

Why is an African-centered education important for Black students?

Black students are currently exposed to many negative interpretations of what it means to be Black. Afrocentric education is important for building Black students' self-esteem through awareness of African culture and contributions, and to develop their sense of responsibility to a larger community. It goes beyond stereotypical media portrayals of Black culture as only Hip-Hop or basketball.

Wouldn't an African-centered school be exclusive rather than inclusive?

The school will be open to everyone who shares the principles and values that guide its structure and operation. No one will be excluded.

Is African-centered schooling a return to segregation?

No, unless we are willing to say that all-girls schools, Catholic schools, French language schools and the Rainbow Program for LGBT students are also segregated. Segregation means exclusion, discrimination and oppression, and Afrocentricity opposes segregation. True equity and integration does not mean one size fits all. It is always best to provide a variety of rich options from which students can choose to serve their diverse needs and interests. How can a school be segregationist when it is open to all?

Where will the teachers for this school come from?

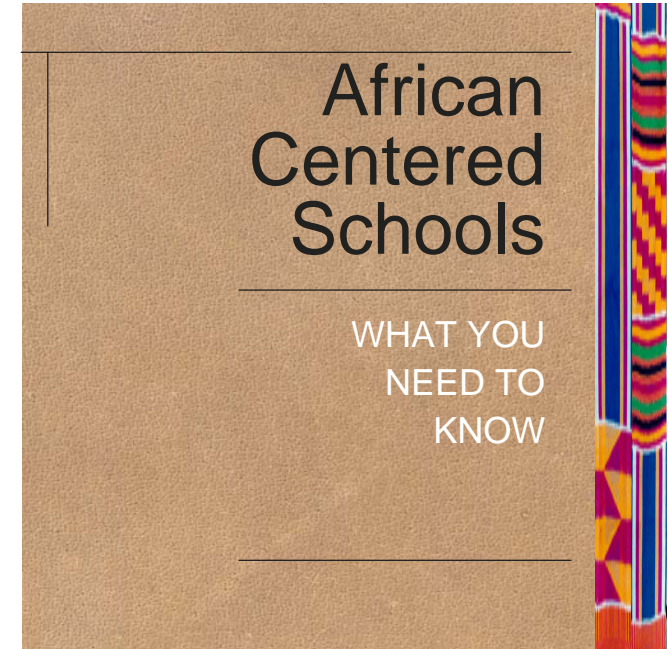
Teachers at the school will be interested and committed educators who are qualified to teach the Ontario Curriculum and who are well-versed in the principles of Afrocentric education. There are a number of teachers in Ontario who already meet these qualifications. However, if the School Board is serious about Afrocentric education, it will provide professional development to increase the capacity of the system.



Where can I find examples of successful African-centered schools?

There are many approaches to Afrocentric education, and numerous examples of successful African-centered schools. The following are the websites of some existing African-centered schools:

<i>The Nsoromma School</i>	www.nsoromma.org
<i>The Ijabo Shule</i>	www.ijobashule.org
<i>Nubian Village Academy</i>	www.nubianvillageacademy.com
<i>Nation House</i>	www.nationhouse.org
<i>The Lotus Academy</i>	www.lotusacademy.org



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Reaching Potential - Living the Dream

What is Afrocentricity?

Afrocentricity emphasizes the importance of centering students in their own culture, experience and history—whether they are from the African continent, Canada, the Caribbean or other parts of the African diaspora. Students who are centered in this way are well equipped to understand and interact with other cultures in a racially and culturally diverse society.

With respect to education, is there a difference between the terms Black-Focused, Africentric, Afrocentric, and African-centered?

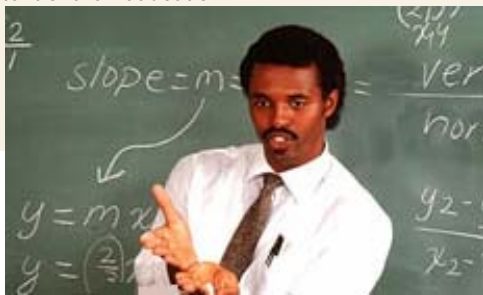
No. These terms mean that the school will be guided by the principles of Afrocentricity. Because the school is guided by a set of principles and not by skin colour, we prefer to call the school African-centered rather than Black-focused.

What will be different about an African-centered school?

The school will teach the Ontario Curriculum, but will be guided by the principles of Afrocentricity, and will use an Afrocentric approach to teaching. The school will promote social responsibility as well as academic success, and work toward instilling a sense of cultural identity, belonging, and collective ownership of the school. Teachers will work cooperatively with students and parents.

Why will the curriculum at the African-centered school not be the same as the neutral curriculum in regular schools?

The existing curriculum is not neutral. It focuses almost entirely on the history, experiences, struggles, and ideas of Europeans. Material concerning the contributions of First Nations, Africans, and Asians is mostly left out, misrepresented, or is optional. The Afrocentric approach respects and includes students' backgrounds in the content of their education.



Aren't Black students underachieving because of family and community problems rather than because of the education system?

Education is the responsibility of the family and the school together. Families should provide a nurturing and supportive environment, but this must be distinguished from blaming families for Black students' underachievement. Many Black youth are disengaged from their education, and are significantly affected by the present content and climate of their education that does not fully respect them. The school system must accept its share of responsibility by setting high expectations, caring for the students, and creating an atmosphere of collaboration with Black parents.

How will an African-centered school address the high dropout and pushout rate among Black students in Toronto?

The African-centered school will be a school where there will be high expectations for all students. Students who have been failed by the current system will have the opportunity to learn the value and importance of their own histories and communities. By learning from a perspective that cherishes the learner and her/his history, students will be motivated to succeed. The high achieving students who choose to attend the school will have the opportunity to mentor their peers, and enhance their own success through this opportunity.

Isn't it the family's responsibility to teach cultural traditions while it is the schools responsibility to teach facts?

Culture, history, tradition, and values are always a part of education, so "facts" cannot be taught without including them. The present system promotes European culture, history, traditions and values. African-centered schooling will also value the culture, history, traditions and values of Africans and other people.

Will an African-centered school also teach the contributions of other cultures and races?

Yes. The principle of centering the student in her/his heritage will benefit students from all backgrounds and develop their ability to function optimally in a racially diverse society.



Will students attending an African-centered school be properly prepared to function in a multicultural society?

Yes. In addition to an excellent academic education, the Afrocentric core values that will guide the school will emphasize the values of transparency, accountability, equity, social justice, and respect for all. Also, the skills of cultural competence that will be taught are necessary for true success in our diverse society.

Will students graduating from African-centered schools be able to compete with students from the regular system for university and college acceptance?

Absolutely! There will be nothing lacking in the content of the school curriculum. In addition, the broad cultural intelligence that will be taught is useful in all aspects of education and is highly sought after in post-secondary education in the world of work.

