

## 2022 Black History Month Poster

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

– Nelson Mandela

### Concept

The 2022 ETFO Black History Month Poster is a visual representation of the importance of knowing your history, learning from it, and building on that knowledge to create a brighter future. The image includes two students in a museum surrounded with portraits of Black historical figures. The featured trailblazers are being celebrated because they have shaped Canadian society and the lives of the Black diaspora through their activism and political endeavours. Each of these trailblazers were the first Black person to hold their position and they paved the way for future generations. The students are looking up to the sky and endless possibilities that await them. They integrate acknowledgement of Pan-Africanism, with the use of red, black, and green colours on the wheelchair and Afrofuturism, through the lettering on the t-shirt. This central image of the students holding hands further represents the connection between the past, the present, and the future. They live in a society where the glass ceiling no longer exists and the use of the words “first Black” before an achievement are a thing of the past.

### What is the significance of the quote?

Racism is the belief in superiority of one race over another. Racism is often enacted through prejudice and violence, as well as overt and systemic actions that aim to maintain discriminatory practices. The importance of the quote is that education is a key element to eliminating racial inequality. Having more people who understand the legacy of systemic racism throughout history and the impact that it continues to have on our society today will increase the number of people who use their words, actions, and positions of power to combat these injustices and build a more equitable society. It is also important for Black students to know their own histories, celebrate the achievements of trailblazers, and recognize that they can achieve anything.

### Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela was a social rights activist, political leader and philanthropist who served as the first Black President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was elected during South Africa’s first democratic elections. His government focused on dismantling the legacy of apartheid by challenging institutional racism and advocating for racial reconciliation.

**Glass ceiling** is a term used to acknowledge the barriers to advancement that affect marginalized people.

**Apartheid** was a system in place in South Africa that separated people based on their race and enforced racial discrimination against citizens who were not white.





**Pan-Africanism** is the belief that people of African descent have common interests and should be unified. In general, it is the sentiment that people of African descent have a great deal in common, a fact that deserves notice and even celebration.

**Afrofuturism** is the reimagining of a future filled Arts, Science, and Technology seen through a Black lens which is also a tribute to groundbreaking innovations of early African development. The design of this poster incorporates stylistic elements that represent Afrofuturism including perspective.

### Some Information about our Trailblazers

*Trailblazers are listed from the closest picture to the furthest, beginning on the left wall and proceeding to the right wall.*

**Alvin Curling** is a former politician who began his career as an educator. He was a Member of Provincial Parliament for twenty years and dedicated his time in office to advocating for marginalized voices by championing the principles of inclusion, public service, and human rights. In 2003, he became the first Black Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

**Zanana Akande** is a former politician who has worked as a Teacher, Consultant, and Administrator in the public education system and a lecturer at the university level. She has advocated for social justice by addressing education, communications and the media, feminism, race relations, and social change. In 1990, she became the first Black woman elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

**Leonard Brathwaite** was a politician and lawyer who also served overseas with the Royal Canadian Air Force prior to beginning his careers. In his first speech to the Ontario Legislature, he spoke out against the *Separate Schools Act*, a law that permitted racial segregation in Ontario schools. In 1963, he became the first Black Canadian to be elected to a provincial legislature.

**Jean Augustine** is a former politician who is a social justice advocate and began her career as a Teacher and Administrator. Throughout her teaching career she was involved in grassroots efforts in the community to strengthen immigrant and women's rights and to combat violence against women, drug abuse, and poverty. In 1993, she became the first Black woman elected to Canada's House of Commons.

**Anne Cools** is a former senator who was an activist and social worker prior to entering politics. She founded a social work agency that provided one of Canada's first shelters for women and children who were victims of domestic violence. In 1984, she became the first Black Canadian appointed to the Senate.

**Rosemary Brown** was a politician, writer, and lecturer. She championed measures to improve women's working and social conditions. She also called for improved services for the elderly, the disadvantaged, immigrants, and people with disabilities. In 1972, she became the first Black woman elected to a Canadian Provincial Legislature (British Columbia).

**Lincoln Alexander** was a lawyer who became a politician and was a leading figure in the fight for racial equity in Canada. In 1968, he became the first Black Canadian elected to Canada's House of Commons. He went on to become the first Black Cabinet minister and the first Black lieutenant-governor (Ontario).