

OSSTF/FEESO Statement

Asian Heritage Month 2021

Asian Canadians have a rich and important history in Canada. It is a history marked with times of great sadness and times of great accomplishments. In 2002, the Canadian government adopted a motion from Senator Vivienne Poy and signed the official declaration declaring every May as Asian Heritage Month.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has seen a rise in anti-Asian sentiment, hate, and violence.

We must use the tools of education to highlight the outstanding contributions of Asian Canadians in Canada. At the same time, hate crimes, racism, and oppression must be named and challenged. As concerned education workers and teachers, we can use the power of knowledge and learning to counter stereotypes and challenge anti-Asian sentiment. As part of the fight against racism, we must acknowledge its existence, and we must match that acknowledgement with positive action. As educators, we also have a responsibility to embed equity in our practices and call out racism.

“When we recognize the contributions of Asian Canadians, we help grow empathy and respect for the diversity in communities and Canada as a whole. When we call out acts of hate and racism, we further build the backbone of equity and foster solidarity of our shared humanity,” said OSSTF/FEESO president Harvey Bischof. “The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased violence against Asian communities across the globe. Asian Heritage Month gives us the opportunity to openly condemn hate while at the same time celebrating the significant impact Canadians of Asian heritage have made to Canada.”

Celebrating Asian Heritage Month allows us to take the time and recognize the many positive contributions of Asian Canadians while at the same time taking a stand against hate and oppression in all its forms.