

Transcript: Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism

The Ontario College of Teachers, Ontario's teaching regulator, exists to protect and support student safety and well-being. When someone is licensed by the College, they can use the designation Ontario Certified Teacher, or OCT. Only OCTs are able to teach in Ontario's publicly funded schools. As part of its mandate, the College provides advice and guidance to OCTs, in the form of professional advisories — including this one, about addressing anti-Black racism in education.

What is anti-Black racism?

Anti-Black racism is not a new issue in Canada. It's existed in the education system for more than a century and a half and includes the establishment of segregated schools for Black students.

Anti-Black racism is defined as prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping and discrimination directed at racialized people who identify as Black. It's deeply embedded in Canadian institutions, policies and practices and diminishes the hard work and positive contributions of Black individuals and communities.

Anti-Black racism in the classroom

Black students face many more barriers and challenges in the school system than students from other communities. The evidence shows that Black students are over-represented in programs and courses that generally don't lead to post-secondary education studies, contributing to poor socio-economic status in Black communities.

Black students experience racism in learning environments in many ways, including:

Hyper-surveillance through security cameras inside and outside of school property and a regular police presence in schools.

Text selection by teachers that reinforces negative stereotypes.

The racism of low academic expectations in feedback and career advice.

Lack of opportunities to study or discuss Black contributions and achievements to Canadian history.

Directing Black students to pursue sports without equal encouragement to pursue academics.

The use of detentions, suspensions and expulsions at a disproportionately higher rate for Black students.

The role of Ontario Certified Teachers

A welcoming learning environment for Black students requires an understanding of the importance of dismantling these oppressive attitudes and practices. The College encourages Ontario Certified Teachers to:

Create safe spaces for Black students and their families to reach out.

Actively listen to the concerns of Black students and co-develop strategies to address them.

Participate in conversations and research about anti-Black racism.

Develop a culture of belonging by inviting Black students' input about readings, events and guest speakers.

Learn to recognize and proactively denounce incidents of racism when they occur in the learning environment.

Recognize the impact of conscious and unconscious bias in the learning environment.

Learn more about Black history and the positive contributions made by Black communities and include these learnings in the curriculum.

Become familiar with what your own school board and others are doing to address anti-Black racism and consider which actions you can use in your professional practice.

For more information and resources, read the College's Professional Advisory on Anti-Black Racism, at oct.ca.