



**Safe and Inclusive
Schools**

A Grand Erie Program

Did You Know?

On behalf of our Safe and Inclusive Schools Equity Champions, and the Safe and Inclusive Schools Committee, we want to share some thoughts, considerations and resources with you for Black History Month. Before we do that, we wanted to open your minds about a bigger question...

Did you know that many people in Canada believe that anti-Black racism doesn't exist here?

Some believe it is only in the United States that racism is a problem—that as Canadians, we are “too nice” to be racist. Maybe you’ve even had these conversations in your homes, or you believe it to be true?

We want you to know that anti-Black racism does exist in Canada, and it exists in our schools and our communities. We see this in research, and in the stories that we hear from our students, our staff and our families.

We can’t change it, unless we name it. It starts with our own understanding and awareness.

Start Where You Are

Because we are all on our own journey of understanding as it relates to equity, we want to encourage you to start where you are comfortable. You don’t need to be an expert.

For some, these conversations are part of your classroom practice already. For others, you may worry that you aren’t informed enough to talk about Black History or issues of racism and anti-racism.

We want to support our staff as learners and share resources that will help you on your journey.

As our Equity Champions stated:

“We need to normalize conversations about Black lives... instead of waiting until February to talk about Black history and experiences of Black people in Canada. We need to have these conversations regularly, and often, as part of our regular teaching practice.”

The contributions of Indigenous, Black, Asian, and European peoples have all shaped the history of our country and who we are today as individuals and as a society. It is important that when we teach, we look for narratives from different perspectives and experiences, and challenge the stereotypes that continue to negatively impact our students.

For example, how Black and Indigenous youth and adults are portrayed in media, news, television and movies promotes stereotyping that impacts how we see, hear and understand one another.

Elementary Resources:

Black History Month was officially recognized by Canada in December 1995. It was created to honour, celebrate and highlight the stories, rights and achievements of Black Canadians in the development of our nation.

Elementary- ETFO resource 365 Days of Black History

<https://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Resources/pages/365.aspx>

365 Days of Black History includes posters, worksheets and lesson plans for primary, junior and intermediate students.

The secondary resources (below) can also be used with intermediate students.

Secondary Resources:

Ontario Black History Society

<https://blackhistorysociety.ca/>

This website provides educational resources for teachers. Through a video series, the goal of #ShareTheirStory is to change the way we talk about history in Canada by bringing the stories of five historic Black entrepreneurs into the discussion.

Unilearnal

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC68IPCCUfMJRCd0kv6hsgWA>

Unilearnal provides 28 Moments of Black Canadian History. These videos range from 5-10 minutes in length. They feature a young Black Canadian who shares historical information about prominent Black Canadians or events that impacted Black communities. Using the video clips, have students reflect on personal identity, cultural identity, and how history shapes our identity.

Safer Spaces

Through exploring who we are, we have the imperative to recognize that we have not all had equal opportunity. Our experiences are also unique. There are privileges that white people have that they are sometimes not aware of, because of their white experience. These are difficult conversations that need to be had among adults, and among students.

Many people among us, including our students, our staff and our families, experience the ongoing impacts of racism, colonization and oppression.

How are you creating safe spaces in your classroom to have these conversations?

How to Be an Ally:

<https://guidetoallyship.com/>

An open source starter guide to help you become a thoughtful and more effective ally.

For more information, suggestions or resources, please contact Christine Bibby, Safe and Inclusive Schools Lead, at: christine.bibby@granderie.ca