

**HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD  
AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN / MI'KMAQ EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

**PURPOSE:** To inform the Governing Board of the African Nova Scotian / Mi'kmaq Education Task Force Report & Recommendations.

**BACKGROUND:** In June 2012 the Halifax Regional School Board passed a motion which stated the following:

*It was moved and seconded (Cameron/Blumenthal-Harrison) that the Board amend the motion to add: As well, because it is important to find effective ways of increasing the number of qualified minority applicants, the board will invite senior representatives of the following organizations or agencies to join representatives of HRSB in a task force the terms of reference of which will be to seek ways to increase the proportion of members of the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities who qualify for teaching positions with the Halifax Regional School Board taking into account the experience of other professional groups. Those invited to join the task force should include representatives of the NSTU, Mount St. Vincent University, Dalhousie Faculty of Law, as well as the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities.*

The Task Force was established in the fall of 2013.

**CONTENT:** In the fall of 2013, the Task Force was established and included members from multiple stakeholders such as other Schools Boards within the Province, the Black Educator's Association, Mount Saint Vincent University, Dalhousie University and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The NSTU was invited to participate but declined.

The Task Force met four times on the following dates: November 7, 2013, January 15, 2014, February 26, 2014 and September 19, 2014.

In keeping with the Board motion, the task force focused their attention on the recruitment and retention of African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq teachers. The recommendations are contained in the attached report.

A copy of the report and recommendations has been provided to all individuals who participated on the Task Force. It is recommended that all participants review the recommendations to determine what steps need to be taken within their own organization to advance the recommendations made by the Task Force. An internal working group has been created to review the recommendations for implementation within the HRSB.

**COST:** N/A

**FUNDING:** N/A

**TIMELINE:** N/A

**APPENDICES:** African Nova Scotian/Mi'kmaq Education Task Force Report and Recommendations.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended the Governing Board receive the report for information.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

AUDIENCE	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE
Senior Staff	Tracy O’Kroneg, Director, HR	January 13, 2015
Governing Board	Tracy O’Kroneg, Director, HR	January 28, 2015
Task Force Members	Tracy O’Kroneg, Director, HR	January 28, 2015

**From:** Tracy O’Kroneg, Director, Human Resource Services  
[tokroneg@hrsb.ca](mailto:tokroneg@hrsb.ca) or (902) 464-2000 ext. 2323

**To:** Senior Staff January 13, 2015  
Governing Board January 28, 2015

# **African Nova Scotian / Mi'kmaq Education Task Force**

## **Report & Recommendations**

### **Purpose**

To provide a report summarizing the recommendations of the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq Education Task Force.

### **Background**

In June 2012 the Halifax Regional School Board passed a motion which stated the following:

*It was moved and seconded (Cameron/Blumenthal-Harrison) that the Board amend the motion to add: As well, because it is important to find effective ways of increasing the number of qualified minority applicants, the board will invite senior representatives of the following organizations or agencies to join representatives of HRSB in a task force the terms of reference of which will be to seek ways to increase the proportion of members of the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities who qualify for teaching positions with the Halifax Regional School Board taking into account the experience of other professional groups. Those invited to join the task force should include representatives of the NSTU, Mount St. Vincent University, Dalhousie Faculty of Law, as well as the African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities.*

In the fall of 2013, the Task Force was established and included members from multiple partners such as other Schools Boards within the Province, the Black Educator's Association, Mount Saint Vincent University, Dalhousie University and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The NSTU was invited to participate but declined.

A list of participants is included as "Appendix A."

The Task Force met four times on the following dates: November 7, 2013, January 15, 2014, February 26, 2014 and September 19, 2014.

It was agreed the meetings would focus on four main themes:

Meeting One: Composition of Task Force, purpose and Terms of Reference

Meeting Two: Discussion of current state/information sharing

Meeting Three: Identify current barriers and possible solutions

Meeting Four: Finalize recommendations

## **Recommendations**

In keeping with the Board motion, the task force focused their attention on the recruitment and retention of African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq teachers and the recommendations have been categorized accordingly.

### ***Recruitment***

- Identify ways to promote teaching as a career to high school students before they enter university. For example, partnerships within board departments, Guidance Counselors and Student Support Workers should work collaboratively to deliver relevant information to students. This will help to increase the pool of candidates in future years.
- Provide opportunities for Human Resources staff to present board specific hiring information to Bachelor of Education students at Universities that grant Education degrees.
- Consider developing a model for early conditional acceptance into Bachelor of Education programs to attract African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq candidates to the teaching profession.
- Provide support to existing Student Support Workers who wish to become teachers. (grant leave of absence from position to study, etc.)
- Establish a means of coordinating/distributing job postings to targeted groups and community partners within the province.
- Work with the Regional NSTU Locals to improve staffing language in the collective agreements with the goal of broadening employment equity provisions to allow for earlier recruitment and increased stability in the rehire process for diversity candidates.

- The Provincial Teacher`s Agreement should be reviewed to include measures that can be implemented to address recruitment and retention issues.
- Provide training to school administrators about the importance of employment equity and representing diverse populations in schools.
- Where possible, ensure that there is a greater reflection of diversity in the hiring process.
- Create a partnership between school boards, BEA and Mi`kmaq organizations to develop workshops for new teachers on how to navigate the hiring process. (provincial and/or board specific)
- Develop a provincial job posting system for school boards to use as a recruitment tool.

### *Retention*

- Provide professional development to Superintendents and Directors in all School Boards on the importance of employment equity and how such measures benefit the organization. A commitment to the principles of employment equity must start with the senior leadership of the organization.
- Develop a mentorship program for African Nova Scotian and Mi`kmaq teachers within School Boards, in partnership with supporting organizations.
- Provide cultural proficiency training for Principals specific to creating welcoming and supportive school environments.
- Work with the NSTU to provide targeted training to support new teachers.

### **Next Steps**

A copy of the report and recommendations will be provided to all individuals who participated on the Task Force. It is recommended that all participants review the recommendations to determine what steps need to be taken within their own organization to advance the recommendations made by the Task Force.

The Halifax Regional School Board would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to all those who participated on the Task Force. The discussions were rich, diverse and extremely valuable.

## Appendix A

List of those who participated on the African Nova Scotian / Mi'kmaq Education Task Force:

Dr. Ann Vibert	Director, Acadia School of Education
Dr. Chris Boulter	HR Coordinator, Chignecto Central Regional School Board
Debbie Graves	HR Coordinator, Annapolis Valley Regional School Board
Delvina Bernard	Executive Director, Council on African Canadian Education
Gerry Purdy	HR Director, Tri-County Regional School Board
Jacqueline Smith-Herriott	Assistant Director – Programs, Black Educators' Association
Dr. Jeff Orr	Dean of Education, St. Francis Xavier University
Dr. Joanne Tompkins	M.Ed. Program Chair, St. Francis Xavier University
Jocelyn Dorrington	Coordinator of African Nova Scotian, Cultural Services, Chignecto Central Regional School Board
Krishinda McBride	Coordinator Race Relations, Annapolis Valley Regional School Board
Dr. Maureen Finlayson	Assistant Professor, Cape Breton University
Martin Morrison	Director, Delmore Buddy Daye Africentric Learning Centre
Mike Christie	HR Director, Halifax Regional School Board
Misty Morrison	RCH Coordinator, South Shore Regional School Board
Normand Descelles	Director Resources Humaines, Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial
Dr. Patrick Kakembo	Director, African Canadian Services, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Robert Upshaw	Executive Director, Black Educators' Association
Kathy Rhodes-Langille	RCH Coordinator, Strait Regional School Board
Dr. Sal Badali	Dean of Education, Mount St. Vincent University
Sherman England	HR Director, Strait Regional School Board
Spencer Wilmot	Director of Education & Student Services, Native Council of Nova Scotia
Tina Munro	HR Director, South Shore Regional School Board
Scott Surette	Acting HR Director, St. FX University
Tracey Jones-Grant	Diversity Management Coordinator, Halifax Regional School Board
Tracie Collier	HR Coordinator, Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board
Wyatt White	Director, Mi'kmaq Services Division, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development