



National Independent Education Coalition
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Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson
Secretary of State for Education & Skills
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

30th April 2007

Our ref: NIEC/DfES/ERCI/FM1

Dear Mr. Johnson,

Re: Educational Review DfES Curriculum inclusion

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT EDUCATION COALITION

It is with sincerity that I introduce the National Independent Education Coalition (NIEC), a national independent body representing a wide network of parents, professionals and agencies.

N.I.E.C. representations consist of a unified collective, determined to influence and take action on educational issues, policies and practices that ¹African children and young people face in the learning environment.

In accordance with the interests of the above group, N.I.E.C. must seek to address disadvantage and community discord with particular aspects of the National Curriculum (Key Stages 3 & 4, at least); and therefore propose that the achievements and contributions of Africans (past and present) to British and World history are introduced into the above key stages as part of a developmental framework, as well as English, Mathematics and Science for young people.

During early 2007, the N.I.E.C. were requested to commission an examination of the aims, values and purpose of the National Curriculum to determine whether it was fit for modern day purpose; and in alliance with the prospects of successive key stage age groups seeking representation, made conclusions in furtherance of relevance, purpose of inclusive² national curriculum materials and awareness of self.

¹. African is used as a collective noun to define people from Africa & descendants represented in the Diaspora of United Kingdom, Europe, USA, etc. ² Of the African Diaspora.

PURPOSE OF INCLUSIVE MATERIALS

Our findings confirm and fully support the need for relevance and significant improvement as to the quality and purpose for inclusive materials to which the activities within the school environment gave direction or indeed failed to do to; A review embracing direct and indirect benefits for all concerned, if one is mindful of positive consequences as a cause for action, clearly has long-term consequences.

The N.I.E.C. has no doubt that the inclusion of Black people's achievements as part of a developmental framework will enrich the existing curriculum and stimulate successive generations.

Indeed there is more work to be carried out to which the N.I.E.C is fully committed.

A national community consultation was undertaken recently by the N.I.E.C. gathering response from the community at large. A petition of over 2,000 signatures demonstrated support for the inclusion of positive Afro-centric contributions to the curriculum; In discussions a significant recognition arose whereby it was determined that exclusion does not necessarily commence when students are told "you are excluded from school", particularly where alienation had become an accomplished practice; albeit in various forms.

N.I.E.C. PETITION

The NIEC petition elucidates, in a respectful manner that the community ardently seeksa More Inclusive Curriculum.

Please see petition enclosed.

A MORE INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

An initial summary report entitled: THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: Guidelines, Entitlements and Opportunities for a More Inclusive Curriculum has been prepared.

THE MAYOR OF LONDON OFFICE CONFERENCE 2006

In 2006, the Mayors office held a conference at City Hall, highlighting the benefits and relevance of black History being included on the national curriculum, which was well attended; recognition at least that diversity has significant communal benefits in forward thinking organizations. The contributions of Africans to the development of London dates back through many centuries, sovereign and political alliances.

Health, wealth and education have been on the agenda of many of those before us; therefore it is not insurmountable to contemplate further positive developments for successive generations.

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PROFESSOR GUS JOHN

Professor Gus John, Educationalist commented recently that young people find the curriculum irrelevant, although children maybe attending school. The Professor asserted that repeated failure to carefully scrutinize the root of exclusions, may well contribute toward further gun crime and or apparently ad hoc gang culture. If the curriculum remains the same it will continue to impact on future generations –

THE PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS

The Prime Minister's recent comments following a spate of black on black gun crime; and the black community failing to be mobilized against such trends, certainly bring urgency to proposals for shared in-depth analysis of who benefits from the status quo, systematic portrayal and ensuing media acquiescence inter alia. The N.I.E.C. decided to take a positive approach toward addressing recent comments of The Rt. Hon Mr. Tony Blair.

SELF DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The N.I.E.C. have both support and sufficient evidence that an inclusive and developmental approach toward Black History, in the context of world achievements is a crucial tool for understanding, self-development and mutual respect - for all. Indeed with this being the 200th year since the enactment of the abolition of slavery in Great Britain, timing for inclusion (as indicated) could hardly be more conspicuous by absence or worthy of anything less than due deliberation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

For successful implementation the N.I.E.C. propose the DfES commission an independent research group, made up of a consortium of professionals with a track record in Socio-Political studies for example. The consortium may include representatives from S.O.A.S School of Oriental & African Studies, Black & Asian Studies Association, N.I.E.C, as well as other independent educational consultants.

The final work providing detailed action/materials for methods of implementation, including monitoring toward structuring a more relevant curriculum, all within a specific time frame of perhaps 3 years. Such work will of course require an allocation of funding.

The N.I.E.C. welcomes any opportunity to discuss the above matters in further detail, as well as participation in the anticipated consultation process leading to the final education review.

Yours sincerely,

Francesca Muhammad BEd Hons, Dipsych, MSc, CPsychol
Chairperson, N.I.E.C.
National Independent Education Coalition

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