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## About Us

*The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is the first of its kind in public education in Canada. The Centre is dedicated to improving the experiences and outcomes for Black students and aims to be responsive to the voices of Black communities who continue to advocate for systemic change within educational institutions and for dismantling anti-Black racism at the TDSB.*



## Celebrating Black Excellence – Virtual Launch Event

The Toronto District School Board launched the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement with a virtual event on June 1. Individuals and communities across the province joined to celebrate this monumental achievement through both webinar and webcast platforms. The evening featured an engaging panel discussion about the Centre's mandate with distinguished academic leaders and community advocates; brilliant student contributions, and an inspirational performance dedicated to the future of the Centre. For access to the recording of the virtual event, please click [here](#).

### Follow us on social media

Twitter: [@tdsb\\_cebsa](#)

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## The Centre Finds its New Home

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is excited to announce that the Centre will be located within Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute located in the Dorset Park neighbourhood of Scarborough. This location was selected for several reasons, including but not limited to:

- The offering of the Leonard Braithwaite Program (LBP), the first Africentric program offered at the secondary school level in Canada. The Africentric curriculum at Winston Churchill delivers a student and community centred approach to learning, highlighting the perspectives, experiences, history and knowledge systems of people of the African diaspora.
- Winston Churchill offers a large, safe and accessible environment to continue strengthening community relationships and partnerships with families across the system.
- Proximity to transit to ensure programs, initiatives and opportunities made available by the Centre of Excellence are readily available to Black students, their families and communities.

We look forward to welcoming families to the new location once construction is complete.



*Painting titled Ascend Towards the Light created by Robert Small.*

## Ascend Towards the Light with Robert Small

Acclaimed artist Robert Small has created a painting to celebrate the launch of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement.

The poster is called Ascend Towards the Light. For Small, this piece of artwork is symbolic of trials, tribulations, but also the history of being a Black student in the Canadian education system.

The water symbolizes the pressure that students might feel to get good grades, live up to expectations of themselves, their parents and family. The mountains are the hurdles you face and the ongoing climb. The light at the top of the mountain is the victory to be had.

When looking at the image Robert wants viewers to, “imagine themselves encouraging this teenager and all Black students, to have the courage and ability to overcome the adversity in life and to achieve their goals,” says Robert.

Robert Small has created Legacy posters for Black History Month for the past 28 years. When asked about how this image fits within the context of his legacy, Robert says, “Despite how turbulent the waves or how steep the mountains appear, given proper education, training and preparation any obstacle can be challenged. This painting is illustrative of another chapter in the ongoing history of Black people.”

## Sankofa Black Heritage Collection

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement in collaboration with English/Literacy and Teachers Learning and Leading departments are developing a Teachers' Guide for use with the Sankofa: *Black Heritage Collection*. The guide will model for junior and intermediate teachers the use of anti-racist and culturally relevant pedagogy. The guide also supports the TDSB's DIAL (Addressing Debt in Adolescent Literacy) goals for student success in literacy.

Rubicon's *Sankofa Black Heritage Collection* is a series of 15 books, each book is written by an author of African Descent. Each book includes a variety of genres, historical and contemporary content, identifying past and present views of the African-Canadian experience. Each title provides motivation for literacy success, features differentiated instruction, and topics that have students' interest in mind, supports curriculum expectations and features cross-curricular connections, Canadian perspectives and leaders. A set of Sankofa books has been ordered for all schools in the Black Student Success and Excellence, and DIAL initiatives.



## Black Girls' Book Club Student Testimonial

The following is a testimonial from TDSB student Zaneta W., Grade 12, A. Y. Jackson Secondary School:

I find that the Black Girls' Book Club is a welcoming, tolerant and very inclusive space for all young Black women who enjoy reading. Whether we are discussing heavier topics or having casual conversation, I think that every facilitator and member does their best to make sure everyone feels respected and heard.

Having the chance to read about Black female protagonists allows us to submerge ourselves into stories and lives we can truly imagine being in. We're currently reading *Legendborn* by Tracey Deonn. It is an urban fantasy novel centered around a powerful, young Black female magician who must battle against both mystical monsters and the monstrous system itself. Even though there are elements of discrimination within the book, it is not the central focus. The main character Bree is so much more than just a Black girl, and she is not a stereotype.

It's important for people to see themselves in the material they read so that they can truly engage with it. The beauty of fiction is that all people can be and do whatever they want.

If you are interested in picking up something new that will spark your imagination alongside a sisterhood of fellow Black women, then I think Black Girls' Book Club is the space for you!

To learn more about the Black Girls' Book Club contact [keisha.evans@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:keisha.evans@tdsb.on.ca)



## Focus Groups

The research team at the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement completed its first round of focus group sessions with self-identifying Black-African, Afro-Caribbean, and Black Canadians (ACB) students and their peers in the French Immersion programs. The Centre would like to thank everyone who supported the focus groups and its participants. The Centre would also like to send a special thank you to the social work staff that participated and attended to support students. There was an overwhelming response from students that welcomed and appreciated their presence.

In June, the research team engaged with parents and families of self-identified Black TDSB students. Part of the discussion included sharing of experiences with the school community and a discussion of how the Centre can strengthen their leadership and support their involvement.

To participate please use the [registration form](#).

If there are any questions or comments, please contact Tanitiā Munroe, Research Coordinator [tanitia.munroe@tdsb.on.ca](mailto:tanitia.munroe@tdsb.on.ca)

## Human Library Podcast

Want to begin or continue equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression work in your learning spaces, but need a boost?

[The TDSB Human Library Podcast](#) is a great conversation starter to shift educator thinking.

TDSB Human Library: Conversations around Equitable, Anti-Racist, and Anti-Oppressive Practice is a podcast series comprising a collection of audio episodes on topics related to equity, anti-racism, and anti-oppression in education. This podcast invites listeners to critically reflect on their pedagogy, reimagine engagement, and partner with community to improve student well-being and achievement.

Our latest episodes feature Dr. ABC and Lisa Cole, Jennifer Watt and Randell Adjei.



### In the News:

[‘A milestone’: TDSB launches centre to improve outcomes for Black students](#)

Toronto Star (June 1)

[TDSB launches new centre to combat 'deeply entrenched' anti-Black racism](#)

CTV (June 1)

[Toronto School Board launches Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement](#)

The Caribbean Camera (May 27)

[TDSB centre will foster ‘sense of safety, belonging’](#)

Share (June 17)

## Black Students in Business Collective

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement in collaboration with the Ivey Business School, the Schulich School of Business and the Smith School of Business hosted the Black Students in Business Collective in the month of May.

The two virtual sessions provided 28 self-identified Black students the opportunity to connect with other students interested in business, and current students and alumni enrolled in one of the three partner business schools (Ivey, Schulich and Smith). The students also had an opportunity to hear from the deans of the business schools, and converse with Fenton Jagdeo, Commissioner of the TTC and co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Faculty. Fenton is an alumnus of the TDSB, Ivey and is the youngest TTC commissioner in its history.

At the second session students engaged with Colin Lynch, Head of Global Real Estate Investment at TD Asset Management and the Co-founder of the Black Opportunity Fund. Colin Lynch is an alumnus of the Smith School of Business.

There will be additional opportunities for students to engage with the Black Students in Business Collective in the fall.

### Mailing List

Sign-up for our [mailing list](#) so you can receive future updates directly from the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement



## Black Student Summer Leadership Program

This summer, 75 students representing 25 schools will participate in the five-week Black Student Summer Leadership Program.

The program will match self-identified Black TDSB students with experiential learning opportunities. Students are interviewed and provided with skills and employment experiences to introduce them to a wide variety of professional pathways. Students engaged in this program are paid for their contributions.

Students have the opportunity to be placed in various career fields including: business, community development, information technology, entrepreneurship, media, public health, and skilled trades and technology.

This summer, our Graduation Coaches for Black Students are collaborating with over 15 partner organizations including: TVO, the Black Business and Professional Association (BBPA), Ellis Don, Peace Builders and IPG Mediabrands.

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

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