

# The Council of Independent Black Institutions

## *Standards for Evaluating Afrikan-centered Educational Institutions*



*"Dedicated to Excellence"*

**First Edition**

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## Introduction

From the time of the forced removal of Afrikan women, men and children from the continent and the imposition of alien institutions, we have been engaged in a war. Today, our children suffer from the continuing and after effects of European schooling. Such schooling requires the subjection of our children to values, beliefs and laws that dictate the subjugation of Afrikan people. These untenable circumstances require the Afrikan person to deny her/his humanity and her/his connection to her/his people, her/his culture and her/history. This painful process of de-Afrikanization has left Afrikan children worldwide behaving and thinking in ways unsuitable to the well-being and unity of our people.

Whatever the conditions of war, Afrikan people have always resisted European domination and in so doing have humanized the world. Resistance has been the basis of the reconstruction of Afrikan-based institutions. Independent Afrikan-centered institutional development has been and continues to be a way to facilitate the transmission of values and beliefs instrumental to the re-Afrikanization process. The Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI) is an organization built upon institutions that have grown out of the resistance movement. Our mission to re-Afrikanize follows the ancestral calling.

These Standards for Evaluating Afrikan-centered Educational Institutions were developed collectively by the Ndundu (leadership council) of CIBI. The women and men who serve on this body are stalwarts in the development of independent Afrikan-centered institutions. They are the founders and directors of institutions that have operated 20 or more years. Their experiences span the 25 years of CIBI's grass roots work. They represent a tradition that is grounded in revolutionary activism and is sprung from ideas of those Afrikan women, men and children who came before us.

Our rationale for developing these Standards for Evaluating Afrikan-centered Educational Institutions stems from the many requests we have received over the years from our individual and institutional members as well as other parties who were interested in a way of defining and developing more consistency in the activities of Afrikan-centered schools. What is it to be or become Afrikan-centered? This critical question underlies CIBI's decision to aim for a consensus that enables our educational institutions to continue to grow and transform. At the same time these evaluation criteria will enable CIBI to provide accreditation standards to CIBI schools and schools that wish to join CIBI. In this way, alliances will exist among Afrikan-centered institutions on a national and international scale.

Beyond the purpose of accreditation, these standards have many other uses.

- They can enable Afrikan-centered institutions and individuals to evaluate the work that is undertaken to facilitate the re-Afrikanization process.
- They can be used by parents considering a school for their children as the basis for evaluating the work of the institutions they wish to become involved with as well as the expectations that Afrikan-centered institutions may have of parents.
- They can be used by institutions, i.e. the parents, pupils and staff, as a model for assessing where they are in their development and where they would like to go.
- They can be used by persons working to create liberated zones (perhaps in public schools, universities, churches or community based service organizations) for support and guidance as well as to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their work.

CIBI has maintained a long-standing tradition that recognizes the process of continual change that we undergo organizationally as a developing entity. We are the reflection of those involved in the pursuance of Afrikan liberation and nation building. It is as such that we continue to grow. *CIBI is because we are, and have been and will be.*

CIBI's evaluation process embodies our commitment to **Afrikan-centered education and nation building**. Our position is that Afrikan-centered education is the means by which Afrikan culture—including the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to maintain and perpetuate it throughout the nationbuilding process—is developed and advanced through practice. Its aim, therefore, is to build commitment and competency within present and future generations to support the struggle for liberation and nationhood. Nation building is the conscious and focused application of our people's collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. Nation building encompasses both the reconstruction of Afrikan culture and the development of a progressive and sovereign state structure consistent with that culture.

The 10 categories below represent essential components of the independent Afrikan-centered educational institution. We have developed evaluation criteria for each category. These criteria provide CIBI with a means of certifying that its members meet national standards for excellence in Afrikan-centered education.

**1.00 Cultural and Ideological Context** -- refers to the way in which the institution expresses and documents its philosophy, mission and goals as well its cultural and ideological reference points.

- 1.01. A written statement of institutional mission, philosophy and goals that is available to all.
- 1.02. A clear and unambiguous statement of institutional identification with positive traditional Afrikan culture that sets forth its commitment to the perpetuation of Afrikan culture including its spiritual systems, languages, and moral philosophies
- 1.03. A clear and unambiguous provision that commits the institution to the ideology of nationalist-Pan Afrikanism and a traditional Afrikan based cosmology/worldview.
- 1.04. A policy that adopts the Nguzo Saba as a guiding value system.
- 1.05. Daily application of rituals, protocols and routines that reinforce an Afrikan-centered mission, philosophy and goals including, at minimum, the CIBI pledge, a meal ritual, and opening and closing rituals.
- 1.06. A stated commitment of the development of students (*watoto* and *wazazi*) into men and women who have the will and the skills necessary for the liberation of African people through nation (re)building.
- 1.07. A stated understanding of the historical rationale for the development of independent Afrikan-centered educational institutions.
- 1.08. An approach to facilitating personal and institutional transformation and growth that is linked to reclaiming and restoring the Afrikan worldview and incorporates an Afrikan-centering methodology that is based on the deconstruction and reconstruction of alien ideas and concepts and the construction of ideas and concepts that are wholly consistent with an Afrikan world view.

**2.00 Curriculum** -- refers to the organization of knowledge in ways that guide both the pedagogy and the allocation of instructional time and space. It is the total learning experience to which participants are exposed. It exists in both explicit (written) and implicit

(understood/perceived) forms and is reflective of the institutional culture, philosophy, mission and goals. Explicitly, it is a systematic and comprehensive listing of what is taught. Implicitly, the perception of its content reflects the orientation and centeredness of both the teacher and learner.

- 2.01. The curriculum exists as a clearly documented organization of knowledge that guides the pedagogy and the allocation of time and space for the teaching and learning.
  - 2.02. The curriculum's philosophy, mission and goals are centered within the Afrikan world view.
  - 2.03. There is a formal pedagogical statement that delineates the institution's philosophy of human development and which specifically addresses in age appropriate ways the unique spiritual, intellectual, physiological and cultural aspects of the developing Afrikan person.
  - 2.04. There is a general description of the design and scope of the subject content of the curriculum.
  - 2.05. There are written descriptions of content (narratives, outlines, learning or behavioral objectives) for each subject area.
  - 2.06. The curriculum incorporates, at minimum, the following five areas or domains:
    - a. Cultural and Ideological
    - b. Spiritual and Psycho-Affective
    - c. Socio-Political and Economic
    - d. Technology
    - e. Nationbuilding
  - 2.07. There is general coherency of subject/course design and content regarding the sequence or process of intellectual, psychological, moral and cultural development as well as evidence of the integration of academic subjects and social and cultural practices.
  - 2.08. There is evidence of efforts to continually enhance curriculum structure and subject content through the identification and adaptation of material from a broad range of sources.
  - 2.09. There is a prominent cultural/ideological focus for the subject areas within the curriculum categories that includes, but is not limited to, the historical and contemporary involvement of Afrikans in a given area of study or the manner in which a given concept can be applied or adapted in the Afrikan world.
  - 2.10. There are clearly stated procedures and criteria established for the selection and creation of curriculum content and materials including protocols for neutralizing the cultural impact of alien/non-Afrikan centered learning/teaching aids.
  - 2.11. Provisions exist for the production or acquisition of Afrikan centered materials to support the curriculum.
  - 2.12. There are curriculum based instruments for student evaluation that are consistent with and informed by the institution's curriculum philosophy.
  - 2.13. Provisions exist within the institutional structure and operations for non-classroom reinforcement of cultural/ideological, academic and moral lessons provided in the classroom.
  - 2.14. There is no dichotomy in the value assigned to manual and mental work in nation building.
  - 2.15. There is evidence that the curriculum aims to ensure the ability to survive and prevail in anti-Afrikan cultural and social environments.
  - 2.16. There is a clear set of evaluative procedures to assist in the assessment of the curriculum.
- 3.00 Institutional Health** -- refers to the institutional climate and culture; evidence of shared understandings of and commitment to central mission; harmony among interpersonal relationships; capacity for development and continuation beyond the present generation; commitment to learning about the quality of overall performance; and balance and complementarity among roles within the institution.

- 3.01. A system exists for hearing and resolving grievances/conflicts.
- 3.02. Internal evaluation of the institution is carried out systematically and regularly.
- 3.03. The institution consistently uses information obtained from its own evaluations and other sources to learn about and improve its performance.
- 3.04. Internal communications systems are established within the institutional culture, i.e., knowledge of these systems exists widely among institutional constituencies and traditions and rituals associated with them are commonly understood.
- 3.05. A plan for institutional development and continuance beyond its present generation exists and is periodically evaluated.
- 3.06. There is a broadly shared understanding of commitment to nation building, nation maintenance and national sovereignty among institutional members and constituencies.
- 3.07. Complementarity and harmony among roles and interpersonal relationships exist and are intentionally created and fostered (male-male, male-female, female-female, age group-age group, role-role, teacher-student).
- 3.08. Reciprocity of roles is evidenced as an institutional characteristic, i.e., the teacher is also a student and the student is also a teacher.
- 3.09. Consistent attention is given to balance and evenness of development among members including the existence of a structured and regularly scheduled educational program in the institutional philosophy for families.
- 3.10. Disciplinary policies and procedures are documented in clear terms and reflect application of the Nguzo Saba as evidenced by conduct.

**4.00 Staff** -- refers to all persons who implement the curriculum and/or associated support activities and are accountable to the governing structure of the institution. It includes the personnel -- paid and volunteer -- who participate in providing for the maintenance and growth of the institution, including but not limited to teaching, administration, office, custodial and transportation roles.

- 4.01. All persons who implement the curriculum and/or its associated support activities are accountable to the institution's governing structure.
- 4.02. The concept of staff is broadly defined to include those persons who are involved in teaching, office, custodial, nutrition, administration, and transportation roles.
- 4.03. Procedures exist to ensure that staff members perform their tasks with competence.
- 4.04. Within the institution there are communalistic relationships that foster cooperation and reflect a collective commitment to the goal of nationhood.
- 4.05. Staff members' conduct exemplifies internalization of Afrikan centered principles and conscious engagement in the process of personal transformation.
- 4.06. Staff members actively participate in the working collective that is devoted to the cultural, political and economic development of the institution.
- 4.07. There are provisions for Afrikan-centered staff development in theories of child development and behavioral management as well as in other aspects of institutional development.
- 4.08. There is evidence of involvement in the study of the culture and with advancing the cultural and political interests of Afrikan people.
- 4.09. Staff members display the ability to bring enthusiasm, conviction, ideological clarity, moral integrity and courage to the institutional environment.
- 4.10. Staff members demonstrate the institution's overall commitment to developing each student's potential to achieve excellence without favoritism or elitism and without regard to the student's socio-economic condition, previous academic labeling or moral/physical challenges.

- 4.11. Methods of internal evaluation exist to insure that *walimu* (teachers), in particular do each of the following:
- a. Demonstrate and adhere to African-centered qualities in teaching, classroom management and decor.
  - b. Demonstrate sensitivity to our children.
  - c. Demonstrate consistency, flexibility, and creativity in managing classroom routines including use of space, entering and exiting, and completion of work.
  - d. Demonstrate ability to align content and activities with curriculum objectives.
  - e. Demonstrate an awareness of learning styles knowledge of subjects/areas taught, seeks and shares information and ideas and engages in self-evaluation..
  - f. Control disruptive noise, obtain prompt response to a request to order, deal with complaints fairly, manage student friction, give praise and maintain student attention.
  - g. Keep records that show students' participation in classroom activities, completion of homework, products and evaluation of work including test results.
  - h. Hold conferences and consistently meet/communicate with parents.

**5.00 Finance System** -- refers to the methods and means of acquiring and/or maintaining the human and material resources required to maintain and develop the institution. It encompasses the acquisition, management and investment of the institution's fiscal resources as well as the planning, procedures and policy making related to these processes. It is a system for collecting, disbursing and prioritizing the use of funds.

- 5.01. Accurate and timely financial information is available.
- 5.02. A financial management plan exists that documents the past performance of the institution.
- 5.03. Specific legal reporting requirements are met.
- 5.04. The programmatic emphasis of the institution is directed toward nation building and the security of liberated space.
- 5.05. Pan-Afrikan nationalist interests determine institutional decisions about soliciting, accepting and investing funds.
- 5.06. The operational budget (e.g. rent/lease/mortgage, payroll, utilities) is funded primarily from sources within and controlled by the Pan-Afrikan community in order to ensure that the ability of the institution to maintain itself is contingent upon Afrikan people. For example, charter schools, public schools or other entities controlled or funded by non-Afrikan sources would not meet this criterion.
- 5.07. There is a collectively agreed upon understanding of the institution's responsibility to families as well as families financial responsibilities to the maintenance and development of the institution.
- 5.08. The institution engages in planning to ensure its ability to meet future needs and to develop a collective vision of financial and institutional growth that goes beyond the present structure.
- 5.09. The institution prepares and manages an annual operating budget.
- 5.10. The institution maintains a legible record keeping system of institutional income and expenditures.

**6.00 Governance** -- refers to the structure and the processes by which staff, parents and board members assign and accept responsibility for institutional operations and its overall management including policies, procedures and decision making.

- 6.01. There are written policies, procedures and decision making guidelines that are available to, understood by and utilized by staff, parents and board members.

- 6.02. Institutional decision-making is designed to enhance harmony and cooperation and includes all constituency groups, that is, parents, students, staff, administrators and community persons in the governance structure.
- 6.03. Within the institution, individuals are held accountable for implementing, applying and abiding by the governance system.
- 6.04. The roles that individuals fulfill should reflect their skills and abilities, while at the same time encouraging the growth of their potential in other areas of expertise.
- 6.05. There exists clear personnel policies contained in a handbook.
- 6.06. There is a chart and/or document that describes the governance structure.
- 6.07. There is a process for the overall evaluation of governance, administration, personnel, physical plant, outreach and resources.
- 6.08. A mechanism exists for the internal sharing of knowledge and for improving services that includes, but is not limited to, staff in-service development, meetings and parent forums.
- 6.09. Procedures exist for providing access to formal assessments and other documents related to institutional and self improvement.
- 6.10. Decisions about compensation, promotion and recognition are linked to formal assessments and evidence of improvement.
- 6.11. Strategic plans for institutional and personal growth, development and regeneration of roles exist and are consistent with nation building goals.
- 6.12. The institution's relationships with other Afrikan organizations are consistent with the Nguzo Saba.

**7.00 Services & Community Programs** -- refers to benefits that the institution makes available to its internal and surrounding community. It incorporates the process of assessing needs upon which these activities are based.

- 7.01. There is a periodic assessment of the needs of the community conducted by the institution.
- 7.02. Necessary programs for the internal and surrounding communities are developed by the institution.
- 7.03. There is a periodic assessment of the capacity of the institution to address selected community needs.
- 7.04. There are collectively agreed upon procedures for dealing with the media.
- 7.05. There is a regularly scheduled educational program for families regarding Afrikan centered lifestyles and effective parenting.
- 7.06. There is evidence that the institution serves the community in which it operates, remains an integral part of the community, and is involved in community issues.

**8.00 Parent Involvement** -- refers to the extent to which parents support and participate in the planning, governing, administration, learning and teaching within the institution.

- 8.01. Parents are involved in learning about, understanding and participating in every aspect of the institution.
- 8.02. Parents demonstrate a shared understanding of and commitment to the philosophy, missions and goals of the institution.
- 8.03. Parent involvement reflects a desire to develop cooperative and cohesive relationships.
- 8.04. There is a structured and regularly scheduled educational program for families that facilitates an understanding of and commitment to the philosophy, mission and goals of the institution.
- 8.05. There should be a procedure for evaluating parent involvement.

8.06. There is reinforcement of parents' understandings of their responsibility to implement the curriculum as co-members of the educational team.

**9.00 Record keeping** -- refers to the documentation and organization of institutional data, including but not limited to the areas of financial assets and liabilities, curriculum resources and materials, history, evaluation of students' and staff members' yearly progress and performance, and alumni.

9.01. A secured storage and retrieval system exists for institutional documentation. Such documentation refers to:

- a. Records of financial assets, liabilities and investments
- b. Curriculum resources and materials
- c. Student records
- d. Staff records
- e. Alumni records
- f. Legal records
- g. Parent records
- h. Evaluation data

9.02. There is ongoing documentation of the institution's history.

9.03. There is a policy to govern access to records.

**10.00 Physical environment** -- refers to the aesthetics, condition, maintenance, planning and development of the space occupied by the institution.

10.01. Written policies describe procedures for disasters and other emergencies.

10.02. Physical plant is occupied at or below its intended capacity to prevent stress on the plant and the people inside and there should be specific plans for alleviating any problems of occupancy.

10.03. Current permits on file demonstrating compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

10.04. Physical plant is maintained in an optimum state of cleanliness, good repair, orderliness, and comfort for its occupants.

10.05. Maintenance personnel have written guidelines that outline standards and state when and what action should be taken.

10.06. The interior design and aesthetics reflect the philosophy of the institution and in no way prevent the school from implementing its programs so that they are consistent with the school's mission, goals and objectives.

10.07. There is a plan for the development of the space occupied by the institution that considers a vision of goals and financial constraints and possibilities.

### **Concluding Comments About the Criteria**

This set of standards requires that we are ever vigilant of our own transformative processes. We may not judge or ask others to do what we are not prepared to do ourselves. With these standards, we may evaluate ourselves on a personal level, our relationship to our institutions and their development, and our roles in our communities and in nation building on a global scale. This effort is a building block in the construction of a nation. The realization of our goals requires a concerted effort toward the objectives of re-Afrikanization. We ask that you join us in this effort by evaluating the effectiveness of these standards and letting us know how we can continue to improve them. *Asante sana* (thank you very much).

## How CIBI Defines Afrikan-Centered Education: A Position Statement

CIBI defines **Afrikan-centered education** as the means by which Afrikan culture—including the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills needed to maintain and perpetuate it throughout the nation building process—is developed and advanced through practice. Its aim, therefore, is to build commitment and competency within present and future generations to support the struggle for liberation and nationhood. We define **nation building** as the conscious and focused application of our people’s collective resources, energies, and knowledge to the task of liberating and developing the psychic and physical space that we identify as ours. Nation building encompasses both the reconstruction of Afrikan culture and the development of a progressive and sovereign state structure consistent with that culture.

We, in CIBI, further believe, that in practice, Afrikan-centered education:

- 1) acknowledges Afrikan spirituality as an essential aspect of our uniqueness as a people and makes it an instrument of our liberation (Richards, 1989; Clarke, 1991; Anwisy, 1993; Ani, 1994);
- 2) facilitates participation in the affairs of nations and defining (or redefining) reality on our own terms, in our own time and in our own interests (Karenga, 1980);
- 3) prepares Afrikans “for self-reliance, nation maintenance, and nation management in every regard” (Clarke, 1991, p. 62);
- 4) emphasizes the fundamental relationship between the strength of our families and the strength of our nation;
- 5) ensures that the historic role and function of the customs, traditions, rituals and ceremonies—that have protected and preserved our culture; facilitated our spiritual expression; ensured harmony in our social relations; prepared our people to meet their responsibilities as adult members of our culture; and sustained the continuity of Afrikan life over successive generations—are understood and made relevant to the challenges that confront us in our time;
- 6) emphasizes that Afrikan identity is embedded in the continuity of Afrikan cultural history and that Afrikan cultural history represents a distinct reality continually evolving from the experiences of all Afrikan people wherever they are and have been on the planet across time and generations;
- 7) focuses on the “knowledge and discovery of historical truths; through comparison; hypothesizing and testing through debate, trial, and application; through analysis and synthesis; through creative and critical thinking; through problem resolution processes; and through final evaluation and decision making” (Akoto, 1992, p. 116);
- 8) can only be systematically facilitated by people who themselves are consciously engaged in the process of Afrikan-centered personal transformation;
- 9) is a process dependent upon human perception and interpretation [Thus, it follows that a curriculum can not be Afrikan-centered independent of our capacity to perceive and interpret it in an Afrikan-centered manner (Shujaa, 1992)];
- 10) embraces the traditional wisdom that “children are the reward of life” and it is, therefore, an expression of our unconditional love for them. In order to best serve Afrikan children our methods must reflect the best understandings that we have of how they develop and learn biologically, spiritually and culturally.

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