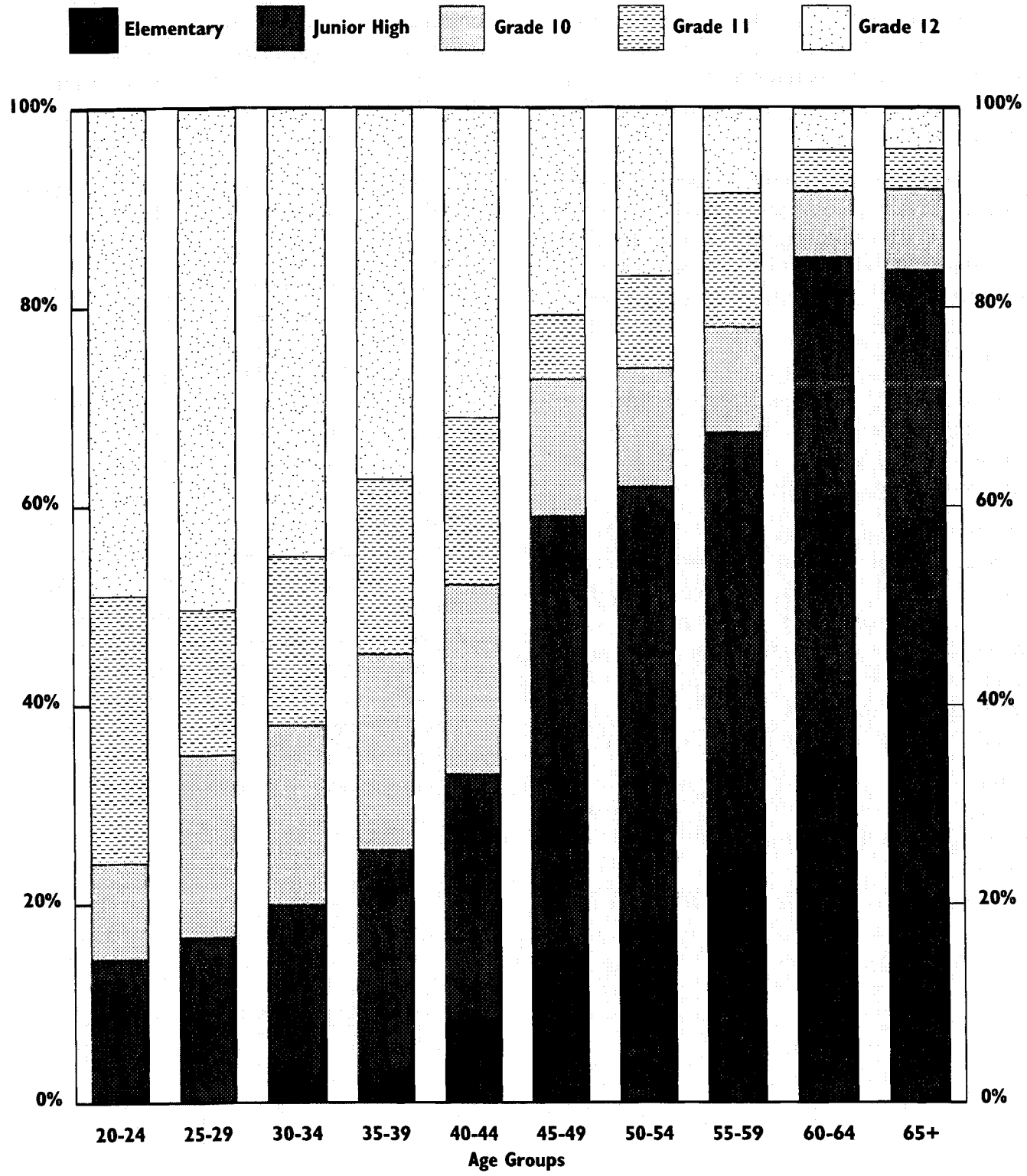
Instead of countering this belief, society has tended to reinforce a sense of hopelessness for the African Canadian child. What we must do is counter these attitudes at an early age with the message "*you are somebody and you can be whatever you want to be.*" We must provide positive reinforcement, praise and encouragement. The Black child needs hope to achieve.

For generations the consequences of school failure have been evident among the Nova Scotia Black community. Some respondents indicated that society, and especially parents and educators, must provide hope to the young person and stress options:

> *It's okay to drop out a year, but you must go back because education is the key. The community should be telling the children that if you don't have an education, you can't succeed. Every day is a learning process and every day will be a hard process, but you have to stand tall, carry on and finish your education.*
>
> PARENT

Highest Grade Completed by BLAC Survey Respondents

Source: BLAC Survey



One very difficult period comes when children reach junior high. Parents felt that most children do well until they reach grade seven. "*After that, they seem to fall through the cracks.*" Apart from academics and school activities there are other factors at this age with which the child must cope and which the parents and teachers must carefully monitor and provide understanding and support.

Junior high is the adolescence period during which children turn into young adults. They are seeking more independence. It is also the time when they are most susceptible to peer pressure to experiment with smoking, alcohol and sex. It is also the time when parents become less involved with the school.

> *One of the major problems is peer pressure. For example, when a student is a leader, has been doing very well and drops out, there is a very direct impact on other students.*

Dropping out is a gradual process. Students do not wake up one morning and decide to leave school. First they drop out psychologically, then drift into absenteeism and hanging out, whereupon they may become entrapped by petty crime and delinquency. This process is often aided by suspending students rather than considering more effective means of discipline.

People felt that early school leavers have a substantial negative impact on their siblings and other children in the community. Because many of them get some money in one way or another, they appear to be the ones who can afford new boots or designer jackets and others envy them. These early school leavers provide the children and youth in the community with the message that:

> *... you can survive if you don't go to school and there is nothing wrong with it. So the child that is trying to go to school is pressured by a peer group that's saying,* "well school isn't important because we can see people who don't make enough or as much as those persons who have no school (education) in their life and are in a racket or something."
>
> BLACK EDUCATOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER

People indicated that even the youth who end up in jail influence youth still in school:

> *The early school leavers tend to spend a disproportionate amount of time doing physical things like basketball, lifting weights etc. and in that sense, have the opportunity to develop their physical bodies. This is especially true for those who have gone to jail. They then stand on the corners, have their bodies on display and, of course, others look up at them and want to look like that. You know, there is a certain macho image that is portrayed by those persons who have gone off either to a detention facility, reformatory, some type of prison. They come back having had three squares a day, all pumped up and have muscles they can show off and say to others, I can do time standing on my head – well, there's really nothing to it. That's what they think. And that has a very detrimental effect on the community.*
>
> BLACK EDUCATOR AND COMMUNITY LEADER

The impact of early school leaving goes beyond the individual economic and psychological handicaps. It scars the community:

> *The impact on peers, is that sometimes it becomes a chain reaction. When a peer finds out their friend has dropped out and they can stay out until 12 pm they do not have to get up early, they have no responsibility, mom and dad are taking care of them, it looks great. Therefore it is glorified and the reaction starts. Siblings are affected in the same way. It looks like the cool way; it's definitely the easy way I can tell you that. But in the long run, it is the hard way. The immediate future looks real good when you get out, believe me, I have been there. Then you realize when you apply for a job with a grade 10 education, they want grade 12. Then you realize you're not going very far and you don't want to pump gas or shovel dirt or be a labourer for the rest of your life. These prospects are at opposite ends of the spectrum when you first get out. You do not look at that. When they mature, hopefully, they do look at that.*
>
> COMMUNITY WORKER

Teenage Pregnancy

A substantial number of teenage girls who drop out of high school do so because of pregnancy. "*Unfortunately, some young girls equate having children with money and independence, only to find out later that they are trapped in the system.*" The majority of these never return to school. Many of the people who said they had left school because of pregnancy hoped to return or had tried to with mixed success. Early school leaving therefore continues to be a consequence of pregnancy although the growing availability of daycare services may help to keep teen parents in school.

There is also an illusion among some of the young girls that it is easy money when you go on welfare.

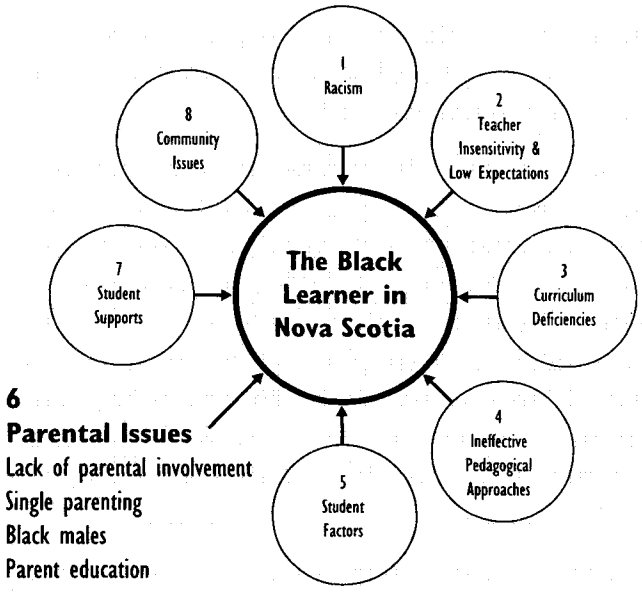
> *What it does is allow a sixteen year old to drop out of school, leave home, and the system will take care of them. The system takes care of them in such a way that it does not show them anything better. It shows them that they can stay home, receive a cheque every month for X amount of dollars to take care of their basic necessities. Mind you, it won't get you any further in life. But for a 16 or 18 year old, having their own apartment and literally not having anything to do, they enjoy it.*
>
> COMMUNITY WORKER

Because of the high drop-out rates, it has often been stated that "*Blacks do not appreciate education.*" The truth is that it is not a drop-out rate, but "*a push-out rate.*" As Professor Molefi Asante stated, "*Black students do not fail in school. They just refuse to learn, because to fail means they try, but most Black students do not even try.*" They are systematically "*pushed out psychologically*" first. Then they are encouraged through failures and suspensions to withdraw physically.

6 Parental Issues

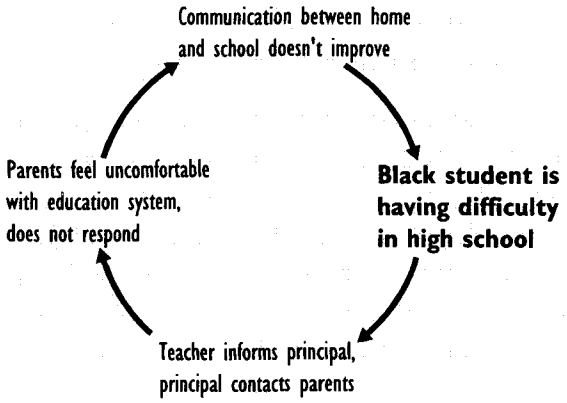
The more parents participate in their children's education, the better the child is likely to do at school. In the focus groups and interviews, we heard that Black parents have always been concerned about the education received by their children. However many parents are not involved with the education system or school programs. Some parents, because they have little formal education, are reluctant to approach their children's teachers. Others carry with them past negative experience with the school system and are reluctant to get involved with it. Yet others have simply no interest. Parent-teacher interactions are infrequent and very formal. This leads some teachers to think that Black parents have abdicated their responsibility for overseeing their children's education.

I think that Black people particularly think the school knows it all. And whatever the school says is "Jim dandy, hunky-dory" *and that whatever the school thinks is best. Granted that's good in some ways but not all the time.*
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL



During the research we heard that many parents are not sure *how* to help their child. They feel, for example, educationally inadequate to help their children with their homework. In other cases, parents are afraid that if they approach the teacher with concerns or questions, their children could be singled out for criticism. Some students expressed similar fears that parents questioning teachers might lead to victimization of the student. Because of these fears and also the genuine belief that teachers will do the best they can, some parents are not involved with their children's school. Unfortunately, this absence is often misinterpreted as not caring and the child is the one who continues to suffer.

Communication



Communication between the schools and the Black communities is essential. The teachers do not live in the community and have little knowledge of what goes on in the community. Teachers should be encouraged to phone and write parents to establish lines of communication, provide feedback on the child's performance and let parents know that the teacher cares. Communication with families is very important especially in dealing with discipline. Adapting new methods of outreach to parents and ways to develop non-judgmental attitudes would increase

the ability to value parents as partners. Schools must build relationships and partnerships with the communities they serve.

Numerous research studies on parent involvement confirm that parent involvement does enhance student achievement.[8] The studies found a connection between school-wide achievement and the level of community involvement and support. They also indicated that all forms of parental involvement help, but parental involvement that is well planned, comprehensive, and long-lasting will have the greatest impact on student achievement.

From our socio-demographic survey (see figure below) we concluded that parents and the community play a critically important role in the education of students.

Another important study by Reginald Clark, 1980, indicated that parental involvement can be an important tool for enhancing student achievement and satisfaction with school. In his study he compared poor families whose children were achieving and poor families whose children were not, and found that the parents of high achievers were actively involved with their children. It also makes clear that poverty and minimal parent education are not necessarily limiting factors preventing students from being successful in school.

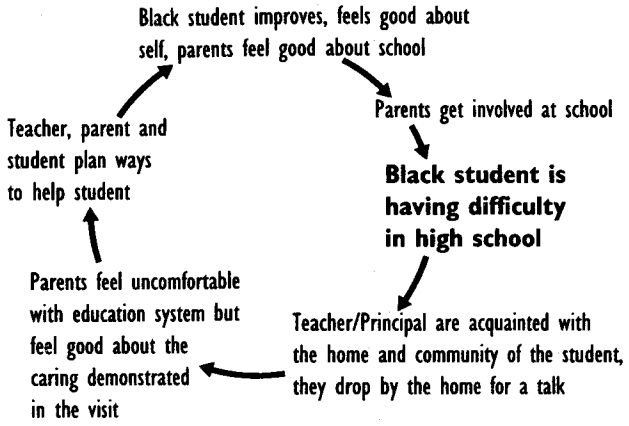
One strategy for increasing parent effectiveness is to have parent groups or education committees focus on techniques and programs that will build strong home-school partnerships. An education committee "*that focuses on helping the school improve its home-school relations is likely to produce important benefits for students, staff, and parents.*"

By looking at the home-school partnership in the context of an effective school reform effort, schools can stop blaming families for the difficulties students experience in school. Home-school partnership activities can then become another strategy, along with improved curriculum and better teaching, for ensuring that the school is a place where all students master the basic skills needed to complete high school education. Families will then no longer be seen as a reason for failure, but as a resource for success.

In this study, we found that parent involvement falls off when children reach the upper-elementary grades. Parents reported less communication with teachers, fewer requests for help with learning activities at home, and regardless of the parent's educational level, less confidence in helping. The question for educators is whether teachers can find ways for parents of older students to be involved and what the impact of such involvement would be.

We also found a high degree of distrust between parents and teachers. Some parents believe that "*teachers will tell you what you want to hear rather than the truth.*" Parents have noticed some changes in some of the schools. In one school teachers phone parents every month: "*They let you know what is going on. I am glad that they call me. I love it.*"

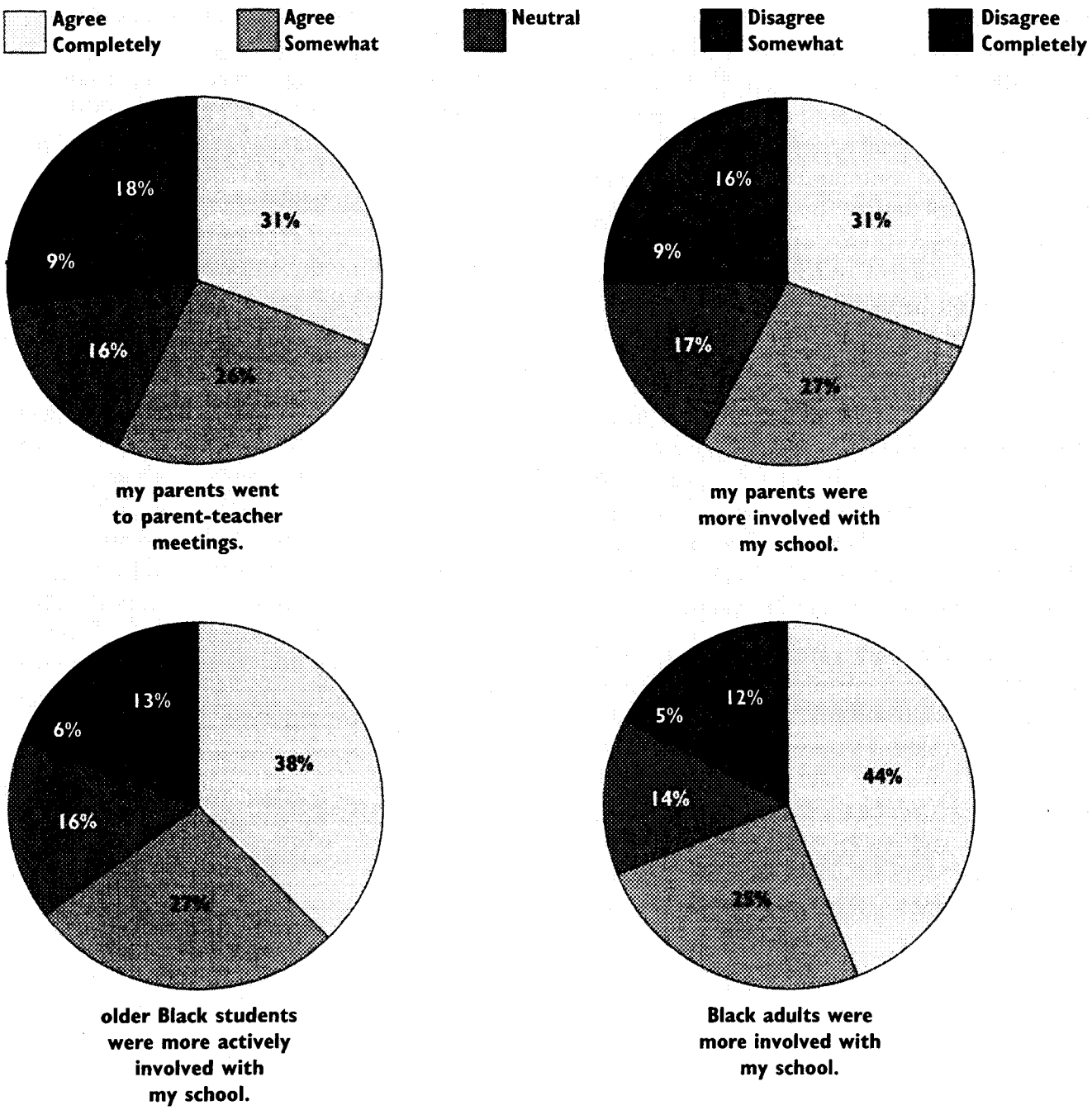
Parental involvement



Parents should be encouraged to work very closely with the school. They should be encouraged to make contact with the teacher at the beginning of each year. This meeting should give the parent and the teacher an understanding of one another as well as each other's expectations for the student. The parents can also learn in what ways they can be of assistance with homework.

My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if:

Source: BLAC Survey



Lack of Parental Involvement

Parents and teachers often do not meet until there is a problem. The school system must reach out to include those parents who traditionally, for one reason or another, do not attend teacher interviews and parent-teacher activities. The school system must convey to them that their participation is valuable and they should be made to feel comfortable in the school environment. Principals should develop a liaison group with the community so that links with the school are established and maintained. In order to develop a strong partnership, the school system must involve the Black parents and communities in discussing all aspects of school policy. The existence of strong linkages between home and school should prevent most problem situations. As well, close communication between school and home will show the child that both are interested in his education.

Throughout the Province there is a lack of Black parent representation on school and government boards. This lack of representation means that the Black perspective is absent from discussions on school issues or policy; as well it contributes to the Black communities' lack of understanding on how the education system functions.

We also found that some parents are not involved at school because they are intimidated by teachers and school administrators and feel woefully inadequate to challenge them. Others are afraid of not knowing what to say or of being embarrassed by their own lack of education. Feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness experienced by African Nova Scotians contribute to a pattern whereby they want to avoid the education system.

Strategies are required that encourage parents to get involved in the schools and find out about what goes on in the child's classroom. They need to spend more time talking to their children about the importance of school and discussing career goals and opportunities. Students want support and encouragement from adults.

> *Education does not all come from the school. Children are in school, in primary they are only in school three and a half hours a day. Some people figure kids are going to bring themselves up, as long as they are out of my hair, out of my sight, they can go play in the street, in the dirt, and don't bother me. And to me, you are not doing your part in educating your children. Speaking, reading and talking to them are all part of education. Some people think* "just plunk them down in front of the television if it's raining or plunk them outside with their Dinky toys!"
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Black organizations and the community must help parents recognize that in order to assist their children's educational development, parents should know what their children are doing both outside the home and in school. Parents should never leave the education of their children up to the school. They should get involved. This involvement should be constructive, helpful, supportive and ongoing. Parents should make sure that their children are taking courses where they get proper exposure to all important subjects.

Some parents are involved with their children's education and know the importance of education.

As far as education in the community is concerned, when I was raised in the 50s, I was told that I should get an education. I graduated in the 60s and it was instilled then, that education was important. I think it is more important now. Back then we were able to find jobs as laborers. But now we live in a technological world and we need more education. Blacks need more education.
PARENT

One way parents can participate is to stress to their children the value of education:

I try to explain to them just how important it is to have a good education and that they have to know where they want to go with their lives. I try to talk to them about the pitfalls, what is out there and things that may get in their way of getting a good education; and the friends they have and the things that can go wrong in their life.
PARENT

Parent involvement is one of the important tools for enhancing student achievement and satisfaction with school. Hence the need for a comprehensive home-school partnership. Key elements of this partnership include: home-school communication, parents as supporters; parents as learners; parents as teachers; and parents as advisors, advocates and decision makers. In this partnership, communication serves as the foundation for all other components. All parents must be reached. Without good communication, nothing much can be achieved.

Parents need a forum to organize their community and to gain skills and information for enhancing the academic success of their children and improving their own lives. Parents said they would like to know how the school system works. Black organizations can facilitate the realization of these goals. The BLAC and the BEA should provide workshops for parents designed to heighten their awareness of the school system and the role of parents in education. Parents who are motivated and involved must be employed to motivate their peers, relatives, neighbours and friends.

Most educators realize how important it is to communicate with parents, yet they often feel frustrated in their efforts to communicate. Two major factors contribute to the difficulties: a natural tension between teachers and parents, and differences in perspective.

According to Lightfoot, 1975, when the child enters the classroom, the parent's skills are on trial. When the child returns home, the teacher's skills are evaluated. In most instances, the child is the intermediary between parent and teacher, with both parties receiving a filtered view. Tensions are increased when the background of the child and the teacher are vastly different and no special effort has been made to bridge the communication gap.[9]

Parent involvement can be an important tool for enhancing student achievement and satisfaction with school. In order to increase parent participation, educators must extend their efforts, and establish new community-based initiatives beyond the school campus. They must reach out to the community. In communicating with parents, it is important to think about what parents need to know, what schools need to know from the parents, and what techniques will foster two-way communication. And as more Black parents feel empowered, self-confident and less afraid to enter the school building or to address the teacher, teachers should themselves feel more comfortable and get ready for this positive development.

Single Parenting

Increasing numbers of children are being raised by single parents. In the single parent situation, all the responsibility for educating the child tends to be shouldered by the mother. Yet single mothers are stigmatized. More specifically, Canadian society has a stereotype of Black single mothers as being on welfare and having children out of wedlock. Likewise educators and school officials tend to harbor stereotypes about children from single-parent homes. They view these children as being at greater risk for such things as learning problems, dropping-out or discipline problems. Consequently, they have lower expectations of children from families headed by single parents.

Single parents often have no relationships with the school community. Many complained about school officials who look down on them and talk down to them. Teachers should be encouraged to phone and write these parents to establish lines of communication, provide feedback on children's performance, and let parents know the teacher understands the difficulty of their role. They should obtain as much information as possible about the children's background, and be aware of factors which may impact on learning. Teachers should also provide critical information as soon as possible to the parent, especially when a student displays a behavioural or academic problem.

Additionally, many single parents are not receiving much support from their own families. Some parents force their children out of the home as soon as they learn of the pregnancy. These children are forced to drop out of school and go on social assistance. Many feel isolated and alone in raising their children:

> *It used to be that everyone looked out for everyone else's child. Now people don't get involved. It is safer not to get involved.*

A recent *Newsweek Magazine* article pointed out that traditionally, the Black extended family has served as a safety net. But the terrible irony is that it has also hurt the Black family. While intended as a cushion, the network, in effect, enabled more single women to have children. Now the extended family is breaking down. Yet the family's expectations for this extended family system haven't diminished:

> *Both sides feel the strains. With the soaring number of teenage mothers, grandparents today are getting younger and more likely to be working themselves. A 32 year old grandmother is not necessarily eager or able, to raise a grandchild, especially when the child becomes a teenager and the problems multiply. And, after generations of no fathers, there are no grandfathers, either. What's more, the tradition of a real neighborhood is disappearing.*
> NEWSWEEK, AUGUST 30, 1992

People felt strongly that there is a need to strengthen the family unit, that young parents should be equipped with parenting skills through programs and workshops and above all, that communication within the family between parents and children be encouraged.

> *Sometimes I might feel that they are not listening to me, but I am hoping that some of what I am saying they are retaining. Maybe sometime down the road they'll say,*
> "I remember my mother telling me that, and it is sort of true what she said."
> PARENT

Black Males

The weakening of the Black family over the past three decades has had a tremendous impact on the Black child. The Black male child in particular has been put at even greater risk. A growing number of households are headed by females; the males are mainly absentee fathers. The Black male is left with no role model in the home. The Black male child often has no role model in the school with whom he can identify as he matures into a man. Often he has no one to comfort him:

> *The Black male student is most afflicted by differential treatment, name-calling and racial slurs. The Black child's behaviour, attitudes, language (verbal and body) is different from that of the White child but is not to be seen as bad, too loud or negative. Different does not mean* more than *or* not as good as.
>
> SCHOOL TEACHER

People felt that the socialization process of males by the family and society in general should be re-assessed. Currently, many Black males grow to feel powerless and often try to regain a sense of power by being abusive to women. This may partly explain "*the concentration on the physical*", having a muscular body, and thus being powerful: to be admired by peers and to be feared by the White man. The feeling of powerlessness is heightened by the lack of role models and "*the lack of basic academic skills which contributes to the embarrassment of being in a class where others are better readers.*" Yet in this predicament, the Black male has received no assistance mainly because:

> *The system does not understand Black males. The Black male is crying out for help. The education system is a minefield for Black males; they are expected to fail.*
>
> BLACK EDUCATOR

Feeling rejected and frustrated, the Black male has turned away from the mainstream in defiance, rejecting its values, norms and rules. On many occasions, this frustration has been vented in acts of aggression, leading to the stereotype that Black males are aggressive and violent. In other cases, Black students have tried to deal with their frustration in humorous ways by playing the class clown, or in positive ventures like sports. But if society will not give him respect, neither will he. He has devalued education because society has to a large degree denied it to him, and devalued it when he has persevered for it. Because they perceive legitimate employment closed to them, many Black youth have turned to the illegal economy for survival. The challenge now is to demonstrate to the Black male that education and employment are open to him on the same basis as others, and therefore worthy of perseverance.

Some people stressed the need for male role models for male children. This experience was seen as essential for all males regardless of race or culture.

> *Someone told me a very long time ago, you only get out of your kids what you put into them and I think that's true. If mom really wants that for you, she has to care, whether its mom or dad or whoever. ... You need that encouragement. It has to come from somebody and may be with the male, even with the Black male or even the White male, if the rapport with your dad was not all that good then there is something missing there, something is not there.*
>
> ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

According to the *Education Digest*, March 1993, boys need the caring interaction of a male to develop appropriate gender behaviours; girls need opportunities to verbally interact with a caring male, so they can later develop interaction skills that can be transferred to the teen and adult relationships.

Parent Education

During the study, we learned that it is not uncommon for parents to need some assistance in providing help to their children. Most parents agree that raising children requires skills that must be continually developed and sharpened, and that parents need the skills and education necessary to provide a beneficial learning environment for their children.

Many parents of Black learners are not familiar with the workings of the education system. Some believe that teachers know what is best for the child. Others are not sure of their rights as parents. For example, in course selection and program placement they may sign forms without questioning the school's recommendations, even when they feel uncomfortable with the recommendations.

We found that one of the barriers to parental interaction with the school system is a general lack of self-confidence. Parents are not sure what to say to the teacher at parent-teacher interviews or what type of questions to ask. This inability to interact with the school system leads to frustration which translates into hostility towards teachers and the school. A better understanding of their rights and roles as a parent in the system, what to say and where to look for help, would provide parents with more self-confidence in dealing with the schools.

As much as the child needs an *enriching environment*, the parents need the know-how and information to provide that environment. Parents indicated a strong desire for programs to show them ways in which they can assist their children with homework, home study and school projects. That know-how and information can be provided through Parent Education Programs. Parents also indicated they were interested in parent support groups and participating in workshops. These workshops could focus on a number of areas including alternative parenting skills, assisting with homework and interacting with teachers and school.

We must help parents adapt a positive view of things. "*When you look at things positively, you see options. If you see things negatively, you feel trapped.*" There should be open forums in the community centres and church halls consisting of students, teachers, parents and other members of the community to discuss all aspects of school policy including discipline. These forums could be facilitated by the BEA or the BLAC.

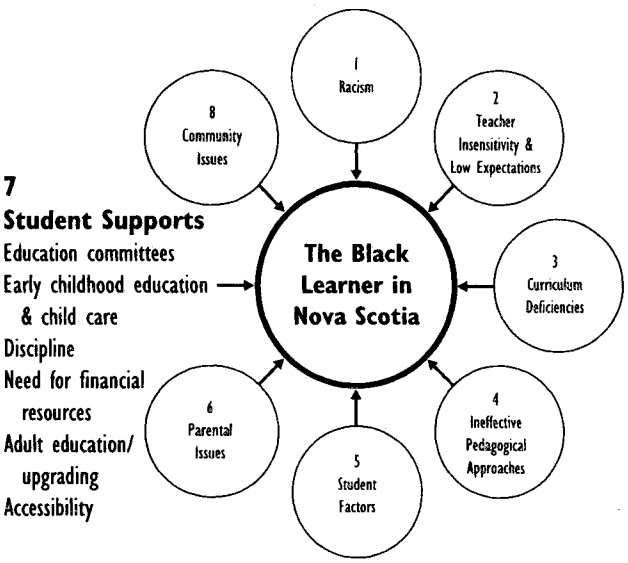
Janice Colbert (1977) reported that learning programs which focus on both the parent and the child tend to be more effective than those focusing exclusively or primarily on the child. Colbert asserted that the greatest gains in language and cognitive skills were reported in "programs that included home visits, the education of parents, and a high degree of parental teaching activities."[10]

Programs for parent information should include workshops conducted semi-annually by the BEA and BLAC in all major Black communities across the province. The school boards' information publications explaining existing board policies could be supplemented by quarterly publications by the BLAC and BEA detailing the changes taking place in education. Videos discussing curriculum expectations and answering parents' questions could be developed to assist with parental education. In-service training on how teachers can work more effectively with Black parents is also required.

7 Student Supports

For Black students to make it through the education system in Nova Scotia they require certain supports. Most important, they require the support, encouragement and understanding of their parents and others in their immediate community. Such support can be greatly enhanced through the direct involvement of parents in school politics through local education committees. Other supports include the establishment of preschool programs to ensure the readiness of children once they reach the public school system; and the re-establishment of discipline and values in the home.

Supports required external to the home include more options for acquiring upgrading; greater access to funding for post-secondary studies; and a greater accessibility to post-secondary programming.



Education Committees

Parents have the right to know how their children are taught and to have a voice in how the system works. One of the ways they can learn about and respond to school board policies and programs is through the Education Committees which have been established in most Black communities with the help of the BLAC.

The Committees are made up of parents, students and community members who volunteer in various capacities. Their activities include lobbying school boards, assisting school boards in developing race relations policies, setting up cultural enrichment and tutoring programs for students and serving as support groups for individual members.

School boards should establish a liaison mechanism with the Education Committees. School boards should also support the efforts and activities of these committees by providing school facilities for meetings and educational functions.

Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Perhaps the most general conclusions from research on child development are that the roots of child development are formed early and that family environment is extremely significant in the learning process. Secondly, a program of fiscal policy that puts priority on the early years of childhood in the context of the family would undoubtedly result in cost savings due to reduced need for costly remediation and rehabilitation programs. The home is our most important social institution. It is imperative to begin the development and education of young children in the family setting through deep involvement with the child's parents.

The rushed lives most parents live make it difficult to provide children with an ideal world for their early childhood years. However, the view on child development and the principles of education need to become known to more and more parents for the healthy development of young children. For this reason, the provision of early childhood education and parent education are linked and crucial. Parents' education about their rights and responsibilities is crucial if we hope to involve them as partners in education. The more parents know about what they are expected to do, the more comfortable they feel about becoming involved.

Black parents are concerned that because of the general low level of formal education in the Black community, their children enter school at a disadvantage compared to the children from families with higher formal education. Parents reported that schools seem to place a premium on preschool education, and if this is so, then Black children who stay home until they enter grade primary may be at a disadvantage.

In addition, parents feel that teacher expectations are often based on the child's racial and socio-economic background. Thus Black children are in double jeopardy. Parents feel that in order to provide a level playing field, all those responsible must ensure that all children are provided with supports to prepare them for success in school. Quality preschool, child care and Four-Plus programs would give Black children a tremendous boost in school. Only by getting children ready for school can we begin to achieve other educational goals.

Lack of quality and reliable child care is said to limit the parents' own educational progress, especially in the case of single parents. Single parents reported they want to upgrade their education to seek better jobs, but one of the barriers facing them is the lack of affordable child care. In Halifax, subsidized daycare is available but in most cases parents have to wait for at least six months to get a spot for a child.

Over the past four decades the range of formal learning has been steadily pushed down, so that many kindergartens are now doing what was once a first grade program, while nursery-age children have taken on tasks previously meant for older children. As a result, primary class teachers have certain expectations of what a child should know when he arrives for his first day at school. This level of expectation is of great concern to Black parents who cannot afford preschool. They worry that their children are at school already at a disadvantage. When the teacher expectations are not met, they could be labeled slow learners.

School *readiness* used to mean readiness for first grade, but it must now be expanded to include readiness for most kindergartens because of the pressure placed on the majority of grade primary students. Due to the downward shift of the curriculum, it is even more important that children today are developmentally ready for school as well as chronologically ready. Developmental age is measured by how closely the child's social, emotional, physical and perceptual maturity corresponds to the norm for his age.

Research has also shown that the most effective child development programs involve parents and family in a significant way. Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1974, a renowned social researcher, in a comprehensive review of early-learning programs, concludes that the most effective programs are those that involve parents directly in activities with the child, and that the earlier such activities are begun and the longer they continue, the better.

Appropriate primary education ought to lessen, rather than increase, overall educational expenditures. Less need for remedial education and remedial human services will mean both a greater realization of human potential and dollar savings to taxpayers. Early childhood education should be available to all children and families. Every young child and family can benefit. But special attention and additional resources must be available to children who have the greatest need. The BEA could develop modules to be used to facilitate the implementation and administration of these programs.

Discipline

The term discipline is often incorrectly used to describe punishment given for misbehaving. But discipline really involves the daily modeling, teaching and shaping of desired behaviour in children.

The research indicated concern about lack of discipline in and out of school. Parents in general lamented the lack of discipline and the loss of power to discipline. Some parents suggested that part of the problem lies in some children being left without adult supervision for long periods of time. In addition, people noted that family activities are limited including the routine of a family supper. People also commented on the absence of any sustained conversation or discussion between adults and children today. Students agreed that communication between children and their parents is poor and in need of improvement. They also commented that they would like to see more adults involved with youth activities and the school.

Some respondents indicated that parents have abdicated their responsibility in the area of discipline to the schools: "*They are expecting teachers and principals to discipline the child.*" Others saw a tendency for parents to pass judgement without hearing the whole story.

The feeling was also expressed that Black students bear a disproportional share of the punishments metered out by teachers and that racial prejudice is a factor in this. And although parents of Black learners acknowledged that some students intimidate and abuse their teachers, there was general consensus that in many cases the school system applies different standards for White and Black students.

Parents and educators both felt that one cause of misbehaviour is a lack of reciprocal respect. Respect must come from both sides because children who are not taught and shown respect will purposely disrupt a class to attract attention, and risk being kicked out. This view was echoed in discussions with early school leavers. People said they had acted up in class just to let out their frustration. "*I wasn't learning anything and the teachers didn't want to help me.*" Such disruptive behaviour often results in teachers verbally assaulting students which in itself is detrimental: "*When you are constantly told that you are bad, you'll generally be bad.*"

Because of the many restrictions society has imposed on teachers regarding what they can and cannot do to discipline a child, schools are left with few options. Suspension seems to be the only practical answer to discipline. Children however view suspension as a day off. Thus parents, students and teachers all seem helpless in the area of discipline.

Respondents noted that some behavioural problems emanate from the home situation. Some children may have frustrations because of a domestic situation and vent these frustrations on the teacher. Teachers who are unaware of the home situation are handicapped in helping or educating that child. The child as an individual does not shut off his life when he arrives at school. In such situations it is critical to involve the home. "*Find out what is going on in the student's life. Unfortunately, many administrators mistakenly believe that they can deal with behavioural problems without enlisting the support of parents.*"

People felt that proper discipline is crucial for children to be able to learn. But today, parents and teachers have lost control in and outside the classroom. Teachers, lacking the authority to discipline, must spend most of their time trying to get discipline instead of teaching. There was also a feeling that the parents' power and ability to discipline has been greatly eroded resulting in disobedience and misbehaviour.

It was suggested that parents should work more closely with teachers to restore discipline. Better communication with the children must be established.

> *I think a lot of times there is* hear no evil, see no evil *sort of thing or* "I really don't want to know what your child is doing and don't tell me what mine is doing." *I think that is a big problem in our community.*
>
> PARENT

Discipline must start at home. The very fact that the issue of discipline is a question to parents is symptomatic of our times. Many parents are not sure about their approach regarding discipline of their children. Many parents do not want to be authoritarian and they question whether they should insist that their child obey. Parents should be authoritative rather than authoritarian or permissive. That means effectively and consistently setting limits for the child. They must make decisions based on a mature viewpoint rather than on the child's likes and dislikes. Therefore, parents should try to maintain discipline at home, and try not to undermine the teachers attempts to discipline. Teachers must be fair but firm, and more welcoming and accessible to parents and students.

Many children have a very highly developed sense of justice. When they are punished arbitrarily or excessively, or when their feelings are hurt and made to feel unloved, they do not learn from the disciplinary action but instead may develop more negative feelings and behaviour toward the punisher.

Likewise, young adults have a strong sense of personal dignity. They must be treated with respect and never humiliated by school staff or officials. Hence, parents must show respect to teachers and avoid confrontation in front of children. Clearly, understanding the reasons why the child is acting up is the first step to formulating a strategy to prevent such behaviour.

Child development experts believe that imitation and example are the best ways to teach discipline. If you want to teach a certain behaviour to a child, one of the best ways is to model that behaviour. This approach demands that we as adults actively participate in the desired action rather than giving the child orders or directions. Instead of saying "*go clean up your toys*", we need to go with the child and clean up together while we might say, "*It's time to put your toys away.*"

It is necessary and appropriate to correct children's behaviour. But discipline means more than correcting undesirable behaviour. It also means guiding the child to develop in a healthy way physically, emotionally, and mentally. How to guide a child depends on his age, personality and the nature of the parent-child relationship. Even within the same family, differences due to temperament mean that all children do not have to be treated in the same way – but all must be treated in a fair way. Parents should be equipped with alternative parenting skills to effectively discipline their children.

Need for Financial Resources

Many Black Nova Scotians are living, or subsisting, at incomes far below the poverty line (established by Statistics Canada as $25,163 for a family of 3). The average 1992 family income in Nova Scotia (1991 Census) for all families was estimated at $46,870, with an average family size of 3.2 persons. The average annual family income for a Black family of the same size was estimated at $20,500, or less than half that of the average Nova Scotian family.

The cycle of poverty and dependence established as a result of these low incomes has important and long lasting implications for the educational needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. Children from homes where incomes are marginal are known to be more likely to have problems related to their health, nutrition and overall well being that in turn affect their educational performance.

Low incomes limit the ability of families to acquire the best possible education for their children, and access to post-secondary education is difficult, if not impossible. While education alone is not a guarantee of economic success, the lack of educational credentials is an enormous constraint and a barrier to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Although education is free from elementary through high school, there are other expenses a student faces if he is to feel comfortable attending school. These range from adequate clothing to personal spending money for breaktimes and school clubs. Adolescents who can not afford decent clothing or the opportunity to participate in normal school activities are made to feel like they do not belong within their peer group.

Many Black students come from large families with low incomes that find it difficult to meet more than the basic physical needs of their children. These parents lack the money to buy the designer clothes worn by their children's peers. Even joining Scouts costs money. Equipment for sports like hockey costs money. Piano or ballet lessons cost money. Most Black families cannot afford these extra activities which would keep children occupied. At school, many Black children cannot afford to make contributions for school functions such as school dances or special trips. Thus the children are unable to participate in school activities. This leads to low self-esteem and isolation. This culture of poverty has bred resignation and hopelessness among Black youth. What they need is a ray of hope.

> *I don't want to say that the secret of the whole thing is to throw money at the problem but certainly, when we come from impoverished families and we want to go through university, it's a pretty daunting task to look at a university degree knowing that you're going to end up owing up to $20,000 without any prospect of work. Especially if you're coming from families that have never been able to have that kind of money. I think a lot of poor people get scared by that prospect.*

Undoubtedly, poverty has a pervasive influence on academic achievement as it tends to limit a child's educational aspirations. Children don't picture themselves going to university. Students feel that "*if there is no money, why bother?*"

Respondents expressed concern about inadequate funding for Black students who want to go beyond high school and cited numerous examples of students who drop out after attending one year of a post-secondary institution because of financial difficulties. The Black Incentive Fund has assisted some students with their post-secondary education but there are many others who have been unable to access the Fund because of the high academic criteria attached to it. In general, students felt that as along as they were given passing grades by the universities, financial assistance should be made available through the Department of Education.

Clearly, financial stress is a significant contributing factor in the poor academic performance of some students and in dropping out. Resources should be made available to enable Black learners to participate equally in both the public school system and post-secondary instititions.

Adult Education/Upgrading

Most of the early school leavers interviewed over the research indicated a desire to re-enter the education system to upgrade their education and job skills. Some said they would like to obtain their high school diploma. However, many school boards have no transition program for early school leavers who wish to return to school. "*Many are trying to get back into the system but there is not a sufficient support mechanism in the schools.*" People feel that such programs would make the return less intimidating and more enjoyable.

The large numbers of early school leavers on waiting lists of programs like the Dartmouth East Black Learning Centre, the Transition Year Program, the Henson College Supervisory Career Paths speak clearly to the need for good upgrading programs. Many unemployed people and teen mothers indicated a strong desire to upgrade their education and seek better jobs. However, there are some major obstacles hindering their return to school.

Some of the obstacles to upgrading include lack of career counselling which takes into account the needs of the client; frustration with upgrading courses that do not lead to jobs and the lack of flexibility of the job skills training programs. The programs offered by the Canada Employment Centres are not flexible to suit the client. The client is expected to fit into the program. In most cases, the duration of the program is very short; it does not allow the clients to reach their desired goal of competence.

Participants in programs which involve work experience reported that they were placed in work situations when they were not ready. People complained that the training received in the short-term programs often does not equip participants with the skills sought by the employers. This makes it difficult to find employment after graduation. Moreover, the assistance programs are not flexible enough to allow single parents to re-enter the education system. Many are afraid they will lose their financial assistance if they return to school. A further barrier cited by respondents is that most of the programs are offered outside the Black community in unfamiliar environments.

Others noted that adult education programs do not reflect the Black experience in Nova Scotia. This deficiency should be addressed by the Department of Education curriculum consultants as part of the ongoing curriculum revision. BLAC feels that in order for the Black perspective to be represented, the Department should add a suitably qualified person to the curriculum team.

Accessibility

Educational and professional programs are still not readily accessible to Black learners. This issue was clearly outlined in the 1989 Dalhousie Report: *Breaking the Barriers*. The report dealt mostly with post-secondary institutions and their policies, but also noted that there was a clear indication that many Black students are *unprepared educationally* to successfully pursue university study. The report, for lack of evidence and because it was not part of its mandate, did not point to the public school system for failing to prepare the Black students, but the implications were obvious. In fact, Black students are not only ill-prepared cognitively, but also psychologically.

The Black community has, over the past twenty-five years, pushed for greater access to post-secondary education. Improving access is heavily dependent on specific strategies being in place at both the institutional and provincial level. So far, the response to the push has been special admission schemes and specific initiatives to enhance access and equity. These include:

Access to Nova Scotia Community College
Because of the failure of the public education system to meet the needs of the Black learners and the high cost of university education, there is a large number of Black Nova Scotians who could benefit from Community College programs. Yet, the Nova Scotia Community College system seems virtually impenetrable to the African Canadian community.

In considering some of the barriers Black Nova Scotians experience in trying to access the Community College system, the study identified: the impact of the inequities of the secondary school system; stringent admissions criteria; lack of vocational counselling; lack of diversity among faculty and other college personnel; lack of child care; inflexible schedules for courses and programs; and, lack of recruitment strategies designed for the African Nova Scotian community.

To ensure that Black Nova Scotians gain access and participate fully and equally, the Community College system must provide an atmosphere where all students, including Black Nova Scotians, could be accepted and respected. There is a need for special programs for African Canadian students which facilitates their access and participation in the Community College system. Enhanced support programs which respond to the needs of Black learners must be developed and implemented.

Transition Year Program

- Dalhousie's TYP arose initially from ideas of the Black community. Dalhousie was prepared to respond to these ideas and acknowledged the unique disadvantages suffered by Black learners in post-secondary study. The TYP offers a full academic year of specific preparation for university study, bridging the educational and cultural gap which often exists between Black learners and first year university requirements.

Black Students Advisor

- While TYP has a bridging function, the Office of the Black Student Advisor provides an enclave through the provision of specific staff, rooms, and support mechanisms for candidates during their orientation and throughout their study at Dalhousie. The Office provides a sense of territory, educational support and sympathetic community encouragement. This sense of support may be just as important as the more formal academic preparation in improving the likelihood of successful completion of a university degree.

  Previous to its establishment, Black students commented on the loneliness of their student years as disadvantaged individuals in a large and frequently impersonal institution. For this reason, Black groups suggested the creation of such enclaves. But having a significant group of Black students will not in itself be enough to create an enclave; the institution must be aware of the presence, and then the needs of this new group.

Law, Dentistry, Medicine, Computer Science and Engineering

- The participation rate of Black Nova Scotians in the Dentistry, Medicine and Engineering Schools is almost zero. Until recently, the same situation existed in the Dalhousie Law School, the only law school in the province. The situation is being addressed by the Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq Law Program. To redress the absence of Black Nova Scotians in these fields, there is need for equally effective and aggressive measures in Medicine, Dentistry, Computer Science and Engineering.

  The barriers to Black access examined in *Breaking the Barriers*, 1989, were considered to be prohibitive. The Dalhousie approach has since been to tackle the problems by encouraging discussion between the University and other funding sources; and by increasing dissemination of information and recruitment efforts in the high schools. The objectives of this approach are to change the attitudes of Black students, their parents and their teachers towards these areas of study and Dalhousie University.

Other initiatives originated from people with foresight and negotiating skills like the late Dr. W.P. Oliver and Dr. P. A. Johnstone, and from pressure groups like the BEA whose accomplishments include the Black Incentive Fund, and the BEA Math Camp.

Some new initiatives should firstly include a mentoring program which would include professionals in all disciplines. A second would be establishing Black student support offices and services at all major educational facilities. The institutions must also increase minority instructors and lecturers who would serve as role models as well as academic advisers.

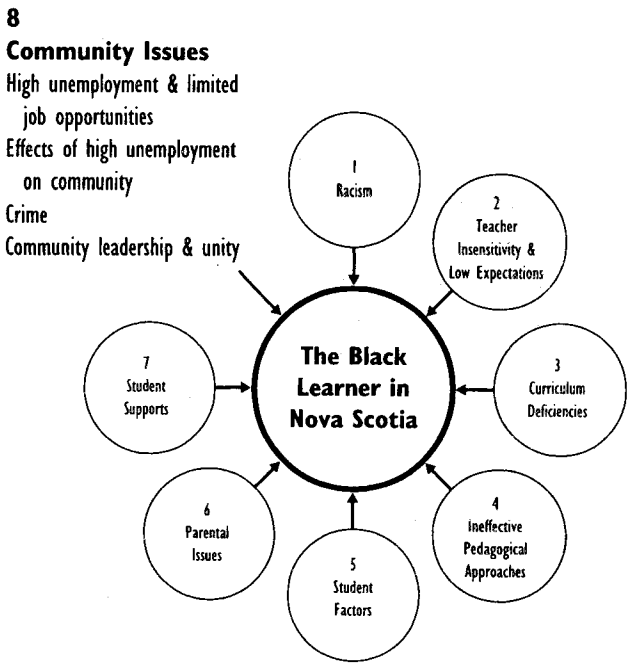
8 Community Issues

Contrary to the claim that Canadian society is democratic and egalitarian, evidence shows that White and Black Nova Scotians do not have equal access to employment opportunities. Racism is most evident in the statistics relating to employment in the province with Black Nova Scotians experiencing significantly higher unemployment rates than non-Black Nova Scotians.

Unemployment not only means shattered dreams but also a future marred by financial insecurity. African Canadians, like other Canadians, are subject to the woes of the unstable national economy, but they face a special burden. As they attempt to solve their unemployment, they are victimized by racial discrimination. Racial discrimination deprives society of valuable human resources and creates hardships in the lives of Black Nova Scotians. Unemployment breeds feelings of worthlessness and unproductiveness. A reduced sense of self and poverty interacts to marginalize many people from society. Unemployment means impoverishment.

The concern about the very high unemployment rate in the Black community was almost universal.

> *We have to address the high unemployment rate and lack of education. This leads to substance abuse, pimping, and other negatives. There is always something behind what's up front and what's being done behind the scenes. Behind that behaviour is the lack of education. I can't get a job, and I need money, so I'll pimp and do all these things. The role model they see is someone making a lot of money and we need to undo that. I am sure we can, but it is going to take people dedicated to giving some time.*
> BLACK EDUCATOR



High Unemployment and Limited Job Opportunities

The BLAC socio-demographic survey indicates that the estimated unemployment rate for young Black adults in Nova Scotia between 20 and 29 years of age exceeds 40 percent. For those between 30 and 39 years of age, unemployment is as high as 30 percent; for those aged 30-45 years who are in the prime of their working careers, unemployment averages 25 percent.

The comparable unemployment rates for all Nova Scotians from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey range from a high of 27 percent for the 20-24 year age group to a low of 10.7 percent for the 45-54 year old age group.

Within Nova Scotia, systemic discrimination results in a lack of job advancement so that qualified Black persons are unable to advance in their careers and are under-employed as a result of this discrimination. Research carried out for the socio-demographic survey shows, for example, that there is a higher percentage of Black Nova Scotia born managers hired outside of the province than there are within the province. According to the census, there were 385 Nova Scotian born Blacks in managerial occupations living elsewhere in Canada. Only 325 Nova Scotia born Blacks living in the province held jobs in the same managerial occupations, even though the number of Nova Scotia born Blacks in the labour force in the province (9,740 persons) is more than double the number of persons who have left (4,260 persons).

There was a general consensus that racial discrimination is still a major factor for any Black person searching for a job in Nova Scotia. We heard that employers are reluctant to hire Black males especially in positions of authority. We also heard that the Black male who is told to be assertive in his job turns around to find himself accused of being the stereotypical aggressive Black male.

We were told that some employers are fueling racism by referring disparagingly of the Affirmative Action hiring programs. "*The White job applicant is told that the company has to hire a certain number of Black people and the White person feels unvalued.*" The recent formation of a group called *Canadians for Equality, Chronicle Herald*, January 5, 1994, to campaign for the abolition of Affirmative Action programs lends credibility to fears of backlash.

Years of chronic high unemployment have led to dependency on the welfare system. Welfare dependency erodes self-confidence, and generates and perpetuates negative perceptions. Once on social assistance, one is stigmatized and faces double discrimination. School children of welfare recipients face lower expectations by their teachers. Adults are prejudged by potential employers because they are on social assistance and face discrimination because they are Black.

> *The young men and women who did manage to get a good education often found the doors to decent employment closed to them. Many times they were looked down upon because of their low socio-economic status, or the community from which they came.*
>
> BLACK CULTURAL CENTRE

Effects of High Unemployment on Community

Unemployed people may lack the economic resources to fulfill their own or their dependents' physical requirements for food, clothing, and shelter. Such circumstances are exceedingly stressful. As a result of unemployment, people may lose their sense of self worth and belonging, within the context of their family, their former workplace, and their community.

Sometimes society overlooks unemployment and racial discrimination as factors in the breakdown of the Black family. But high rates of family instability and disruption have been linked to high rates of unemployment. A Canadian Mental Health Association study, 1983, for example, found that "*when a family loses its source of economic support through job loss, its very existence is threatened.*" Adults, who are expected to provide physical necessities for themselves and for dependent members, cannot perform their primary function. The study concluded that:

> *Increases in the rate of unemployment are accompanied by increases in the rates of spouse abuse, divorce, rape, child abuse, children's problems in school, criminal acts, and racial tensions.*

More and more Black men are not there to build marriages or to stick around through the hard years of parenting. The biggest culprit is an economy that has locked them out of the mainstream through a pattern of bias and a history of racial discrimination.

Crime

Unemployment creates emotional consequences for workers of any age. But for young people who cannot find a job, they must also deal simultaneously with the arduous developmental task of growing up. Unemployed youth are likely to:

- feel bored with nothing to do, no money to do it with, no clear goals, no sense of purpose;
- flounder in their search for a sense of identity;
- have lower self-esteem than their peers who are employed or in school;
- feel angry and resentful of themselves and parents, teachers, employers, government, and other institutions; and,
- experience depression; feel disillusioned with themselves and their society.

The boundary between boredom, hostility, disconectedness and crime can be hazy. Most Black educators interviewed felt that Black youth turn to crime (drugs, prostitution) because society has failed them. While unemployment does not cause people to commit crimes, it is a contributing factor. Several studies, Gillespie, R, 1975; Ross, M, 1977; Glaser, 1978, assert that "*deprivation of legitimate alternatives for economic survival tends to stimulate criminal techniques for survival. Failure to find legitimate work is related to serious law violations.*"

In discussing the growing youth crime, Lavine, 1978, in yet another study linking lack of employment opportunities to law violation, warned:

> *What vested interests have these young people in perpetuating the values and aspirations of a society that they feel has failed them? Alienated, demoralized young people who are, at least theoretically at the potential peak of their physical health and power, their energy, and their idealism, are being lost to themselves and, more importantly, to society. ... The long term consequences are more ominous than the immediate. There is a cumulative impact and a multiplier effect on the unemployed and on their society. These young men and women will evidence signs of psycho-social disintegration in the short run, and the delayed effects do not speak well for their future.*

Unemployment has created a sense of powerlessness. Chronically high unemployment has meant poverty which, in turn, has resulted in low levels of education, low status occupations, social segregation, and lack of control over conditions of poverty. As a result, many Black Nova Scotians experience low self-esteem, chronic depression, and a tendency towards self-destructive behaviour such as alcohol and drug abuse and in some cases, criminal activity.

The existence of criminal elements in the community or neighborhood which impact on the adolescent is a growing problem over which many parents have little control. While the commerce in illegal drugs is a growing concern in urban areas throughout North America, including metropolitan Halifax-Dartmouth, few people really wanted to discuss this problem. People commented more on the way the media handled the issue of pimps and the Black community. Without denying the gravity of the problem, people felt that the media have been biased in their reporting, making it appear that all pimps are Black men, that most Black males are criminals and the White female prostitutes are "*innocent girls forced into the trade by violent Black men. The whole thing stinks of racism.*"

Members of the Black community did acknowledge the issue of crime. People attending the community meetings felt strongly that the housing projects into which familes have been herded have contributed significantly to the growth of crime. "*Black people should live throughout the city rather than be confined to certain areas. Housing projects should never be a solution. They are in fact, part of the problem.*" Lack of job opportunities, or frustration in minimum wage paying jobs, plus the lure of quick money often blinds young people to the extreme dangers involved in illegal activities.

Those who commented on the drug issue felt that many people get involved in drugs to cover up emotional stress. Doing drugs becomes a form of escapism or a youth's response to societal rejection. Selling drugs, however, is more than escapism. For the Black youth largely excluded from the main stream economy, drug dealing seems to offer a lucrative, albeit dangerous, alternative to a more tedious and lower paying job. The lure of big money and nice cars is one of the reasons youth are attracted to the trade.

Unfortunately, growing numbers of young Black males are turning to the drug dealers as their role models with parents expressing concern at their powerlessness in reversing this trend. "*Ironically,*" says Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Development Study Centre, "*you have to make a supreme and extra effort to get into the legal system and no effort to get into the illegal system.*" For many Black youth on the fringes, there is no contest.

Max Weber, 1947, once suggested that when a subset of a society does not enjoy equal access to economic and political power and influence, the oppressed group develops certain lifestyles. These lifestyles allow individuals to cope with and ward off the collective disappointment, pain, and rejection dealt them by mainstream society. Talking loudly, being cool, and behaving aggressively are a few example of practices often assumed by poor Black youth because these conventions are the antithesis to the primary values of society and its schools.

If we hope to make any significant progress in educating Black youth, we must alter the very lifestyles that these children emulate. This lifestyle must be modified by setting up a standard of group educational excellence; it must become hip and cool to achieve academically.

During adolescence, individuals identify the limits of their participation in society, and in turn develop the necessary skills in order to assume their defined role. It is this process of role definition that characterizes this stage of life – a stage when clear self-identification is established. In short, during adolescence, individuals formulate their sense of individuality, worth and purpose, that is, self-concept. Self-concept is an important aspect which helps to determine achievement. Since individual aspirations are a product of both their socialization and interaction with the social structures, then their perception of their opportunities, crystallized during adolescence, will affect their aspirations. Clearly, lack of opportunity in education and employment is at the heart of the issue of motivation and negative attitudes towards education.

Community Leadership and Unity

Most African Nova Scotians believe that whatever the circumstances, they will have to rely on their own abilities, skills and strengths as a way of coping with racism.

Response was overwheming that it is up to the community to develop an education system that supplements the public education system:

Today the three most important areas to address are:

- to get parents involved with their child;
- to get parents involved with the school; and,
- to get learners involved in educational and positive activities in and outside school.

While there is at present a lack of active parental involvement in programs set up in the communities to enhance education, many of those we spoke with are coming to realize that the success of Black learners is dependent upon support mechanisms both within the school and the community. "*We cannot leave it to the education system to take care of our children*" was a statement heard in every parent group we met.

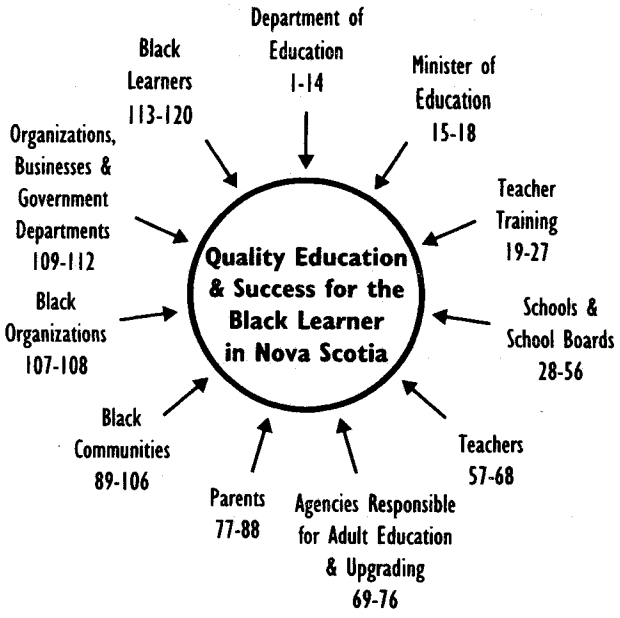
Adult supervision and involvement with youth activities was viewed as critical in order to guide youthful energy into constructive and developmental endeavours and away from negative peer pressure. People also felt that parents and the community need to prepare Black children for the racism they will face.

Finally, people spoken with were of one mind that for meaningful change to occur, parents need to unite as a group:

> *Parents need to be marching and changing strategy. They need to be more assertive – to reach out more. Racism beats you down and saps your energy. Collectively we can fight every issue.*

Summary of Recommendations

During the focus groups and interviews conducted as part of the PAR community consultation process, many suggestions were made for improving the educational system for Black learners. These suggestions are grouped here as recommendations to the many groups who influence the quality of education for the Black learner in Nova Scotia. The diagram opposite lists the groups and the number of recommendations generated for that group's responsibility. As stated in the introduction, this is a complex problem and no one group can solve all the problems. Our expectation is that the various groups will need to work together to improve the likelihood of success for Black learners.



The Department of Education

We believe that the Department of Education and the School Boards have an obligation to create a conducive learning environment for all students regardless of gender, religion or colour. Therefore the Department of Education should:

1 Eliminate racial harassment and work consistently towards a conducive and harmonious learning environment. Develop mechanisms to keep all parents informed of the progress the education system is making toward addressing racism.

2 Monitor racism in the education system through the appointment and strengthening of authorities like the BLAC working with the race relations/anti-racism officers.

3 Through the Curriculum Development Section continue to pursue the revision of the curriculum at every level of education, so that it fully reflects the cultural diversity of Nova Scotia.

4 Examine existing texts and learning materials and either discard or suitably amend any that distort or misrepresent the past or the present role of any group of people within the province.

5 Develop learning materials that will accurately provide knowledge and understanding of the Black, Aboriginal, and other racially visible groups in Nova Scotia and make them available to the schools.

6 Develop programs and materials intended to provide students enrolled in schools with significant numbers of Black students a full opportunity to explore and acquire knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of the Black people, their history, heritage, culture, traditions, and their contributions to society.

7 Require race relations/anti-racism training as part of teacher certification, appointment and promotion.

8 Ensure that all instruments used in the testing and evaluation of students are free of racial, gender and cultural bias. Ensure that the people carrying out the testing are sensitive to the particular needs of Black learners.

9 Provide quality preschool educational opportunities such as Four-Plus for all African Canadian children. Priority should be given to children in rural areas and the inner city. Early intervention support strategies which have had success elsewhere should be evaluated to consider those appropriate for use in Nova Scotia.

10 Extend the Incentive Fund to cover all Black students in post-secondary institutions, guaranteeing them a specified amount. Increase the amount to match the escalating university fees.

11 Set aside funds for cultural enrichment programs for Black students. Run these programs with outside personnel as after-school programs on the school premises or within designated communities. Plan for the inclusion of cultural education within the curriculum.

12 Minimize streaming by examining the possibility of eliminating general programs from the public school system.

13 Financially support a parent education program as part of a comprehensive Stay-in-School strategy.

14 Hire staff, to be based at the Black Cultural Centre, to conduct educational programs, develop educational kits on Black history, instruct visiting groups, and visit schools throughout the province as requested to meet the increasing demands from the schools and educational institutions.

The Minister of Education

15 Make scholarships immediately available to assist Black youth to undertake teacher training to help redress the under-representation of Black teachers in the education system.

16 Provide direct funding to school boards to ensure the implementation and continuation of anti-racism initiatives. Meet with the school superintendents, the Nova Scotia School Board Association, the Association of School Administrators, the Principals' and Vice Principals' associations to directly communicate the need for and urgency of eliminating systemic discrimination in the education process.

17 Endorse and encourage Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies in every educational institution in the province. Monitor the implementation in the public school system.

18 Through the BLAC and the Office of Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding, establish a strong mechanism to monitor the implementation of Multicultural and Anti-Racism policies in the School Boards of Nova Scotia.

Teacher Training

The Black community is greatly aware of the importance of teachers and their significant role in influencing and shaping the lives of the children and their future. We recognize the unique and vital role that teacher training institutions play in preparing individuals for one of the most challenging professions.

We cannot over emphasize the important role teacher training institutions have to play in preparing teachers to take a leadership role in combating and eliminating systemic discrimination in education, ensuring that all their students have a positive and rewarding experience regardless of their gender, racial or social background. We believe it is incumbent on the teacher training institutions to sensitize teachers who will be working with students from different ethnically visible and social backgrounds.

19 Incorporate anti-racism principles as a key element of the philosophy of education and reflect these principles in major institutional documents such as the University Act, Calendars and all curriculum and course guides.

20 Sponsor cross-cultural and anti-racism training programs or workshops for their faculty and staff.

21 Make anti-racism education a high priority to coincide with the public school system moving towards eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination. Produce teachers who have training in and exposure to a Multicultural and Anti-Racism education through annual classes for education students and in-service training for teachers. Teach Anti-Racism teaching strategies as part of the B.Ed. programs. Such a course could:

a) teach prospective teachers about African Canadian culture,

b) sensitize them to the special needs that children from African Canadian cultures have in the classroom, and

c) discuss strategies to manage the special problems African Canadian children face in the larger school system. Offer professional development programs aimed at re-orienting teachers toward an Anti-Racism education approach. Such programs should focus on raising the level of consciousness of racism in society and how it is perpetuated in the education system. It should equip teachers with the necessary skills to work through their own subtle prejudices and help them to utilize educational practices that do not discriminate among cultures and races in the classroom environment.

22 Develop and implement detailed guidelines for the evaluation of teaching learning materials and resources for any forms of bias: gender, cultural or racial.

23 Make mandatory anti-racism and race relations training a component for all in-service and teacher training programs, including child care teacher training. Help teachers and school administrators develop their proficiency in working with dominant, marginalized and mixed groups. Include research or field experience that would take teacher trainees into the Black community, visiting institutions that promote Black culture, for example, the Black Cultural Centre, Ujaama Books and Cultural Store, reading literature and reports on the Black history and culture, and attending community activities.

24 Recognize the Black experience in Nova Scotia, Canada, and the World by including the accomplishments of Black people from Canada and elsewhere as regular subjects throughout the year, not just in February.

25 Provide leadership in the development of a central curriculum which recognizes and honors the existence of other cultures in an integrative and thematic way rather than adding a separate course. Lack of knowledge of other cultures is a contributing factor to the perpetuation of racist attitudes.

26 Children need role models to build self-esteem and a sense of cultural pride. Nova Scotia desperately needs more Black teachers and school board administrators, not only where there are Black students, but to teach in homogenous areas as well. Therefore, faculties of Education should implement Employment Equity/Affirmative Action programs in recruiting and hiring racially visible staff, instructors and faculty. This should also be true in the recruitment of B.Ed. students to ensure racial and cultural diversity.

27 Incorporate culture of the racially visible in the Arts curricula in a relevant and inclusive way. Access to and expression of culture occurs largely through the arts (music, plays and poetry, films) and should have a greater role in education at all levels and be incorporated fully into the teacher education programs.

Schools and School Boards

28 Provide race relations, and cross-cultural sensitivity training to all teachers, staff, administrators and school board members. Hold conferences and seminars on anti-racism and cross-cultural education.

29 Offer multicultural and anti-racism education in all public schools. Teachers should take a leadership role in combating racism. Train teachers to identify stereotypes and bias in curriculum, teaching practices and student behavior.

30 Incorporate a course of study on Black History and Culture, as well as the contributions made by Black people to Nova Scotia, Canada and to the world, into the staff development program of the Nova Scotia public school system. This should be a required in-service course for all new (and serving) teachers.

31 Formulate and implement race relations policies as soon as possible. Encourage cities and counties to do so as well.

32 Evaluate teachers' performance frequently, including their sensitivity to ethnic and racial minorities. Expect teachers to be more informed on the history of Black people in Nova Scotia and Canada.

33 Provide staff development for teachers on how to motivate students through their communication to the students that everyone of them is capable of learning and achieving academic success and that school work is worthwhile.

34 Collaborate with communities in resolving disciplinary problems. Meet with community groups to discuss and lay out a strategy to improve discipline and learn the reasons why the child/student is acting up as a first step to formulating a strategy to prevent it. Teachers must be fair but firm, more welcoming and accessible to parents and students. Develop effective and alternative disciplinary programs and practices in place of out of school suspensions. These may take the form of short-term crisis intervention programs or in-school suspension models that have proven to be educationally and behaviourally successful.

35 Encourage positive interaction between the schools and the communities they serve. Match principals to schools so that experienced and sensitive principals are assigned to the more difficult schools rather than exceptional principals to good schools.

36 Be sensitive to the needs of Black learners, and respond to issues of loneliness or of feeling different from the majority. Show the Black learners that they are valued and genuinely cared for by the system.

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

38 Equip African Canadian students with skills needed to cope with racism and racial incidents such as name-calling. Provide support and encourage involvement in social development.

39 Ensure that school records are properly used, and do not become a means of labeling students on the basis of one incident.

40 Create a conducive learning school environment for all students. Demand that schools treat all students equally and fairly. At the beginning of each school year, teachers should clarify school rules and expectations to all students and parents.

41 Provide Black role models by seeking out and hiring Black teachers, guidance counsellors and administrators, and whenever necessary, implement an affirmative action/employment equity program to achieve this objective. Teachers should invite Black parents, professionals and volunteers to come to the school on a regular basis to participate in educational activities and serve on school and school board committees.

42 Place more caring male teachers in the elementary grades. Rotate teachers among the schools every five years. Performance appraisal should become a key determining factor in placement.

43 Organize single parent support groups and resource centres. Recognize the single parent family as a norm, the new reality which defines family. School officials must be sensitive and non-judgmental. Single parents should receive the same respectful treatment as all other parents. Children from single parent families must be treated with the same respect as those from two parent families and given the same opportunity to succeed.

44 Hire more Black male teachers, especially in the lower grades, and more Black male social workers to work with young Black males. From preschool through high school, these male youth will have the opportunity to be exposed to positive role models with whom they can identify.

45 Encourage dialogue between the teacher and the students' parents, to help work together in the interest of the child.

46 Provide a school-community profile developed in consultation with the community to teachers so that they have a better understanding of the community they serve.

47 Develop programs to raise the self-esteem and expectations of all Black learners. Promote anti-racism education as part of the strategy. Provide positive feedback, more sensitivity and caring by the teachers. While positive feedback is important to all learners, it is very crucial to a group of learners who, in most cases, feel isolated and alienated in the total school environment. Because reading has been shown to be directly related to high self-concept, enrichment activities in reading and language arts should be developed for Black learners.

48 Enhance the cultural identity among Black children by providing cultural education and African/Black history to all African Canadian children. Establish community resource centres in all Black communities in the province (as satellites of the Black Cultural Centre).

49 Provide learning and library materials relevant to the Black students. Update all learning/teaching materials and eliminate those which perpetuate stereotypes, prejudice and racial bias or racism.

50 Offer and expand cooperative education which allows more hands-on experience. The exposure also helps build the students' self-esteem. Take Black students on tours of universities, businesses, factories and historical sites.

51 Develop regular and on-going programs whereby various segments of the community, such as the media, business persons, religious leaders, public servants, senior citizens, retired professionals, skilled craftsmen, social and civic organizations and university students (especially Black males) volunteer to assist as tutors, speakers, resource persons and counsellors.

52 Promote peer counselling and tutoring programs where motivated students can help those less motivated or having problems. Establish academic and cultural enrichment programs in Black communities. Offer study skills workshops on a regular basis, and correspondence courses for Black single parents. Provide a tutoring service at community centres. Recruit retired teachers from the community to assist with administering the tutoring programs.

53 Provide child care for teens wishing to return to high schools and for Black single parents desiring upgrading.

54 Provide orientation for all junior high students and their parents to prepare for high school. Provide precise information to parents and students about course selection, and how this affects career choices. The Black Educators and parents should ensure that appropriate course selection is taking place.

55 Offer workshops on sexuality and planned parenthood. Schools and organizations serving youth must provide teens with knowledge and skills to help them delay parenthood. Focus on preventing teenage parenthood and sexually transmitted diseases by building community and educational resources and providing programs for youth to build self-esteem and to increase responsibility and awareness of life choices. Educate youth on the pitfalls of teen parenthood.

56 Monitor with parents, the placement of Black learners in special education and alternative programs to ensure that parents and students understand the implications and their rights.

Teachers

57 Participate willingly in a free in-service course that focuses on anti-racism education. Such a course should help school and school board personnel to understand how they have internalized racism, even if in its most subtle form.

58 Treat all children with respect at all times and maintain the child's dignity. Provide consistent feedback for appropriate behaviour and counselling for inappropriate behavior. Share responsibility for discipline with parents. Ensure that expectations for behaviour are well articulated.

59 Do not tolerate any sort of name-calling of Black children, or any other ethnically visible children, and let children know during school orientation they should tell someone in authority about incidents of this sort.

60 Hold similar expectations and standards for all students irrespective of gender, ethnic, racial or social background. Demonstrate sensitivity to the learning needs of Black learners. Ensure that academic expectations are communicated and reinforced regularly to students and parents. Recognize, praise and reward the students' efforts and achievements.

61 Watch the progress of Black children as early as grade primary, and focus on helping the student. Helping the child master basic skills should be a priority of any intervention program. Do not push students through the system until high school.

62 Utilize a holistic approach by setting up school-based teams of professionals to assist students. Provide social workers in the school system to work in conjunction with guidance counsellors and teachers in helping the child and the family.

63 Encourage parents to become more involved in their children's education. Get parents to check their children's homework. Phone and write to parents to establish lines of communication, provide feedback on the child's performance, and let parents know that the teacher cares. Teachers can assist in formulating plans for supplementary and enrichment activities. Parents should be invited and treated as full partners in the education system.

64 Encourage Black students in the earliest grades to attend college or to pursue post-secondary training. This could be accomplished through visitations to community colleges or university campuses, career day programs, racially visible guest speakers representing white- and blue-collar careers, as well as through career-oriented volunteer programs.

65 Organize with students and participate in school-based forums to develop better communication patterns between students and teachers. Possible areas of discussion might centre around the school's goals and objectives or discipline.

66 Encourage male students to participate in extra curricular activities which are not related to athletics such as student government and student mentoring programs as well as to assume roles of leadership and responsibility at school.

67 Use more diverse instructional practices in recognition of different ability level of pupils. Learn about other teaching methods through visits to other schools and classrooms. Provide study skills development classes for students to help prepare them for instruction and how to put in practice what they have learned. Explain to students why they take required courses so that students will understand their applicability to the real world.

68 Develop appreciation of how Black children express themselves verbally and behaviourally, and allow students to express themselves without fear of intimidation and belittlement, especially in the early formative years.

Agencies Responsible for Adult Education & Upgrading

69 Promote and support community ownership of adult education programs. Locate adult education programs in familiar settings in the Black community, in the community centres to increase accessibility and reduce people's fear of sitting among strangers in adult education classes. Educate participants on how the adult education programs work. Provide evening classes for working people.

70 Advertise the upgrading and job training programs in the community through the churches, recreation centres and other community channels.

71 Admit people on the basis of need, rather than their UI status. Provide adequate financial assistance for single parents and others who decide to continue their education or enroll in job skills training programs.

72 Employ Black instructors to conduct the training and recruit and train unemployed Black professionals as employment counsellors and job skills instructors. Train high school students to teach adult literacy.

73 Incorporate Anti-Racism education in Upgrading, vocational and community colleges curricula. Integrate Black history and culture in all programs especially those targeted at Black learners.

74 Offer entrepreneur/business management skills training in the Black community. In conjunction with the Department of Economic Development, the community can create businesses and jobs to meet local service needs e.g: food service, furniture, auto repair.

75 Link upgrading and job skills training to employment by targeting jobs. Make the job re-entry programs more effective and relevant by incorporating work placement with prospective employers for at least a year. Offer colleges and university extension courses in the community. Equip the youth with marketable skills such as computer literacy.

76 Improve and streamline programs already in place before creating new ones. Provide follow-up on the graduates and include job finding clubs in the information package for people who are unemployed.

Parents of Black Learners

77 Educate their children on the importance and the value of education. Emphasize this.

78 Provide academic assistance to teenage parents and single parents. This assistance might be offered in the evening at community centres or church halls where child care and homework assistance are available to the children of these parents.

79 Become active participants in the education of their children by visiting the school frequently; assuring that their children are in school daily; that they are prepared to perform fully and that they will abide by school rules and regulations. Bring friends along when attending PTA or home/school meetings as individuals receive less attention or consideration. Also children will feel more confident when they know they have parental support.

80 Be role models. Encourage and teach self-discipline to children. Start at elementary school with lots of encouragement and skill building. Establish a set time for homework each night; and establish a time for reading everyday with the duration and reading material appropriate to the child's age.

81 Provide reading resources for the child. At home, encourage the child with small libraries, books and learning programs. Utilize the public library whenever possible.

82 Find educational assistance, enroll the child in supplementary educational programs; participate in school activities.

83 Maintain good communication with children. Share your own experiences with the youth by pointing out how you have dealt with issues; pointing out both the positive and negative aspects of the decisions you have made in your life.

84 Set examples for children by approaching teachers with an air of respect while seeking the opportunity to address any concerns that might exist. Avoid parent-teacher confrontations in the presence of the child. This undermines the teacher's authority and can make the situation worse by encouraging rebellious behaviour in the child.

85 Replace degrading disciplinary procedures and use of put-downs with positive disciplinary approaches. Develop alternative discipline measures to help the children understand the choices they are making and the consequences of those choices. Develop appropriate discipline for the unacceptable behaviours. Discipline should focus on changing behaviour positively rather than on punishment. Set rules and disciplinary procedures in the community. Consider setting curfew hours for children, enforced by all parents in the community. Be consistent. Teach children to take responsibility for their actions.

86 Participate in training to become active members of groups to help educators in the school system provide a superior education for children. The BLAC and the BEA, in collaboration with the school system should develop a parent education module to facilitate the process.

87 Encourage your children to participate in more and varied extra-curricular activities in balance with homework demands and other assigned school projects. Monitor carefully your children's television viewing.

88 Provide rewards and recognition for students' academic achievements like those received by athletes. Provide rewards and incentives (e.g: summer jobs), to the children who maintain above average grades, attend school daily and who participate in extra-curricular activities. These reinforcements would be an additional source of motivation to students to excel in school.

The Black Community

The African Canadian community must send a clear message to the children and Black youth that education is a priority for the community. This message can be sent through greater involvement with the education system and through community events that combine entertainment, motivation and education.

89 Build a sense of value and pride in the African Canadian children by showing interest in the children's activities and giving praise. Set aside a day for children to display their talents to parents and the general public in each community.

90 Listen to the children and respect their opinions and ideas. Allow children to express, explain and set goals. Support them in their positive engagements.

91 Monitor educational institutions and hold them responsible for the academic performance of Black children. Form parent support groups or Education Committees. The committees could lobby school boards and the Department of Education for change, e.g. for curriculum reform. Promote community involvement in education through organizing in the community and attending school related activities.

92 Inform parents of Black learners on the different manifestations of racism in education. The BLAC should develop and distribute an information package to parents of Black learners which includes this information. Empower parents in dealing with the education system by providing them with information on how the school system works. Invite speakers to address topics of interest to parents and the community, e.g: role of the Trustee or School Boards in education.

93 Prepare and make available a list of resource persons who are knowledgeable in facilitating groups to analyze race, culture and education.

94 Provide counselling services, courses and workshops on alternative parenting skills to parents. Inform and equip parents with skills to help their children at the various stages of development.

95 Get more involved with Black youth. Most educators recognize that learning can be enhanced through quality human contact, appropriate role models and high expectations. Empower Black youth by involving them in the development of after-school programs, both educational and recreational. Establish Youth Centres/programs in the communities "*to get children off the streets.*" Increase the number of individuals in the community to serve as role models or advocates by broadening the context in which they interact with students.

96 Develop and promote programs like mentoring and peer tutoring in the community. Encourage eligible people to become mentors. These programs would also provide after-school and Saturday activities for youth. Conduct study skills workshops for students at least twice a year: in September and in January. Encourage University students, especially Black males, to perform community services at local schools e.g: as tutors, aides, speakers, assistants.

97 Create appropriate programs so that more parents will want to volunteer to participate in community activities. Organize Block/community parties, craft nights, or meet and greet sessions so that people can meet, get to know each other and feel more comfortable.

98 Encourage Black youth to become teachers and administrators in the public school system, both to serve as examples and encouragement to Black students.

99 Provide computers and computer tutoring programs in locations easily accessible to Black learners in isolated or rural communities.

100 Establish Heritage schools which would have Black history as a central component of the curriculum for African Canadian children. Implement the Saturday School model developed by the African Canadian Education Project (ACEP).

101 Set up an African Canadian Education Foundation with a charitable status to solicit corporate funding for education initiatives in partnership with the Nova Scotia Government.

102 Encourage the Continuing and Adult Education Departments of municipalities to introduce courses in Black and Aboriginal studies as part of their evening studies programs.

103 Support the Black Church in continuing to play a prominent role in education, where respect and good manners are taught in addition to saving souls. The Church, the home, the Black Cultural Centre, and all institutions in the Black community can contribute along with the school system to helping Black youth learn their history.

104 Offer workshops on sexuality and planned parenthood. Schools and organizations serving youth must focus on preventing teenage parenthood and sexually transmitted diseases.

105 Encourage fathers to be more involved with their children, to spend quality time with their children. Conduct workshops for fathers on parenting skills and responsibilities.

106 Set up a central Black community development committee to work with government and agencies to develop and direct social and educational development programs.

Black Organizations

Take the initiative in restructuring the basis for deciding the educational messages and values which subconsciously as well as consciously shape the self-esteem and achievement of all children in the education system. The Black Educators Association, African Canadian Education Project, BLAC, and other Black organizations should illuminate the concept of cultural awareness and pride and assist teachers in understanding the correlation with academic excellence.

107 Establish effective networking among all Black communities. No one program can meet all the needs of the Black learners or Black community. Avoid getting caught up in turf issues; actively promote cooperation with and participation of other organizations that can provide additional opportunities for Black learners.

108 Start a political skills training program. Develop leadership ability and negotiating skills to work with school boards, agencies and governments. Improve skills in lobbying, public speaking, organizing and facilitating meetings.

Organizations, Businesses and Government Departments

109 Produce pamphlets or kits on the history and contributions of the Black community in that area for distribution in local libraries and schools. (Municipal Governments)

110 Provide more education to the public about the purpose and importance of employment equity programs. (Human Rights Commission and Businesses)

111 Prohibit discrimination in the provision of educational opportunities or in the treatment of students in the public schools and universities of the province. (Human Rights Commission)

112 Offer counselling and stress management to parents, and provide group and personal counselling for community members experiencing difficult situations. (Department of Community Services)

Black Learners

The following suggestions are derived from the recommendations for other key players in the educational process for Black learners. These suggestions recognize the responsibility of the Black learner to also contribute to their education.

113 Explore and acquire knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the history, heritage, culture, traditions and contributions of Black people to society. Visit the Black Cultural Centre and take part in after-school programs. Look for and read literature on Black culture and history by contacting BLAC regional educators or Ujaama Books throughout the year.

114 Stay in school, find supportive teachers and school personnel and invite them to meet your parents. Go with your parents to school orientation sessions.

115 Apply for educational funds through the Incentive Fund for Black students in post-secondary institutions and scholarships for teacher preparation.

116 Make high school course selections that maximize your career choices after completion such as university preparatory. Go on school tours of businesses, community colleges and universities, to be exposed to a variety of workplaces and educational options.

117 Find a role model for yourself and be a role model for younger students. Learn about the importance of education by talking with parents and people who value it.

118 Get to know teachers, principals, social workers and BLAC regional educators who are sensitive to the needs of the Black learner and go to them if you want resources, assistance or feel you have been treated unfairly within the school system.

119 Take training in coping with racism and racial incidents. Attend workshops on self-esteem, sexuality, career planning offered in your community or school. Organize youth groups to discuss topics of interest regarding school.

120 Take part in peer counselling and tutoring programs. Ask for help when you need it, find a quiet place to do homework; if home is not the best place check with community groups, libraries or the school.

Notes for Section 1

1 Nova Scotia Department of Education, *Directory of Public Schools in Operation, 1991-92.*

2 Data for previous years indicates similar results. Enrollments were: 14,403 students in 1988; 14,296 students in 1989; and 14,285 students in 1990.

3 From *The Things They Say Behind Your Back.*

4 Interviewed by *Essence Magazine*, December 1993, PAGE 137.

5 *Effective Strategies For Dropout Prevention*, National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 1990.

6 Morris, R.C. (ed), *Youth At Risk: A Resource Guide*, 1990.

7 Hrytsak, Al, Director, School of Cooperative Education Programs, Manitoba.

8 Chrispeels, Janet A, "The Family as an Educational Resource," *Community Educational Journal*, VOL 14, NO 3, 1987, PAGE 10-17, reviewed over ten studies done between 1977 and 1986.

9 Lightfoot, Sara Lawrence, *Worlds Apart*, Basic Books Inc, New York, 1975.

10 *Community Education Journal*, January 1988, PAGE 6.

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Appendix A
Section I

Halifax Region

Focus Groups

Date	Community/Group	# Participants
March 29, 1993	University Students	8
April 13, 1993	Junior and Senior High Students	12
April 13, 1993	Lucasville/Sackville – Community	14
April 19, 1993	Upper Hammonds Plains – Community	15
April 28, 1993	Halifax – Employed/Self–Employed	7
May 11, 1993	Uniacke/Central Halifax – Parents	18
May 15, 1993	Junior and Senior High Students	12
May 17, 1993	Upper Hammonds Plains – Parents	15
May 18, 1993	Central Halifax – Parents	10
June 1, 1993	Lucasville/Sackville – Parents	14
June 3, 1993	Beechville – Community	12
June 8, 1993	Uniacke/Central Halifax	18
June 9, 1993	Central Halifax – Early School Leavers	10
June 14, 1993	Single Parent Focus Group	7
June 15, 1993	Early School Leavers	6

Individual Interviews

Name	Community	Date
Julie Coolen	Halifax	July 26, 1993
Iona Crawley	Beechville	July 22, 1993
Doug Earle	Halifax	July 26, 1993
Sonny Forgeron	Halifax	Sept. 9, 1993
Carolyn Gabriel	Halifax	July 29, 1993
Rocky Jones	Halifax	July 26, 1993

Cape Breton Region

Focus Groups

Date	Community/Group	# Participants
May 11, 1993	Students	14
May 25, 1993	Students	12
June 8, 1993	Single Parents	10
June 22, 1993	Two Parent Families	8
July 16, 1993	Employed	6
Oct. 9, 1993	Students	12
Oct. 11, 1993	Employed	7
Oct. 11, 1993	Two Parent Families	8
Oct. 12, 1993	Single Parents	11

Individual Interviews

Name	Community	Date
Lorne Green	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Marie Green	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Renee Halloway	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Sadie Halloway	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Darren MacDonald	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Jeanette O'Toole	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Eddie Parris	Sydney, Cape Breton	1993
Dorcan Headley	Glace Bay, Cape Breton	1993
Elaine Gillens	Glace Bay, Cape Breton	1993

Dartmouth Region

Focus groups and Interviews

Date	Community/Group	# Participants
Nov. 16, 1992	Dartmouth – Education Committee	15
April 14, 1992	Dartmouth Education Committee	13
April 15, 1993	Cherry Brook/Lake Loon – Community	9
April 19, 1993	Junior & Senior High students	12
April 20, 1993	Early School Leavers	8
April 26, 1993	Junior & Senior High students	13
May 6, 1993	Single Parents	9
May 11, 1993	Early School Leavers	10
May 17, 1993	Single Parents	11
May 18, 1992	Dartmouth education Committee	7
May 19, 1993	Cole Harbour Education Committee	8
June 7, 1993	Employed & Self-Employed Focus Group	6
June 9, 1993	Cole Harbour Education Committee	8
June 10, 1993	Cherry Brook/Lake Loon Focus Group	9

Individual Interviews

Name	Community	Date
Cathy Beals	Dartmouth	June 28, 1993
Laura Cain	Dartmouth	July 20, 1993
Donny Fairfax	Dartmouth	July 15, 1993
Calvin Gough	Dartmouth	July 14, 1993
Susan Jeffries-Murray	Dartmouth	July 14, 1993
David Provo	Dartmouth	June 28, 1993
Linda Randolph	Dartmouth	July 19, 1993
Calvin Ruck	Dartmouth	July 14, 1993
Ernest Simmonds	Dartmouth	June 28, 1993
Patricia Simmonds	Dartmouth	June 28, 1993
Francis Smith	Dartmouth	June 28, 1993
Maria Smith	Dartmouth	June 28, 1993
Gerry Taylor	Dartmouth	July 15, 1993
Wanda Thomas-Bernard	Dartmouth	July 14, 1993
Gary Williams	Dartmouth	July 19, 1993

Antigonish

Focus groups and Interviews

Date	Community/Group	# Participants
Oct. 14, 1992	Early School Leavers/Unemployed	21
Oct. 15, 1992	Teenage Single Parents Focus Group	17
Oct. 28, 1992	Sunnyville Grade 8-12 Focus Group	11
Nov. 17, 1992	Two Parents Family Focus Group	6
Jan. 16, 1993	Jr. Sr. High (U.B.T.) Focus Group	12
Jan. 17, 1993	Jr. Sr. High (Lincolnville) Focus Group	

Individual Interviews

Name	Community	Date
Hattie Ashe	Upper Big Tracadie	1993
Norma Ashe	Guysborough	1993
Unice Borden	Sunnyville	1993
Gloria Desmond	Lincolnville	1993
James Desmond	Lincolnville	1993
Catherine Gerro	Upper Big Tracadie	1993
Marina Izzard	Guysborough	1993
Sonia Reddick	Upper Big Tracadie	1993

South-West Nova

Focus groups

Date	Community/Group	# Participants
March 5, 1993	Weymouth Consl. School	13
March 17, 1993	Shelburne Hilcrest School (Elem.)	8
March 13, 1993	Yarmouth – Parents	9
March 18, 1993	Yarmouth – Jr. & Sr. High	13
March 21, 1993	Weymouth – Education Committee	5
March 24, 1993	Weymouth – Jr. & Sr. High	10
March 31, 1993	Greenville – Parents	6
April 6, 1993	Hilcrest – Junior & Senior High	12
April 7, 1993	Weymouth – Junior & High School	17
April 8, 1993	Shelburne – Junior High School	6
April 19, 1993	Weymouth Falls – Education Committee	9
May 3, 1993	Yarmouth Junior & Senior High	11
May 7, 1993	Digby – Education Committee	5
May 10, 1993	Shelburne – Education Committee	4
May 19, 1993	Focus Group Meeting	7
May 30, 1993	Southville Ed. Committee	6
June 2, 1993	Southville Early School Leavers	10
June 9, 1993	Southville Early School Leavers	9

Individual Interviews

Date	Name
March 3, 1993	Evelyn Richardson
April 1, 1993	Irene Guy
April 2, 1993	Mary Dyous/Irene Guy
April 12, 1993	Lynn Perry
May 5, 1993	Mr. Jarvis
May 12, 1993	Oscar/Angie
May 19, 1993	Rowanne Barton
May 19. 1993	Brenda Clarke
May 27, 1993	Janet Thibeau
May 27, 1993	Nelson Francis
June 1, 1993	David Miller

Valley Region

Focus groups

Date	Community/Group	# Participants
April 22, 1993	Kentville Community	16
April 23, 1993	Windsor – Junior & Senior High	13
April 26, 1993	Windsor – Community	14
April 28, 1993	Kentville – Junior & Senior High	12
April 29, 1993	Bridgetown/Lequille	14
May 3, 1993	Windsor – Students	10
May 4, 1993	Middleton/Bridgetown/Lequille – Parents	8
May 5 , 1993	Bridgetown/Lequille – Students	12
May 6, 1993	Kentville – Elementary students	11
May 10, 1993	Windsor – Elementary students	9
May 17, 1993	Windsor – Community	6
May 18, 1993	Aldershot Focus Group	5
June 8, 1993	Kentville – Education Committee	12
August 17, 1993	Kentville – Employed group	6
August 18, 1993	Windsor Parents	5

Individual Interviews

Name	Community/Group	Date
Edith Cromwell	Bridgetown	April 27, 1993
Rhoda White	Middleton	April 29, 1993
Geraldine Clayton-Browning	Kentville	July 22, 1993

Black Organizations and Individuals Contacted for Written Submissions

1. African Canadian Education Project	Delvina Bernard
2. Association of Black Social Workers	Veronica Marsman
3. African United Baptist Association	Rev. Mathew Lucas
4. Afro-Canadian Caucus	Yvonne Atwell
5. Black Educators Association	Sheila Cole
6. Black Cultural Society	George Borden
7. Black Business Consortium	Rev. Darrel Gray
8. Black Incentive Fund	Van Roy Tobitt
9. Black United Front	Rev. Ogueri Ohanaka
10. Cultural Awareness Youth Group	Micheal Rochester
11. Indigenous Blacks and Mic Mac Law Program	Carol Ayward
12. Transitional Year Program	Beverly Johnson
13. Dartmouth East Black Learning Centre	Gerry Taylor
14. Supervisory/Career Path Program	Percy Paris
15. Congress of Black Women	Dolly Williams
16. Parents Resource Centre (Halifax)	Joan Mendez
17. The Provincial Monitor	Rev. Darrell Gray
18. Association of Retired Black Teachers	Doris Evans
19. Preston Student Parents Association	Madeline Downey
20. North Preston Community School	Laura Cain
21. Black Community Literacy Facilitator	Calvin Gough
22. Peer Tutors of Preston	Denise Ewing
23. Uniacke Square Tenants Association	Yvonne Carvery
24. Nova Scotia Association for Advancement of Coloured People	Thelma Coward-Ince
25. Guidance Counsellor, Bell Park Academic Centre	Rev. Trevor Phillips
26. Careers Officer, Department of Education	Helen Dorrington-Price
27. School Board Member, Digby Co.	Eleanor Elms
28. School Board Member, Annapolis	Edith Cromwell
29. St. Mary's University	Dr. Harvey Miller
30. National Film Board	Sylvia Hamilton
31. North Preston Rate Payers Association	Allister Johnson
32. AUBA Scholarship Program	Cherry Paris
33. Teacher's Assistant, Kentville	Valerie Rafuse
34. St. Francis Xavier University	Dr. Agnes Calliste
35. Vice Principal, Graham Creighton Junior High School	Connie Glasgow
36. Head Librarian, Halifax North Branch Library	Tracy Jones
37. Employment Equity Officer, Dalhousie University	Mayanne Francis
38. Anti-Racism Project Officer, Halifax District School Board	Norma Williams
39. Halifax County Bedford District School Board	Nancy Sparks
40. Director, The Voices	David Woods
41. Community Legal Worker, Metro Law Clinic	Joan Jones
42. Public School Teacher, Guysborough Co.	Gloria Desmond

Letter Requesting Submissions

Dear:

Re: Black Learners Advisory Committee Research Project

As you may already know, the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) is undertaking a **comprehensive study of the educational realities and learning needs of the Black learners in Nova Scotia.**

Some of the objectives of the study are to:

a) document the Black experience in Nova Scotia's education system
b) document the people's perceptions and opinions of the education system
c) identify the concerns of parents and Black learners
d) assess the learning/educational needs of Black learners and how these can be met.
e) identify ways by which the Black community can work with the education system to ensure high quality education for all Black learners.

In scope, the study seeks to examine the history of the education of Blacks from around 1811 to the present day. It will examine how the lack of educational opportunities has impacted on the lives of Black Nova Scotians.

Given the interest of your organization in education in the Black community, I invite you to participate in this process. This participation may be through:

- suggestion of additional issues that should be discussed
- a written submission with specific recommendations for changes in the education system.

Your response could be to any one or more of the following issues that have so far been identified through the Participatory Process and the BLAC education conference. All written submissions should be post-marked no later than **September 15, 1993.**

Issues Identified

1. School Curriculum (i.e. text books, audio-visual materials, extra-curricula etc.)
- How can we ensure that the public school program is inclusive of Black culture and history?
- How can we ensure that the curriculum contains anti-racist and multi-cultural education and that teachers demonstrate this in their daily classroom activities?

2. Cultural Education and Positive Self-Esteem
- What is the importance Cultural education in fostering a positive self-esteem?
- Do you see Cultural education as an essential component of the education of Black learners?

3. Racial discrimination and name calling:
- Are there adequate mechanisms in place for teachers and school boards to deal with racial incidents?
- What are the most effective means of handling racial harassment and name calling?

4. Teacher Attitudes and Insensitivity

5. Teacher Expectations
- Do all teachers believe that all children can learn and excel?
- How do we get teachers to hold similar expectations for all learners while appreciating the social and cultural diversity in the classroom.

6. Parental Involvement
- How can partnerships between the school system and the Black parents/communities be enhanced?

7. Lack of Black Role models:
- What practical steps are school boards taking to address the imbalances in representation?
- What is the most effective means of ensuring that Blacks are represented in the teacher education programs and in the teaching force?

8. Pre-school education :
- What is the importance of pre-school education in the child's educational development?
- Are pre-school programs readily available to Black children in your community?

9. Early school leavers (dropouts):
- What are the main causes and what initiatives can the system in partnership with the Black community undertake to reduce dropout rates?

10. Adult literacy and Upgrading:
- How can accessibility to adult upgrading courses be maximized?

11. Financial need
- What steps are needed to overcome the financial barrier Black learners face in pursuing post- secondary education?

12. Motivation

13. Accessibility
- Are education/other professional programs readily accessible to Black learners?

14. Specific programs: Transition Year Program, Black Incentive Fund, Dartmouth East Black Learning Centre, Dalhousie Law Program for Indigenous Blacks and Micmacs etc.

- How can these programs be more effective in meeting the needs of the community?

The information received will be correlated with data from the Participatory process (focus groups), the socio-demographic survey, from the BLAC conference and a historical review of the education of Blacks in the Province, to form a final report. The final report will be a summary of all the findings, recommendations and a Plan of Action to be presented to the Nova Scotia Government and the Black community.

This is a very important project and we look forward to your participation. I would like to thank you for your time and cooperation, and if you have any concerns, please call me or our Director of Research and Field Operations, Dr. Patrick Kakembo at (902) 424-3649.

Yours truly,

Robert Upshaw
Executive Director

cc. Mr. Castor Williams
Chairman, BLAC

Section 2

Results of a Socio-Demographic Survey of the Nova Scotia Black Community

Acknowledgements

This report presents the results of a three year process that involved people from all areas of Nova Scotia concerned with the educational needs and experiences of the Black learner in this province. The results obtained by the survey simply would not have been possible without their strong support, cooperation and patience.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Patrick Kakembo, Director of Research and Field Operations for the BLAC*, for his advice and direction throughout the study. I greatly appreciate the support I received from Mr. Robert Upshaw, the* BLAC *Executive Director, as well as the* BLAC *Research Committee and the Board. Valuable input was received from the Regional Educators of the* BLAC.

Many people worked very hard to administer the survey questionnaires in the Black communities of Nova Scotia. Thank you *to these interviewers, to those at ForceTen who coded the data, and to my colleagues Bill Greenlaw and Kelly Maher at Applied Management Consultants for their help in the survey analysis.*

Finally, I would like to thank all those persons in the Nova Scotia Black community who took the time and made the effort to respond to this survey, and to share their experiences and expectations with us. Your input has made the survey a success.

Bill Collins
Halifax Manager
Applied Management Consultants

Introduction

The Importance of the Survey

The Research Project of the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) is focused on the need for comprehensive data to identify the educational experiences and needs of the Black learner throughout Nova Scotia. Several components of the Research Project were designed to obtain information on these needs, using a variety of research methods. The cornerstone of the Research Project, however, is the collection of socio-demographic information on the Nova Scotian Black learner. This information, developed in the form of a profile, is meant to describe, using valid data, the educational and economic characteristics of Black learners in the province.

In the late spring of 1993, the Research Committee of the BLAC approved a plan to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Nova Scotia Black community. A questionnaire package was developed by Applied Management Consultants, working closely with Dr. Patrick Kakembo and the Research Committee of the BLAC. Additional, valuable input was received from Mr. Robert Upshaw, Executive Director of the BLAC, and the Regional Educators of the BLAC.

The survey was tested during the summer, and, following the training of volunteer interviewers from the Black community, was administered during October. Follow-up interviewing continued into November. Data entry, editing and analysis were completed during November and December.

The survey collected an immense and unprecedented amount of information on the Black community throughout Nova Scotia. The findings of the survey provide an important source of data that can be assessed in much greater detail and scope than presented here. *This report presents the major results and highlights of the survey.* The objective of the report is not to provide detailed responses on each and every question but to draw out the results for the major survey themes. These include:

- socio-demographic information
- school experiences and achievements
- the role of parents, teachers and others
- the needs of the community
- expectations for the future

It is possible to compare the findings of the questions on the basis of the seven BLAC regions, by different educational sub-groups, such as students, graduates and early school leavers and by many other characteristics. These comparisons are used somewhat sparingly in this report, mainly in situations where differences are strong or noteworthy. This has been done in an effort to keep the presentation as straightforward as possible.

The report begins, in the following section, with a broad picture of the survey results. The survey methodology, along with its strengths and limitations, is also described in this chapter.

The remainder of the report presents results from the survey data. Chapter 2 provides a socio-demographic profile of the Nova Scotia Black community. Supplementary information from the 1991 Census of Canada is included here as well. Chapter 3 focuses on responses to particular survey questions, based on the themes identified in the following section. A summary of the results is included in Chapter 4, along with recommendations. Appendices A and B provide more technical data on the survey, including a copy of the questionnaire package in Appendix A and, in Appendix B, the data used in the preparation of the charts.

Survey Methodology

Design and Approach

The Research Project for the BLAC lists a number of research questions that are important to the Nova Scotia Black community. These questions are *fact-based*, designed to supply answers to topics such as:

- the number of Black persons in various occupations in the province, including the public service;
- the educational attainment of students; and,
- the income levels within the Black community in Nova Scotia.

In addition to questions directly related to education and the educational needs of the Black learner, the Research Committee wished to include questions that examined other topics that both directly and indirectly affect the educational needs of the Black learner. These covered items such as housing and housing conditions as well as an overall assessment of community services.

Taken together, these questions formed the basis for the overall design of the survey, its administration, themes and specific questions. Finally, in order to provide a benchmark for the results of this survey and obtain detailed answers to several socio-demographic questions, we obtained specific, customized 1991 Census results from Statistics Canada.

Sample versus Census

The goal of the BLAC in undertaking the survey was to obtain socio-demographic information, opinions and experiences of the *entire* Black community living in Nova Scotia. In a real sense, the aim was to complete a *Census* of the Black community, not simply a *sample* of the population. The former approach, the Board felt, would provide much more accurate findings and allow detailed analyses at the community level.

By covering all of the community, a Census approach would also serve as a communication tool between the BLAC and the communi[illegible]n addition to collecting information, the su[illegible]y would help make the community more aware of the BLAC and its objectives. Finally, the Research Committee wanted to be able to compare, in a strategic way, the results of a survey undertaken by the Nova Scotia Black community with those of the government Census completed by Statistics Canada.

The survey coverage was such that a Census [illegible] not completed. Constraints occurred in the [illegible] and resources available to administer the sur[illegible], including the sheer level of effort required [illegible]o identify, locate and interview the enti[illegible]e population of Black Nova Scotians. A Census required that each and every Black person in the province be identified and asked to participate, on a volunteer basis, in the survey.

The actual approach taken was to maximize the number of persons interviewed within the available resource limits of time and funding. Consequently, surveying efforts focused on the Black communities in the province as well as locations with high numbers of Black persons within the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

The following are the major factors influencing the number of questionnaires that were eventually completed. Each is discussed in detail below:

- the length and complexity (or overall design) of the questionnaire;
- the interview process;
- the availability of persons to be interviewed; and,
- the commitment of the interviewers to the survey.

The length and complexity of the questionnaire had an influence on the number of responses obtained. For example, the second part of the Individual questionnaire was seven pages long and included 13 questions, each with multiple parts. Questions covered a wide range of topics. The time required per questionnaire limited the total number of interviews that could be completed within the one month time frame for the survey.

Efforts were made to interview each person in the household who was 13 years of age or older. It was possible for an interview to last up to one hour per person; the result was that it could take one interviewer up to two hours or more to complete one household of four persons, assuming that all members were available to be interviewed.

The availability of persons to be interviewed slowed the response as well. Interviewers attempted to contact households throughout the day and evening. Persons that were working were sometimes difficult to contact.

Finally, the persons conducting the interviews were paid for their efforts on a per-completed interview basis, not on a contact-made basis. Many interviewers were community volunteers, and no matter how dedicated to the survey, these volunteers had to balance the time required to do surveys with their other obligations. Some interviewers were discouraged by the amount of time and effort it took to complete the questionnaire. Some interviewers, when they realized how much effort was required, changed their minds about interviewing. The commitment of the interviewers had an important impact on the number of questionnaires completed.

Strengths and Limitations

The survey represents a major undertaking of the BLAC and the Black community in Nova Scotia. The major strength of the survey is the fact that a very large number of persons from the Black community took part in the process; more than 4,400 persons. The data from the first part of the questionnaire, the *socio-demographic information*, were not as complete as that obtained from the second part, which focused on *educational experiences* and *needs*. Detailed and consistent information was obtained from close to 3,400 persons over 13 years of age in the second part of the questionnaire.

Since a Census was not completed, the overall quality of the results must be viewed as a *sample* of the population. From a statistical perspective, the main issue is how *representative* the sample is of the entire Nova Scotia Black population.

This survey provides a strong profile of the Black population outside of the Halifax-Dartmouth Metro area. The non-random sampling approach used to select households in the larger Metro area may mean that the Metro results are not as strongly representative of the demographic characteristics of the entire Metro area Black population.

An issue related to the demographic information is the personal nature of the information requested from those interviewed. Questions on income, employment, education and other demographic information are sensitive and confidential. The survey asked persons to voluntarily provide the information; there was no (legal or other) requirement to participate, unlike the Census which has been given a legal and enforceable right by Parliament to collect information. Many people in the BLAC survey chose not to provide income information; only one half of those asked the income question responded.

Respondents were very interested in providing their opinions, experiences and recollections on the educational system. In most cases, opinions are influenced by the immediacy of the event being recalled – students are easily able to recall their experiences, while those out of school for some years reported difficulty in recalling their experiences related to some of the questions.

Survey Format and Process

Interviews were conducted in-person by a trained interviewer. Households were selected by the interviewer; the criteria for selection was that there was at least one Black adult in the household. Since the goal was to interview as many households as possible, no attempt was made to randomly select households. Interviewers were instructed to make two call-back attempts in cases where no one was available to be interviewed; this was designed to interview as many persons as possible.

The survey package was complex to administer. It consisted of five main parts:

- a household tabular form that enumerated each member of the household, along with basic socio-demographic information such as age, education, marital status and work status;
- a series of questions related to each household that was answered by Person 1, a representative of the household; these included questions on the educational level of the parents of Persons 1 and 2, housing, community services and household income; and,
- three separate Education Questionnaires on school experiences and opinions, answered by all household members more than 13 years old. The three groups were students, graduates and early school leavers (or drop-outs).

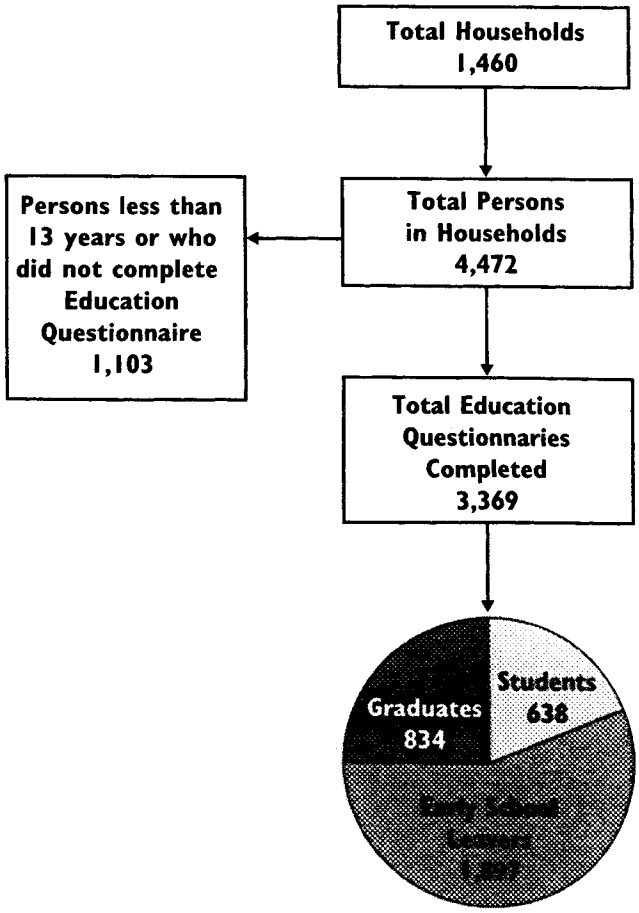
The number of responses for each component is shown in the following figure. The numbers shown represent the maximum number of responses available for analyzing the results of a particular question. For example, since a total of 1,460 Person 1's were interviewed, the greatest number of responses for any question related to Person 1 is 1,460.

Most figures in the report combine several variables, such as location cross-classified by the educational status of the respondent. If any of these variables were not answered or "missing" a response, the total count of results will be less than the maximum accounts shown in Figure 1.

The count of households is based on the number of questionnaires completed by Person 1. The Person 1 Questionnaire is the only source of information on household income, housing and community services.

The Education Questionnaire, completed by 3,369 persons, forms the basis of the analysis on drop-outs, suspensions, school programs and other information.

Figure 1
The Results for Each Part of the Survey
Source: BLAC Survey



2 Profile of the Nova Scotia Black Community

Introduction

This section presents the socio-demographic profile of the Nova Scotia Black community. The profile is a composite, developed from the BLAC Household survey as well as two custom 1991 Census tables prepared for the BLAC by Statistics Canada. The survey contains socio-demographic information such as age, gender, education, marital status, work status, occupation and household income on those interviewed who were 13 years of age and older, classified by community and BLAC region.

The Census tables provide detailed information on key socio-demographic characteristics that are important to the Research Project, for both the Black and non-Black[1] Nova Scotia population. Characteristics include occupation and income groups, highest level of schooling, urban/rural location, age and gender. The Census tables permit comparisons of the Black and non-Black population aged 15 years and older.

One custom Census table includes information on the Nova Scotia born Black population living in the province with those Nova Scotia born Blacks who lived in another part of Canada when the 1991 Census was completed, enabling a comparison between the two groups. This allows us to determine whether native-born Nova Scotia Blacks have fared better, economically, in their home province than elsewhere in Canada.

Socio-Demographic Results from the Survey

The first part of the household survey obtained demographic information on the Nova Scotia Black community, including the number of persons, their respective ages, gender, education, employment status and kind of work. A question on household income was also included. This section reports on these characteristics.

The responses include a very large proportion of the Nova Scotia Black population, up to 25 percent of the population estimates from the 1991 Census of Canada. As Chapter 1 notes, randomness is an important part of the statistical process required to generalize the survey results to the entire Nova Scotia Black population. Where appropriate and meaningful, we have included measures of statistical confidence such as margins of error in the results. These tell us how statistically likely or representative the results are; more detailed assessments require extensive analysis and testing and these generally have not been done.

The following figures indicate the demographic characteristics of those surveyed, beginning with the number of persons by region. As noted in the previous chapter, 4,472 persons were counted in the survey.

Geographic Location

- The regional breakdown in Figure 2 indicates that 32 percent of the respondents were from the Dartmouth area and one quarter from the Halifax area.
- In total, 55 percent of all persons interviewed were from the Halifax-Dartmouth Metro area – including communities such as the Prestons, Lake Loon and Hammonds Plains. The Census results estimate that one half of the population lives in the Metro area.
- At the community level, the largest concentration of respondents was from the North Preston area. Based on the responses to the household component of the survey, the ten largest communities for which results were separately coded, are identified in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Survey Results by Community
Source: BLAC Survey

Community/ Area	Number of Persons	Percent of Total Results
North Preston	748	16.7
Yarmouth/Greenville	277	6.2
Sackville	250	5.6
Sydney	234	5.2
Spryfield	218	4.9
Central Halifax	365	8.1
Cumberland	190	4.3
Pictou	161	3.6
Lake Loon/Cherry Brook	214	4.8
Weymouth	127	2.8

Figure 2
Persons Inteviewed by BLAC Region
Source: BLAC Survey

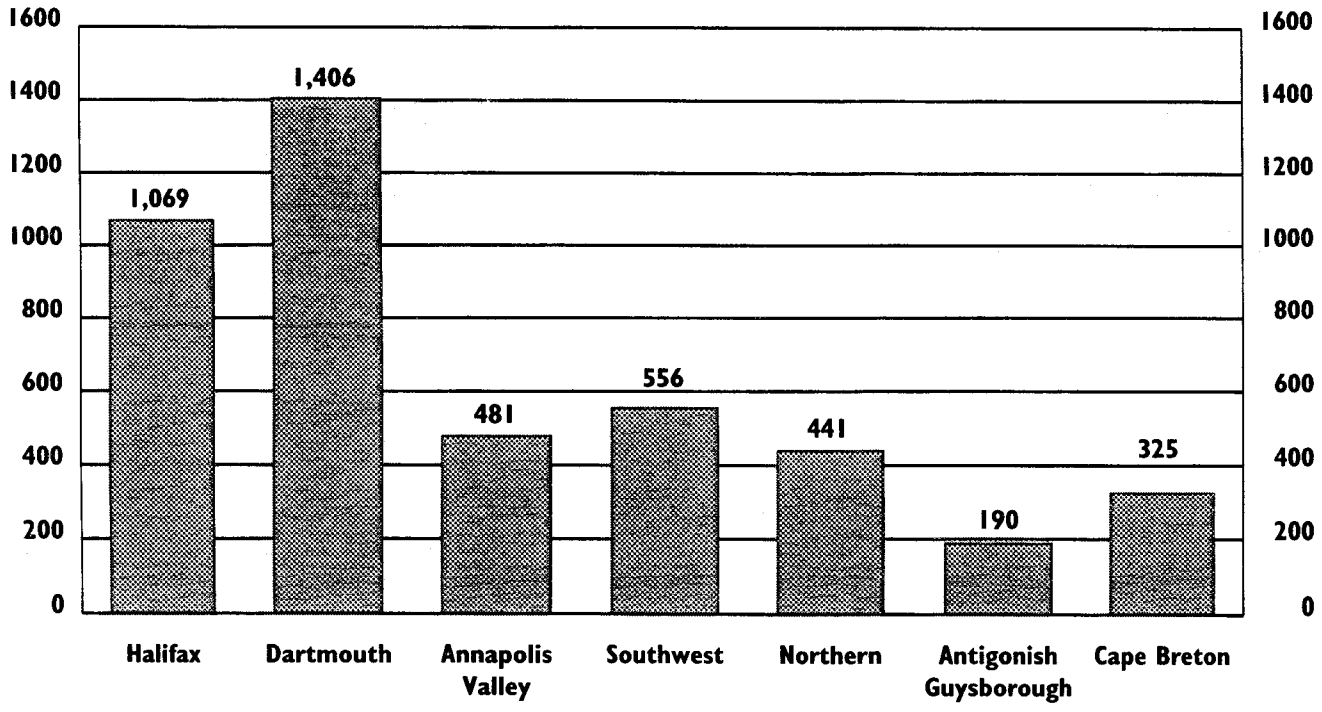


Figure 4
A Comparison of the BLAC Survey and the Census
Source: BLAC Survey and 1991 Census

Age Group	BLAC Survey	1991 Census NS-Born Blacks	Survey as a Percent of '91 Census
0-14 years	870	N/A[4]	N/A
15-19 years	483	1,370	35%
20-24 years	406	1,290	31%
25-29 years	356	1,425	25%
30-34 years	470	1,300	36%
35-39 years	383	1,205	32%
40-44 years	327	1,050	31%
45-49 years	228	740	31%
50-54 years	190	500	38%
55-59 years	147	390	38%
60-64 years	131	475	28%
65+ years	343	1,200	29%
Total	3,464	10,955	32%

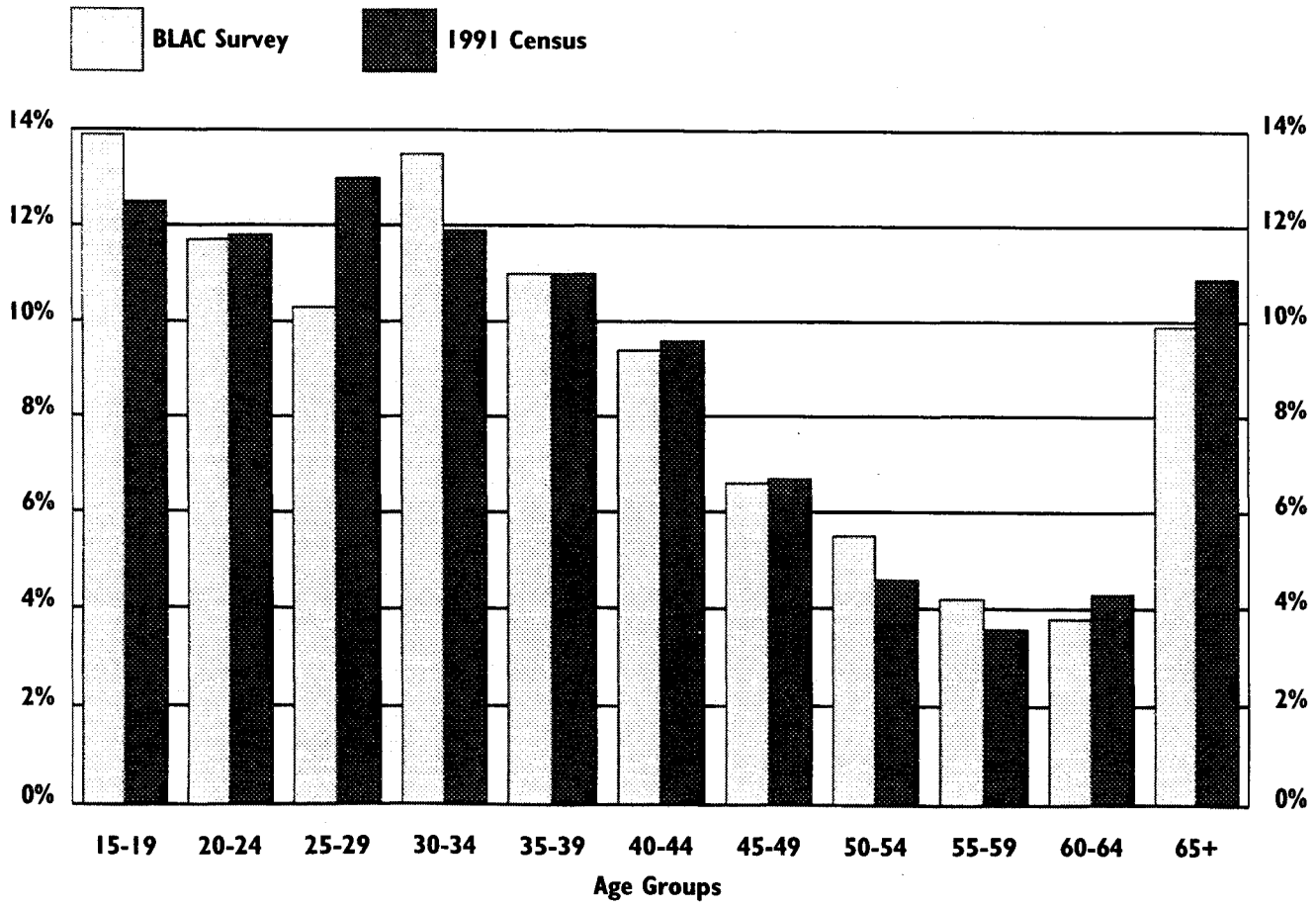
Age and Gender

- Females outnumbered males in the survey by more than 300 persons; there were 2,035 males (46 percent) and 2,357 females (54 percent)[2].
- The average age of all respondents, including children, was 31 years; this age represents the average age of the *entire* Black population, within six months, 19 times out of 20[3]. The average age of Person 1, the person who provided the demographic profile for the household, was 44.8 years, with a margin of error of 9.5 months, 19 times out of 20.
- Figure 4 shows the age distribution of all respondents, split by 5 year groups. For comparison purposes, the 1991 Census findings are also displayed. These Census data are from a table for the Nova Scotia born Black population *only*; these Census data do not include the 0-14 year old age group nor do they include the Black population born outside Nova Scotia but now living here.
- Figure 4 indicates that the sample coverage of the BLAC survey was very good. One quarter of persons in the 25-29 year age group were interviewed, as well as close to 38 percent of persons in their 50's.

- Figure 5 indicates the relative share or size of each age group compared to the total population 15 years and older, for both the BLAC survey and the 1991 Census. Each age group "bar" in the figure, such as the 15-19 year age group, indicates the percentage of the entire population in that group.

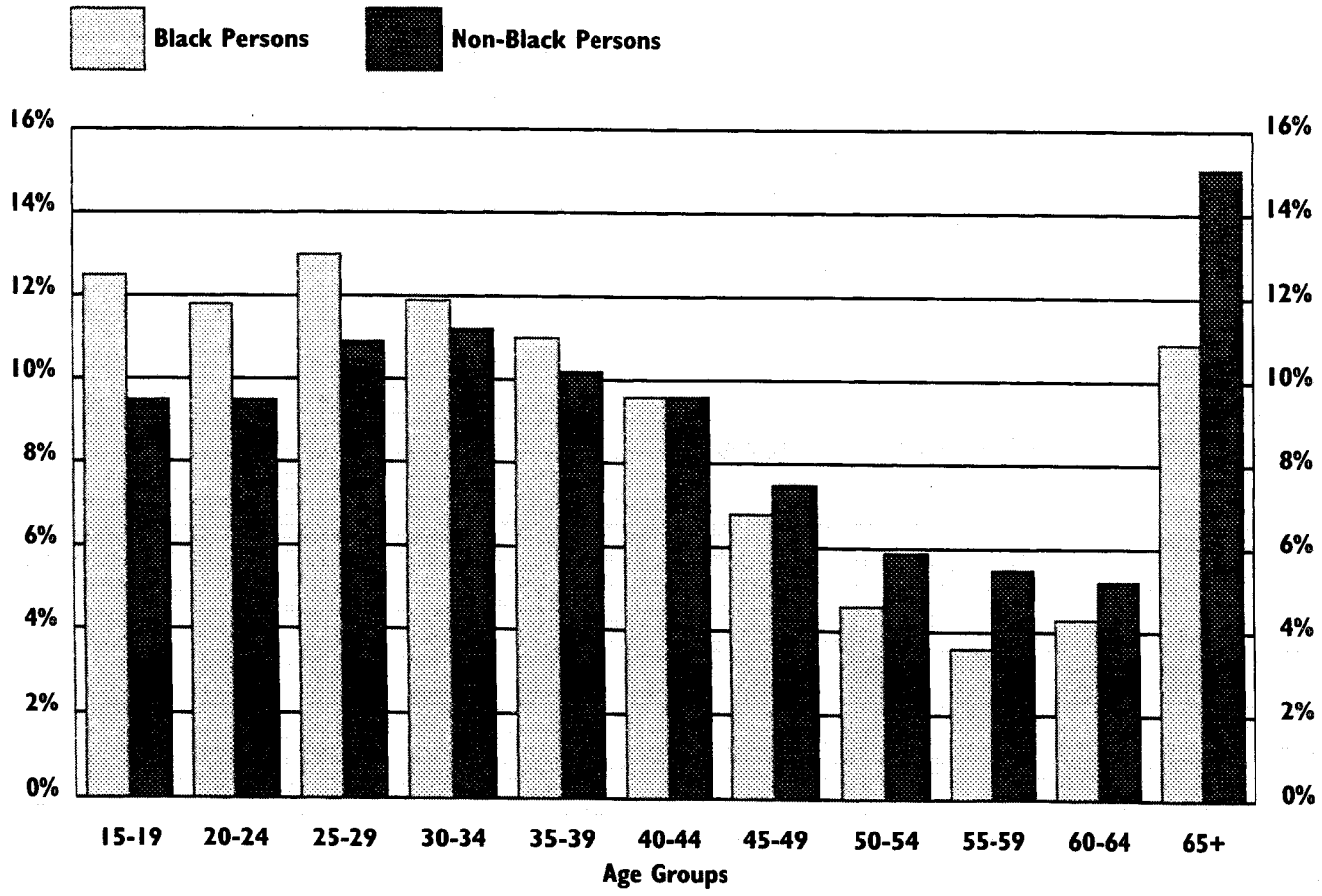
- This comparison indicates that the BLAC survey and the Census are very closely matched in terms of the age grouping of the Black population; none of the age groups differs from each other by more than three percent, and in several groups the two surveys have identical distributions. This indicates that the BLAC survey is representative of the Census population in terms of age groupings.

Figure 5
Age Distribution:
A Comparison of the BLAC Survey and 1991 Census of Canada



- Figure 6 in this series compares the age distribution of the Black population in Nova Scotia with the non-Black population of the province, based on the 1991 Census results. Given the ethnic composition of Nova Scotia, this non-Black population is predominantly the province's White population.
- About 13 percent of the Black population are in the 15-19 year old age group; only 9 percent of the non-Black population are in the same age group.
- Figure 6 indicates that the Black population is a younger population than the non-Black population. The proportion of young persons in the province's Black population is higher than that of the non-Black population up to the age 35-39 year old age group; both groups are equal in the 40-44 year old age group, after which there are proportionately less persons in the Black than non-Black population.

Figure 6
Nova Scotia Born Population by Age Groups:
A Comparison of the Black and Non-Black Census Populations
Source: 1991 Census of Canada



Marital Status

The household part of the BLAC survey obtained information on the marital status of those responding to the survey. Figure 7 indicates the overall responses to the question, arranged by four categories. Because the results were computerized by individual person rather than family or household, it is difficult to provide a complete profile of the household. The marital status results combine the results for Person 1 and Person 2, for persons over 20 years of age.

- The results indicate a statistically significant difference between the marital status of males and females within the Nova Scotia Black community. This overall difference varies by age.
- According to the BLAC survey results, the percent of persons married or living common law does not differ by gender until the 35-44 year age group. Within this age group, males are more likely to be married than females. A similar situation occurs for persons over age 55.
- Another interpretation of these results is that while some 26 percent of adult Black males are single, more than one third (35 percent) of adult Black females are single. This situation is reversed for the province as a whole where 30 percent of all Nova Scotia males and 24 percent of all females are single.

Persons by Education

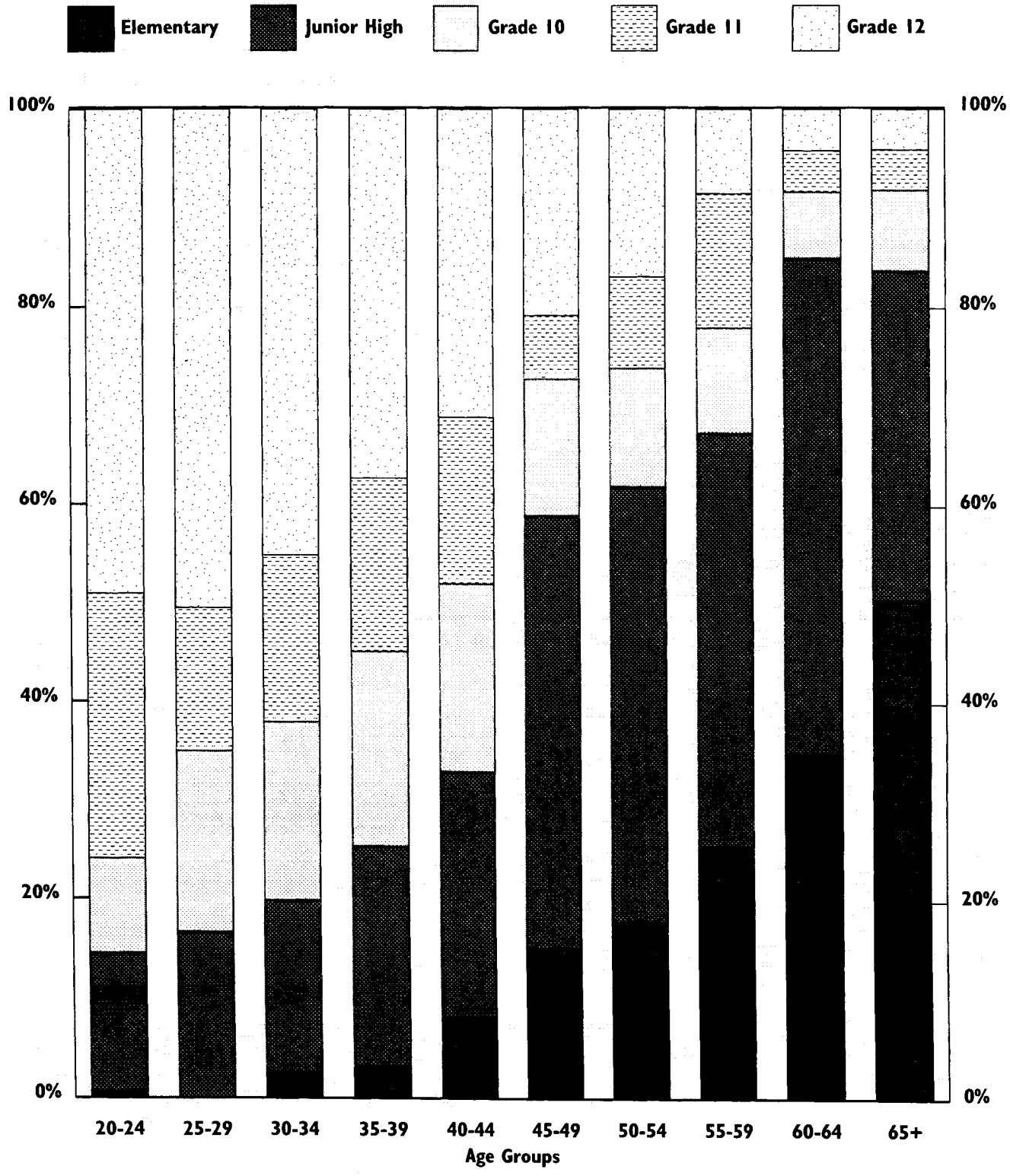
Determining the educational levels of the Black population is one of the key goals of the Research Project. The Household part of the survey asked all respondents to tell us their highest grade completed at school as well as any other education they have received. Except where noted, the results include those who were students at the time of the survey as well as those who are no longer students. The following figures present the findings of this part of the survey.

- Figure 8 and its corresponding Figure 9, give the percentage breakdown of the highest grade completed[5], categorized by the age of the respondent; those who were students at the time of the survey are not included in this figure. Each "bar" or age group in the figure indicates the relative percentage of education for each group. For example, 49 percent of those in the 20-24 year age group reported they had completed high school, while only 4 percent of the 60-64 year age group had a high school education.

Figure 7
Marital Status of the BLAC Survey Respondents

Marital Status	Males (number)	Males (percent)	Females (number)	Females (percent)
Single	249	25.8%	462	35.2%
Married/ Common Law	608	62.9%	616	46.9%
Widowed	42	4.3%	116	8.8%
Divorced/Separated	67	6.9%	119	9.1%
Total	966	100.0%	1313	100.0%

Figure 8
Highest Grade Completed by BLAC Survey Respondents
Source: BLAC Survey



- The main trend evident from the data is that younger persons are more likely to have completed high school than older persons; the older the respondent, the more unlikely is high school completion.
- The BLAC survey found that 4 percent of respondents 65 years of age and older had completed a high school education while the 1991 Census found that less than 2 percent of the Black population in this same age group had completed high school. However, the Census reported that 8 percent of the non-Black population in this same age group have graduated.
- Although there is a sizable discrepancy between the BLAC survey and the Census, the clear conclusion is that for senior citizens, a significantly higher percent of the non-Black population is better educated than the Black population. In fact, the average non-Black senior is close to 4 times more likely to have a high school education than a senior Black person in Nova Scotia.
- The data for older Black persons reflect the lack of access to education when these persons were of school age. Very few persons in this group had the opportunity to attend high school. There were no high schools in the Black community; grade 8 was the highest grade offered. Those attending high school in other areas had to incur the financial costs.

Figure 9
Number of Persons by Grade Completed
Source: BLAC Survey

Age Group	Elemen.	Jr High	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total	% Finished Grade 12
20-24	3	54	38	106	193	394	49%
25-29	0	57	63	50	173	343	50%
30-34	12	77	81	76	202	448	45%
35-39	12	82	73	65	138	370	37%
40-44	26	78	60	53	98	315	31%
45-49	33	95	30	14	45	217	21%
50-54	33	81	22	17	31	184	17%
55-59	36	59	15	19	12	141	9%
60-64	42	60	8	5	5	120	4%
65+	162	106	26	13	13	320	4%

- The 40-49 year old age group was the first group of Black learners in the province to be able to take advantage of higher education offered through a more open school system, beginning in the 1960s. The data in the figure reflect significantly higher levels of graduation for this age group and younger, compared to older persons.
- The 1991 Census results provide a similar perspective in Figure 11. Although Figures 8 and 11 do not have quite the same education categories, there are a number of important findings in the Census figure.
- The low number of high school graduates amongst the Nova Scotia Black population is even more pronounced in the Census than in the BLAC survey. In the Census 20-24 year old age group, less than 30 percent have graduated from grade 12. The BLAC survey found that 49 percent of this group reported that they graduated from grade 12.

Figure 10
Highest Grade Completed by Nova Scotian Black Population
Source: 1991 Census

Age Group	Less than Grade 9	Grades 9-12	Graduated Grade 12
20-24	55	360	175
25-29	90	450	170
30-34	165	390	105
35-39	125	345	85
40-44	175	240	60
45-49	260	195	20
50-54	220	85	25
55-59	210	105	10
60-64	215	130	15
65+	790	265	10

- One reason for this difference is that respondents to the BLAC survey may have over-stated their education if they were interviewed by a person their own age. The Census method is more anonymous and legally binding than the BLAC survey.
- The BLAC survey found the highest grade completed, on average, by those who are no longer students was grade 9. This calculation does not include other education courses that may have been taken after leaving school, such as GED, trades training and other courses.
- The BLAC survey asked those who left school before graduating to indicate their age when they left; an indicator of the major at risk years for the Black learner. The results, shown in Figure 12, indicate that the average age is about 16 years of age.
- The figure also indicates the years from age 15-18, inclusive, are those of the greatest drop-out risk; some 70 percent of those responding to this question reported that they left school when they were 15-18 years of age.

Figure 11
Highest Grade Completed by the Nova Scotia Black Population
Source: 1991 Census of Canada

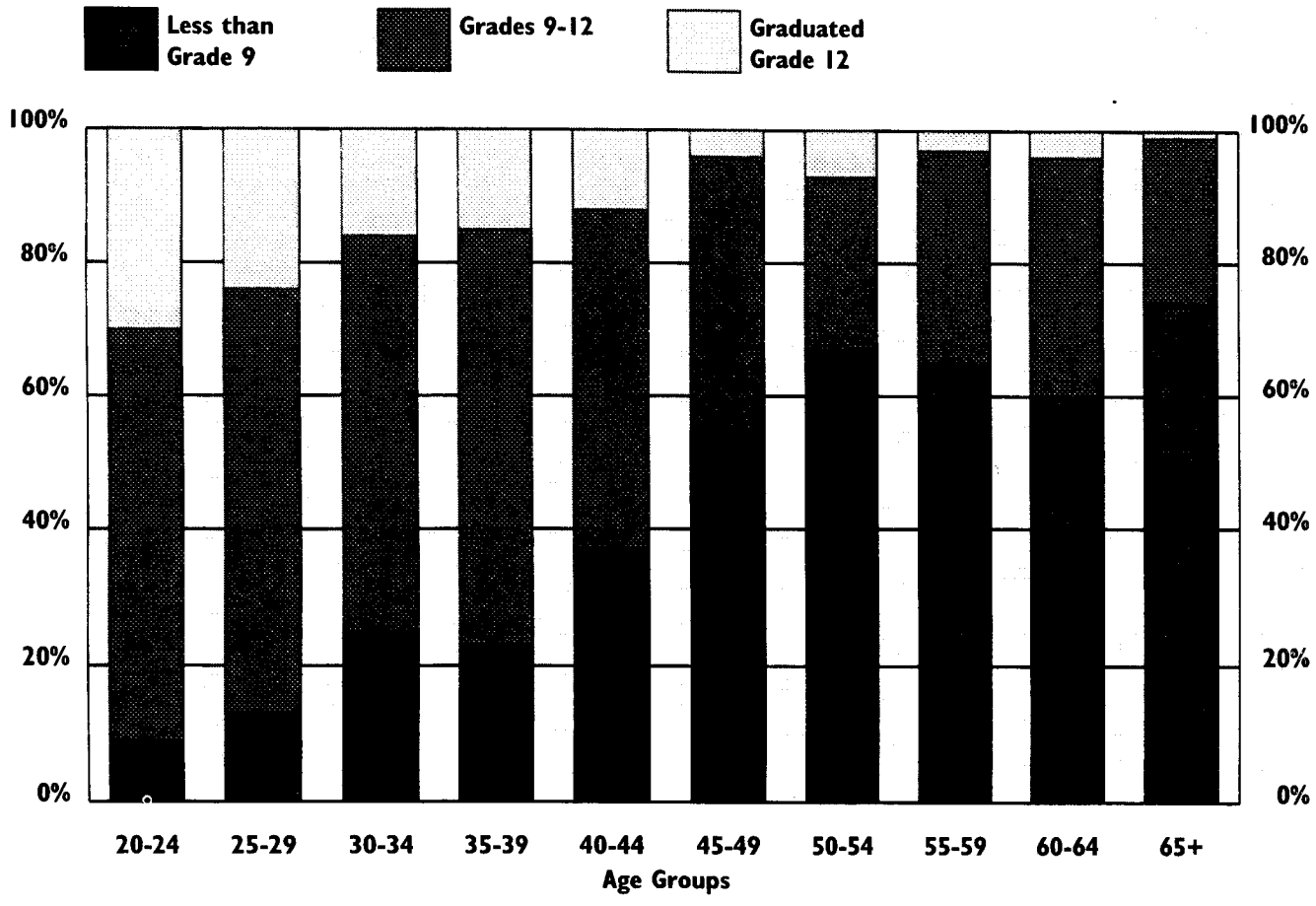


Figure 12
Drop-out Age of Early School Leavers
Source: BLAC Survey

Age Group	Number of Persons	Percent
Under 15 years	323	19.4
15 years	227	13.6
16 years	376	22.6
17 years	312	18.8
18 years	268	16.1
19+ years	158	9.5
Total	1,664	100.0
Average Age 15.9 years		

Figure 13
Reasons for Dropping Out
Source: BLAC Survey

Reasons for Dropping-out	Number of Persons	Percent
Didn't relate to school/bored	1,438	76%
Employment	1,305	69%
Family/personal	817	43%
Racism	222	12%
Told to leave	75	4%

- The BLAC survey provided respondents with a list of reasons that describe why they had dropped out. Figure 13 summarizes the reasons in five main categories, ranked by the number of times the reasons were indicated by respondents.
- The percentages do not total 100 percent since it was possible to state more than one reason for dropping out; the results do indicate the overall level of importance of various reasons to those who left school early.
- The most common reasons for leaving school reported in the figure are symptoms rather than causes. In other words, while actions such as employment or finding a job may be the final reason for leaving school, the underlying causes are more likely the outcome of a long, painful process of alienation and disillusionment with school and the education system, as well as poverty.
- Many of these persons have been pushed out of the educational system, yet because of the long term nature of being pushed out, they do not recognize the process to which they have been subjected. Pushing out results from a student being gradually alienated from school, as a result of feelings of inadequacy or not belonging, and school suspensions.

Type of Academic Programs

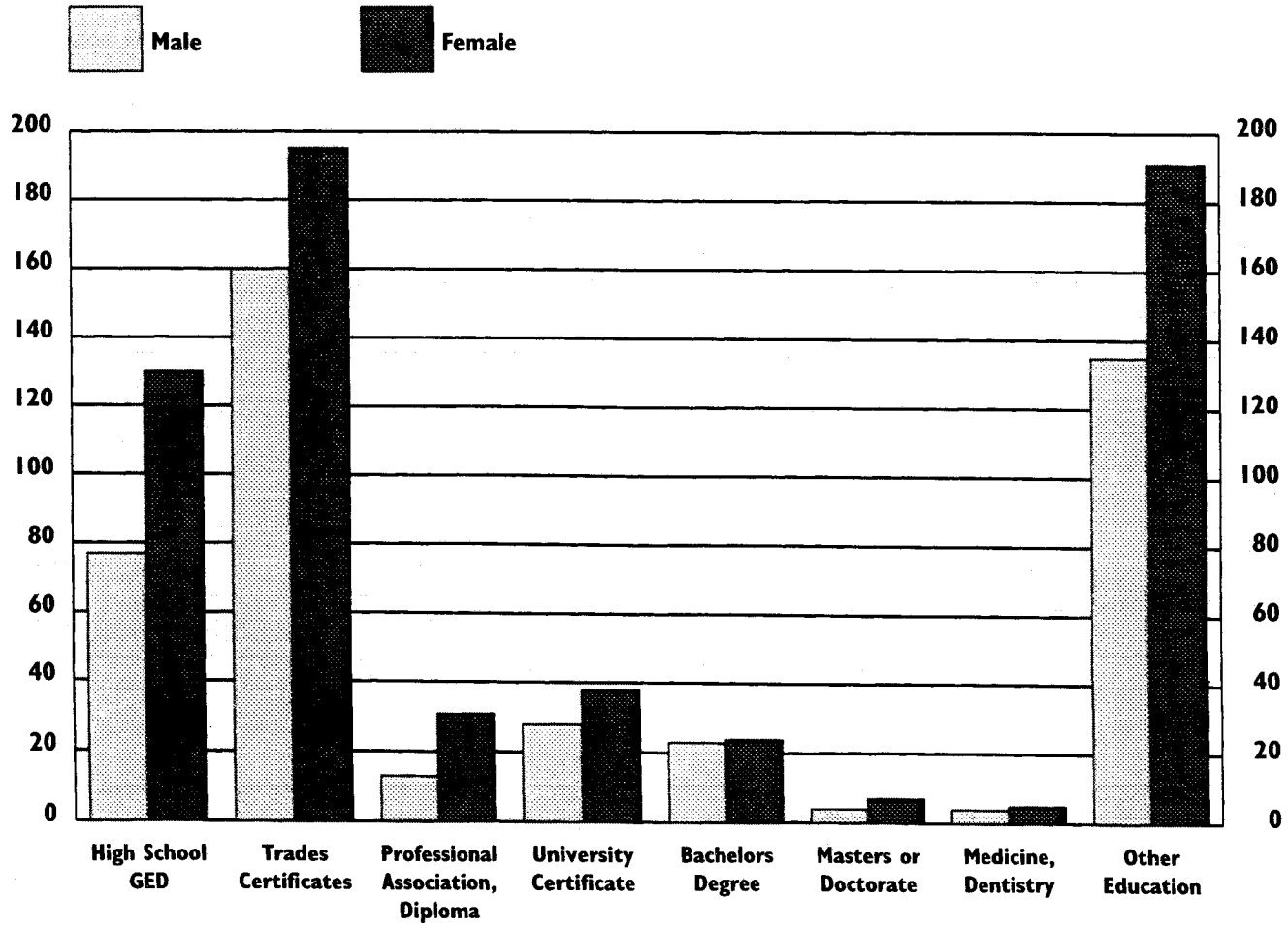
- The BLAC survey asked respondents to indicate the program level in which they were enrolled in school, in order to assess the degree to which Black learners find themselves in the general rather than academic program. The following results in Figure 14 show percentages of persons by group.
- The figure shows that program type differs by group, with school dropouts more likely to have taken a general program than any other program. Close to 70 percent of students and graduates reported they were enrolled in an academic program in high school.

Figure 14
School Programs by Survey Group
Source: BLAC Survey

Program	Graduates	Students	Drop-outs
General Program	24.1%	20.5%	34.4%
Intermediate/Industrial	1.0%	2.3%	1.3%
Academic Program	69.4%	68.3%	17.5%
Honours Program	1.5%	1.6%	0.1%
Resource or Special	1.2%	3.4%	2.4%
Other Program	2.9%	3.9%	1.3%
Did Not Attend High School	N/A	N/A	43.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

- Figure 15 compares the level of education of "Other education" beyond high school for the 1,078 males and females who responded to the question in the BLAC survey.
- More females than males have completed additional education beyond high school for all educational categories shown. In percentage terms, the GED and Trades Certificate/Diploma accounted for about 50 percent of the additional education for both males and females.
- "Other Education" includes various short term courses, training programs and non-certified education.

Figure 15
Other Education Completed by BLAC Survey Respondents
Source: BLAC Survey



Work Status

This question measured the labour force and employment status of the Black population in Nova Scotia at the time of the survey. The question did not attempt to replicate or use the criteria used by Statistics Canada to estimate labour force status. For example, to be unemployed according to Statistics Canada, an unemployed person must be actively seeking work.

- Statistics Canada does not count those without jobs who are not looking for work as unemployed. This group includes those working in the home, students, those on disability or workers compensation and retired persons. *If we adjust our data to reflect this definition, the unemployment rate amongst those interviewed increases to 36 percent – more than one out of three adults in the Black community.*
- Figure 16 indicates that only two thirds of those interviewed by BLAC had jobs.
- In contrast, recent[6] Statistics Canada surveys estimated the overall Nova Scotia unemployment rate at 15.8 percent, less than half that of the Black community. Since unemployment is typically higher in January than when the survey was undertaken, the unemployment gap between the Black community and the total Nova Scotian population is actually much greater than indicated.
- Another way to examine the work-related data is to assess the situation in individual communities. Figure 17 presents the findings of the BLAC survey for the five largest communities surveyed, showing the percentage of respondents in each work status category.
- Spryfield had the highest unemployment rate; close to half of those interviewed were without jobs at the time of the survey.

Figure 16
Work Status of the BLAC Respondents
Source: BLAC Survey

Work Status	Number of Respondents	Total Percent	Percent Excluding Non-Labour Force
Student	786	23.0%	N/A
Employed or self-employed	1303	38.1%	64.4%
Unemployed	721	21.1%	35.6%
Homemaker	128	3.8%	N/A
Disabled/ Workers Comp.	208	6.1%	N/A
Retired	271	7.9%	N/A
Grand Total	3,417	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 17
Work Status for Selected Black Communities
Source: BLAC Survey

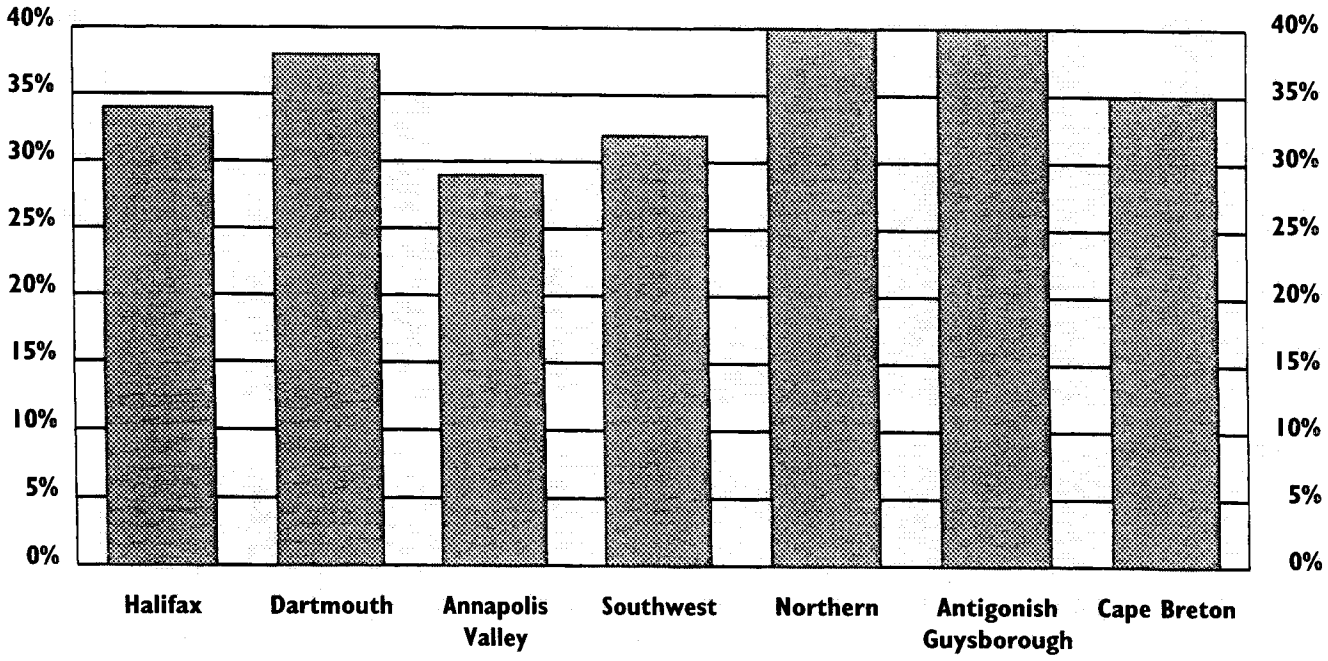
Work Status	Spryfield	Sackville	North Preston	Sydney	Yarmouth, Greenville
Employed or self-employed	52.0	74.7	59.3	73.9	75.0
Unemployed	48.0	25.3	40.8	26.1	25.0
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- The number of persons without work varies considerably by BLAC region. As shown in Figure 18, the highest rates occurred in Northern Nova Scotia and the Antigonish and Guysborough areas; 40 percent of those interviewed in the labour force in these Black communities were without work.
- Figure 19 indicates that some 72 percent of adult males and 58 percent of adult females in the Nova Scotia Black communities were employed at the time of the survey. Females between the ages of 30-54 are more likely to be unemployed than males, as Figure 20 indicates. The female unemployment rate is influenced by the 7 percent of those women interviewed in the Black community that work in the home, and who are not normally counted as being part of the labour force.

Figure 19
Work Status by Gender
Source: BLAC Survey

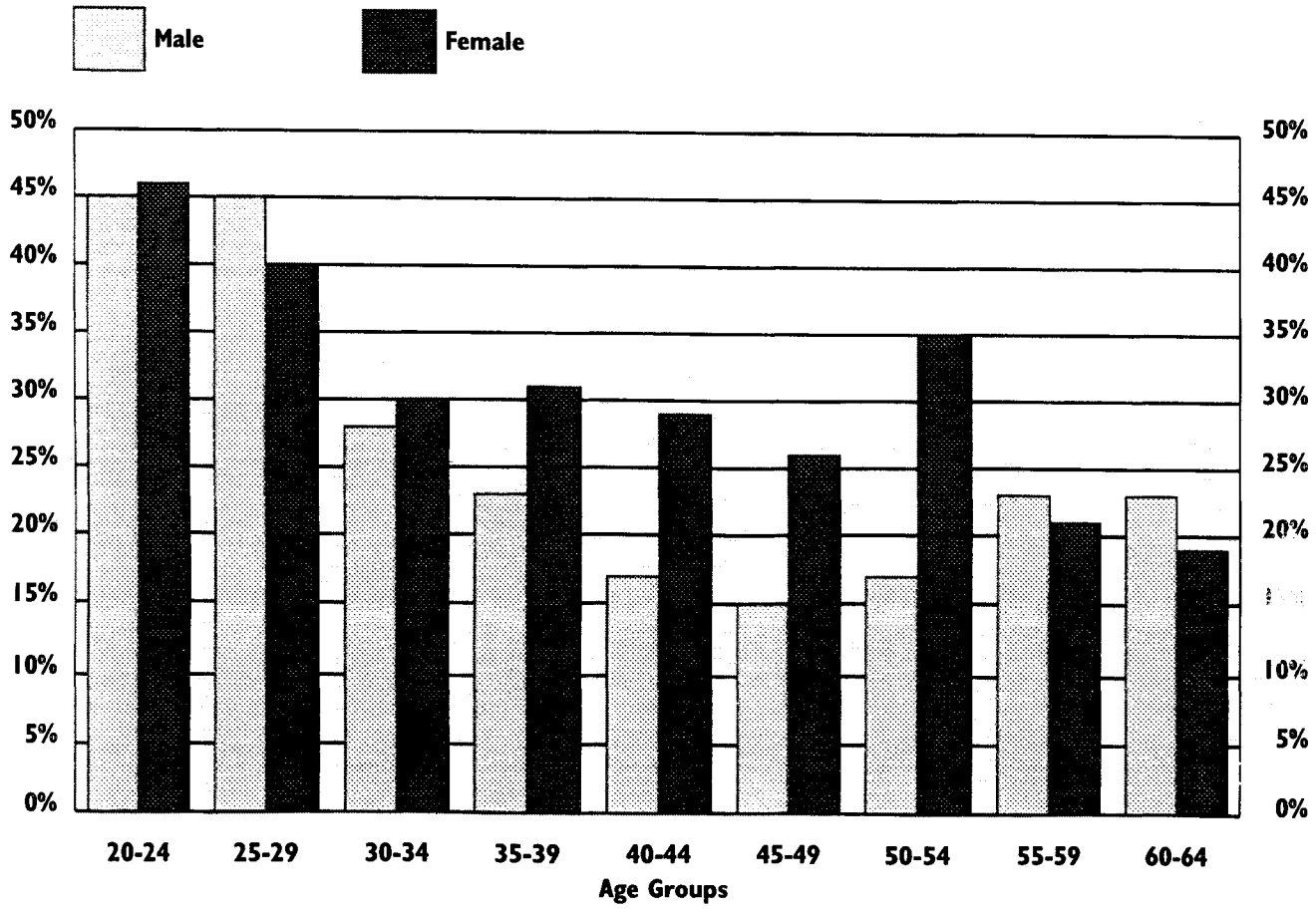
Work Status	Males Percent	Females Percent
Employed or self-employed	72.0%	57.9%
Unemployed	28.0%	42.1%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 18
Those Without Jobs in the BLAC Regions
Percent of those interviewed.
Source: BLAC Survey



- The survey found that 14 percent of the females interviewed were receiving social assistance; this amounts to some 266 out of the 1,830 women in this sample; only 44 of the 1,549 males were receiving social assistance at the time.
- The estimated unemployment rates amongst the younger age groups is appalling, as Figure 20 indicates. The rate exceeds 40 percent for persons 20-29 years of age.
- For those 30-39 years of age, unemployment is as high as 30 percent; for those aged 30-45 years who are in the prime of their working careers, unemployment averages 25 percent.
- The comparable unemployment rates for all Nova Scotians from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey range from a high of 27 percent for the 20-24 year age group to a low of 10.7 percent for the 45-54 year old age group.

Figure 20
Unemployment Rates by Age and Gender
Percent
Source: BLAC Survey



Occupation

A question on occupation or "kind of work" was included in the household profile. Each person in the household was asked to indicate the kind of job they had at that time, or at the last time they were employed. For comparison purposes, the results were coded using the same codes used by Statistics Canada. This question was answered by 1,406 persons of the 4,472 persons interviewed, including 47 students. In other words, about one third of the sample provided this information.

Persons who were unemployed typically did not answer this question. In one quarter of the non-completed cases, the information provided did not describe their jobs in enough detail to be usable for the analysis.

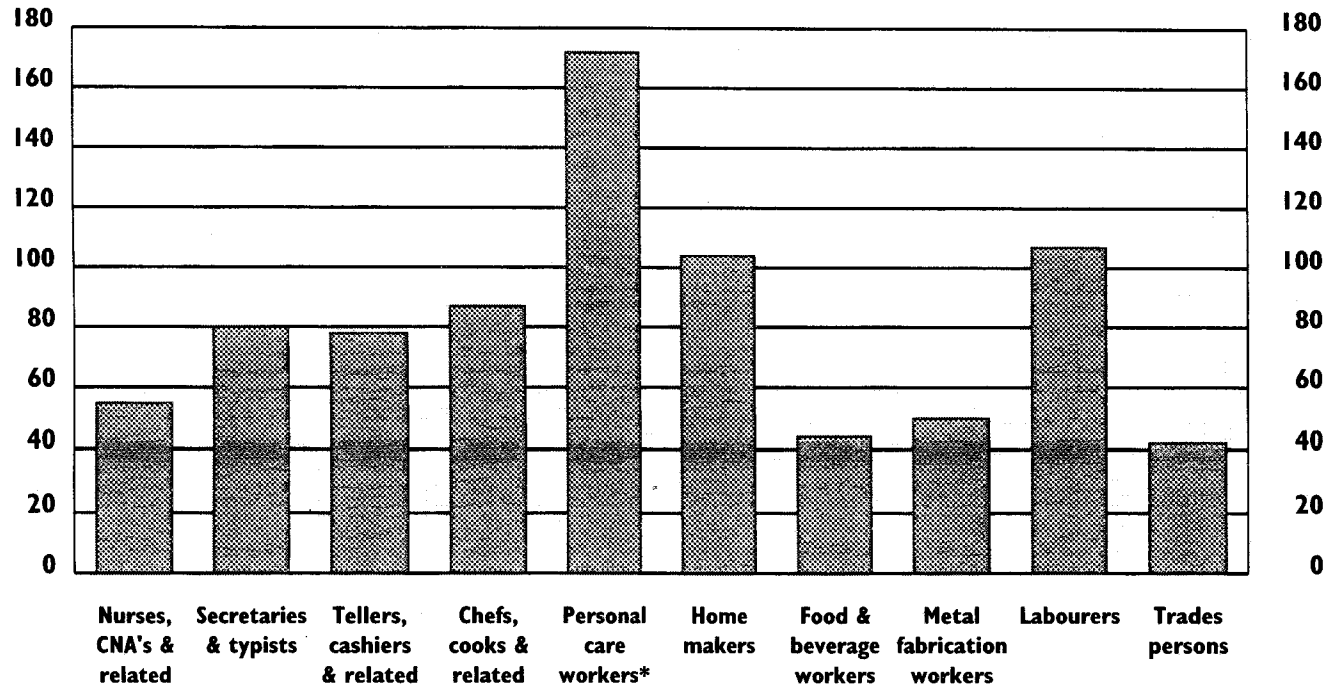
- Figure 21 indicates the numbers of persons in the major occupational groupings of the work force. The figure provides the percent share of the work force for each occupational group. It also compares the survey findings with the 1991 Census results for Black persons born in Nova Scotia and still living in the province at the time of the Census.

Figure 21
Types of Work in the Black Population

Type of Work: Major Groups	BLAC Survey: Number of Persons	BLAC Survey: Percent of Total Results	Census Results[7]
Managerial, administrative and related occupations	35	2.6%	5%
Teaching and related occupations	44	3.2%	3%
Occupations in medicine and health	72	5.3%	7%
Technological, social, religious, artistic and related occupations	56	4.1%	5%
Clerical and related occupations	215	15.8%	19%
Sales occupations	46	3.4%	6%
Service occupations	412	30.3%	22%
Primary occupations	23	1.7%	3%
Processing occupations	67	4.9%	4%
Machining, product fabrication, assembling, and repairing occupations	101	7.4%	5%
Construction trades occupations	153	11.3%	10%
Transport equipment operating occupations	32	2.4%	4%
Other	103	7.6%	6%
Grand Total	1359	100.0%	100%

- More detailed job information is available within the broad groupings. The ten most common occupations amongst survey respondents are shown in the following figure, along with the percentage of each job amongst the entire group of respondents.
- The Census results indicate that some 37 percent of the Nova Scotia born Black population reported they had no work experience in the year prior to the Census. In other words, these persons had not worked at any job in the previous year. This group includes persons working in the home, students and others with no work experience, but it also includes those unable to find work. The equivalent percent for the entire Nova Scotia population was 34 percent.
- Personal care workers, including housekeepers, cleaners and child-care workers were the most commonly reported occupations in the survey; 13 percent of those interviewed were in this job grouping.
- Most personal care workers are women. The survey found that women accounted for close to 78 percent of this group; men made up the remaining 18 percent. Almost one woman in five in the Black community that stated their job for the survey worked as personal care workers. More women worked in this category than any other occupation.

Figure 22
The Ten Most Common Jobs Reported
Source: BLAC Survey



*Personal workers includes daycare workers, hairdressers, cleaners, and housekeepers.

- Labourers accounted for the largest occupational category amongst the Black males who responded to the survey; 14 percent of the 652 males were in this group. Some 50 men worked in the metal fabrication group; this was the second highest occupational grouping, accounting for 8 percent of the jobs held by the men interviewed.
- We used several approaches to assess whether the Nova Scotia born Black population who has remained in the province has fared better economically than Black Nova Scotians who have moved away. We used Statistics Canada Census data to compare these two groups to the average Nova Scotian. Figure 23 presents this comparison.
- Each column in the figure shows the percentage share of each group within the major job or occupational groupings used to analyze the work force. Job categories with major differences are indicated in the right most column of the figure.

Figure 23
A Comparison of Type of Work

Type of Work: Major Groups	Nova Scotia Born Blacks Living Elsewhere in Canada	Nova Scotia Blacks Living in Nova Scotia	All other Nova Scotians[8]	Jobs with Major % Differences
Managerial, administrative and related occupations	12%	5%	8%	✖
Teaching and related occupations	2%	3%	4%	
Occupations in medicine and health	5%	7%	5%	
Technological, social, religious, artistic and related occupations	7%	5%	6%	
Clerical and related occupations	22%	19%	17%	✖
Sales occupations	7%	6%	9%	✖
Service occupations	20%	22%	15%	✖
Primary occupations	1%	3%	7%	✖
Processing occupations	3%	4%	5%	
Machining, product fabrication, assembling, and repairing occupations	6%	5%	7%	
Construction trades occupations	5%	10%	7%	✖
Transport equipment operating occupations	5%	4%	4%	
Other	6%	6%	5%	
Grand Total	1359	100.0%	100.0%	

- The figure shows that in a number of categories, the proportion of Blacks in Nova Scotia differs to a significant degree from the average Nova Scotian, as well as Blacks who have left the province. Blacks in the province hold fewer managerial, teaching and technology related jobs, and are more likely to hold jobs in the lower paying service, clerical and construction occupations.
- The difference in the percent of persons in the managerial category between Blacks in Nova Scotia and elsewhere is very strong. According to the Census, there were 385 Nova Scotia born Blacks in these occupations living elsewhere in Canada; only 325 Nova Scotia born Blacks living in the province held jobs in these occupations, even though the number of Nova Scotia born Blacks in the labour force in the province (9,740 persons) is more than double the number of persons who have left (4,260 persons).
- These results directly illustrate the consequences of the barriers faced by Blacks in the province – fewer higher paying, managerial jobs that result in part from lower educational attainment, which in turn is a direct consequence of systemic discrimination.
- Another major result of systemic discrimination helps explain these employment differences. Systemic discrimination results in a lack of job advancement; even qualified Black persons are unable to advance in their careers and are under-employed as a result of this discrimination.

Household Income

Income is the final demographic characteristic reported from the survey. The information was provided by the person in each household who responded to the questionnaire, referred to as Person 1 in the survey process. A coded list of possible income groups was used rather than simply asking for household income directly; this was done in order to ensure some confidentiality to the respondent. The information was provided by 755 persons, half of the total of 1,460 possible responses.

- Before presenting these results along with data from the 1991 Census, it is imperative to provide a broad context for the results – the poverty line and average household incomes. As indicated below, comparisons of the income levels in the Black community are in stark and dramatic contrast with income levels for the entire Nova Scotia population.

- Estimates of the "poverty line" for Nova Scotia, calculated by Statistics Canada, need to be kept in mind when reviewing the income tables for the Black population of the province. Data for 1992, shown in Figure 24, indicate the poverty line for various family sizes. *Those making annual incomes below this amount are, in fact, living in poverty.*

Figure 24
Poverty Amounts per Family Size

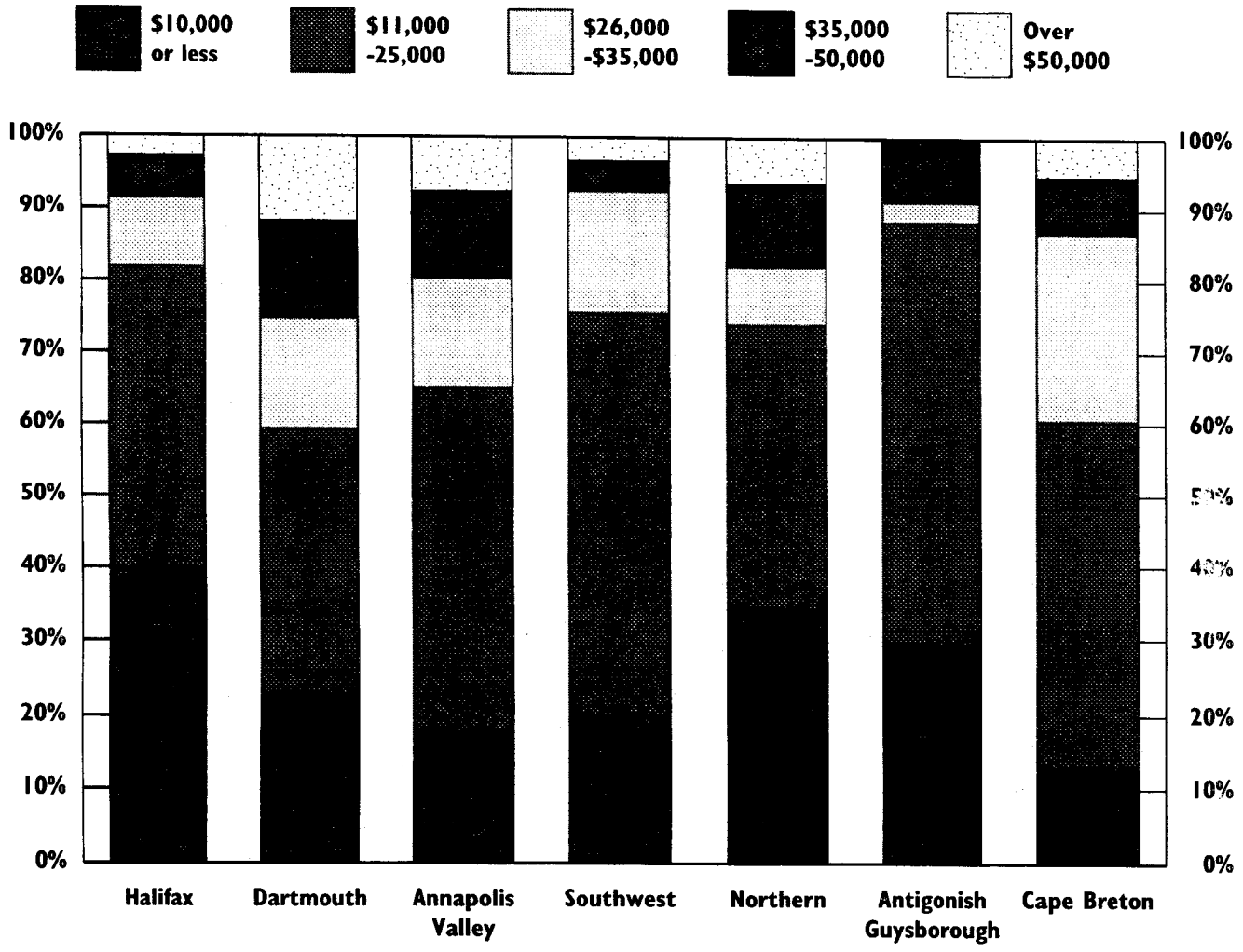
Family Size	4 Persons	3 Persons	1 Person
Poverty Line for Gross Annual Family Income	$30,460	$25,163	$16,186

- Income data for the entire Nova Scotia population are in very strong contrast to the incomes of the Nova Scotia Black population obtained from both the BLAC survey and the 1991 Census estimates. The average 1992 family income in Nova Scotia for all families was estimated at $46,870, with an average family size of 3.2 persons.
- Close to 29 percent of those responding to the income question on the BLAC survey reported their household income in 1992 was less than $10,000; six percent reported an annual household income of more than $50,000. Our estimate of the 1992 average family income, based on the information provided in the BLAC survey is approximately $20,500. This is accurate with a margin of error of $1830, 19 times out of 20.
- The estimate of an annual income in a Black family in the province, at $20,500 is less than half that of the average Nova Scotian family – $46,870. Even if we assumed that the BLAC survey underestimated Black family incomes by $10,000, so that annual incomes were $30,500 instead of $20,500, the average Black family would still earn less than two-thirds of the average Nova Scotia family income!

- Data from the BLAC survey shows sizable differences in the distribution of household income amongst respondents from the seven BLAC regions, as Figure 25 indicates. The proportion of households earning from $11,000 up to $25,000 accounted for about 42 percent of all households responding, on average. This income category ranged from a low of 36 percent of Dartmouth households to a high of 59 percent for those in Antigonish and Guysborough.

- In Halifax, 40 percent of households reported earning less than $10,000 per year; this percent declines to 13 percent for Cape Breton households. Part of the reason for the high percentage of lower incomes in the Halifax area is likely due to the high concentration of results from the public housing areas of the city, where incomes are more likely to be lower than in the communities.

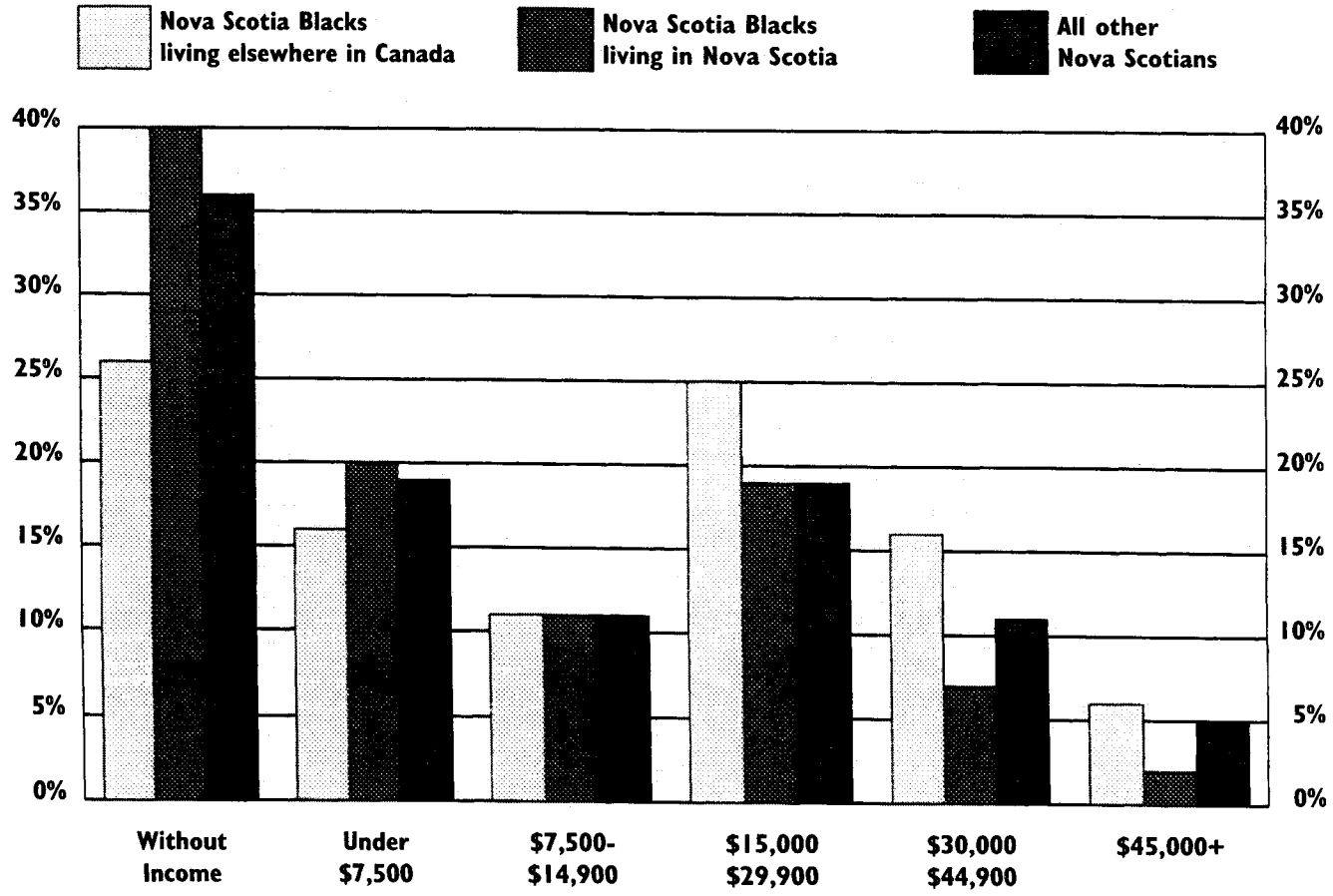
Figure 25
Household Income Varies by Region
Source: BLAC Survey



Census Data on Individual Incomes

- We obtained income data from Statistics Canada from the 1991 Census for the Nova Scotia born population. We compared the incomes of the Nova Scotia born Black population with the average Nova Scotian to determine whether Nova Scotia born Blacks had better earnings if they left the province, an indication of systemic discrimination in Nova Scotia.
- Figure 26 indicates a strong disparity in the low and high income groups between Nova Scotia born Blacks and both the average Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia born Blacks who have moved away. Some 60 percent of all adult Black persons living in Nova Scotia reported no income in 1990[9], or had an annual income less than $7,500.
- At the other end of the income scale, only 2 percent of Nova Scotia born Blacks living here reported that their annual income was over $45,000. In comparison, six percent of Blacks who have moved away had incomes of more than $45,000 annually – three times the share of those Blacks living in the province. In real terms, this amounts to 175 Black persons within Nova Scotia and 275 Black persons living elsewhere.

Figure 26
1990 Income Distribution for the Nova Scotia Born Population
Source: 1991 Census of Canada



- We used the same statistical methods[10] as for the BLAC survey to estimate annual incomes for *individuals*, based on the 1991 Census results. For Nova Scotia born Black Nova Scotians, including close to 4,000 persons who reported no income, the annual income for *individuals* was estimated at $10,300. The annual income for all Nova Scotia born persons living in Nova Scotia was estimated at $13,100.
- The Census data indicate that Nova Scotia born Blacks who moved away earned an average income of $17,100, an increase of 65 percent over Black Nova Scotians who remained in the province.
- These results indicate dramatic and significant differences between the income levels in the Nova Scotia born Black community and the average Nova Scotian. Black Nova Scotians are living, or subsisting, at incomes far below the poverty line.
- The cycle of poverty and dependence established as a result of these low incomes has important and long lasting implications for the educational needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. Children from homes where incomes are marginal are known to be more likely to have problems related to their health, nutrition and overall well being that in turn affect their educational performance.
- Low incomes limit the ability of families to acquire the best possible education for their children, and access to post-secondary education is difficult, if not impossible. While education alone is not a guarantee of economic success, the lack of educational credentials is an enormous constraint and a barrier to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Other Educational Data

Drop-out Estimates

This section provides estimates of dropouts from the 1991 Census. The goal is to supplement and confirm the information gained from the survey. The Census did not directly ask Nova Scotians to indicate whether or not they had dropped out of school. It did ask all respondents to indicate the highest level of schooling they obtained.

We have used this information, along with the age of the persons, to develop an estimate of the drop-out rate. Our approach is that persons over 20 years of age who left school before completing their high school education, have in effect dropped out of school.

This information is closely linked with the results shown earlier in this report on general educational attainment.

- The results indicate a clear and strong disparity in educational attainment between the Black population and the average Nova Scotian, for all age groups. As the rightmost column in Figure 27 indicates, this difference is up to 50 percent higher for some age groups.
- The age groups can also be used to estimate historical drop-out rates. The drop-out rate for each age group represents the drop-out rate when these persons were of school age. For example, persons in the 30-39 year age group would have attended high school in the 1970s; persons in the 40-49 year group attended in the 1960s.

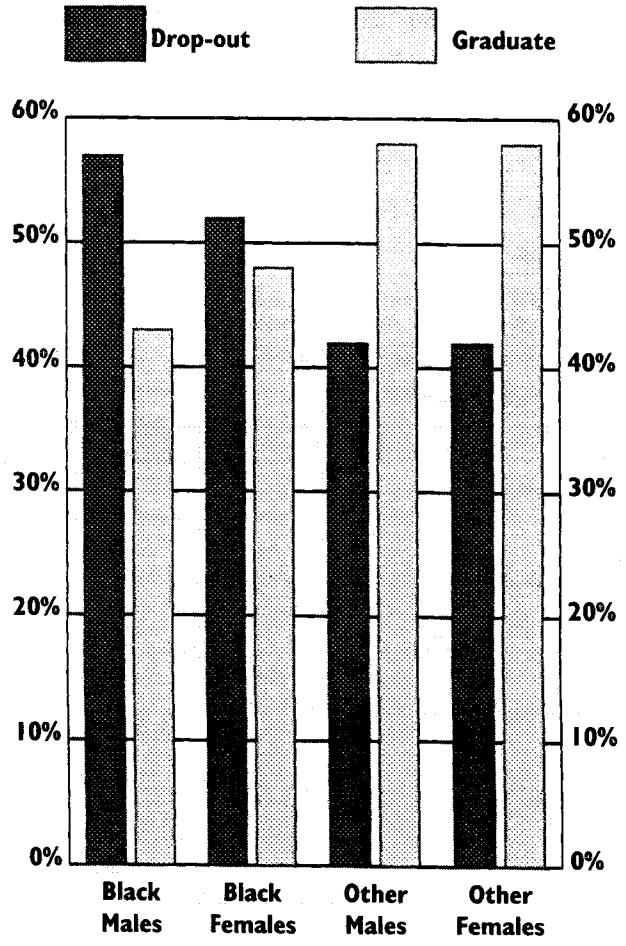
- The data for the Black population and the average Nova Scotian show a downward trend in historical drop-out rates. When the rate for the oldest and youngest age groups are compared, the difference in the rate between the groups is found to have declined by about 60 percent for both groups.
- *The most important finding in the drop-out data is that the gap in educational attainment between these two groups is growing not declining.* For persons over age 60, the level of educational disparity between Black Nova Scotians and the average Nova Scotian is 29 percent. But for younger persons, the gap is 44 percent. While drop-out rates may be declining, the educational system is failing Black Nova Scotians, who are not experiencing the same improvements as the average Nova Scotian.

Figure 27
Estimated Dropouts by Age Group
Source: 1991 Census

Drop-out Rates	Black Nova Scotians	All other Nova Scotians	Difference in Drop-out Rates between Black & Others
Age 20-29	35%	24%	44%
Age 30-39	41%	27%	51%
Age 40-49	49%	34%	43%
Age 50-59	70%	51%	37%
Age 60+	84%	65%	29%
Overall Rate	51%	39%	30%

- The drop-out rate estimates indicate major differences between drop-out rates between males and females in the Black and non-Black population, as shown in Figure 28.
- The estimated drop-out rate for Black males, 57 percent, exceeds the 42 percent drop-out rate of non-Black Nova Scotian males by 15 percentage points, close to a 30 percent difference. Drop-out rates for Black females are about 25 percent higher than for non-Black Nova Scotian females.

Figure 28
Estimated Drop-out Rates in Nova Scotia by Gender
Source: 1991 Census of Canada



Suspensions

The BLAC survey asked several questions concerning suspensions from class and school. These include the number of times students were suspended, the reasons for the suspensions and the resolution of the suspension between the parent and school. The results indicate some confusion concerning the various questions – the response was very low in the questions concerning the incidence of class and school suspensions. The low number of results also differed from the other suspension questions.

We have relied mainly on the data indicating the "reasons for the suspensions." Figure 30 presents the results of the analysis, according to the three different groups of respondents. The figure indicates the number of persons reporting each reason as well as the overall share or importance of each reason. It was possible for the person being interviewed to give several reasons for being suspended, so there is some overlap in the responses.

- Figure 29 indicates that fighting was the most common reason for suspension amongst those who responded to the question; this reason accounted for 38 percent of the suspensions.
- Suspensions are one underlying cause for a student's decision to leave school; once such students are suspended many times, they fall behind academically or feel lost; these students could be said to have been pushed out of the system when they leave.

Figure 29
Reasons for School Suspensions
Source: BLAC Survey

Reason	Dropouts	Graduates	Students	Total	Percent of All Responses
Late	75	23	17	115	12%
Talking in Class	115	26	41	182	19%
Fighting	179	62	110	351	38%
Missing Class	91	25	31	147	16%
Drinking/Drug	21	4	3	28	3%
Other	48	24	41	113	12%
Total	529	164	243	936	100%

- The BLAC recently obtained suspension data for Halifax City schools for the academic years from 1987 to 1992, as shown in Figure 30.
- While there is no evidence of a trend towards an increase in the percentage share of Black learner suspensions amongst all learners, the figure does indicates a strong upward trend in the number of suspensions for all learners in the Halifax school system.
- The estimated number of Black learners in the Halifax District school system in 1991-92 was approximately 1,100 students, compared to an overall student population of 14,245 students[11], a ratio of about 8 percent Black learners[12]. The results on suspensions indicate that Black learners accounted for 16 percent to 21 percent of all suspensions in Halifax. This rate is more than double the actual share of Black learners in the Halifax school system. *The clear conclusion is that Black learners are more likely to be suspended than other students.*
- According to the Halifax School Board, most high school suspensions result from truancy. Other common reasons include disrespectful behaviour and fighting. These reflect those found in the BLAC survey.

Figure 30
Suspensions Within the Halifax School System

	Total Suspensions	Total Black Learners Suspended	Percent of Black Learners
1987-88	386	76	19.7%
1988-89	370	58	15.7%
1989-90	477	80	16.8%
1990-91	581	98	16.9%
1991-92	739	152	20.6%
Average	2,553	464	18.2%

Conclusions

The data in this chapter provide a dramatic and striking socio-demographic profile of the Black community in Nova Scotia, based on the results of the BLAC survey and the 1991 Census.

Virtually all of the characteristics analyzed and described show strong, negative disparities between the Black community and the average Nova Scotian. These range from various measures of educational attainment, to work status, to the type of jobs held, and to income. The data shows that in many instances, those from the Nova Scotia Black community who have left the province have fared better in terms of jobs and income than Blacks who have remained.

While the results indicate increased levels of education amongst the younger members of the Black community in the province, strong disparities still exist between Black Nova Scotians and the average Nova Scotian. Moreover, the gap in drop-out rates between Black and non-Black Nova Scotians is actually increasing; the 1991 Census indicated a 44 percent difference in rates between the younger age groups. Data on suspensions in the Halifax school system, indicating a high, unequal representation of Black learners amongst those who are suspended, reinforce the results concerning educational disparity.

The under-achievement in socio-economic areas results to a large degree from lower educational attainment. Those who have not been able to complete high school are less likely to hold higher paying jobs in the professions, as managers and in many other occupations. While education alone is not a "ticket", it does represent a critically important means to attaining other socio-economic goals.

The lack of educational opportunities for Black Nova Scotians initiates a vicious cycle of poverty. Poor educational credentials are a strong barrier to good jobs. Low wage, seasonal jobs in unskilled or low-skill occupations are often tied to periods of unemployment and socio-economic disparity. The social results are low self-esteem and expectations, de-motivation and a failure of individuals to reach their potential as part of the human family.

The underlying issue and common theme for all these findings is systemic discrimination or institutionalized racism. The results are indicators of the larger problems arising from systemic discrimination. This racism affects the Black learner in different ways and at different levels but the long term results, presented throughout this chapter, reflect the failure of society and the inability of the educational system to address the needs of the Black student. The ultimate result is the failure of a person to reach their potential.

3 The Experiences and Needs of the Black Learner

Introduction

The survey of the Black population obtained a wealth of information on the educational needs and experiences of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. The analysis was done by associating each respondent with one of three groups: early school leavers (or dropouts), graduates and students. The results in this chapter describe the main survey findings about the educational experience of persons in these groups, based on a series of opinion questions.

The survey questionnaire asked respondents to recall their school experiences, the roles of their parents, teachers and others in the school system, and their expectations of future, both for themselves and the Black community in Nova Scotia. Those interviewed were asked about their awareness of several programs designed to support the Black learner in the province as well. The final part of this chapter presents the results of an overall assessment of the services and needs of the community, as assessed by the person who answered the Household Questionnaire.

School Experiences

The second part of each questionnaire contained two questions concerning the school experiences and perceptions of respondents. The questions were made up of 28 separate statements in total; respondents were asked to rate each statement using the following scale:[13]

Not Applicable	Disagree Completely	Disagree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree Somewhat	Agree Completely
0	1	2	3	4	5

To simplify the analysis, we organized the 28 questions in three themes:

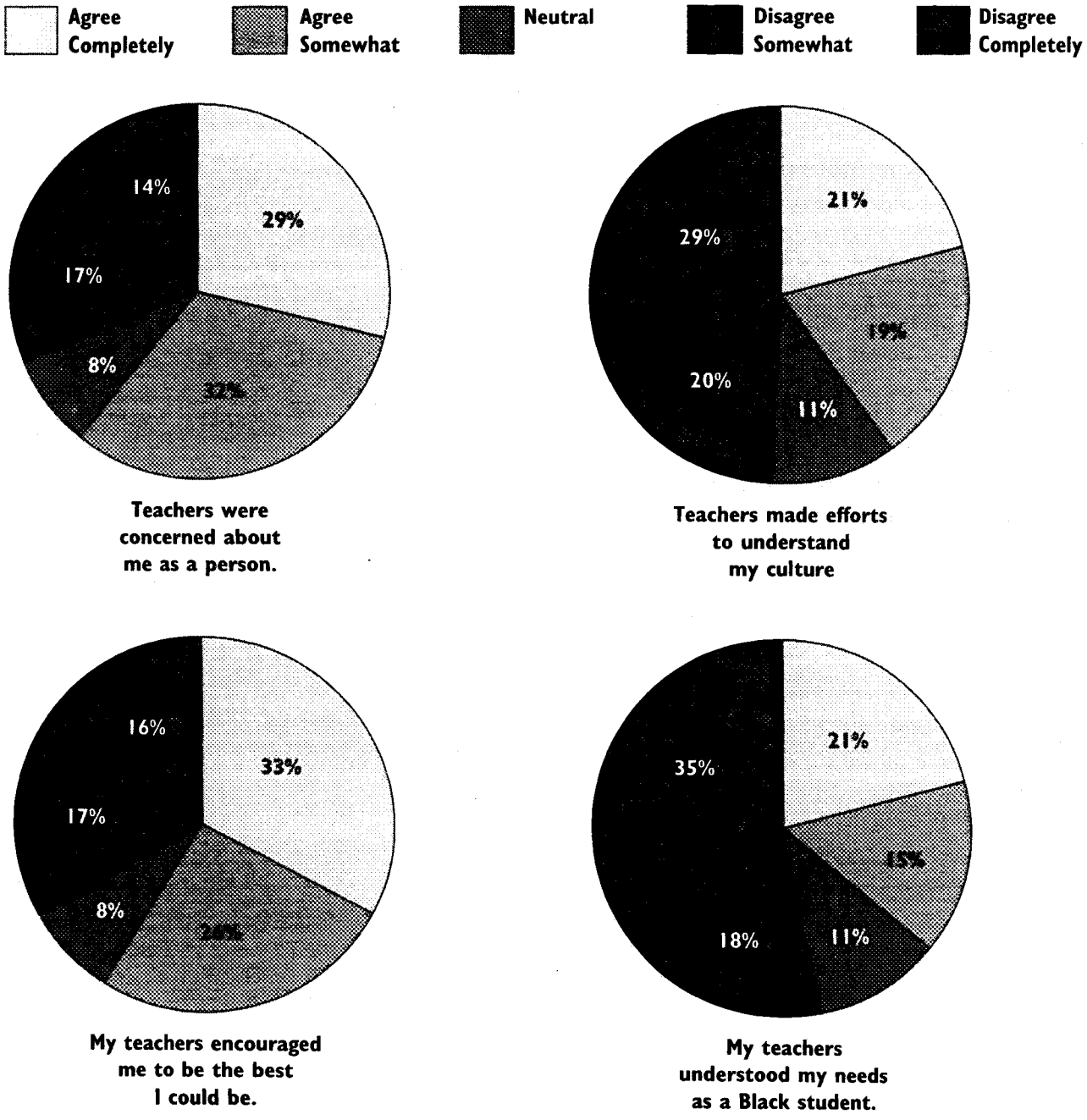
- teacher and student interactions;
- the school environment and roles; and,
- parents, community and school interactions.

Figures 31-33 present the highlights of the analysis.

Teacher and Student Interactions

- The results in Figure 31, based on an average response of more than 3,000 persons per question, indicate a strong appreciation for teachers in their general support role to students. These include the broad areas of teacher concern and encouragement of students, where approval ratings – *strongly agree* and *agree* reached 59 and 61 percent, respectively.
- The two questions related to the more specific cultural understanding of students, the two boxes on the right side of Figure 31, received a lower approval rating. Respondents indicated that teachers were less likely to make efforts to understand their culture and to attempt to understand the specific needs of the Black learner.

Figure 31
Teacher and Student Interactions
Source: BLAC Survey

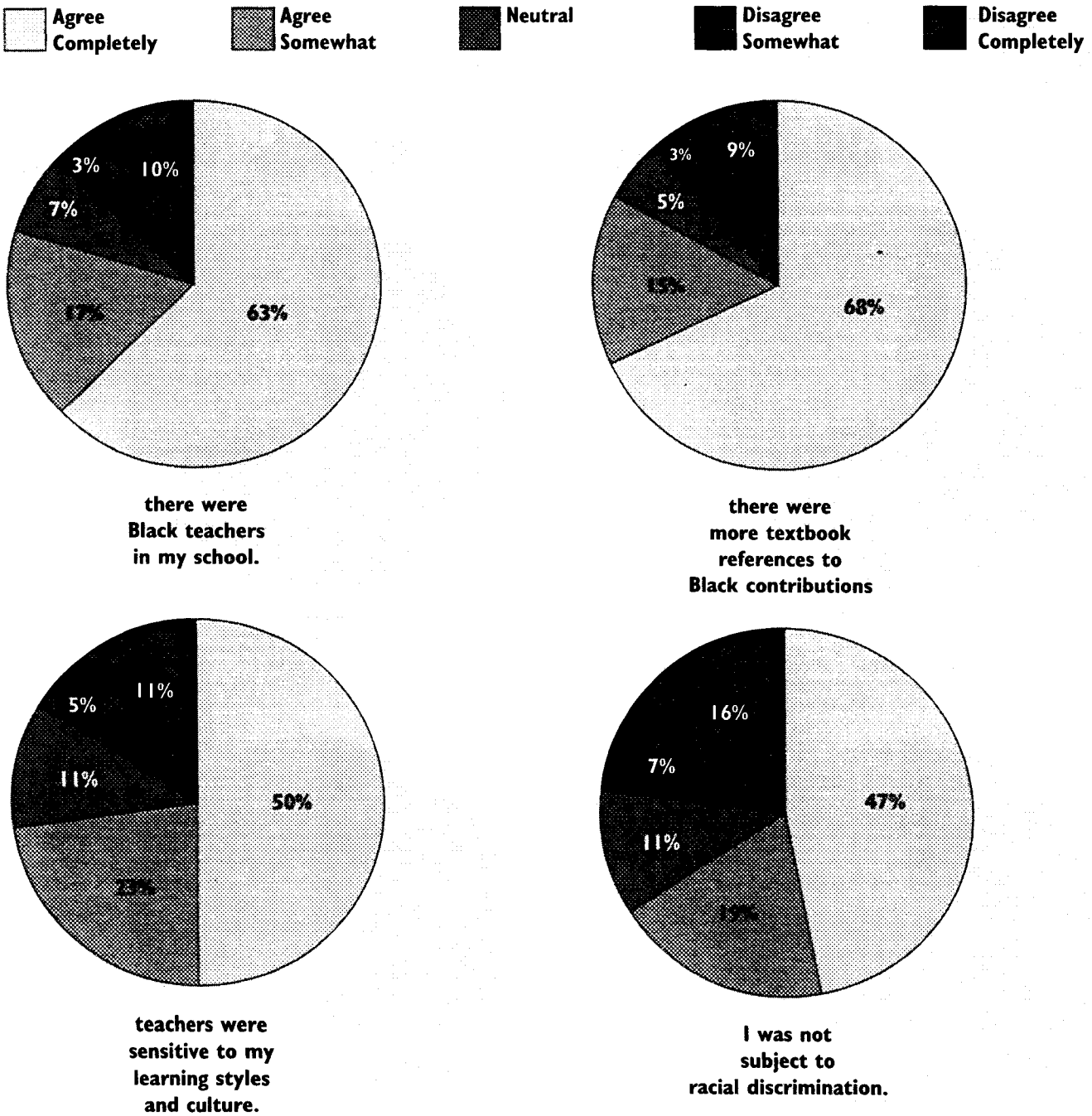


The School Environment

- Figure 32 focuses on the school environment and the experiences of the Black learner. The four parts show different aspects of the school environment for the Black learner – teachers, texts and the impact of racial discrimination.
- Each box in the figure shows a very strong level of agreement with the statements in each box; more than half of those interviewed indicated they strongly agreed with the statements.
- These results provide a clear and absolute indication of the importance of these topics to the learning experiences of Black students:
  - the need for Black teachers in schools;
  - the need to sensitize teachers to the culture and needs of Black learners;
  - the need for a greater demonstration and understanding of the contributions of Black persons to our society, through texts and other approaches; and,
  - the need to work to eliminate racism and systemic discrimination in the school system.
- The issues shown illustrate the strongest level of opinions amongst the 28 opinion questions include in the survey. Other issues related to these topics, while not having as strong a level of agreement, confirm the views expressed in this figure.
- For example, 61 percent of respondents indicated that racial harassment had a negative impact on their educational experiences; 77 percent would like to see more Black guidance counsellors in the school system. A total of 17 percent of those answering the two questions on racism and racial discrimination indicated that the topic was not applicable to them.
- Several items received high levels of disagreement, indicating that respondents did not feel that the topic was of importance in their school experience. These include the issue of being pushed to the next grade before being ready; 43 percent of the 3,100 persons who answered this question said the topic was not applicable to them and 39 percent of those who did answer indicated that they disagreed with the statement.
- However, a total of 521 of 1,336 persons indicated that they agreed completely with this statement; this amounts to more than one third of those answering this question.
- More than one third of those interviewed questioned the relevance of education, indicating that they did not feel that school helped them plan for their future education and career.

Figure 32
The School Environment
My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if:

Source: BLAC Survey

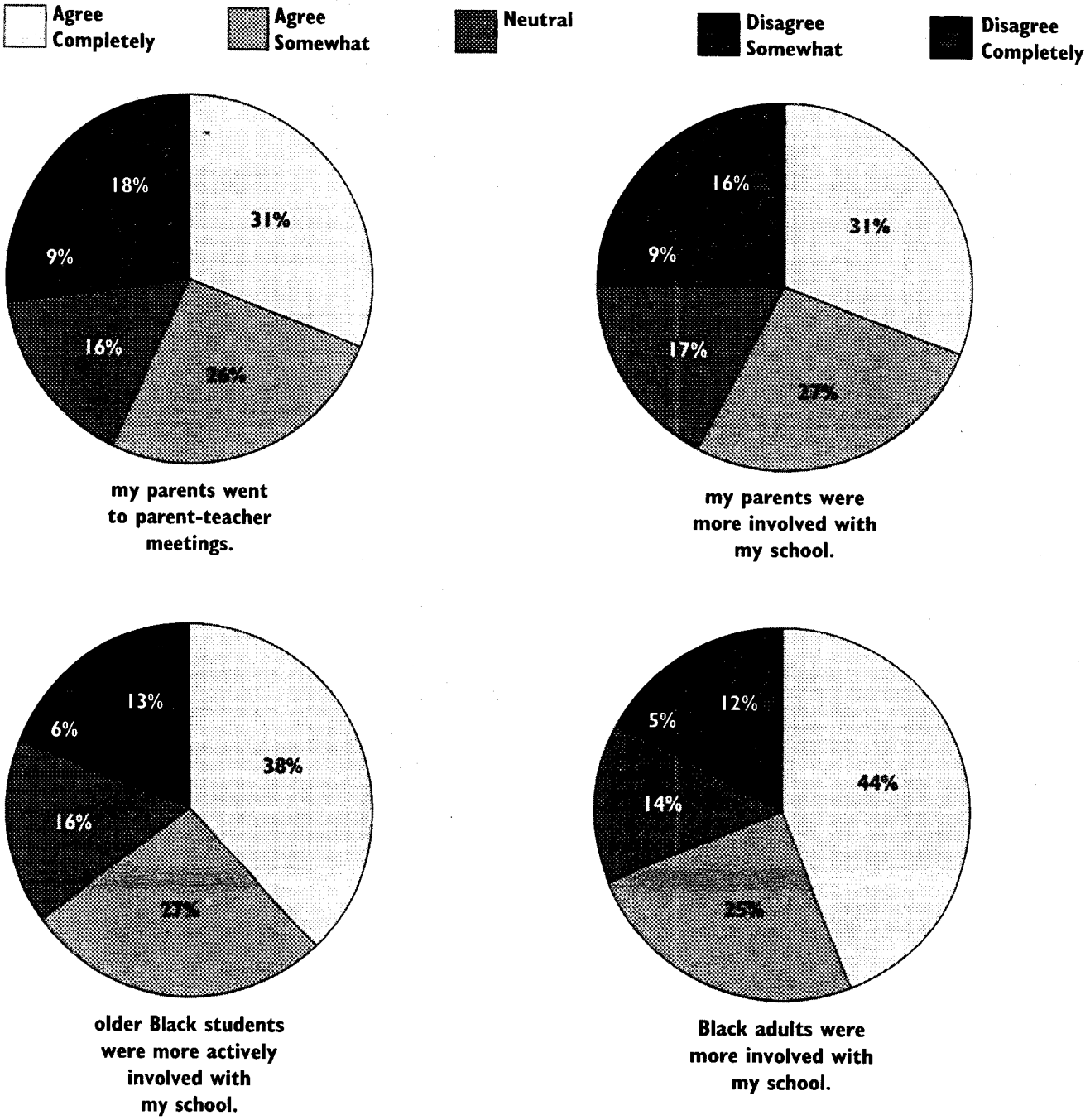


Parents and the Community

- Parents and the community play a critically important role in the education of students.

This was clearly recognized by respondents in the survey, as Figure 33 indicates.

Figure 33
The School Environment
My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if:
Source: BLAC Survey



Program and Agency Awareness

The final part of the survey concerned the overall awareness of educational programs and agencies designed to help meet the needs of the Black learner in Nova Scotia. Figure 34 lists the five programs from the questionnaire, along with the recognition rate and the percent of respondents who reported they had heard of the program.

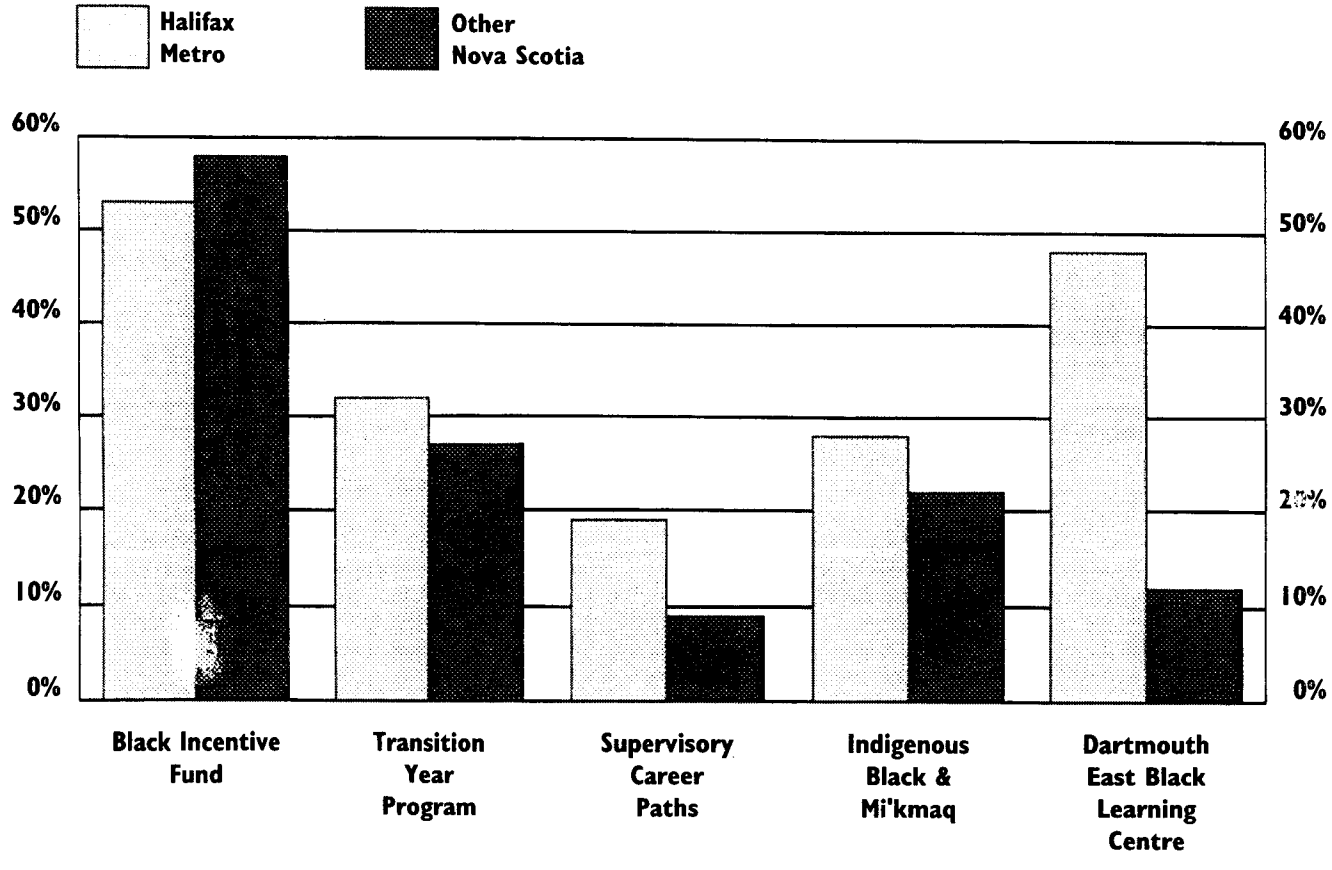
- The Black Incentive Fund was known by more than half of those interviewed. This result appears somewhat low, given that the program has been in place throughout the province for many years.

Figure 34
Program and Agency Awareness
Source: BLAC Survey

Program Name	Persons Reporting Awareness of Program	Percent Awareness
Black Incentive Fund	1718	51%
Transition Year Program (Dalhousie University)	921	27%
Supervisory Career Paths Program at Dalhousie University	460	14%
Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq Law Program at Dalhousie	761	23%
Dartmouth East Black Learning Centre	981	29%

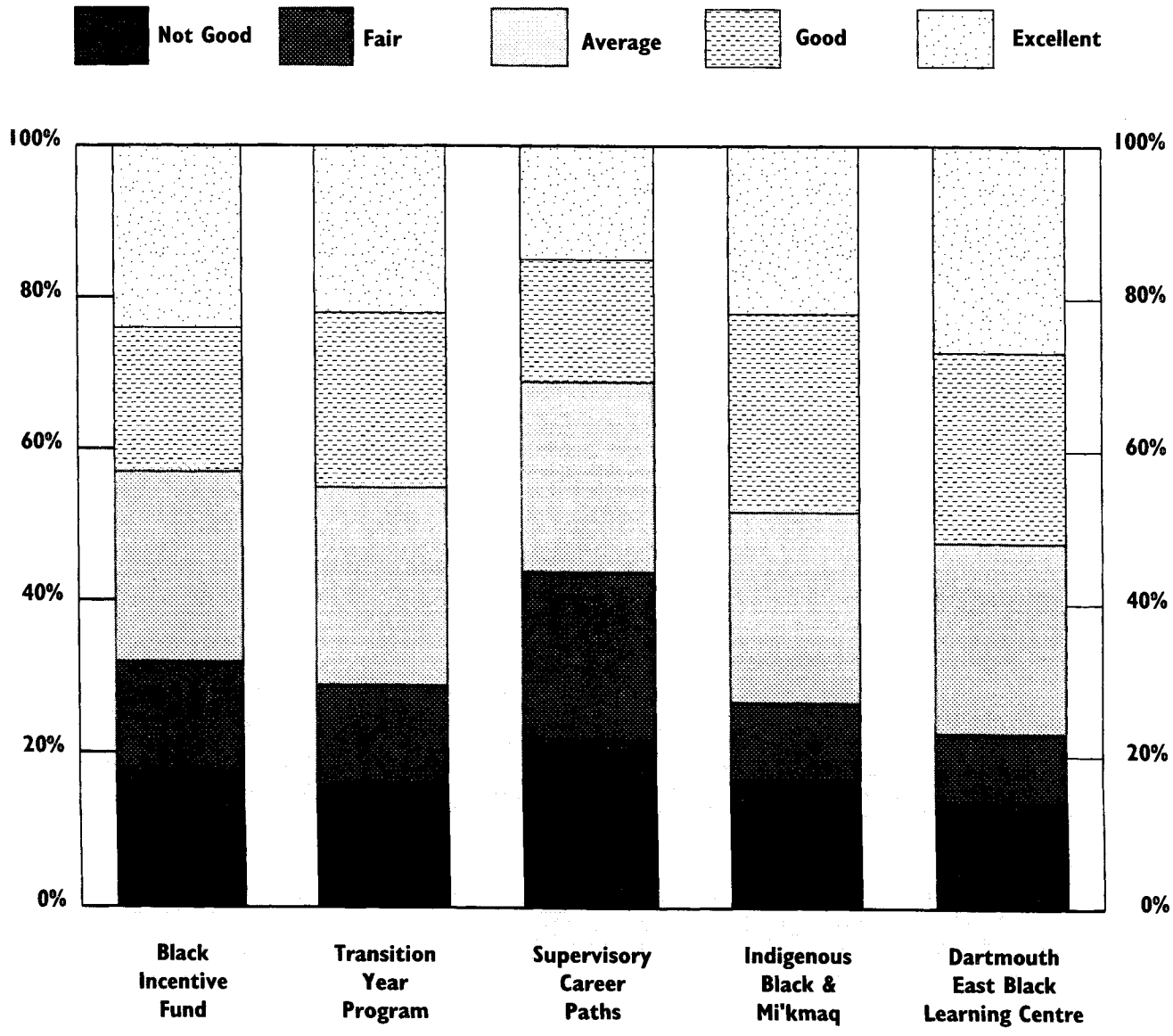
- The levels of awareness of other programs is not as strong as for the Black Incentive Fund, as Figure 35 indicates. This is not too surprising, since these programs are only offered within the Halifax-Dartmouth Metro area.

Figure 35
Program Awareness Differs by Area
Source: BLAC Survey



- The questionnaire asked those respondents who reported that they knew about the programs to rate each program with which they were familiar. The rating was based on their assessment of how well the programs were meeting the needs of Black learners.
- The results of this rating, shown in Figure 36, indicate high approval ratings for four of the five programs. Approximately half of those who were aware of the programs rated these as *good* or *excellent.*

Figure 36
Do the Programs Meet the Needs of Black Learners
Source: BLAC Survey



Educational Agencies and Resources

The questionnaire asked respondents about their awareness of the following agencies or resources that assist Black learners in the province.

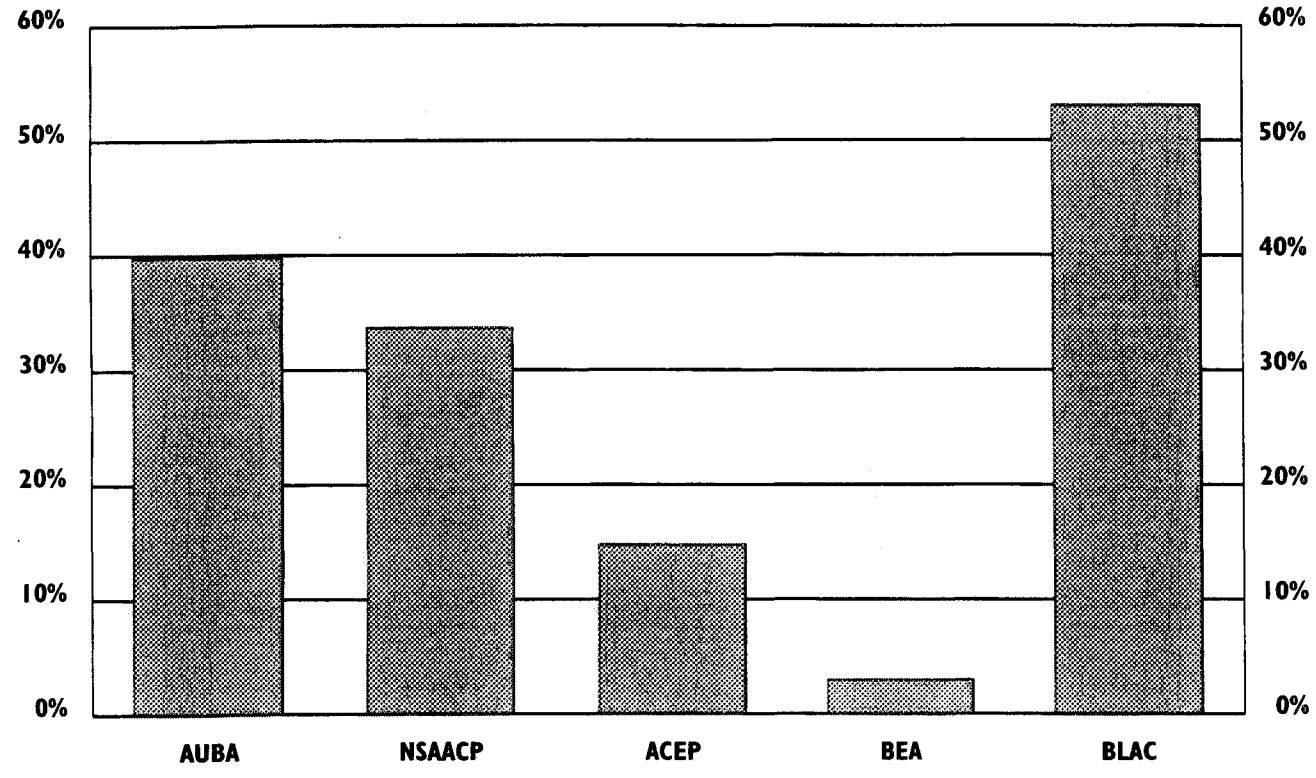
- African United Baptist Association Scholarship Fund (AUBA);
- Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Colored People - Scholarship Fund (NSAACP);
- African Canadian Education Project (ACEP);
- Black Educators Association (BEA); and,
- Black Learner's Advisory Committee (BLAC).

- Figure 37 indicates the level of awareness of the resources; the longer the bar, the higher the awareness level.
- Some 53 percent of the 3,400 persons who answered this question indicated that they were aware of the BLAC; the AUBA Scholarship Fund was the second most well known program, cited by 40 percent of the respondents.

Figure 37
BLAC is The Most Widely Known Resource

Percent Awareness

Source: BLAC Survey



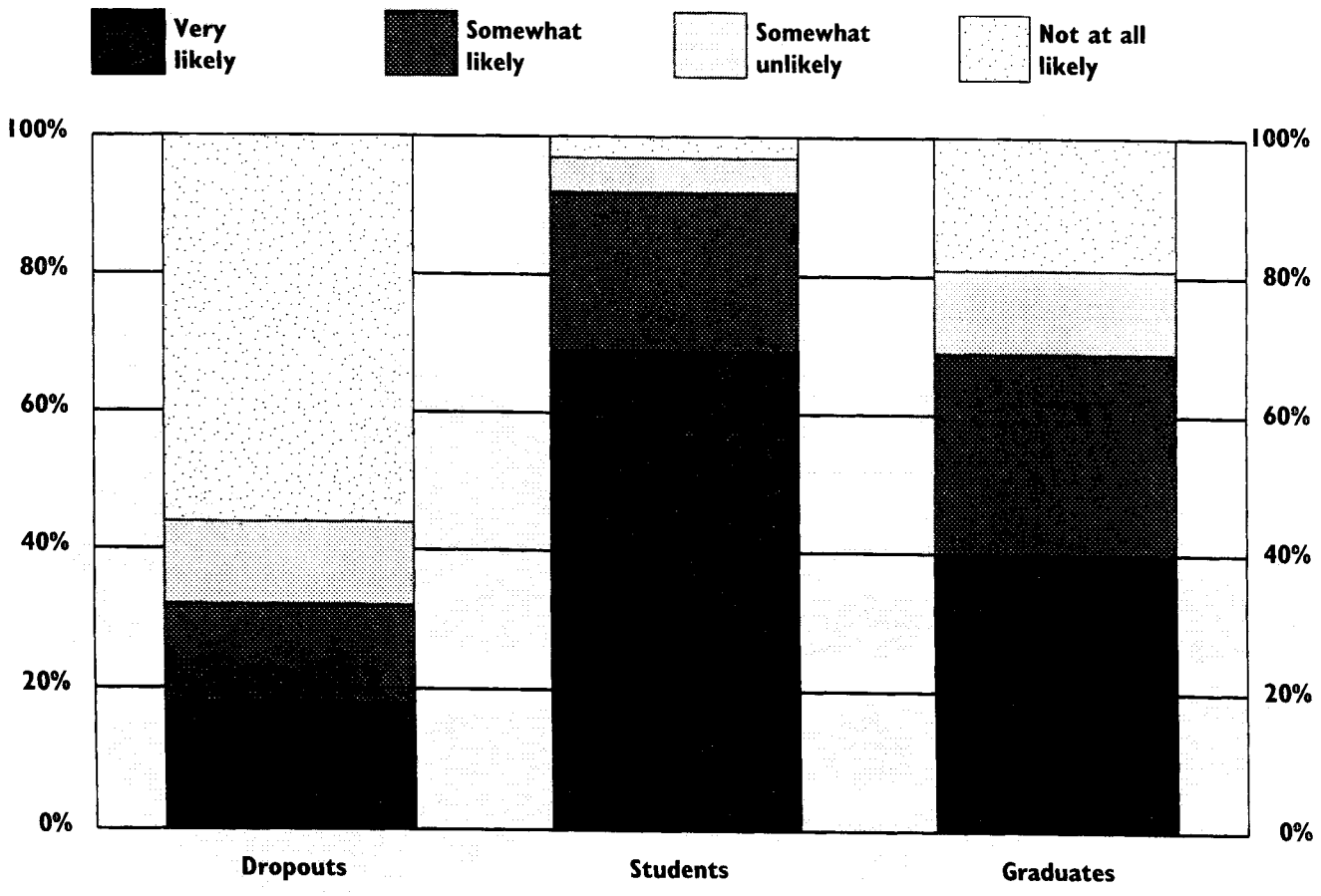
Expectations for the Future

This set of questions consisted of two kinds. One set of questions was designed to assess the educational aspirations of individual students and to identify potential barriers to their continued education. This question was in addition to the implicit barriers described at the beginning of this chapter, such as those related to the school environment. A second group of questions was more general in scope, asking respondents about their educational goals for their children.

This section presents the results of these questions, beginning with the responses to a question on barriers that may have affected decisions by the respondents on whether or not to continue their education beyond high school.

- Figure 38 gives an overview of the responses – the likelihood of the person being interviewed continuing their education. As might be generally expected, those who left school before graduating are less likely to want to continue than those who have either graduated or who are still in school.

Figure 38
Respondents' Expectations of Continuing Their Education in the Near Future
Source: BLAC Survey



- We asked each person to indicate whether or not certain barriers may have influenced their decision not to continue their education. More than half of the early school leavers indicated that their age – *"I'm too old"* – was their main reason for not continuing their education.
- Figure 39 shows the three major barriers along with the percentages of persons identifying the reason. It was possible for respondents to identify more than one barrier. There were little differences in the response between graduates, students and early school leavers.

  The final question in this section concerns the respondents' expectations for their children's education.
- Figure 40 indicates the strong expectations for educational attainment within the Black community in Nova Scotia; close to 90 percent of those interviewed want their children to obtain a university education and complete a professional program such as law, accounting, medicine and so on.
- Although there are high expectations for educational attainment within the Black community, these expectations must face the same barriers described in the previous figure. The high costs of education and the inability to pay for education given the low incomes in the community, mean that it will be difficult for many to achieve their expectations.
- Those who indicated that they would only like their children to graduate from high school were most likely to have left school early. About 6 percent of early school leavers indicated this as an academic goal for their children; only 2 percent of graduates and 4 percent of students shared this goal. The latter two groups set higher educational goals.

Figure 39
Major Barriers to Continuing Education
Source: BLAC Survey

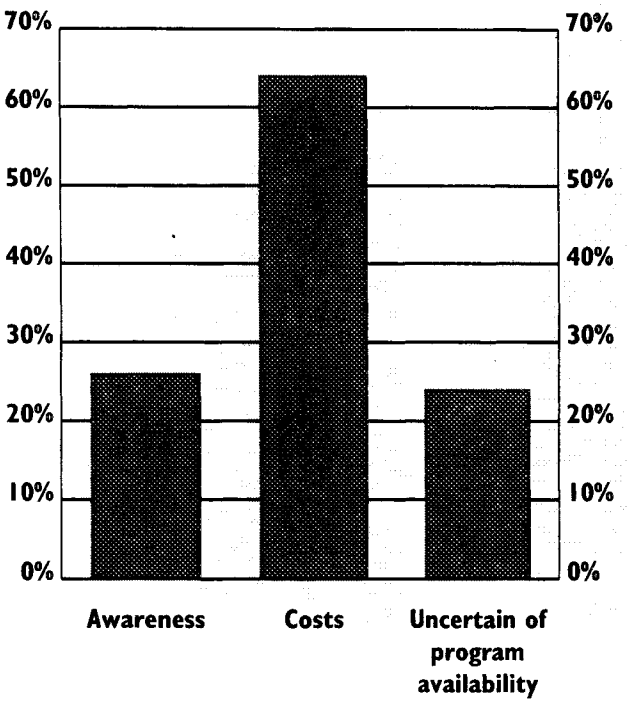
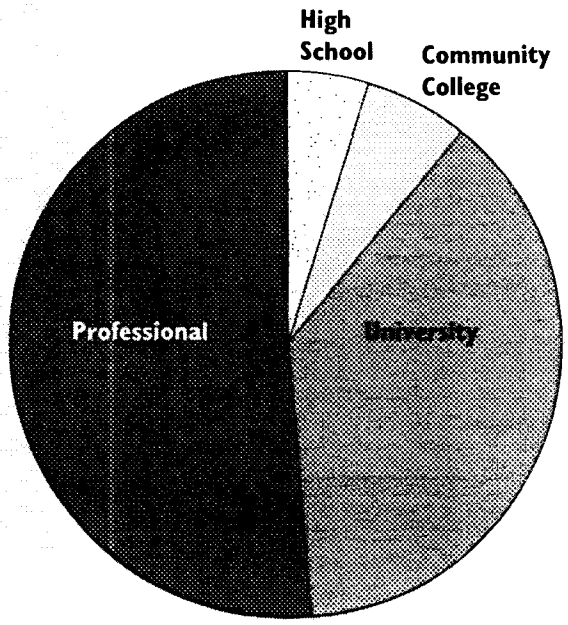


Figure 40
Expectations for Children's Education
Source: BLAC Survey



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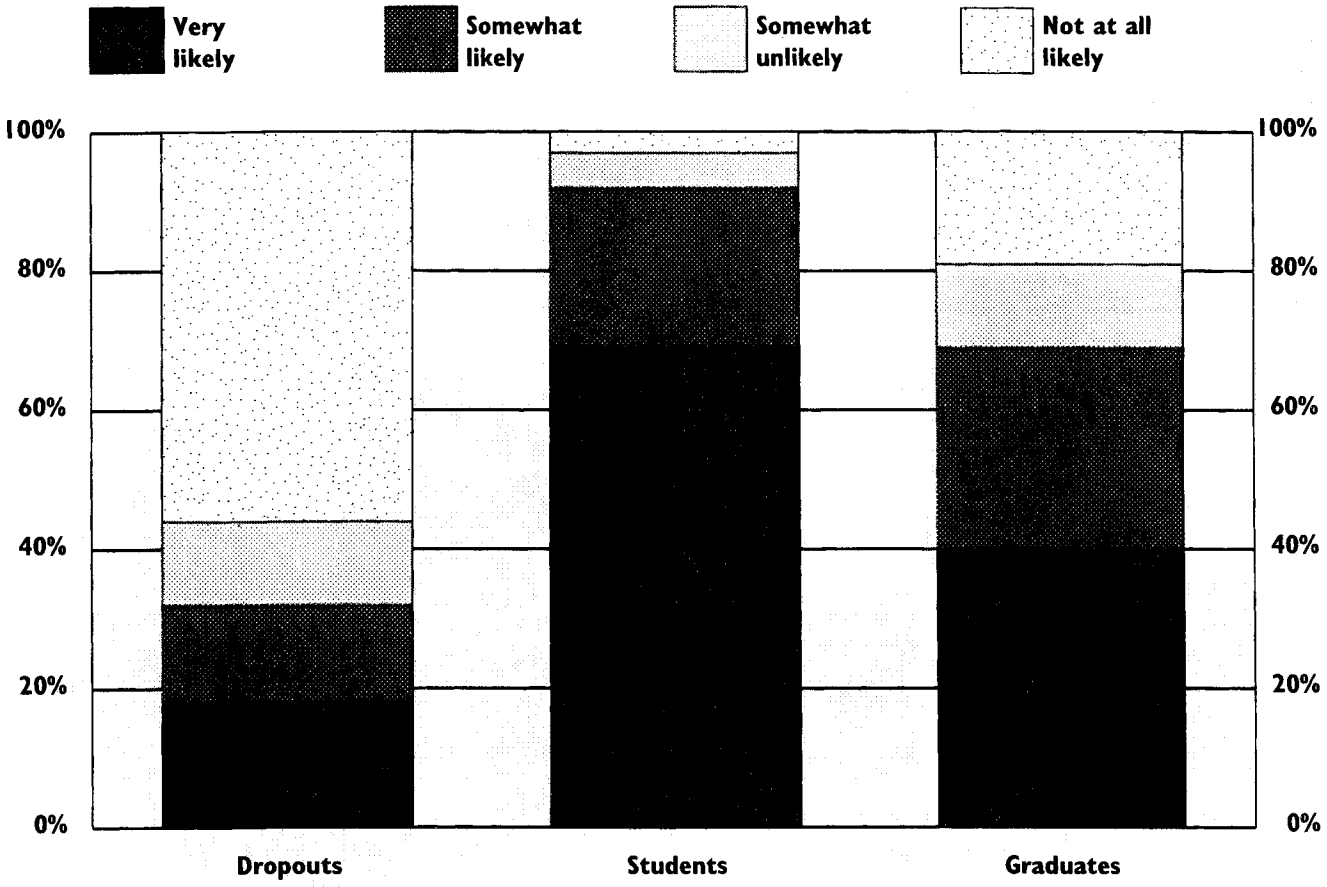

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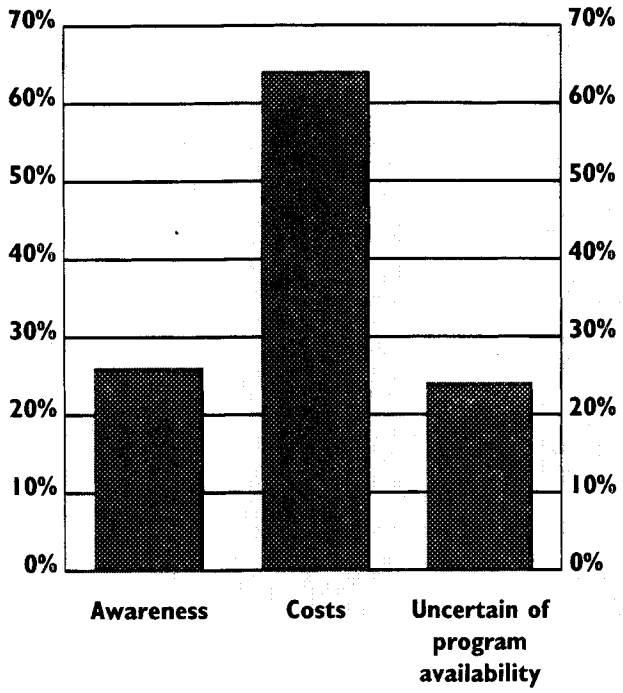

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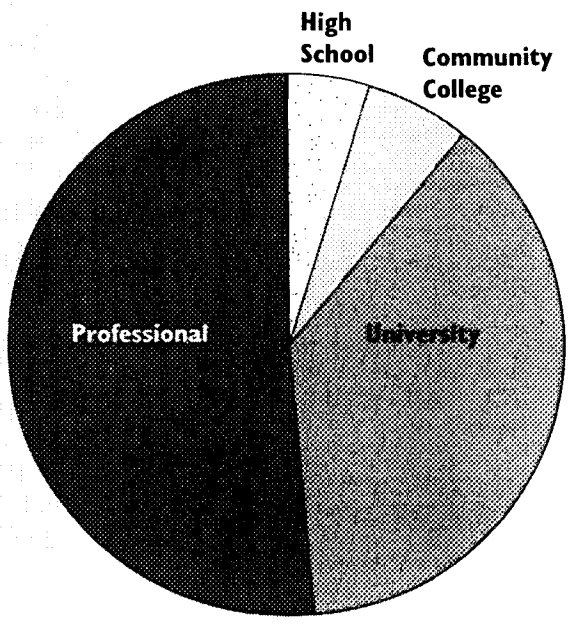
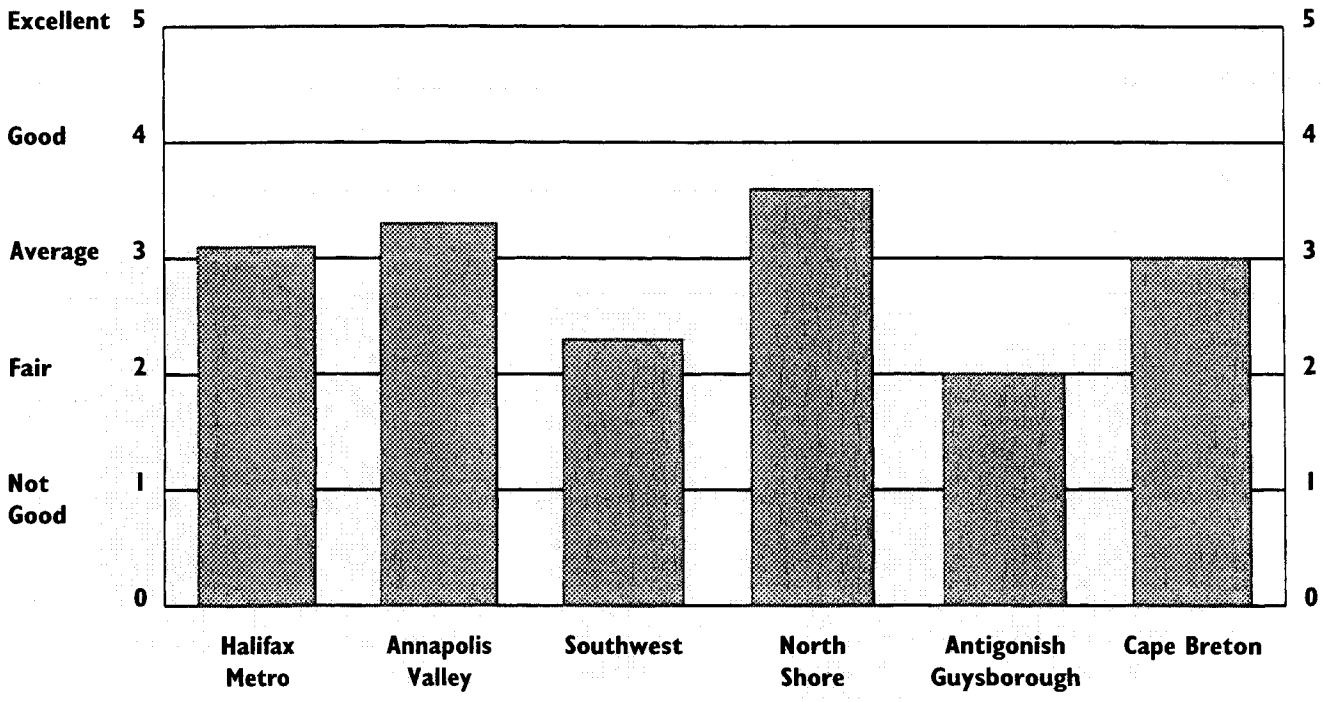


Needs of the Community

Most people would agree that the educational needs of an individual student are complex and go beyond the school environment. Community services are one group of services that need to be assessed in obtaining a broader perspective. The Household section of the questionnaire included a list of 16 services, including schools, that were rated on a five point scale by Person 1. The scale rated each service from *not good* to *excellent.*

- Figure 41 presents the combined results of the various community services rated by respondents. These are shown for each BLAC region.
- The highest level of satisfaction was reported from the North Shore region of the province, where more than half of those interviewed from that region indicated that the services they received were *average* or *good.*
- The lowest overall rating was from the Antigonish and Guysborough area, where 88 percent of those interviewed rated their community services as *fair* or *not good.*

Figure 41
Satisfaction with Community Services
Source: BLAC Survey



- In order to get a better picture of the opinions on individual services, we placed each of the 18 services into one of three groups: educational services, health services and overall community services. The scores for individual services are shown in the following three figures:
- It should be noted that the ratings of all 18 services fall below average, with the exception of schools, medical facilities and churches.

Figure 42
Satisfaction with Education-related Services
Source: BLAC Survey

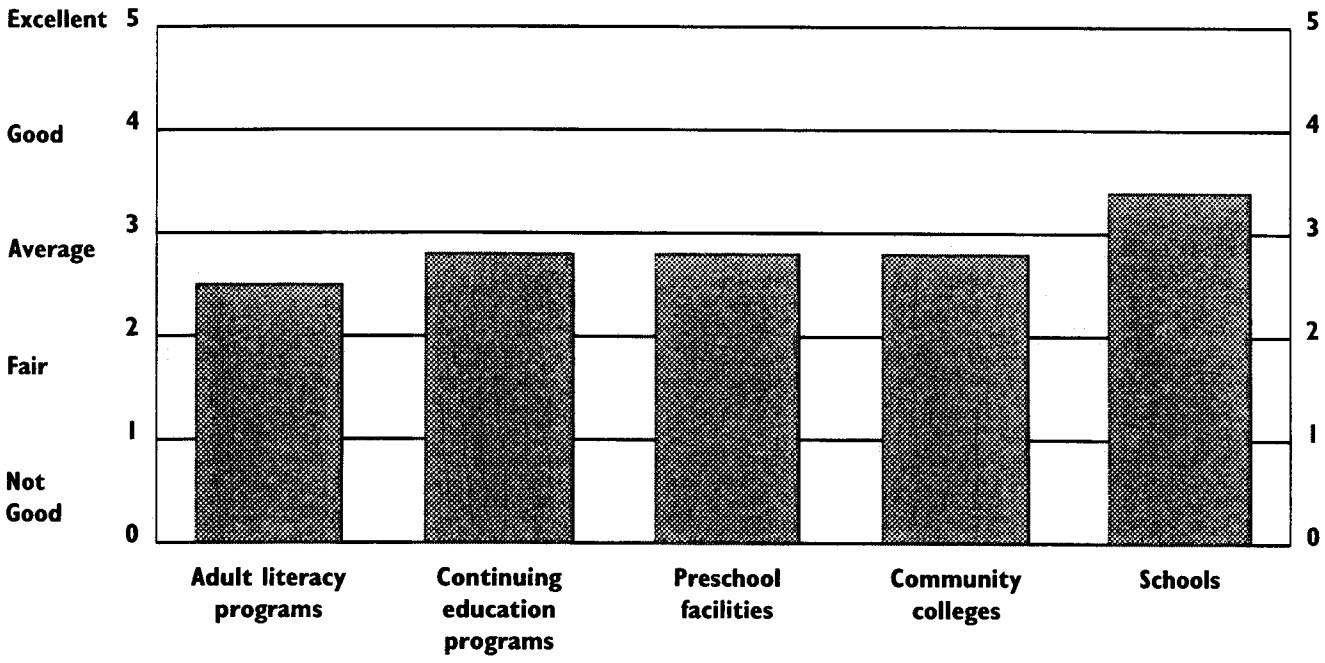


Figure 43
Satisfaction with Health-related services
Source: BLAC Survey

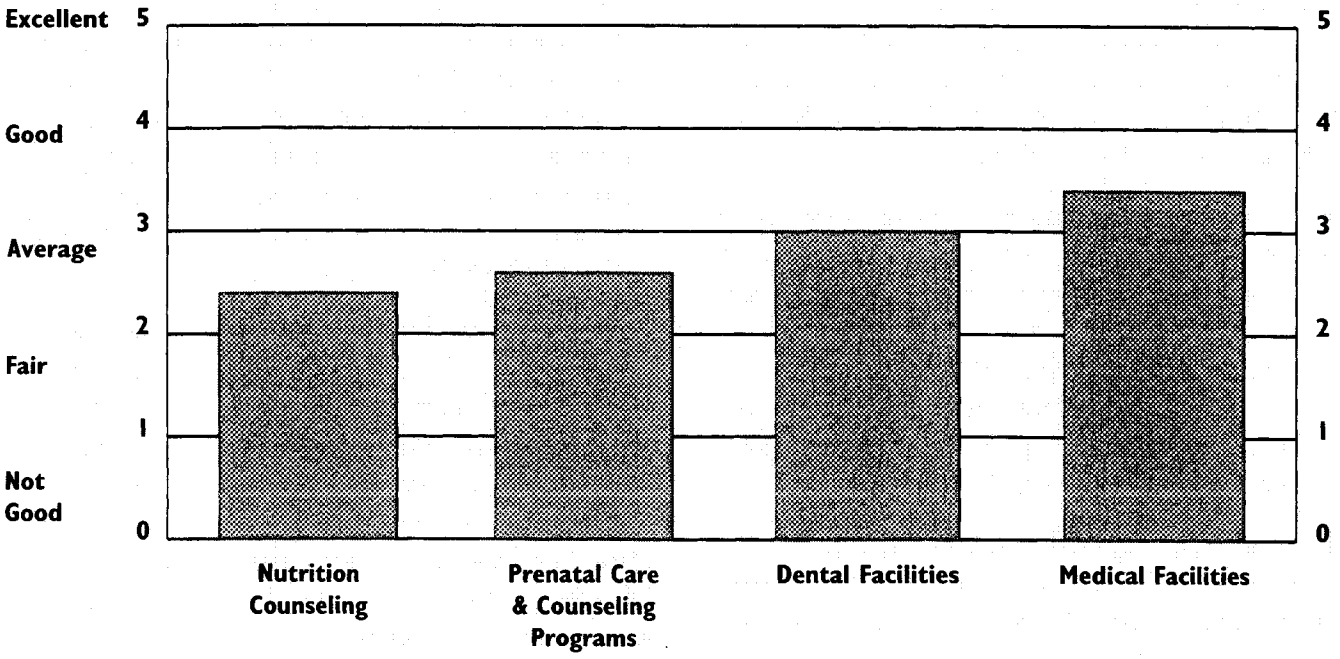
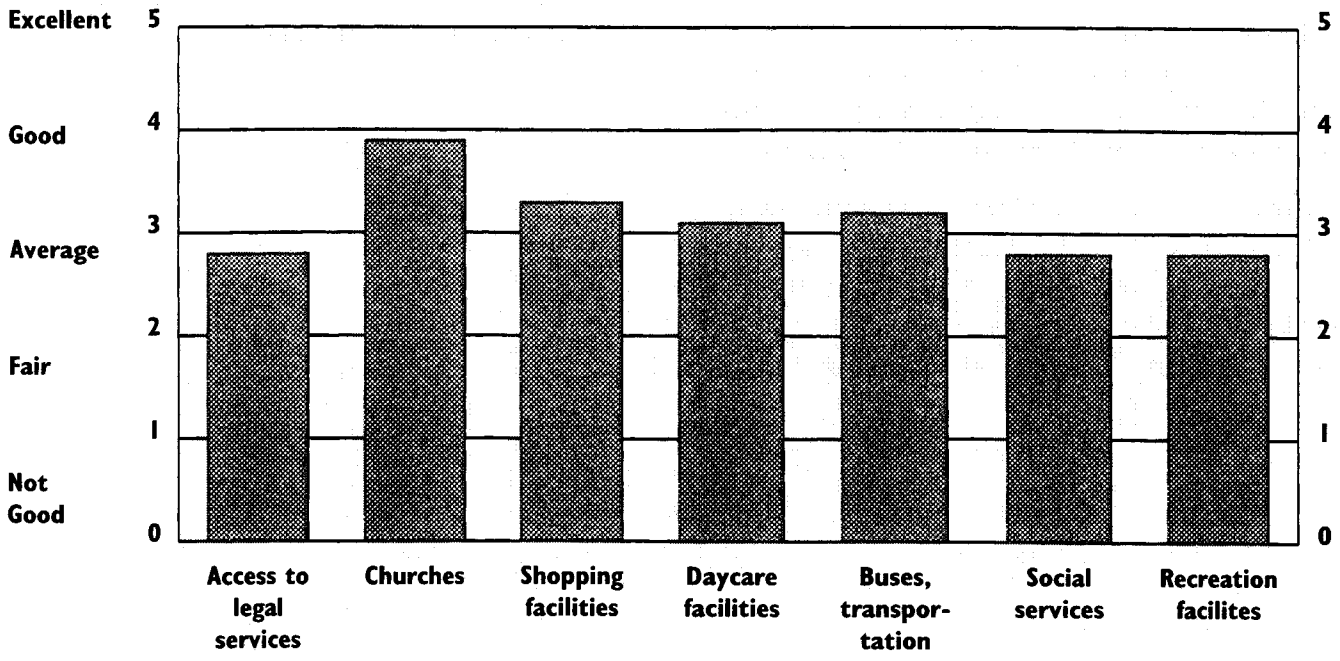


Figure 44
Satisfaction with Other Community Services
Source: BLAC Survey



Conclusions

The results presented in this chapter present a different, but complementary perspective on the Black community in Nova Scotia. Chapter 2 provided a socio-demographic profile of the community – the various facts and characteristics that statistically describe the individuals who make up the Black community.

This chapter gives a more personal perspective on the educational needs and experiences of past and present Black learners in Nova Scotia. It describes their opinions and recollections of past events, and lets their insights describe their educational needs. Chapter 3 balances and validates the facts of Chapter 2 with the opinions and perceptions of the Black community.

The results portray and quantify the experiences of the Black community within the Nova Scotia educational system. A clear message from the survey is that the Black learner has often felt alienated and out of place within the provincial educational system. Those interviewed expressed very strong agreement with statements that their education would have been greatly enhanced if the system was more open and responsive to their needs. Approaches that were supported include methods to increase the cultural awareness of teachers and the need for a greater demonstration and understanding of the contributions of Black persons to our society.

The responses also recognize the vital importance to the student of both parental and community involvement in the school system. Upwards of one third of those interviewed indicated a strong level of agreement with statements related to these forms of involvement.

This finding is important for two reasons. First, it indicates that this involvement has often not existed in the past, as parents and members of the Black community felt alienated or out of place within the system. As a result, their important support role was not available for students. Second, these opinions confirm the particular need for the Black community to become more involved and more active participants in the system.

Another group of topics in the survey dealt with awareness levels of programs and resources designed to support the needs of the Black learner. Half of those interviewed were aware of the Black Incentive Fund, but only one in four respondents knew of the other educational resources; awareness was greatest within the Metro area. More than half of those interviewed were aware of the BLAC.

As in the previous chapter, these findings identify the negative impacts of systemic discrimination and the absolutely critical importance of dealing with issues of institutionalized racism. In order to respond to the needs expressed throughout the survey, action must be taken to deal with the issue of systemic discrimination.

4 Summary

The goal of the Board of the BLAC in undertaking the survey was to obtain socio-demographic information, opinions and experiences of the entire Black community living in Nova Scotia. The BLAC Research Project lists research questions that are important to the BLAC and the Nova Scotia Black community. These questions are fact-based, designed to supply answers to topics such as:

- the number of Black persons in various occupations in the province, including the public service;
- the educational attainment of students; and,
- the income levels within the Black community in Nova Scotia.

The primary hypotheses for the Research Project are set out in the following statements:

- there are inequalities in education in Nova Scotia between Blacks and Whites;
- these inequalities are the result of systemic or institutionalized racism, perpetuated by educational policy at all levels; and,
- these inequalities existed in the past and still exist now.

In addition to questions directly related to education and the educational needs of the Black learner, the questionnaire included questions that examined other topics that both directly and indirectly affect the educational needs of the Black learner.

The information obtained from the BLAC survey, together with the 1991 Census results, provides a striking portrayal of the Black community in Nova Scotia. The results for key socio-demographic variables – education, employment, occupation, and income – consistently indicate a disparity between those in the Black community and the average Nova Scotian. This disparity cuts across age groups and can ultimately be explained in terms of one factor – systemic or institutionalized racism.

The Census results indicate the disparities that existed in the past continue to this day and in some instances, such as drop-out rates, the gap between the Black community and the entire population is actually increasing.

The survey results are the indicators of larger problems arising from systemic discrimination. Racism affects the Black learner in different ways and at different levels. The long term results, presented throughout this report, reflect the failure of society and the inability of the educational system to address the needs of the Black student. The ultimate result is the failure of people to reach their potential.

Additional information from the survey gives a more personal perspective on the educational needs and experiences of past and present Black learners in Nova Scotia. The results portray and quantify the experiences of the Black learner within the educational system.

A clear message from the survey is that the Black learner has often felt alienated and out of place within the provincial educational system. Those interviewed expressed very strong agreement with statements that their education would have been greatly enhanced if the system was more open and responsive to their needs. Approaches that were supported include methods to increase the cultural awareness of teachers and the need for a greater demonstration and understanding of the contributions of Black persons to our society.

The responses also recognize the vital importance to the student of both parental and community involvement in the school system. This involvement has often not existed in the past, as parents and members of the Black community felt alienated or out of place within the system and their important support role was not available for students. The results confirm the particular need for the Black community to become more involved and more active participants in the system.

The survey results confirm the major research hypotheses – there are inequalities in education between Black Nova Scotians and the average Nova Scotian. These inequalities existed in the past and still exist now. These inequalities are the result of systemic or institutionalized racism. The societal effects are clear from the survey. There are strong disparities between the socio-economic well being of Black Nova Scotians in comparison to the average Nova Scotian. This gap, to a large degree, results from the cycle of poverty generated by the lack of educational resources and opportunities that actively support and encourage the Black learner in the province.

Those interviewed during the survey described a system that has not recognized or been responsive to the educational needs of the Black community. At the same time, these individuals expressed a willingness and interest to become more actively involved in the educational system. The question is how this could best be accomplished.

The BLAC, with its mandate to address the needs of the Black learner, has a unique and important leadership role to play in supporting the educational aspirations of the Black community. The BLAC is an important mechanism for realizing this increased involvement. The BLAC should use its resources to continue to bring together all key stakeholders in the educational system – students, parents and Black community, along with teachers, administrators and policy makers within the educational system. This approach is imperative in order to address and resolve the longer term problems inherent in the Nova Scotia educational system and society as a whole.

Notes for Section 2

1 The census results we obtained grouped the Nova Scotia population by ethnic origin; the non-Black group included all those who were not Black, such as aboriginals, White Nova Scotians, and other ethnic origins. For practical purposes, the "Other", non-Black group is the White population of the province.

2 Eighty persons who answered the survey did not complete the question on gender.

3 Based on the sample results, and assuming randomness of the sample.

4 Not available in this figure.

5 Elementary refers to the completion of grade 6 or less; Junior high refers to the completion of grades 7-9.

6 January 1994 data.

7 Nova Scotia born Blacks living in Nova Scotia.

8 Persons born in Nova Scotia and living in the province at the time of the Census.

9 The Census estimates are based on the 1990 calendar year.

10 The data in both the Survey and Census were formated so that only calculations based on grouped data were possible.

11 Nova Scotia Department of Education, Directory of Public Schools in Operation, 1991-92.

12 Data for previous years indicates similar results. Enrollments were: 14,403 students in 1988; 14,296 students in 1989; and 14,285 students in 1990.

13 For analytical purposes, we have reversed the scale and the rating scheme from that used in the questionnaire. The results are not changed.

Appendix A
The Questionnaire Package

Household Questionnaire

(To be administered by Interviewer)

This first part of the survey provides us with a profile of your family and other families in the Black community. *The questions are about the people living in your dwelling* ***now****.*

When you are answering the questions, please do not count members of your family who have moved away, such as a child who has moved away to attend school full time or an adult who has left to find work.

Your answers to us will be kept confidential. No one except the interviewer and the researcher analyzing the information will see your answers. No government department or agency will be able to find out your answers.

For each person living here now, please provide the following information. Begin your list in the order described on the table, then continue as directed. If you need more space, please use another *Household Questionnaire.* and attach it to this one.

Person	Age	Sex	Highest Grade Completed	Other Education (see codes)	Marital Status (see codes)	Work Status (see codes)	Kind of Work (specify)	Codes
Person 1								
Person 2								
Person 3								
Person 4								
Person 5								
Person 6								
Person 7								
Person 8								

Community	
Questionnaire Number	

The following questions should be answered by Person 1, the person listed at the top of the table.

1. What is (was) the highest education level of the parents' of Person 1 and Person 2? *Read list and check only one box per column.*

	Person 1		Person 2	
	Father's Education	Mother's Education	Father's Education	Mother's Education
Elementary School	☐	☐	☐	☐
Junior High School	☐	☐	☐	☐
Senior High School	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community College/Vocational School	☐	☐	☐	☐
University	☐	☐	☐	☐
I don't know	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please describe)				

2. Have any children in this household moved away from Nova Scotia?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If **YES**, ask for each child that has moved away:

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
What is the age of the person now?				
What is the gender of the person?				
Are they employed now?				
Did they attend School in Nova Scotia?				
What is they highest grade of school completed?				

3. Is this dwelling:

   (*Mark one box only*)

- ❑ rented (even if no cash rent is paid)?
- ❑ owned by you or a member of this household, (even if it is still being paid for)?

3.a) *Ask owners only*: If you were to sell this dwelling now, for how much would you expect to sell it?

_$_____

4. How many rooms are there in this dwelling? *(include kitchen, bedrooms, finished rooms in the attic or basement, etc.)Do not count bathrooms, halls, vestibules and rooms used solely for business purposes.*

- ❑ Number of rooms

5. How many of these rooms are bedrooms?

❑ Number of bedrooms

6. Is this dwelling in need of any repairs?

(Do not include desirable remodeling or additions)

❑ No, only **regular maintenance** is needed (painting, furnace cleaning, etc.)

❑ Yes, **minor repairs** are needed (missing or loose floor tiles, bricks or shingles, defective steps, railings or siding, etc.)

❑ Yes, **major repairs** are needed (defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors or ceilings, etc.)

7. I am going to read a list of services that may or may not be available in your community. For each service I read, please tell me whether these are presently meeting the needs of your community, based on a scale from 1 - 5. A 1 means "not good" and 5 means "excellent". Mark the score in the box at the right of each service.

	Score		Score
Schools	☐	Preschool facilities	☐
Community College(s)/Trade Schools	☐	Prenatal "Care" & Counseling Programs	☐
Access to buses and other transportation	☐	Nutrition counseling	☐
Medical facilities	☐	Continuing education programs (including job/skills training, except literacy programs)	☐
Recreation facilities	☐	Literacy programs for adults	☐
Social Services (social assistance)	☐	Shopping facilities	☐
Dental facilities	☐	Churches	☐
Daycare facilities	☐	Access to Legal Services	☐
Some other services (please specify)	☐	Any Comments?	

8. What was the total annual income, before deductions of this household in 1992? (This is your *total* annual income, before deductions, in 1992. It includes income from wages and salaries, income from a business, Old Age Security Pensions, Guaranteed Income Supplement, Canada Pension Plan benefits, Unemployment Insurance, workers compensation, maintenance and alimony payments, welfare and other social assistance.)

Income Code _____

Individual Questionnaire Cover Sheet

Person Number: _____

Questionnaire Number: _____

This questionnaire is to be completed by persons who are 13 years old and older. Your experiences with the education system in Nova Scotia, along with those of other Black Nova Scotians, will help us develop a clear picture of Black learners in the province. Your answers will also help us understand the needs of Black learners better .

There are three questionnaires with questions about your school experience. Please answer the following question to find out which section you should answer.

Please check the one box that best describes your school completion:

	Check one box only	Answer Questions in:
• I am a student in the public school system now.		**Blue**
• I completed school (graduated from Grade 12 or equivalent)		**Green**
• I left school before graduating from Grade 12.		**Yellow**

Early School Leaver Questionnaire

Person Number: _____

Questionnaire Number: _____

Part A: This questionnaire is to be answered only by persons who left the public school system before graduating.

1. What program were you enrolled in at Junior High School? *Read list and check one box only:*

   Regular: ☐

   Enriched: ☐

   Resource or Special Program: ☐

   Other, Please Specify: ☐

2. What program were you enrolled in at High School? *Read list and check one box only:*

General:	☐	Honours:	☐
Intermediate/Industrial:	☐	Resource or Special Program:	☐
Academic:	☐	Other, Please write in:	☐
		Did not attend High School	☐

2.a) **ASK only if** Academic is checked: If you were an academic student, was Academic English **and** Academic Math part of your academic program of study?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. How old were you when you left school? **Age:** _____

4. Which of the following reasons describes why you left school? Check as many as apply.

Preferred to work	☐
Told to leave/suspended	☐
Lost interest	☐
Family reasons	☐
Support myself	☐
Racial discrimination by:	
School	☐
Teacher	☐
Other students	☐
School did not relate to me	☐
Difficulty with school work	☐
Health reasons	☐
Peer group pressure	☐
Pregnancy	☐
Other (please write in)	☐

5. How likely is it that you will continue your education beyond in the near future? *Please check one box only.*

Very likely:	☐	
Somewhat likely:	☐	
Somewhat unlikely:	☐	Go to question 7
Not at all likely:	☐	Go to question 7

6. What would you like to study? For example, what program, degree or courses would you study?

_____

7. The following table lists some barriers that may affect your decision to not continue your education beyond high school. For each reason, please check (√) either the "yes" or "no" box. *Read list.*

	Yes	No
1. Costs	☐	☐
2. None of my family or friends have ever attended university.	☐	☐
3. I would like to get more training, or go to university, but don't know how to find out about it.	☐	☐
4. I'm not smart enough.	☐	☐
5. I would feel out of place since there are so few Black students.	☐	☐
6. I'm too old.	☐	☐
7. I would feel too anxious about being away from home and my community.	☐	☐
8. I'm not sure if the program or courses I would like to take are available.	☐	☐
9. Some other reason (please write in)	☐	☐

Student Questionnaire

Person Number: _____

Questionnaire Number: _____

Part A: This questionnaire is to be answered only by persons who are *now* students in the public school system.

1. What program are you (or were) you enrolled in at Junior High School? *Read list and check one box only:*

   Regular: ☐

   Enriched: ☐

   Resource or Special Program: ☐

   Other, *Please Write in:*: ☐

2.a) **ASK only if** the student is now in High School (*see the Household Questionnaire*): what program are you enrolled in at High School? *Read list and check one box only:*

General:	☐	Honours:	☐
Intermediate/Industrial:	☐	Resource or Special Program:	☐
Academic:	☐	Other, Please write in:	☐

2.b) **ASK only if** Academic is checked: If you are an academic student, is Academic English **and** Academic Math part of your academic program of study?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Are you currently repeating Grade 12?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

4. How likely is it that you will continue your education beyond high school? *Read list and check one box only:*

Very likely:	❑	
Somewhat likely:	❑	
Somewhat unlikely:	❑	**Go to question 6**
Not at all likely:	❑	**Go to question 6**

5. What would you like to study? For example, what program, degree or courses would you study?

_____

6. The following table lists some barriers that might affect your decision to not continue your education beyond high school. For each reason, please check (√) either the "yes" or "no" box. *Read list.*

	Yes	No
1. Costs.	❑	❑
2. None of my family or friends have ever attended university.	❑	❑
3. I would like to get more training, or go to university, but don't know how to find out about it.	❑	❑
4. I'm not smart enough.	❑	❑
5. I would feel out of place since there are so few Black students.	❑	❑
6. I would feel too anxious about being away from home and my community.	❑	❑
7. I'm not sure if the program or courses I would like to take are available.	❑	❑
8. Some other reason (please write in)	❑	❑

8. How many Black students are in your home room in school now? #_____

9. How many Black students are in your school now? #_____

Graduate Questionnaire

Person Number:	_____
Questionnaire Number:	_____

Part A: This questionnaire is to be answered only by persons who have graduated from the public school system.

1. What program were you enrolled in at High School? *Read list and check one box only:*

General:	☐	Honours:	☐
Intermediate/Industrial:	☐	Resource or Special Program:	☐
Academic:	☐	Other, Please Specify:	☐

2. Did you have to repeat Grade 12?

No ☐ **Yes** ☐

3. How likely is it that you will continue your education in the near future? *Please check one box only.*

Very likely:	☐	
Somewhat likely:	☐	
Somewhat unlikely:	☐	**Go to question 5**
Not at all likely:	☐	**Go to question 5**

4. What would you like to study? For example, what program, degree or courses would you study?

_____

5. The following table lists some barriers that may affect (or may have affected) your decision to not continue your education beyond high school. For each reason, please check (√) either the "yes" or "no" box. *Read list.*

	Yes	No
1. Costs	❑	❑
2. None of my family or friends have ever attended university.	❑	❑
3. I would like to get more training, or go to university, but don't know how to find out about it.	❑	❑
4. I'm not smart enough.	❑	❑
5. I would feel out of place since there are so few Black students.	❑	❑
6. I'm too old.	❑	❑
7. I would feel too anxious about being away from home and my community.	❑	❑
8. I'm not sure if the program or courses I would like to take are available.	❑	❑
9. Some other reason (please write in)	❑	❑

Part B:

1. The statements I am going to read are about your last year in school. I would like your opinion for each statement I read. *Read first sentence and list of opinions; continue with other statements, checking only one box per row.*

	Agree Completely	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Completely	Not Applicable
1. My teachers were concerned about me as a person.						
2. My teachers made efforts to understand my culture.						
3. My teachers encouraged me to be the best that I could be.						
4. The guidance counselor(s) were supportive and listened to my concerns.						
5. There was good communication between my teachers and parent(s).						
6. My teachers made me feel like "I belonged" in the school.						
7. My teachers understood my needs as a Black student .						
8. The guidance counselor(s) understood my needs as a Black student in the school.						
9. My teachers treated students of all races and ethnic backgrounds fairly and equally.						
10. My school gave me the help I needed for planning my future education and career.						

2. Were you ever suspended from class?

	Number of Times		What is the Longest Number of Days You were Suspended (if applicable)
Elementary School	Never ☐	or ____ times	
Junior High School	Never ☐	or ____ times	
Senior High School	Never ☐	or____ times	

3. Were you ever suspended from school?

	Number of Times		What is the Longest Number of Days You were Suspended (if applicable)
Elementary School	Never ❑	or ____ times	
Junior High School	Never ❑	or ____ times	
Senior High School	Never ❑	or ____ times	

If you were never suspended, Go to Question 8.

The following questions are about your suspension(s) from school. If you had more than one suspension, please answer the questions referring to the *most recent* suspension.

4. Why were you suspended? Please check each of the boxes which apply:

Late	❑
Talking in Class	❑
Fighting	❑
Missing Classes	❑
Drinking / Drugs	❑
Other *(Please Write In)*	❑

5. Were your parent(s) contacted by the school when you were suspended?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Not Certain ❑

6. Did they talk to your teacher(s) or school principal about the suspension?

Yes ❑ No ❑ Not Certain ❑

7. Was the suspension resolved to :

Your satisfaction	Yes ❑	No ❑	Not certain ❑
Your parent(s) satisfaction	Yes ❑	No ❑	Not certain ❑

8. I am going to read you some statements about your *experiences* and *needs* as a student in Nova Scotia, *no matter when you were a student.* I would like your opinion for each statement I read. *Read the first sentence and list of opinions; continue with other statements, checking only one box per row.*

My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if:	Agree com-pletely	Agree Some-what	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Some-what	Disagree com-pletely	Not Applicable
1. there were Black teachers in my school.						
2. there was a Black guidance counselor in my school.						
3. there were more references in my text books to the contributions of Blacks to our society.						
4. I was more aware of the contributions of Blacks to our society.						
5. I was not racially harassed.						
6. I was not subject to racial discrimination.						

My school experience would have been more meaningful for me if:	Agree completely	Agree Somewhat	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree completely	Not Applicable
7. my parents went to parent-teacher meetings.						
8. my parents became more involved, or felt comfortable with my school.						
9. there was more active involvement of older Black students with my school.						
10. I was encouraged to keep up my academics while playing sports.						
11. I was not in a general level program.						
12. adults active in the Black community were more involved with my school.						
13. my teachers were sensitive to my learning styles, my environment and my culture.						
14. I had more respect for my teachers.						
15. my classmates had more respect and understanding for me as a Black learner.						
16. I was able to get extra help with my studies.						
17. I was more interested in school.						
18. my teachers had not pushed me to the next grade before I was ready.						

9. How much education would you like your children to get (even if you don't have children now)? *Read list and check one box only:*

Complete high school	❑
Complete community college	❑
Complete university	❑
Complete a Professional program such as law, medicine, accounting and so on	❑
Some other education (please specify)	❑
Not Applicable	❑

10. Do you think that:

Young Black learners today are more interested in education than they were 20 years ago?	Yes ❑	No ❑	Not certain ❑
Young Black learners today have more opportunities for a better education than they did 20 years ago?	Yes ❑	No ❑	Not certain ❑
More education leads to better jobs?	Yes ❑	No ❑	Not certain ❑

11. How involved or active were/are your parents in various school activities? *Read list and check one box only per item:*

	Very involved	Somewhat involved	Not involved at all	Not applicable
Home and school associations				
School activities, such as school fairs and sporting events				
School Boards				
School parent/teacher meetings				

The following programs are designed to help Black learners in Nova Scotia improve or complete their education.

12a. First of all, I would like to know if you have ever heard of the program. *Read list and check response under leftmost column.*

12b. **ASK only for Programs checked in part a**: Were you ever enrolled in this program? *Read list and check response under centre column.*

12c. **ASK only for programs checked in part a**: Based on your awareness or experience of these programs, how well it is meeting or has met the needs of Black learners? Use a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 being "not good" and 5 being "excellent". *Mark the responses in the rightmost column in the above table.*

Program	Heard of (√ if Yes)	Ever Enrolled in (√ if Yes)	Meeting Black learners' Needs (1-5)
Black Incentive Fund	❑	❑	❑
Transition Year Program (Dalhousie Univ.)	❑	❑	❑
Supervisory Career Paths Program (Dalhousie University)	❑	❑	❑
Indigenous Black and Micmac Law Program at Dalhousie	❑	❑	❑
Dartmouth East Black Learning Centre	❑	❑	❑

13. Are you aware of the following educational resources available to the Black community in Nova Scotia? *Read list and check each box for "yes" response:*

Black Learner's Advisory Committee	❑
Black Educators Association	❑
African Canadian Education Project	❑
NS Association for the Advancement of Colored People/Scholarship Fund	❑
African United Baptist Association Scholarship Fund	❑

THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH US.

Appendix B
Supporting Data for Figures in Section 2

Nova Scotia Population by Age Group

Data for Figures 6-7

Age Group	BLAC Survey	Percent of persons 1991 Census Black Persons	Non-Black Persons
15-19	14%	13%	9%
20-24	12%	12%	9%
25-29	10%	13%	11%
30-34	14%	12%	11%
35-39	11%	11%	10%
40-44	9%	10%	10%
45-49	7%	7%	7%
50-54	5%	5%	6%
55-59	4%	4%	6%
60-64	4%	4%	5%
65+	10%	11%	15%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Number of Persons by Grade Completed

Data for Figure 9

	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65+
Elementary	3	0	12	12	26	33	33	36	42	162
Junior High	54	57	77	82	78	95	81	59	60	106
Grade 10	38	63	81	73	60	30	22	15	8	26
Grade 11	106	50	76	65	53	14	17	19	5	13
Grade 12	193	173	202	138	98	45	31	12	5	13
Total	394	343	448	370	315	217	184	141	120	320
% Graduating	49%	50%	45%	37%	31%	21%	17%	9%	4%	4%

Highest Grade by Age Group

Data for Figure 12

Age Group	Number of Persons by Grade Completed: Less than Grade 9	Grades 9-12	Graduated Grade 12
20-24	55	360	175
25-29	90	450	170
30-34	165	390	105
35-39	125	345	85
40-44	175	240	60
45-49	260	195	20
50-54	220	85	25
55-59	210	105	10
60-64	215	130	15
65+	790	265	10

Other Education Completed

Data for Figure 16

	Males	Females
High School GED	77	130
Trades Certificate	160	195
Professional Assoc. Diploma	13	31
University Certificate	28	38
Bachelors Degree	23	24
Masters or Doctorate	4	7
Medicine/Dentistry	4	5
Other Education	135	191

Black Population without Jobs

Data for Figure 19

	% Without Jobs	Those Without Jobs by Region: Unemployment Insurance	Social Assistance	No Benefits
Halifax	34%	5%	10%	5%
Dartmouth	38%	6%	12%	6%
Annapolis Valley	29%	11%	4%	2%
Southwest	32%	4%	4%	9%
Northern	40%	7%	10%	6%
Antigonish/ Guysborough	40%	10%	5%	5%
Cape Breton	35%	9%	10%	2%

Unemployed Rates by Age and Gender

Data for Figure 21

Age Groups	Male	Female
Age 20-24	45%	46%
Age 25-29	45%	40%
Age 30-34	28%	30%
Age 35-39	23%	31%
Age 40-44	17%	29%
Age 45-49	15%	26%
Age 50-54	17%	35%
Age 55-59	23%	21%
Age 60-64	23%	19%

Income for Nova Scotia Born Population

Data for Figure 27

Income Groups	NS Blacks: Other Canada	NS Blacks: In NS	All Other NS
Without Income	26%	40%	36%
Under $7.5K	16%	20%	19%
$7.5K - $14.9K	11%	11%	11%
$15K - $29.9K	25%	19%	19%
$30K - $44.9K	16%	7%	11%
$45K plus	6%	2%	5%

Household Income by Region

Data for Figure 26

	$10K or less	$11K-$25K	$26K-$35K	$35K-$50K	Over $50K
Halifax	40.0	41.9	9.5	5.9	2.7
Dartmouth	23.0	36.3	15.5	13.4	11.8
Annapolis Valley	18.1	47.0	15.2	12.1	7.6
Southwest	20.2	55.3	17.0	4.3	3.2
Northern	34.3	39.6	8.1	11.7	6.3
Antigonish/Guysborough	29.5	58.8	2.9	8.8	0.0
Cape Breton	13.1	47.4	26.3	7.9	5.3

Estimated Drop-out Rates in Nova Scotia

Data for Figure 29

All Ethnic Groups	Both Sexes	Females	Males
Total highest level of schooling	706,675	362,685	343,990
Less than grade 9	93,245	41,740	51,505
Grades 9-13 without graduation certificate	208,945	111,980	96,955
Secondary school graduation certificate	72,880	41,620	31,255
Trades certificate or diploma	27,000	9,725	17,275
Other non-university education only	156,625	81,230	75,395
University without bachelor's degree or higher	74,510	41,145	33,360
University with bachelor's degree or higher	73,475	35,240	38,240
Blacks			
Total highest level of schooling	10,955	5,720	5,230
Less than grade 9	2,440	1,185	1,255
Grades 9-13 without graduation certificate	3,515	1,765	1,750
Secondary school graduation certificate	820	515	305
Trades certificate or diploma	460	245	215
Other non-university education only	2,120	1,240	880
University without bachelor's degree or higher	935	480	450
University with bachelor's degree or higher	665	285	380
Others			
Total highest level of schooling	695,720	356,965	338,760
Less than grade 9	90,800	40,555	50,250
Grades 9-13 without graduation certificate	205,425	110,215	95,205
Secondary school graduation certificate	72,060	41,105	30,960
Trades certificate or diploma	26,540	9,485	17,055
Other non-university education only	154,505	79,990	74,520
University without bachelor's degree or higher	73,575	40,670	32,910
University with bachelor's degree or higher	72,810	34,950	37,860

Student and Teacher Interactions

Data for Figure 32-34

Teacher and Student Interactions	Teacher Concern	Teacher Cultural Aware	Teacher Encouraged	Teacher Understood Needs
Agree Completely	28.9%	20.9%	32.3%	20.7%
Agree Somewhat	31.7%	19.1%	26.4%	15.4%
Neutral	8.4%	11.3%	7.9%	11.3%
Disagree Somewhat	16.5%	20.2%	17.1%	18.5%
Disagree Completely	14.5%	28.5%	16.3%	34.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

	Black Teacher in School	Teachers Sensitive	More Blacks in Texts	Not Racially Harassed
Agree Completely	62.6%	50.2%	68.1%	40.9%
Agree Somewhat	17.3%	23.4%	15.2%	20.0%
Neutral	7.0%	10.5%	5.1%	15.0%
Disagree Somewhat	3.4%	5.0%	2.8%	7.9%
Disagree Completely	9.7%	11.0%	8.8%	16.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Parent and Teacher Interaction	Parents Involved	Parents & PT Meetings	Older Black Students Involved	Black Adults Active with School
Agree Completely	30.4%	31.3%	39.1%	43.5%
Agree Somewhat	27.4%	25.8%	27.2%	25.4%
Neutral	16.9%	15.6%	15.6%	14.4%
Disagree Somewhat	8.9%	9.4%	5.6%	4.9%
Disagree Completely	16.4%	17.8%	12.5%	11.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Program Evaluations

Data for Figure 37

BIF Meeting Needs	Total Count	Total Percent	Yes Count
Not Good	243	18	183
Fair	186	14	173
Average	355	26	313
Good	253	19	236
Excellent	324	24	275
Total	1361	100	1180

TYP Meeting Needs			
Not Good	110	16	56
Fair	93	13	81
Average	184	26	171
Good	158	23	138
Excellent	153	22	136
Total	698	100	582

SCPP Meeting Needs			
Not Good	91	22	30
Fair	92	22	80
Average	107	26	95
Good	65	16	52
Excellent	64	15	51
Total	419	100	308

IBM Meeting Needs	Total Count	Total Percent	Yes Count
Not Good	103	17	53
Fair	61	10	48
Average	150	25	138
Good	154	26	139
Excellent	129	22	109
Total	597	100	487

DEBLC Meeting Needs			
Not Good	101	14	53
Fair	71	9.8	62
Average	178	25	162
Good	178	25	173
Excellent	195	27	174
Total	723	100	624

Program Awareness

Data for Figure 36

	Halifax Metro	Other NS
Black Incentive Fund	53%	58%
Transition Year Program	32%	27%
Supervisory Career Paths	19%	9%
Indigenous Black & Mi'kmaq	28%	22%
Dartmouth East Black Learning Center	48%	12%

Resource Awareness

Data for Figure 38

BLAC	53.1%
BEA	3.0%
ACEP	14.8%
NSAACP	33.7%
AUBA	39.8%

Continuing Education Beyond High School

Data for Figure 39

Count	Dropouts	Students	Graduates
Very Likely	332	424	328
Somewhat Likely	250	143	237
Somewhat Unlikely	216	28	95
Not at all Likely	1052	20	158
Total	1850	615	818

Barriers to Continuing Education

Data for Figure 40

Awareness	26%
Costs	64%
Uncertain of Program Availaility	24%

Overall Satisfaction of Services

Data for Figures 42-45

Satisfaction of Community Services	
Halifax Metro	3.1
Annapolis Valley	3.3
South West	2.3
North Shore	3.6
Antigonish/Guysborough	2.0
Cape Breton	3.0
Satisfaction of Education Services	
Schools	3.4
Community Colleges	2.8
Preschool Facilities	2.8
Continuing Education	2.8
Adult Literacy Programs	2.5
Satisfaction of Health Services	
Medical Facilities	3.4
Dental Facilities	3.0
Prenatal Care & Counseling Programs	2.6
Nutrition Counseling	2.4
Satisfaction of Community Services	
Recreation Facilities	2.8
Social Services	2.8
Buses/Transportation	3.2
Daycare Facilities	3.1
Shopping Facilities	3.3
Churches	3.9
Access to Legal Services	2.8