

## **Black Lives Matter – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) focusing on Black Lives Matter during the month of February for Black History/African Heritage Month?**

The LKDSB is committed to recognizing the historically erased role of Black Canadians in our history and society. This year, the focus for Black History/African Heritage Month will be Black Lives Matter.

As educators, we are committed to ensuring our students feel safe and a strong sense of belonging within their schools. We call upon all staff to advocate for and promote equitable and inclusive learning and work environments, as well as denounce anti-Black racism in education. We also know that we have an opportunity to use our influence in the communities we serve to promote awareness and understanding of Black Lives Matter, a movement asserting and affirming that Black lives matter; centering Black history locally, and highlighting Black resilience, resistance and brilliance.

It is important for all students, not only Black students, to develop understanding of anti-Black racism and white supremacy, and its impact on their lives and society at large, and the privileges they may hold.

As we continue our journey to champion anti-oppressive education in our classrooms and workspaces, we need to keep in mind, "[The Pervasive Reality of Anti-Black Racism in Canada](#)". This article provides data-based evidence of the extent to which anti-Black racism exists in Canada and how it impacts Black individuals across many areas of their life, such as education, employment, health care and policing. This article helps to put in context the issues that need to be addressed in our society today. Read more information about [Anti-Black Racism in Ontario Schools: A Historical Perspective](#).

At the provincial level, the [Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate](#) was established in 2016 to work to eliminate systemic racism in government policies, decisions and programs, and advance racial equity for Black, Indigenous and racialized populations. Ontario has released an [Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#), [Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#), and [Ontario Public Service Anti-Racism Policy](#), as well as passed the [Anti-Racism Act, 2017](#), which focuses on eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity.

In a recent [Ontario government news release](#), partnerships with public, private and non-profit sector organizations are being created to enhance workplace opportunities for Indigenous, Black and racialized employees. There is the acknowledgement that systemic racism shows up in many ways in the workplace and that everyone has a responsibility in creating a more inclusive province. The news release also suggests that by 2036, racialized people are projected to account for approximately 48 per cent of Ontario's population. As such, there is a sense of urgency for the learning and work that needs to be done now to address existing problems and the importance of creating more inclusive and diversified learning and working environments for our students and staff as we move forward.

In order to champion anti-oppression in education and provide safe and welcoming school and work environments, we all play a role in recognizing and advocating for the human rights of all students and staff.

We encourage and promote the incorporation of Black history and heritage throughout the curriculum, to further understand the current experiences of Black Canadians. Schools are encouraged to explore the rich history in the surrounding area to enhance students' learning and understanding about African Canadian history and heritage during the month of February and throughout the school year.

### **What does Black Lives Matter mean?**

Black Lives Matter focuses on and centres the lives of Black people who have historically and systemically been marginalized and excluded in Canadian society and globally. This has direct impacts on economic, social, educational and health outcomes for Black people. By focusing on Black Lives Matter, it reiterates the importance of the human rights of all individuals and acknowledges that those rights have not always been extended to all Canadians, specifically Black people. It is a movement to dismantle anti-Black racism in all forms, affirming and centring Black identities and experiences, and promote healing and self-determination.

The Black Lives Matter movement does not call for violence and the majority of Black Lives Matter protests, including those held locally, have been peaceful. The narrative that this is a radical movement is false and distracts from the reasons for the protests, namely to centre Black voices and advocate for the human rights of Black Canadians.

### **Why is it “Black Lives Matter” and not “All Lives Matter”?**

Black Lives Matter was started in response to present-day issues of violence directed at Black people and is a movement which is focused on promoting the human rights of Black Canadians, who have been historically and systemically marginalized in Canada and around the world.

Stating that Black Lives Matter does not imply that other lives do not matter; it is a movement intended to focus on and centre the lives of Black people who have historically and systemically been marginalized and excluded in Canadian society and globally. The movement is open to collaboration with other equity movements, particularly Indigenous peoples' calls for reconciliation and decolonization. To say “All Lives Matter” is a way to distract from and ignore the problems the movement is meant to address.

An analogy that has been used is that of a house on fire – you wouldn't turn the hose on all houses in the neighbourhood because “all houses matter,” but you would focus specific efforts towards the house on fire. Black Lives Matter is not to say that *only* Black lives matter, but rather that Black lives *also* matter.

### **Additional resources:**

[LKDSB Black History/African Heritage website](#)

[Buxton National Historic Site](#)

[Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society/Black Mecca Museum](#)

[Uncle Tom's Cabin Historic Site](#)

[Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate](#)

[Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#)

[Anti-Racism Strategic Plan](#)