

Written Notice of Motion for Consideration as Emergency Business (Trustees Moise and Smith)

From: Denise Joseph-Dowers, Manager, Board Services, Governance and Board Services

In accordance with the Board’s bylaws, emergency business is defined as:

a situation, or the threat of a situation, adversely affecting health, safety and/or well-being, or resulting in significant legal risk or financial damage or loss, which by its nature and seriousness requires an immediate response...

Further,

5.12.7 A matter not on the agenda or directly related to matters arising from discussion cannot be introduced by a trustee at a Board or Committee meeting, or after the notice of agenda has been circulated to members, unless the item qualifies as emergency business and is confirmed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members present.

Black Youth Mental Health Day, March 2

Trustees Moise and Smith have submitted the following as a matter of urgency and for consideration as emergency business.

Therefore, be it resolved:

A. That the following matter be deemed as emergency business;

and, if approved (requires a two-thirds majority vote of the members present to be considered);

B. That the following be considered:

Whereas, over the past two years, the Toronto District School Board has deepened its commitment to strengthening the mental health and well-being of students and human rights, equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression articulated in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan - Action Plans; and

Whereas, the Board has acknowledged that anti-Black racism exists in the district and is committed to understanding, intervening and preventing all forms of discrimination; and

Whereas, mental health is an important component of overall health for all Canadians and the link between racism and mental health has been documented; and

Whereas, specifically, the 2016 Advancing the Mental Health Strategy for Canada: A Framework for Action, the Mental Health Commission of Canada noted that "mental well-being is deeply impacted by social determinants of health, such as precarious housing, poverty, social exclusion, and racism"; and

Whereas, moreover, the Commission reported that African and Caribbean Canadians face significant challenges that have negative implications for their mental health; and

Whereas, these challenges include experiences of interpersonal and institutional anti-Black racism and discrimination, systemic socio-economic and other disadvantages, disproportionately lower rates of educational attainment, higher levels of poverty and social exclusion, and more frequent interactions with law enforcement, criminal justice and child welfare systems and a lack of access to culturally appropriate and culturally competent services. (The Public Health Agency of Canada's Initiative - Promoting Health Equity: Mental Health of Black Canadians Fund); and

Whereas, the City of Toronto has recently launched a campaign focused on raising awareness of the impact of anti-Black racism on mental health; and

Whereas, the City's campaign will culminate in a Black Mental Health Day on March 2, 2020 and annually in March thereafter; and

Whereas, the City has asked institutions to take action focused on protecting and promoting the mental health and wellness of Black Torontonians; and

Whereas, Board staff provide mental health and well-being support services to students through Professional Support Services in schools and in partnership with community agencies serving Black and other equity-seeking students;

Therefore, be it resolved:

- (a) That March 2 be recognized annually as Black Mental Health Day in the Toronto District School Board to:
 - (i) promote awareness of the effects of anti-Black racism,
 - (ii) increase acceptance and support for those individuals so affected,
 - (iii) encourage respectful and informed dialogue about the impacts of discrimination on mental health;
- (b) That the Director present a report, as part of the mental health and well-being annual report in 2021, describing actions aligned with providing culturally responsive and competent mental health supports through social work, psychology and other relevant mental health and well-being services.