



KNOW THE SIGNALS FAQs

Learning and Growing Together



SANKOFA

Questions	Answers
1. How does <i>Know the Signals</i> support the Inclusive Education Policy?	Successful inclusive education requires ensuring that every student sees themselves reflected throughout their schools, learning resources, and within their learning experiences, and that the appropriate guidelines are followed (i.e., using the <i>Bias Evaluation Instrument</i> and <i>Know the Signals: A Guide for Selecting Resources that Value Black Students' Lives</i> to ensure curriculum fit and developmental appropriateness).
2. How does <i>Know the Signals</i> align with <i>The Call to Value Black Students' Lives So They Can Fulfill Their Promise and Potential</i> ?	Both <i>Know the Signals</i> and <i>The Call to Value Black Students' Lives So They Can Fulfill Their Promise and Potential</i> are professional resources developed to support students in being heard as well as being seen as they see themselves. These resources draw attention to practices in schools that negatively impact the achievement and well-being of African Nova Scotian/Black students.
3. What is the need for the <i>Know the Signals</i> document?	<p><i>Know the Signals</i> is one of the inclusive education tools necessary to disrupt the silence of racism within Nova Scotia's schools to foster more inclusive environments.</p> <p>The following important strategies help move our system forward towards supporting African Nova Scotian/Black students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell students the truth about the richness of their heritage.• Speak to the wisdom of their ancestors and Elders' creativity, intelligence, and leadership that exists within their communities.• Seek and share the truth about systemic racism, trauma, and how it impacts our African Nova Scotian/Black students and their communities.
4. Why was the <i>Know the Signals</i> document created?	The document was created to interrupt the unintentional consequences around the selection of resources and represents the fulfillment of a commitment to support school staff in selecting learning resources that value African Nova Scotian/Black students lives. The <i>Know the Signals</i> document will benefit all students.
5. What have some of the unintentional consequences been when selecting resources?	African Nova Scotian/Black students have been negatively impacted by resources that perpetuate an erroneous narrative that situate African Nova Scotian/Black history and culture primarily in slavery, civil rights, and the stereotypical Black inner-city youth. These narratives tend to be based on little or no experience with the students, families, or communities. Also, the African American experience tends to dominate the narratives in some of these resources and does not necessarily reflect African Nova Scotian/Black lived experiences.

<p>6. Who is impacted by racism?</p>	<p>Racism impacts everyone’s lives. It is our professional responsibility to collaborate and coordinate our efforts to help foster a deeper understanding of the perspectives or experiences of African Nova Scotian/Black students. Acknowledging and understanding the impact of racism will benefit all students.</p>
<p>7. Where can I go for support and guidance when selecting resources?</p>	<p>Regional coordinators, African Nova Scotian Education and Services, are the first point of contact. They are presently supporting and leading their system on the selection of learning resources, programs, and practices that value Black students’ lives.</p>
<p>8. What if the resource I presented to the students had an unintended negative impact?</p> <p>For example, negative racial stereotypes are reinforced in the resource.</p>	<p>If the resource you presented to the students had an unintended negative impact, validate and affirm the student(s)’ feelings. And remember we are learning and growing together, so we are going to make missteps.</p> <p>Self-acknowledgement is the first step in fostering inclusive learning spaces for the students. Do not be dismayed and turn back. This is crucial work and it is important that we all step into it.</p> <p>When communicating with the students, principal, regional coordinators, etc., communicate why you selected the resource and the objective. This will be helpful in beginning a respectful restorative conversation.</p>
<p>9. How do we share responsibility in the implementation of <i>Know the Signals</i>?</p>	<p>Collectively we are responsible to support students’ well-being and achievement.</p> <p>“Every student deserves to belong (affirmed, validated, and nurtured), be safe, and feel welcomed in all aspects of their daily experience.” – <i>Inclusive Education Policy</i> (2019, p. 2)</p> <p><i>Know the Signals</i> pertains to all stakeholders within the provincial educational system.</p>
<p>10. What does it mean to “know them as they are known?”</p>	<p>“Knowing Them As They Are Known” is one of the five pillars of the African Nova Scotian Education Framework and appears in <i>Know the Signals</i>.</p> <p>Within society there are ongoing assumptions about who African Nova Scotian/Black children are and who they can be regardless of how they know themselves.</p> <p>African Nova Scotian/Black learners are descendants of rich, multi-generational and multi-ethnic histories of strength, resilience, and innovation. Listening to them is the first step to “knowing them as they are known.”</p> <div data-bbox="581 1703 634 1906" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="699 1703 1086 1730" data-label="Section-Header"> <p>KNOWING THEM AS THEY ARE KNOWN</p> </div> <div data-bbox="699 1749 1393 1906" data-label="Text"> <p>African Nova Scotian cultural beliefs systems affirm Black children as wonderful creations that are endowed with gifts and talents that must be nurtured through individual and collectively confirming experiences. Authentic, strengths-based practices that honour spiritual, familial, and communal understandings, and that engage the brilliance of Black learners through culturally responsive teaching, inspire wellness, a sense of belonging, and success at school.</p> </div>

<p>11. What is “first voice” and why does it matter?</p>	<p>First voice represents the students’ perspectives, lived experiences, and realities from within a given community.</p> <p>First voice matters and is necessary because we need to change the narrative about who African Nova Scotian/Black students are and what they can become.</p> <p>As a department, we have responded to numerous correspondences from parents, families, and their communities of children and youth feeling isolated and harmed. We have heard from students who have felt the need to walk out of their class because of the selection and use of classroom resources. As a result, we have developed <i>Know the Signals: A Guide for Selecting Resources that Value Black Students’ Lives</i> to assist teachers in selecting inclusive resources.</p> <p>African Nova Scotian/Black children should feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and know they are essential members of the classroom.</p>
<p>12. How do we honour first voice in our teaching and learning practice?</p>	<p>We honour first voice in our teaching and learning practice when we commit to listening, learning, and evolving. We can move forward together by reflecting on data, student and community feedback, new information from books, articles, and other professional learning opportunities to make better informed decisions to foster more inclusive environments.</p>
<p>13. How does this document work in relation to resource selection and purchasing for schools?</p>	<p>The <i>Bias Evaluation Instrument</i> and the <i>Know the Signals</i> guide work together to help us identify bias when selecting learning resources. Learning resources include texts, videos, software and apps, audio or visual media, and other materials that educators use to address learning outcomes.</p> <p>These professional resources support school staff in understanding and accessing learning resources that align with our <i>Inclusive Education Policy</i> commitment to ensuring all students feel safe and accepted and experience a sense of belonging. The policy supports teachers in selecting resources that will inspire learning, wellness, and achievement of African Nova Scotian/Black students who have historically been racialized and marginalized.</p>
<p>14. Why is the STOP section necessary?</p>	<p>The bullets in the STOP section of the <i>Know the Signals</i> guide are derived from the <i>Bias Evaluation Instrument</i> and are necessary to stop the harm.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The learning resource depicts violence towards a group of Black individuals and has the potential to expose students to traumatizing events and images. • The learning resource uses racist terms and/or portrays African Nova Scotians and people of Black African Nova Scotian ancestry from a deficit, stereotypical and racist perspective that runs counter to how they are “Known.” <p>It is an expectation of practice that we will apply the STOP section of the document. The STOP section requires us to step back and adjust our</p>

	<p>resource selections. When we make resource selections to support the well-being and academic achievement of every student in alignment with our <i>Inclusive Education Policy</i>, we move the system forward in arresting those practices that we know cause harm or trauma and/or have the potential to cause harm or trauma.</p> <p>While using this document and applying the “stop” section, and reflecting on the resource selection, we will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help everybody grow in their understanding of resource selection and the cumulative effect on an African Nova Scotian/Black child’s sense of identity and well-being when resources with highly offensive words and inaccurate depictions of cultures are selected for use in a school or classroom • help build an awareness of intersectionality (the interconnectedness of social categories such as race, class, disabilities, neurodiversity, gender, etc., as they apply to an individual or group)
<p>15. In <i>Know the Signals</i>, why are people of African ancestry referred to in a variety of ways (Black, African Nova Scotian, etc.)?</p>	<p>Our current registration form allows students and their families to self-identify in a variety of ways. <i>Know the Signals</i> was developed to ensure that all students and their families see wording that acknowledges and validates the ways they choose to self-identify.</p>