

Black History Month events at Halton District School Board

The Halton District School Board has planned a series of events throughout February in recognition of Black History Month.

"February is a time when we formally recognize, honour and reflect upon the invaluable contributions black Canadians have made intellectually, politically, artistically, culturally and so much more to the vibrancy and rich diversity that help define our country," said Stuart Miller, director of education for the Halton public board.

"During this month, and all year long, we will highlight the learning in classrooms to affirm and promote the achievements, knowledge, life experiences and identities of people of African and Caribbean descent in all curriculum areas," said Miller.

"We are honoured to have named schools after individuals who were integral to the Underground Railroad in bringing freedom and opportunities to thousands of people escaping slavery."

To highlight Black History Month, a board-wide project, which includes the participation of a total of nine elementary and secondary schools, will be unveiled at the end of February.

Collaborating with Natasha Henry, an African-Canadian historian and president of the Ontario Black History Society, teachers started developing learning opportunities last fall to help students identify racism while highlighting black Canadian experiences and contributions.

Schools will showcase

their learning on Feb. 28, during an event in the Joshua Creek Public School library in Oakville.

Halton board staff members are using Black History Month as an opportunity to take learning about understanding the contributions of black Canadians beyond the classroom.

Tonight, Kelly Gray, a teacher from Emily Carr Public School in Oakville, will speak at the Ireland House Museum, 2168 Guelph Line, Burlington, at 6:30 p.m.

In her presentation, *I am Canadian: Reflections Past and Present*, Gray will talk about Canada's black explorers, slaves, pioneers and freedom fighters, and their contributions to Canadian life.

"Celebrating Black History Month aligns with the equity and well-being goals



contained in the board's Multi-Year Plan," said Rob Eatough, superintendent of education with the Halton board.

"Our goal is to ensure every student learns in a respectful culture of high expectations that values diversity, and that students will see themselves reflected in their learning. Together, we inspire every student to learn, grow and succeed."

Some of the events taking place at Halton schools

to celebrate the month include:

- Craig Kielburger Secondary School (Milton): Hairstyling and esthetics teachers will engage in a workshop about race and black hair on Feb. 21.

- Limehouse Public School (Halton Hills): Throughout February, students will share facts, contributions and musical influences of black Canadians during morning announcements.

In addition, the library will house a display to increase the school community's awareness of the month's celebrations.

- Munn's Public School (Oakville): Tonight, the school will be hosting two performances to honour Black History Month. Grade 4 and 5 students will view *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*, which depicts her

life as an African-American abolitionist slave who helped many escape slavery through the Underground Railroad. Grade 6 to 8 students will view *Things my Fore-Sisters Saw*, written and performed by Leslie McCurdy. The one-person play will introduce students to four black women who brought about significant social change in Canadian history.

- Robert Bateman High School (Burlington): The Starlite Steelband will perform traditional and popular calypso as well as reggae songs on Feb. 15. Culinary program students will prepare and serve Caribbean-inspired appetizers to staff and students, including jerk chicken wings, mini Jamaican patties, fried salt fish balls and vegetable ragoon wraps.



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