

AFRICENTRIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL PARENT INFORMATION BROCHURE

Welcome to the Africentric Alternative School located at 1430 Sheppard Avenue West, North York. Our school is housed in a building which includes Sheppard Public School. At Africentric Alternative School, we aim to provide a holistic, high quality educational experience for your child. We commit to building and supporting a safe, caring and positive environment for all our stakeholders – students, families, staff and community members.

What is Africentricity?

Africentricity is a consistent way of understanding and interpreting everyday life from the perspective of being a person of African descent, using positive African worldviews and values, as well as the real lived experiences and realities of African Canadians in order to best understand and engage with reality.

Why is an Africentric education important and relevant?

African Canadian students are currently exposed to many negative experiences in daily life and often in their educational experience. An Africentric education provides important culturally affirming, social and academic building blocks for students to build their capacity through enhanced self esteem, positive identity awareness, strong cultural values and sense of engagement and responsibility to community. This is done through a comprehensive and consistent infusion and integration of positive contributions in all aspects of the school experience.

Is the Africentric Alternative School a form of segregation?

No. Ontario already has a variety of alternative schools that addresses diverse student needs – All Girl schools, Rainbow programs for 2SLGBT+ students, Catholic schools, Aboriginal schools, etc. In a diverse society like ours, we fully support an educational commitment to equity and anti-oppression that is extended to the African Canadian community.

Are there different curriculum standards and expectations for students at AAS?

No. The AAS fully utilises the Ontario curriculum. Lessons are infused with Africentric modules, examples, historical contexts, projects, references, scenarios and our students' lived experiences.



What are the primary educational objectives of AAS?

We are committed to a holistic, high quality education for all our students. This includes:

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

We use both traditional and innovative teaching methods to create a stimulating and nurturing environment in which each child can blossom and shine. There are high expectations of excellence.

Our students are challenged to achieve at their highest level. We build on what students bring and help them identify and use their strengths as they handle their challenges and move forward.

Academic excellence is a realistic and necessary expectation for students to develop the competence to live and thrive in an increasingly complex world.

We use examples and references all across the curriculum that amplify the African presence, perspective and frame of reference. We provide children

with the tools and supports to excel and we are clear and consistent about expectations of excellence in effort and achievement.

CHARACTER /MORAL DEVELOPMENT

We encourage cooperation, demonstrate respect of self and others, and stimulate a thirst for knowledge and understanding. We believe that all things in the universe are interconnected and interdependent and that what we do affects not only us individually, but also affects those around us. We desire to build character and cultivate values that support and celebrate life. We promote respect for the natural environment and awaken students' focus on environmental sustainability. We teach them to honor the role of Ancestors and Elders in shaping who they are. We promote personal and collective accountability and responsibility. We make them aware of the various African and African-derived value systems and how they concretely relate to the behaviour and realities of African Canadians. We expose them to the powerfully positive moral lessons of leaders in the community. We promote equity, anti-oppression and anti-racism in everything we do with students.



AFRIKAN-CENTERED

From the temples of ancient Kemet, Nubia and Axum, the universities of West Africa, the powerfully intelligent and organizational genius of Africans in Haiti, Trinidad, Brasil, Cuba, Peru, Jamaica, to the on-going achievements, sacrifice and creativity taught through the lessons and strategies of enslaved Africans in the U.S. to the multitude of inspiring contemporary examples, academic excellence has been a part of African culture and practice. An Africentric approach acknowledges and respects the lived experience of students and their families.

Therefore, we utilize the strengths of African derived cultural ways of learning to facilitate academic excellence. We believe students should know and appreciate their own culture as a basis for exploring and understanding others.

ORDER AND STRUCTURE

We value stability, reinforcement, consistency and coherence between what happens at home and what happens at school for students. Students need to see that the AAS school environment, their parents and community partners provide administrative and teaching consistency and demonstrate a consistent expectation of excellence of character and achievement for students, for each other and that all around them there is a consistent modelling of positive, affirming cultural values. The AAS family should be a high quality matrix for each child – a safe place, a place of love and a place of good energy to explore endless possibilities.



What is my role as a parent in the AAS?

Through the AAS Parent Council, parents play a critical role and are often involved in many aspects of the AAS' operations. In collaboration with the educational staff and community members, parents help guide the school towards the realization of its mission. Parents also assist with some administrative duties, participate in different initiatives like raising funds, act as specialists in certain areas, and might even support the preparation of classroom material.

Parent participation sends a strong and clear message to children that education is a significant family value, making education seem relevant and important. The presence of parents within the classroom can also help to smooth the transition between home and school.

For parents to be as optimally involved and supportive as possible to both their child and the administration, a sound understanding of Africentric principles, approaches and content is critical. Parents also must feel comfortable and empowered in this regard.

The presence of parents can influence the climate and direction of the school significantly. Therefore, it is important for each parent to take the initiative around building awareness and education with respect to the AAS' basic philosophy and Africentric practices, and the demands of participating in an alternative school.

Parents and administrators also play a crucial role in engaging and involving members of the broader African Canadian community in important aspects of the school's operations.

Role of School Staff

We recognize that parents/ caregivers are often the first teachers for their children. As such, we are here to partner with families in providing a safe, caring and nurturing learning environment for all students so that they will maximize their potential and achieve to the best of their ability.

Application/Registration Process

1. Please contact our Office Administrator at 416 395 5251.
2. An email will be sent to you with registration and optional attendance forms.
3. Complete and return (by email) the forms.
4. Office Administrator will arrange a virtual/ in person meeting with parent/ caregiver to verify documents.
4. Principal will contact parents with admission decision.

Appropriate Dress Code

It was collectively agreed that all students of the Africentric Alternative School are required to wear a uniform consisting of black bottoms and a white shirt daily to create a sense of Unity (Umoja) and community. In addition, students should be dressed appropriately for the weather and the activity in which they are participating.

Transportation

The TDSB does not provide transportation for students attending alternative schools. Consequently, parents and caregivers are expected to make arrangement for transporting students to and from school.