

A. WHAT SHOULD BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INDEPENDENT BLACK SCHOOL (IBS) CURRICULUM AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM?

The distinctive difference is that the IBS puts politics in the lead and consciousness in command.

I. POLITICS IN THE LEAD

Education is not neutral (i.e. void of value judgments and class or cultural interests) for education not only passes on knowledge and skills, the process of education also, and most importantly, shapes our attitudes and gives us values. Therefore we say that the education we provide for our children must be vital. Vital education is political because it empowers our children, physically, mentally, socially and consciously. We are an oppressed and exploited people in need of power. In this context, education for our children potentially empowers our people because our children are our people's future revolutionaries, leaders and works. Vital/political education for our children can exist only when we put politics in the lead.

What is the essence of politics? The essence of politics is ideology. Ideology is a system (not a random collection) of ideas and values which when accepted and applied by our people act a guidelines to make judgements and to attain goals.

Putting politics in the lead is using our ideology in the following four ways:

a. STUDY IT: KEEP OUR IDEOLOGY ON OUR MIND

We study our ideology by reading it every day, by discussing it with our brothers and sisters, by grasping it so that it can be a guide for our life and finally by evaluating and revising it to meet ever changing conditions.

b. QUOTE IT: STRUGGLE TO PROMOTE OUR IDEOLOGY

We quote our ideology by introducing it in our everyday speech; decorating the spaces where we live and work with ideological phrases; inserting the ideology into everything we write and finally giving credit to our teachers.

c. APPLY IT: USE OUR IDEOLOGY AS A TOOL OF ANALYSIS

We apply our ideology by systematically solving our problems, by observing our social and material reality, by identifying the forces at work, by developing solutions and applying them and finally by evaluating our practice.

d. BE IT: BE EXAMPLES OF OUR IDEOLOGY

We "be" our ideology by developing consciousness (self-awareness and self-control), by acknowledging our weakness and our strengths, by struggling to resolve our weaknesses and building on our strengths, and, finally, by dedicating our lives to principled struggle.

## II. CONSCIOUSNESS IN COMMAND

Only a committed, conscious and capable teaching team can insure that politics will take the lead in independent Black schools and will insure growth and results. Regardless of degree or training, expertise does not insure that teachers will be politically advanced. We need committed teachers who are Black (conscious) and expert (capable). Otherwise the very essence of vital education is lost. For how can our children advance politically and academically if their teachers are not politically and academically advanced?

**WHO ARE COMMITTED TEACHERS?** Committed teachers are those who do what is right and necessary regardless of obstacles. They are those who struggle to transform themselves by overturning negative aspects of their socialization and who struggle to put our ideology into practice. Committed teachers believe in our people's potential and capacity to transform themselves and our communities. They set new priorities, giving up comforts and pleasures, as they grow stronger in their commitment to their own self-development and the collective power of the masses of our people.

**WHO ARE CONSCIOUS TEACHERS?** Conscious teachers put politics in the lead by using ideology, that is, political thought and morals, as a guide for living and studying, for developing analysis and plans and for growing to higher levels of work and study. Conscious teachers consistently analyze, practice and evaluate, for they understand that change is a constant and new contradictions are always arising. Conscious teachers are armed with an identity of self and of our people that is rooted in our history and present reality. They are disciplined, that is, self-controlled and are committed and able to struggle beyond belief. Conscious teachers pass on vital education that our children need to become activist of change.

**WHO ARE CAPABLE TEACHERS?** Capable teachers have the will and the ability to study and struggle in the realm of political organizing and education. Capable teachers are willing to create the type of environment and make the type of social associations that will re-inforce rather than tear down their full participation in improving Black life. Capable teachers are able to participate in creating conditions for change.

Consciousness in command means that committed, conscious and capable workers, those who have grasped the ideology and daily practice it, are in control, Black and expert workers are in command. Thus, correct implementation of our ideology is insured because the implementers are ideologically advanced, disciplined and work unceasingly for our people.

## B. HOW DOES OUR VALUE SYSTEM RELATE TO OUR CURRICULUM AT AHIDANA WORK/STUDY CENTER?

Values are rules that help us know what is right and what is wrong. In our school values guide our actions and attitudes and guide our choices and decisions. In our actions we struggle to be respectful and stress the value of socially advanced relationships. In our

attitudes we stress the positive and see every problem as a lesson rather than a letdown. In our choices we try to create educational materials and a school environment that is supportive of our values. In our decisions we do what is best for the collective good rather than our own individual wants. Our values guide our practice. Values thus guide our teaching of the curriculum, helps us decide what to emphasize in lessons and aids us in choosing what is relevant to our children's needs.

Using the NGUZO SABA as a guide, the following values are instilled in our children at AHIDIANA:

UMOJA (Unity) – stressing the collective and the needs of the group; decisions based on consensus.

KUJICHAGULIA (Self-determination) – concentration, self-motivation, initiative.

UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility) – orderliness, cleanliness, leadership, respect for leadership, accepting help, willingly asking for help, helping others, accepting responsibility.

UJAMAA (Familyhood and Cooperative Economics) – respect of self, others and property, sharing, being non-materialistic.

NIA (Purpose) – alertness, criticism and self-criticism, value of work/study, purposefulness.

KUUMBA (Creativity) – overcoming obstacles and problem solving.

IMANI (Faith) – value of struggle, self-awareness, self-control.

The practice of our values is not a mechanical but rather is a creative process of weighing the relative merit of each and every variable under consideration and then, finally, reaching a decision based on our assessment of the total problem.

The practice of our values is a full time job. WE are not interested in simply teaching our children to memorize the NGUZO SABA or make mechanical movements like little Black robots. We are struggling to raise, that is, provide for, protect, respect, inspire, educate and socialize, children who will be able to continue this awesome task and responsibility carrying it through to its conclusion.

## C. WHAT KIND OF STUDENTS ARE WE CREATING?

### 1. Academically excellent students who:

- are not fearful of theoretical knowledge, especially science.
- are skilled in communicating ideas through music, art, dance, but more importantly, communicating through speaking and writing.
- are able to compete with high academic standards of excellence.

2. Socially advanced students who:

- are committed to our greater collective good rather than limited individual goods or pleasures.
- advocate moral development over material development.
- are able to build positive social relationships supportive of our people’s identity and struggles.
- are respectful of our total environment rather than destructive of it.

3. Politically progressive students who:

- have a sense of purpose.
- are committed to our people first.
- are conscious of our history, collective conditions and hoped for future.
- are capable, that is, possess the will and the ability to be revolutionaries leaders and workers for our people.
- seek the truth and base their ideas on reality rather than idealism; on rationality rather than fanaticism; on truth rather than metaphysics.

This is the type of students who we are attempting to create at AHIDIANA Work/Study Center.