

African Heritage Month Celebration February 2021

Theme: *Kujichagulia: Self Determination*





A message from TDSB African Heritage Month Committee



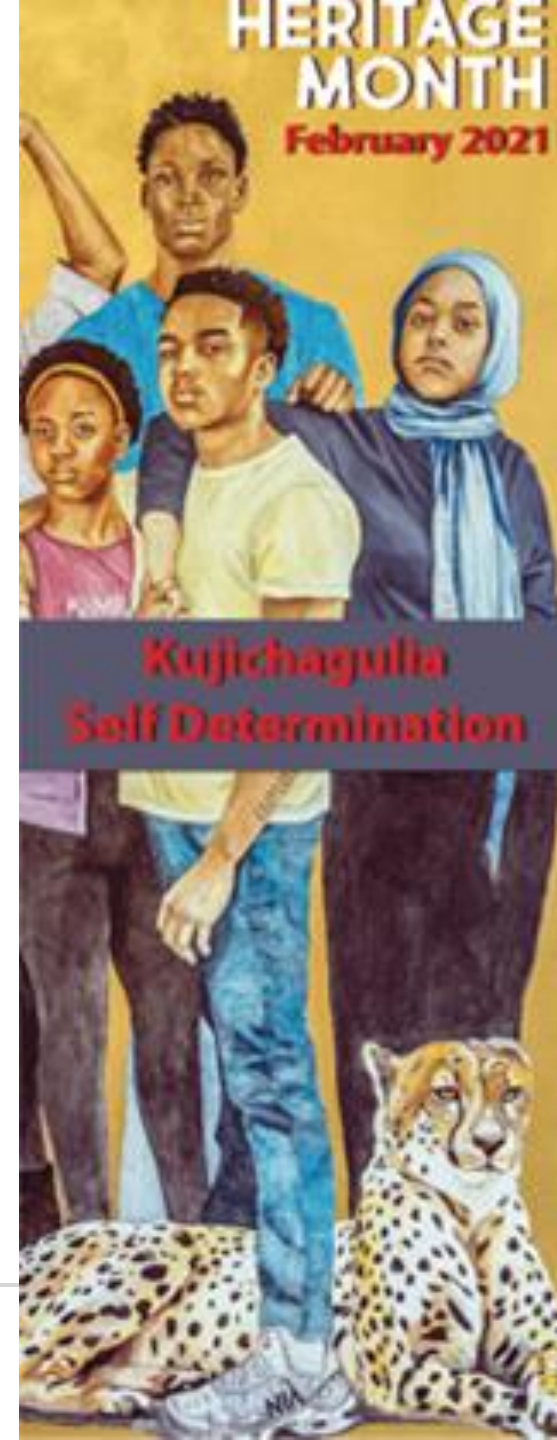
During the month of February, the Toronto District School Board is proud to recognize and celebrate the many achievements and contributions of Peoples of African Descent to Canada and the world. The selected theme for February 2021 is:

Kujichagulia: Self Determination

A message from TDSB African Heritage Month Planning Committee

The art work for the poster was created by students from Downsview Secondary School in 2020 under the leadership of their teacher, Matthew Chapman. Five principles of Kwanzaa are presented in this painting include the theme for 2021, *Kujichagulia (Self Determination)*, which can be found in the fabric of one of the shirts. The other four principles present in this image are:

- Umoja (unity) the tattoo.
- Nia (purpose) the logo on the shoe.
- Kuumba (creativity) the logo on the shirt.
- Imani (faith) the brand tag on the hijab



A message from TDSB African Heritage Month Committee

These principles are further explored in more subtle ways:

- The interconnected hands of the figures: Unity
- The cheetah, which adds an element of surprise and wonder, but fully represents the traditional symbol for keenness of sight and vision for the future. In ancient Egypt, cheetahs were also kept by royalty for these reasons. (Self-determination and purpose)
- The eagle is an African symbol for Victory, as well as vision and leadership (Purpose and unity).
- Nia (purpose) as it appears on the shoe, to show direction and purpose in where we are heading.
- Imani (faith) on a garment that represents a connection to faith, and a confidence in identity.
- The inclusion of animals adds a sense of connectedness, not only to each other, but to the earth, and to all creation as a whole.

Culture and Traditions

Black people in Canada have diverse backgrounds and experiences – while some can trace their roots in Canada for many generations, others have immigrated in recent decades.

Black Canadians are connected by a common African history and ancestry. The African-Canadian population is made up of individuals from a range of places across the globe including, but not limited to, the United States, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, and Canada.

There were almost 1.2 million Black people living in Canada in 2016. The Black population is diverse and has a long and rich history in Canada.

Among the Black population born outside of Canada, the source countries of immigration have changed over time. More than half of this population who immigrated before 1981 were born in Jamaica and Haiti. Black newcomers now come from about 125 different countries, mainly from Africa.

Source: [Statistics Canada](#), [Canadian Encyclopedia](#), [Statistics Canada](#)

History

In Canada, people of African descent have been a part of shaping our country's heritage and identity dating back to the arrival of Mathieu Da Costa, a navigator and interpreter, whose presence in Canada dates back to the early 1600s.

The contributions of people of African descent in Canada has not always been recognized as an important feature in Canada's history. After the American Revolution some of the Loyalists who arrived in Canada and settled in the Maritimes were people of African descent, and soldiers of African descent who fought in the War of 1812. There is little mention of these stories and the many sacrifices made of Black Canadians to the settlement, growth and development of Canada.

Source: [Government of Canada](#)



African Heritage Month Initiatives

African Heritage Month Celebration Launch

- Monday, February 1st, 2021
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
- Virtual Celebration! Everyone is welcome!
- Speakers! Entertainment! Information sharing our African Heritage!



African Heritage Month Initiatives

Black Student Alliance

BSAs are student groups that increase student voice, build capacity in student leadership, and are supported by a TDSB staff member. Through ongoing meetings and discussions, school assemblies, guest speakers, presentations, and other initiatives students support each other, challenge anti-Black racism and contribute to ensuring the TDSB meets its commitments to equity, inclusion, and Black student success.



African Heritage Month Initiatives

African Heritage Month BSA Webinar: How to Start a Virtual Black Student Alliance

- Wednesday, February 10th, 2021
- 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm
- Elementary and Secondary Panel



African Heritage Month Initiatives

Know Your Worth Conference

- Saturday, February 27th, 2021
- 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
- The theme of the Know Your Worth Conference this year is **Black Resistance**.
- This will provide an opportunity for students of African Heritage to attend workshops that will empower, educate and create community throughout the day



African Heritage Month Initiatives

Know Your Worth Scholarship Fund

Bursaries are being established to award up to three graduating TDSB students of African heritage. Students who attend the Know Your Worth Conference will be considered. Individuals will be able to contribute through the TDSB on-line process and any amount contributed on-line will be tax deductible.



African Heritage Month Initiatives

Professional Learning Community

Workshop topics include:

- Discussions around the importance of an Africentric curriculum in all schools, especially those where white staff and students are the majority.
- Incorporating Black history/heritage into curriculum of all Ontario schools
- *Panel discussion*: The experiences of teachers and administrators regarding adding Africentric courses/programming to their schools
- Covid-19 and its impact on highlighting the academic inequities and socio-economic disparities of Black students.
- Start or continue building supportive learning communities between students, staff and families?



African Heritage Month Initiatives

Joint Initiative with Jewish Heritage Month

- In collaboration with the Jewish Heritage Month Volunteer Planning Committee, an event will be taking place with the Shoah Foundation to recognize the contributions of the 761st Tank Battalion of the United States Army known as the Black Panthers.
- Thursday, February 25, 2021
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

African Heritage Month Initiatives

Daily Quotes/Proverbs

- A selection of quotes and proverbs were gathered to recognize African Heritage Month.
- School administrators could use these quotes for daily announcements and/or teachers may use them in their classrooms to start conversations about African heritage.
- Follow us!! Twitter **@tdsbAfricanHM** and Instagram **@tdsb_african_hm**



African Heritage Month Initiatives

AHM Resource Guidebook

A listing of available resources gathered by the African Heritage Month Volunteer Planning Committee was compiled as a reference to recognize African Heritage Month.

Black Lives Matter

The African Heritage Month Committee continues to resist and challenge anti-Black racism through their organized initiatives shared throughout the TDSB and commitment to hold space for Black students, staff, parents, and families to heal, to celebrate, and to thrive.





Toronto District School Board Equity Initiatives

The original decision of The Board of Trustees (2004) named February as African Heritage (Black History) Month. The terms African Heritage Month and Black History Month have been used synonymously in recent years.

The term African Heritage Month was more commonly adopted beginning in 2008 when there was a discussion about Black History Month and the need to represent the historical and current lived experiences of people's throughout African diaspora. This discussion took place at the time of the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the British Empire and concurrently with the introduction of the Africentric Alternative School in TDSB. These conversations contributed to a more systemic focus on African or Africentric focus.

Why February?

The first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament, the Honourable Jean Augustine, introduced a motion to recognize February as Black History Month. The motion was carried unanimously by the House of Commons. In December 1995, the House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month in Canada. Since that time, Parliament did not formally recognize February as Black History Month.

The celebration of Black History Month dates back to U.S. professor Carter G. Woodson's declaration of Negro History Week. In 1976, Negro History Week became Black History Month in the U.S.

In February 2008, Senator Donald Oliver, the first black man appointed to the senate, introduced a motion to recognize the contributions of Black Canadians and February as Black History Month completed Canada's parliamentary position on Black History Month. The motion received unanimous approval and was adopted on March 4, 2008.

Source: [Government of Canada](#)

Toronto District School Board Initiatives

Policy 037: Equity was developed “to ensure that Fairness, Equity, Diversity, Acceptance, Inclusion, and the elimination of all forms of Discrimination are essential principles of our school system and are integrated into all TDSB policies, procedures, programs, operations, and practices.”

Source: Link: [Policies, Procedures & Forms](#)

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Policies-Procedures-Forms/Detail/docId/200>

Multi-Year Strategic Plan: “Student success drives everything we do in the Toronto District School Board. Our Multi-Year Strategic Plan sets direction and identifies system goals to support our 246,000 students and 583 schools.

Its focus is simple: to ensure that every student receives a great education by having equitable access to programs and resources and increased opportunities to lead to success.”

Source: Link: [Multi-Year Strategic Plan - Action Plans](#)

https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/Multi-Year%20Strategic%20Plan_AODA_Oct%202019_Appendix%20A.pdf

Excerpts from the Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Leadership Development in Equity & Anti-Oppression (Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Page 10 – 11):

- **What is our goal?** To support District and site leaders to develop skills and a capacity to address issues of human rights, equity and anti-oppression at the system and classroom levels. To strengthen our organizational culture to foster shared leadership, ensure learning cultures embody human rights and support the achievement of all of our students and the priorities in the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Some examples on how we do this is and the current status as of October 2020:

- Provide mandatory training for Principals/Vice-Principals in anti-oppression and anti-Black racism connected to school improvement by June 30, 2019 through Learning Network Meetings in alignment with the Director's Response to the Enhancing Equity Task Force Report (Part 1 Completed June 2019)

For additional information please see [page 10 &11 of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#).

Excerpts from the Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Toward Excellence in the Education of Black Students: Transforming Learning, Achievement and Well-being – Leadership Development (Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Page 33)

What is our goal? To integrate professional learning about anti-racism and anti-Black racism into school improvement processes and all leadership development opportunities.

Some examples on how we do this is and the current status as of October 2020:

- Provide mandatory training for all Principals/Vice-Principals in anti-oppression and anti-Black racism connected to school improvement (June 2019 , Part 1 - Completed)
- Create and implement a mobilization strategy to deepen the facilitation skills of leaders at all levels to facilitate learning in equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression (October - June 2019)

For additional information, please see [page 33 of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.](#)

Excerpts from the Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Toward Excellence in the Education of Black Students: Transforming Learning, Achievement and Well-Being – Pathways & Transitions (Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Page 34)

What is our goal? To improve academic and well-being outcomes of Black students through increasing participation in academic programming and increase graduation rates of Black students. Initiate a professional learning and student engagement focus on five secondary schools and their elementary feeder schools serving high populations of Black students.

Some examples on how we do this is and the current status as of October 2020:

- Implement and learn from a pilot program supported by the Anti-Racism Directorate to improve outcomes for Black students (pilot concluded August 2019)
- For additional information, [please see page 34 of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.](#)

Excerpts from the Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Toward Excellence in the Education of Black Students:
Transforming Learning, Achievement and Well-Being –
Special Education (Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Page 35)

What is our goal? To create professional learning models that support inclusion and reduce the over-representation of Black students in Special Education programs (specifically Home School Program, Intensive Support Programs and other congregated programs).

Some examples on how we do this is and the current status as of October 2020:

- Identify schools where models of inclusion have successfully changed the opportunities and access of Black students to engage in programs in which high expectations for learning contribute to improved well-being. Create opportunities for those schools to coach, document and share the implementation of their models with other schools (Ongoing)
- For additional information, please see [page 35 of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.](#)

Excerpts from the Multi-Year Strategic Plan

Toward Excellence in the Education of Black Students: Transforming Learning, Achievement and Well-Being – Early Years (Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Page 36)

What is our goal? To improve the overall experience of Black students in the Early Years specifically focusing on entry experiences and academic achievement in literacy and numeracy

Some examples on how we do this is and the current status as of October 2020:

- Support the mobilization of Early Years educators who have the expertise to provide ongoing professional development to schools on how to engage Black families and enhance the academic achievement of Black students (ongoing)
- Review and revise Early Years documents to ensure that they highlight and address a focus on Black students' well-being, achievement as indicated by current research and best practices for Black students (ongoing)



Notable Canadians of African Heritage

The African community has many notable individuals to honour that have made, and continue to make, a significant contribution to disrupt anti-Black racism and advocate for justice through their actions.

The following slides highlight a few of these individuals, but there are numerous more.



Notable Canadians of African Heritage

The Honourable Jean Augustine

[About Black History Month -
Government of Canada](#)

The Honourable Jean Augustine

The Honorable Jean Augustine was born in St. George's Grenada and immigrated to Canada in 1960. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree of the University of Toronto, and later earned her Masters in Education while working as an elementary teacher. Promoted to Principal, followed by a Supervisory Officer position, her leadership in these positions impacted the students, parents/guardians and communities that she served. As the first African-Canadian woman she served as the Member of Parliament in the Greater Toronto Area constituency of Etobicoke-Lakeshore from 1993 – 2006.

Today two schools are named after her: The Jean Augustine Secondary School in the Peel District School Board and the Jean Augustine Girls' Leadership Academy at the Toronto District School Board. Her distinguished awards include being appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada in 2009, Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012, Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 2014 and most recently appointed to the Order of Ontario in 2020.

Source: [The Honourable Jean Augustine, P.C., C.M., O.Ont, C.B.E.](#)



Notable Canadians of African Heritage

Colonel The Honourable Lincoln
MacCauley Alexander

Colonel The Honourable Lincoln MacCauley Alexander

Colonel The Honourable Lincoln MacCauley Alexander was a dedicated individual to both to his country and his community. His actions demonstrated his “ his life’s pursuits, a longstanding interest in and commitment to serving his country and his community. As outlined in the Lincoln Alexander Day Act that declares His date of birth, January 21 as Lincoln Alexander Day, the following is an excerpt the shines a light on his exceptional accomplishments.

Whereas Colonel The Honourable Lincoln MacCauley Alexander had a long and distinguished record of public service, including as an airman in the Royal Canadian Air Force, as a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons and a Minister of the Crown, and later as the twenty-fourth Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Ontario.

Colonel The Honourable Lincoln MacCauley Alexander was the first Black Canadian to be elected as Member of Parliament in the House of Commons, to be appointed as Cabinet minister and to be appointed as Lieutenant Governor.

Whereas Colonel The Honourable Lincoln MacCauley Alexander was a passionate advocate for the advancement of education, race relations and youth issues, including by serving as Chancellor of the University of Guelph and Chair of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Source: [Lincoln Alexander Day Act – Government of Canada Justice Laws Website](#)

Leonard Austin Braithwaite

Leonard Austin Braithwaite was born in October 1923 in Toronto, Ontario and was raised in the Kensington Market area of the city of Toronto. He is a graduate from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, achieved a Masters in Business Administration from the Harvard Business School and graduated from Osgood Hall Law School. (died 28 March 2012 in Toronto).

Braithwaite served his community initially as a school trustee in Etobicoke, followed by as an elected alderman and later became the first Black Canadian elected to a provincial legislature. He served as a Liberal member of the Ontario Legislature from 1963 to 1975.

Today the Leonard Braithwaite Program at Winston Churchill CI is situated at the Toronto District School Board. His distinguished awards include the Queen's Counsel in 1971, appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada in 1998, and to the Order of Ontario in 2004. He became the first Black bencher in the Society's 200-year history when elected in 1999 by The Law Society of Upper Canada.

Source: [Canadian Encyclopedia: Leonard Braithwaite](#)





**Viola Irene
Desmond**

Viola Irene Desmond

Viola Irene Desmond was born in 1914 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. She was an entrepreneur and community leader who established her own business and supported community members by teaching them skills and continued to mentor individuals as they prospered. Viola faced racial discrimination when stopping in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. She was erroneously accused of sitting in the wrong area of the theatre by being accused that her ticket did not cover the admission cost to sit in that area. Though Viola was charged, an outcry from the community was made as it was clear that an injustice was made.

In 2010, Wanda Robson, Viola Desmond sister wrote a book called, **Sister to Courage**, that outlines details of what occurred to Viola. Following this publication, Viola Desmond was granted a free pardon on April 15, 2010 by Lieut. Governor Mayann Francis at a ceremony in Halifax. At the ceremony it was stated by Percy Paris, minister of African Nova Scotian Affairs and Economic and Rural Development, "With this pardon, we are acknowledging the wrongdoing of the past," and "we are reinforcing our stance that discrimination and hate will not be tolerated."

Viola Irene Desmond

In recognition of Viola Desmond, the The Viola Desmond Chair in Social Justice was established at Cape Breton University in 2010, and Canada Post issued a postage stamp bearing her image. The most recent distinguished honour is that her image currently appears on Canada's \$10 banknote making it the first non-royal woman to appear alone on the country's currency and the first Black person to be depicted on Canadian currency.

Source: [Britannica Biography - Viola-Desmond](#)

Thank You

The TDSB African Heritage Month

Volunteer Planning Committee 2021

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