

ETFO advocates for sustained focus on Black excellence throughout the year

For Immediate Release – February 1, 2024

TORONTO, ON – Beyond celebrating Black History Month in February, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) urges a year-long focus on Black excellence. ETFO also calls on individuals to actively challenge anti-Black racism as we work together to build a more just, inclusive society. This task starts with education.

Black History Month provides an opportunity to acknowledge and honour the contributions and accomplishments of Black Canadians while also addressing the ongoing issues that have adverse effects on this community.

To this end, ETFO reiterates its plea for a fully funded strategy from the provincial government and school boards to address the discrimination and underrepresentation within the education system. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) recently held province-wide community consultations on anti-Black racism in education. ETFO made a submission to the OHRC with several policy proposals aimed at combatting anti-Black racism in Ontario's public education system and beyond. Long-term solutions to addressing anti-Black racism require institutional changes that can lead to both recruitment and retention of Black educators.

Despite concerted efforts to address anti-Black racism embedded in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, Black people still disproportionately face discrimination in areas such as education, healthcare, and housing. Black people with multiple intersectional identities such as race, gender, or sexuality face additional forms of oppression. As we work to build a more just society, it is imperative that we continually reflect on the historical ramifications of colonization and actively strive to eliminate anti-Black racism while celebrating and promoting Black excellence.

ETFO remains unwavering in its commitment to this work, both within the realm of education and the union. The Federation focuses on implementing systemic changes to confront anti-Black racism, and to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for its Black members. To support these efforts, ETFO has developed a range of resources accessible on etfo.ca. These resources include a [365 resource](#) for educators to incorporate the experiences of Black Canadians into their classrooms year-round, as well as [Black History Month resources](#), including [posters](#). This year's poster, created by artist Yung Yemi, is a transgenerational representation of the power, creativity, and strength of Blackness.

ETFO is also awarding two [Black Educator Bursaries](#) to Black individuals who are entering their first year of a faculty of education in Ontario. More information is available at etfo.ca/awards.

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