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Community Update – Volume 3, Fall 2014



Delmore “Buddy” Daye
Learning Institute

Excellence in Africentric Education

5539 Cornwallis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia
902-407-3200 • www.dbdli.ca

Meet Judge Castor Williams: Inaugural Chair of the Black Learners Advisory Council



“Buddy Daye had a long term plan, a vision that put into place a structure within the establishment that ensured black people had a say in what was going to be taught and learned within the educational system.”

In the early 1990s, the African Nova Scotian community was preparing to face the reality of short falls within the province’s educational system in a constructive and engaging way.

The right people with the right skills would be required to make deep and meaningful systemic changes that would provide African Nova Scotian learners with better opportunities to achieve academic excellence. Delmore “Buddy” Daye understood that and was engaged by the province to mobilize leaders from the community.

Enter Judge Castor Williams (Ret.) who, along with other leaders from Nova Scotia, united to develop the foundation for the constructive engagement of the government of the day in a deep evaluation of how the education system at that time approached African Nova Scotian learning.

As the inaugural Chair of the Black Learners Advisory Council (BLAC), Judge Williams came with a strong background and appreciation for economic development.

Born in Antigua W.I., he served as a non-commissioned officer in the West Indian Regiment and worked with the Government of Antigua, Bank of Scotland and later served as Manager of the Seaview Credit Union in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he was actively involved in community development.

With a degree in Political Science and Economics, Judge Williams applied to Law School and it was there where he experienced systemic discrimination. The experience made him fully aware that to affect the system and affect change, access to the system was paramount. He received his law degree in 1976.

He has since spent many years working hard to help our communities flourish. As Chair of the BLAC Report on education, Judge Williams took a long term view on what would be required to achieve the outcomes required to make positive and lasting change.

Judge Williams has guided the work of the Black Learners Advisory Committee with a steady and balanced hand, helping to ensure that Africentric learning is entrenched in our educational system with a seat at the table and a voice in the system.

Chair's Message



Welcome to our Fall edition of the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute Newsletter. I hope that you had an enjoyable and relaxing summer and that the start of the new school year has gone smoothly. It was a busy summer for us as we hosted two major events. The first was our inaugural Annual General Meeting held on July 10.

We are passionate about the work we are doing and continue to do. We are equally passionate about demonstrating an unprecedented level of accountability to our community and making the community aware of what and how we are doing, what challenges we are facing and our vision for the future.

The event was well attended by members of the community.

Then in August, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development we hosted, Dr. Norma LeMoine.

The three day seminar on language, literacy and learning for children of African descent, helped heighten

Message from the Chair cont'd...

the level of understanding of teachers, regional educators, university professors and government employees. The event received very positive feedback.

Our search for a full time Chief Executive Officer continues. We are confident that we will find an ideally suited candidate for this position.

Some of you may be aware that in early September, a judicial decision was rendered that required the organization to change its name. In accordance with the decision we have changed our name to Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute.

We are pleased to announce that the Institute is a co-sponsor of the

20th Anniversary of the BLAC Report on Education Conference, Nov. 14 & 15, the theme of which is *Reflecting on the Past, Charting the Future*.

This is an important event as we evaluate and discuss the path that has led us to where we are today and where we are headed in the future.

Finally, we are very excited about our discussions with Acadia University to offer a cohort in the Masters of Education in Counselling Program, which is slated to begin in the summer of 2015.

The DBDLI will provide full tuition scholarships for up to 20 students of African descent from those successful applicants to the University program.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:



We extend deep appreciation and thanks to **George Borden** for the donation of his beautiful artwork, on display at the DBDLI office.

Meet Board Member Susan Brigham



Susan Brigham is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. Hailing from New Brunswick, she started her career teaching school children in Ireland, then in Kuwait. After returning to Canada she taught Kindergarten in a First Nations community in B.C. and then in rural Alberta before going on to complete her graduate studies at University of Alberta.

Dr. Brigham has been in Halifax since 2004 and has conducted research and presented her work in North America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Europe. She is co-editor of the book *Africentricity in Action* (2012, Halifax: Fernwood) and *Building on Critical Traditions: Adult Education and Learning in Canada* (2013, Toronto: Thompson). Former Chair of the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice, she was the coordinator and advisor of the three MSVU/ALI Master of Education cohorts in Graduate Studies of Lifelong Learning with a focus on Africentricity.

Dr. Brigham is married to Richard Gale and they have two lovely daughters in junior high school, Helena and Lily.

20th Anniversary of the BLAC Report on Education Conference to honour milestone

The BLAC Report on Education: Redressing Inequality-Empowering Learners was tabled in the Provincial Legislature 20 years ago and contained 46 individual recommendations.

In 2003, the *Report of the BLAC Implementation Review Committee* was released followed by the *Reality Check: A review of key program areas in the BLAC Report for their effective educational opportunities and achievement of African Nova Scotian Learners* in 2009.

In recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the signing of the BLAC Report, we are pleased to be a major sponsor of the BLAC Report on Education Conference: *Reflecting on the Past, Charting the Future*.

Details on this two-day conference, November 14-15, 2014, can be found at www.dbdli.ca.

Our Role

At the DBDLI, our goal is to help African Nova Scotian learners and educators reach their full potential.

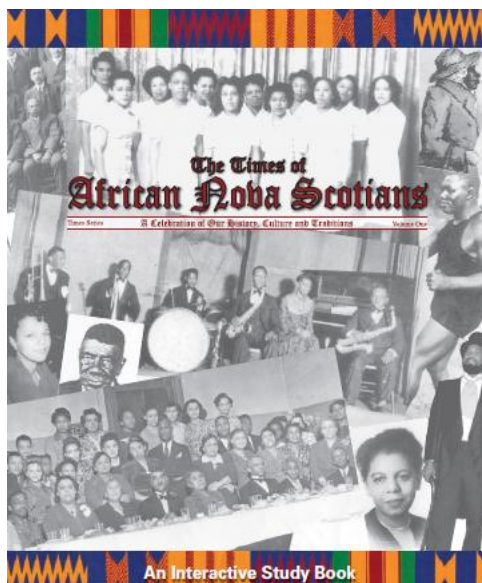
We are committed to ensuring our education system meets the needs of our communities. An important part of making that happen is getting more Africentric resources into the hands of our African Nova Scotian educators and learners.

“We have a deep commitment to improve educational outcomes for African Nova Scotian students from pre-school to adulthood,” says Yvonne Atwell, DBDLI Director. “To do that, we need to improve education for African Nova Scotian lifelong learners through educational research, informed policies and practices.”



This requires a balanced, relevant and collaborative approach to Africentric education which involves working with our regional partners, the provincial government, educators, learners and the African Nova Scotian community to build more Africentric content into the school curriculum. It means engaging in research and best practices, and developing policies and programs that can be put into practice.

In Print: “*Times of African Nova Scotians*”



The DBDLI is proud to announce a new partnership with Effective Publishing for the publishing rights of the *Times of African Nova Scotians*.

Published In 2006, by Tony Colaiacovo, *The Times of African Nova Scotians* is a historical journal developed specifically to address the shortage of teaching materials pertaining to African Nova Scotian history. Its content was inspired by widespread consultation with community groups from across the province and with input from distinguished educators, teachers, historians and writers.

Embraced as a teaching aid by teachers at all grade levels and considered an important classroom tool, *The Times of African Nova Scotians* is peer reviewed and written to support the African Canadian Studies 11 Curriculum outcomes. Tony Colaiacovo, editor of *The Times of African Nova Scotians*, has been a publisher for more than 35 years. A lifelong resident of Halifax, Tony graduated from Dalhousie University with a BA in History in 1978 and Graduate Studies in Business Administration in 1979.

Tony was a co-founder of *Halifax Magazine* and the *Burnside News* and for many years specialized as a contract publisher in the cultural industries for clients and partners including Neptune Theatre, Symphony Nova Scotia, The Atlantic Film Festival and the Quebec Nordiques, to name a few. Volume 2 of *The Times of African Nova Scotians* is currently in development, the focus of which is *African Nova Scotian communities: Where were they and where are they now?*

Tony invites comments and contributions from all those interested in African Nova Scotian history. He can be reached via email at: tonycola@ns.sympatico.ca

The DBDLI is proud to publish this important piece of our history. We look forward to the release of Volume 2 in 2015.

The 2014 Municipal Awards Ceremonies:

Each year, The Halifax Regional Municipality Council recognizes Grade 9 students who exemplify the qualities of good citizenship.

At a ceremony held at City Hall this past June, 46 students were recognized, several of whom we are proud to report are of African Nova Scotian descent.

Recipients include:

Alexandra Carroll: Ross Road
Nana Ntiwaa Boakye: Graham Creighton Junior High
Bocar Wade: Gorsebrook Junior High
Kiara Sexton: Rockingstone Heights

Congratulations to all of the award recipients.

DBDLI Graduate Research Fellowship Grant

The DBDLI Graduate Research Fellowship Grant assists graduate students of African ancestry to complete post-secondary education at the graduate level while providing an opportunity for the DBDLI to strengthen its relationship with ‘up and coming’ researchers in the African Nova Scotian community. We are especially pleased to announce that the following graduate students have been awarded DBDLI’s first Graduate Research Fellowship Grant. Congratulations to:

Ayodeji Aladejebi
Rajeau Boudreau
Kwesi Firemong
Eluned Jones
Kesa Munro-Anderson
Joseph Nyemah
Cinera States

Mount St. Vincent University
Dalhousie University
York University
Dalhousie University
Mount St. Vincent University
Mount St. Vincent University
Dalhousie University

The selected recipients are awarded up to \$5000 in one academic year for a maximum of two years to use towards tuition, textbooks, and supplies.

Dr. Noma LeMoine:

Education Seminar helps expands knowledge base for
educators of African Nova Scotian learners



**“Shifting Paradigms and Building New
Schemes for Educating the Linguistically
Diverse African Nova Scotian Learner”**

Facilitated by Dr. Noma LeMoine, a three-day EDUfest summer workshop, sponsored by DBDLI and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, was very well received by an attentive audience comprised of teachers, community and regional educators, university professors, and government employees.

Dr. LeMoine, who has a Ph.D. in Education specializing in language, literacy, and learning, explained that African Canadians are considered Standard English Learners (SELs). These learners tend to be overlooked and underserved in North American schools, mainly because they are not acknowledged as language different but rather assumed to be language deficient.

Noting the factors that influence the academic achievement of SELs include - status in society, language variation, educator attitudes and cultural diversity - Dr. LeMoine illustrated how African American/ African Canadian English (also referred to as Black English, African English, and Ebonics) is a language system with its own set of rules, originating from the Niger Congo region of Africa (many African Canadians are descendants of people from that region).

African Canadian English is not a dialect of English or slang, which African Canadian learners can simply be ‘corrected out of,’ rather it is a language.

Differences in the learning and behavioural styles of SEL learners and the styles expected by educators often result in educators having lower expectations of SEL learners.

Dr. LeMoine borrowed an analogy from Wade Nobles to demonstrate what it is like for African Canadian children who enter schools where their language and learning styles are not compatible with the mainstream. It is like salt water fish taken from the ocean and put into a fresh water pond they experience trauma.

The fresh water fish don’t understand what is wrong with the salt water fish because to them the fresh water is just fine. They assume the problem is with the fish, not with the water. This analogy segued nicely into a discussion of the culturally responsive teaching that is required for advancing learning in African descent SEL populations.

The general feeling among attendees was that Dr. LeMoine introduced critical points to improve the academic achievement of African Canadian learners and that discussion of these ideas must continue.

AGM 2014: Our Passion. Our People.

A new era of Transparency and Accountability

This past year saw many important milestones for the DBDLI.

On July 10, 2014 the DBDLI held its first Annual General Meeting, which gave us the opportunity to update our community, partners, educators and learners on what we have accomplished thus far and what we will be working on over the next year.

Our Financial Statements were presented by the audit firm Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP and were deemed to be in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Our various committee reports were also presented, which provided a thorough recap of our activities and accomplishments.

The reports demonstrated how we achieved and advanced our primary goal - to address educational issues that impact African Nova Scotian learners and educators.

As stewards of the Delmore “Buddy” Daye Learning Institute, we understand that: **The most powerful asset we have is our people.**

Educators, learners, community members, government partners, board members and staff all share the same passion for enabling African Nova Scotian learners and educators to achieve academic excellence.

We look forward to the continued advancement of our mandate and expect that the coming year will hold more meaningful and important achievements.



2014 BEA Open Golf Tournament



Picture above: The 'Honeybees' - Roberta Morrison, Margo Hampden, Cathy Riley and Jean Whalen

The Black Educators Association (BEA) celebrated its 26th Annual Golf Tournament at Ashburn Golf Course in Halifax on July 19. The sold out annual event raises funds for African Nova Scotian students pursuing a post-secondary education.

This year, the tournament raised \$15,000 dollars bringing the total to \$330,000. As a result, 24 student bursaries of \$400 will be awarded this year, raising the total number of bursaries awarded to 650.



Pictured above: John Wedderburn, Dean Smith, Martin Morrison and Telbert (Lex) Bizzeth

Inglewood Homecoming Reunion

The community of Inglewood was founded in the late 1700s by a group of Black Loyalists who settled in the surrounding areas of Grandville Mountain in the beautiful Annapolis Valley.

Education was considered by the elders of Inglewood to be the foundation of a good life. The community built their own school in 1859, which remained open until 1944.

In 1993, a survey was commissioned by the Department of Education to understand how this small black community achieved such an outstanding record of educational excellence, which was reflected in the high number of high school graduates on a per capita basis.

The results of that survey are captured in the BLAC report. The Inglewood Community Club celebrates the culture and heritage of this community, located one kilometre north of Bridgetown.

This year, more than 200 family, friends and relatives gathered from July 24-27 for the 3 day event. This year \$3,000 was raised and will be used to upgrade the Inglewood Community Hall.

African word meanings

MA'AT (Goddess of Order, originates from the ancient Egyptian Goddess by the same name). The principles of MA'AT are truth, righteousness, justice, balance, global order, reciprocity and harmony.

Ubuntu (ou-bun-tou) is a Swahili word which means the spirit of humanity, collectivism and kindness.

If you have an interest in knowing more about the DBDLI and what role you can play in helping to improve the academic achievement of African Nova Scotia learners and educators, contact us. Call us at **902.407.3200**, visit us at **5539 Cornwallis Street, Halifax**, or check out our **website** at www.dbdli.ca

