



Mark Fisher, Director of Education and Secretary

July 14, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
The Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Subject: **National Action Summit on Islamophobia**

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On behalf of the Thames Valley District School Board of Trustees, I am writing to express our support for the House of Commons' recent passing of a unanimous motion (see Appendix 1) that commits to hosting the National Action Summit on Islamophobia before the end of July.

As you know, on June 6, 2021, a Muslim family of five in London, Ontario was targeted in a tragic car attack that killed four members and injured one. We are sad to report that one of the victims who passed was a student at Thames Valley's own Oakridge Secondary School.

Hate has no place in our schools or in our community. The Thames Valley District School Board stands with the Muslim community during this difficult time. We remain steadfastly committed to combatting racism, Islamophobia, and discrimination in all its forms and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students and staff.

As you may be aware, this is unfortunately not the only incident of hate-motivated crime against the Muslim community in Ontario. Over the past several years, there has been a disturbing rise in Islamophobia in Canada. In 2019, there was a nine per cent increase in anti-Muslim attacks compared to the previous year, according to Statistics Canada. A 2020 report by the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group also shows that 46 per cent of Canadians have an unfavourable view of Islam, while 42 per cent of Canadians think that discrimination against Muslims is 'mainly their fault.'

These attitudes are not just wrong, but as we have seen with the rise in Islamophobic attacks, they present a clear and present danger to our Muslim neighbours, friends, and family members across Canada.

We urge the federal government to move swiftly to set a date for the national summit to begin this important conversation. We encourage you and your federal colleagues to reach out to and work together with provincial, territorial, and municipal leaders to take immediate action to address dismantling both violent forms of Islamophobia and systemic Islamophobia. These actions are necessary to ensure that no one else suffers the way #OurLondonFamily has suffered.

Once scheduled, we would strongly urge you and your colleagues to listen to community leaders on how to best tackle this incredibly important issue that has had devastating impacts on Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

The National Action Summit on Islamophobia is a promising start to what we strongly hope leads to a sustained Team Canada effort to combat Islamophobia.

Sincerely,



Lori-Ann Pizzolato
Chair, Board of Trustees
Thames Valley District School Board

CC: Mark Fisher, Director of Education
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