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 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:

- The Nsoromma School  www.nсорomma.org
- The Ijabo Shule  www.ijobashule.org
- Nubian Village Academy  www.nubianvillageacademy.com
- Nation House  www.nationhouse.org
- The Lotus Academy  www.lotusacademy.org

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.
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.