
STATEMENT

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Attorney General
Ministry of Education

Joint statement on Black Excellence Day

VICTORIA – Premier John Horgan, Rachna Singh, Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, and Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education, have released the following statement in celebration of Black Excellence Day:

“This year marks the first time that we have proclaimed Black Excellence Day in British Columbia. On this day, we celebrate the outstanding contributions of Black communities throughout B.C.

“Since 1858, Black communities and people of African descent have been an integral part of this province, and they continue to shape the cultural, economic, political and social successes that we enjoy today.

“The term ‘Black excellence’ was born out of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. While there is a long history of outstanding Black British Columbians, from political figures such as Emery Barnes and Rosemary Brown to cultural icons such as Eleanor Collins and Harry Jerome, today is a day to recognize those who are inspiring the children and youth of the present.

“From writers, scientists, business leaders, athletes and teachers to everyday people, the contributions of Black Canadians have made – and continue to make – a positive difference throughout this province, showing generations of British Columbians what is possible.

“At the same time, we recognize that Black British Columbians continue to face disproportionate barriers as a result of systemic racism and discrimination. Equity and anti-racism work are foundational to all our government’s efforts to build a truly inclusive province.

“Education is one of the most powerful tools to achieve racial equity and equality. By learning to identify language, acts of racism and oppression as well as understand diverse cultural histories and experiences, we can better address discrimination in our communities and celebrate the contributions of all British Columbians.

“The Ministry of Education is working with Focused Education Resources and community organizations to identify learning resources to support anti-racism education and diverse cultural experiences, including the long history and contributions of Black communities in B.C. The ministry is also developing a K-12 Anti-Racism Action Plan. This plan will help strengthen our education system to include new teachings, perspectives and history that promote racial equity.

“We know there is much more to do to address systemic racism in our province. That is why we have committed to introducing anti-racism data legislation in spring 2022, helping to pave the

way to a fairer and more inclusive province.

“It is critical that in this work we include the voices of those most affected by racial discrimination and inequities. We are working in partnership with community organizations throughout B.C. to gather feedback from Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities as we move forward on introducing race-based data collection.

“The issue of racism will not be solved by these actions alone. As a society, we must stand up to discrimination, call out incidents of hatred and stand in solidarity with those who struggle against oppression every day.

“We recognize the struggles that Black communities in British Columbia face and reaffirm our commitment to fight racism and make this a truly equitable and inclusive province for everyone.”

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