

WE ARE REBUILDING

# THE NATIONAL BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE



CENTER FOR  
BLACK EDUCATOR  
DEVELOPMENT

2024  
PROGRESS  
REPORT



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## RESEARCHER NOTE

Evaluation for this annual progress report was designed and conducted in consultation with Maryann Corsello, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist, education researcher and professor emeritus of the University of New England.

# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

## The link between educational equity and racial justice is undeniable.

At the Center for Black Educator Development, our programs are grounded in the well-established fact that students achieve stronger academic, socioemotional and life outcomes when they are taught by a diverse group of teachers.

Increasing the diversity of our nation's teaching workforce has been at the heart of our mission since our founding. We believe it is a vital, irreplaceable aspect of delivering on the educational equity so foundational to the racial justice we all seek.

But in these tumultuous times, we've been challenged to find the *how* of it all.

How do we better position our motivations in an anti-Black, hyperpolitical climate that bans books, subverts DEI and criminalizes access to Black history? How do we reframe our work to further amplify the voices of students who are in desperate need of alternatives?

How do we radically, and unapologetically, reimagine our strategies to dispel critics while making a greater impact? How do we generate transformative change one student and one educator-activist at a time? How do we guarantee a liberating education in times of crisis and resistance?

This year, as we pursued our *how*, we sought to elevate our Teaching Academy Career and Technical Education (CTE) course for future educator-activists. We also double-downed on our student-originated #WeNeedBlackTeachers campaign that's motivating and inspiring communities across the nation.

At the same time, we remained committed to pursuing policies that promote teacher diversity by supporting efforts to recruit and retain Black teachers and fostering school environments where they can thrive.

At this year's 7<sup>th</sup> annual Black Men in Education Convening in Philadelphia, we brought together more than 1,200 participants from 40 states and three countries for a stellar lineup of plenary speakers, 125+ breakout facilitators and, most importantly, fellowship with one another.

One thing we're sure of in the coming years: our collective efforts to rebuild the national Black Teacher Pipeline and diversify the teaching workforce to create a safe, welcoming and rigorous learning environment for all students will be more imperative and more irreplaceable than ever.

We are grateful to all of you who have joined us on this life-changing journey.

In service,



**Winston Cox**  
Board Chair



**Sharif El-Mekki**  
Founder and CEO





## WHY WE ARE REBUILDING THE NATIONAL BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE

The Center for Black Educator Development works tirelessly to ensure we as a nation are offering the best possible education to all of our children—no matter their background and circumstances.

Such a commitment takes smart interventions and an ever-growing community of supporters.

We focus on ensuring our nation's teaching workforce reflects the diversity of student racial identities, because research has shown better outcomes when Black students have even just one or two Black teachers.

They do better in school, they get better grades, they're more likely to graduate on time and they're more likely to go on to college.

More than just benefitting Black students, adding more Black teachers to the workforce benefits all students, preparing them to live, work and thrive in an increasingly diverse world.

This is why we are committed to rebuilding a robust national Black Teacher Pipeline that existed prior to the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision making state-sanctioned segregation in public schools unconstitutional.

After this decision, the existing pool of Black teachers who taught in segregated schools experienced a massive upheaval, including widespread dismissal, ongoing discrimination in hiring and workplace marginalization across newly desegregated schools.

Black teachers did not abandon their students to pursue new careers, rather they were systematically dismissed, ignored, phased out and silenced.

We, too, will never abandon our students. Nor our fellow educators. In the ongoing fight to address racial justice, underrepresentation and improve educational equity, the Center for Black Educator Development remains steadfast in its commitment to increasing teacher diversity.

### The hill before us is steep.

Despite the great need for Black educators, never has the interest in teaching been so low among the rising generation.

The Student Research Foundation's 2019 data review showed that only 3.6% of high school students were interested in teaching, citing student experiences with their teachers as one of the most contributing factors.

We've designed our programming for Black students to address this low interest in teaching as well as negative teacher experiences.

Both the Center for Black Educator Development's Teaching Academy and Freedom Schools Literacy Academy take an intergenerational approach, where expert Black teachers guide high school students and already aspiring young teacher apprentices in college, most of whom did not have a single Black teacher in 12 years of public schooling who reflect their identities and worldviews and hold high expectations for their success in both school and life.





## OUR MISSION

**To achieve educational equity and racial justice by rebuilding the national Black Teacher Pipeline.**

## OUR VISION

**We envision a world where:**

All Black students have access to high-quality, Black teachers throughout their PreK-12 schooling.

All teachers demonstrate high levels of expertise in anti-discriminatory mindsets.

Educator preparation programming, professional learning, pedagogy and policies that advance educator diversity and effectiveness are institutionalized.



# OUR PROGRESS IN 2024

Whether measured in numbers, testimonials, changed lives or disrupted systems, the impact the Center for Black Educator Development generated in 2024 is clear and compelling.

Over the previous five years, we grew significantly from a local start-up to a well-established organization with a national footprint.

When our Philadelphia-based pilot program, Freedom Schools Literacy Academy, launched in 2018, we served 81 students. Six years later, we've reached 12,106 participants in 25 different states through our teaching pathways, professional learning and policy and advocacy efforts.

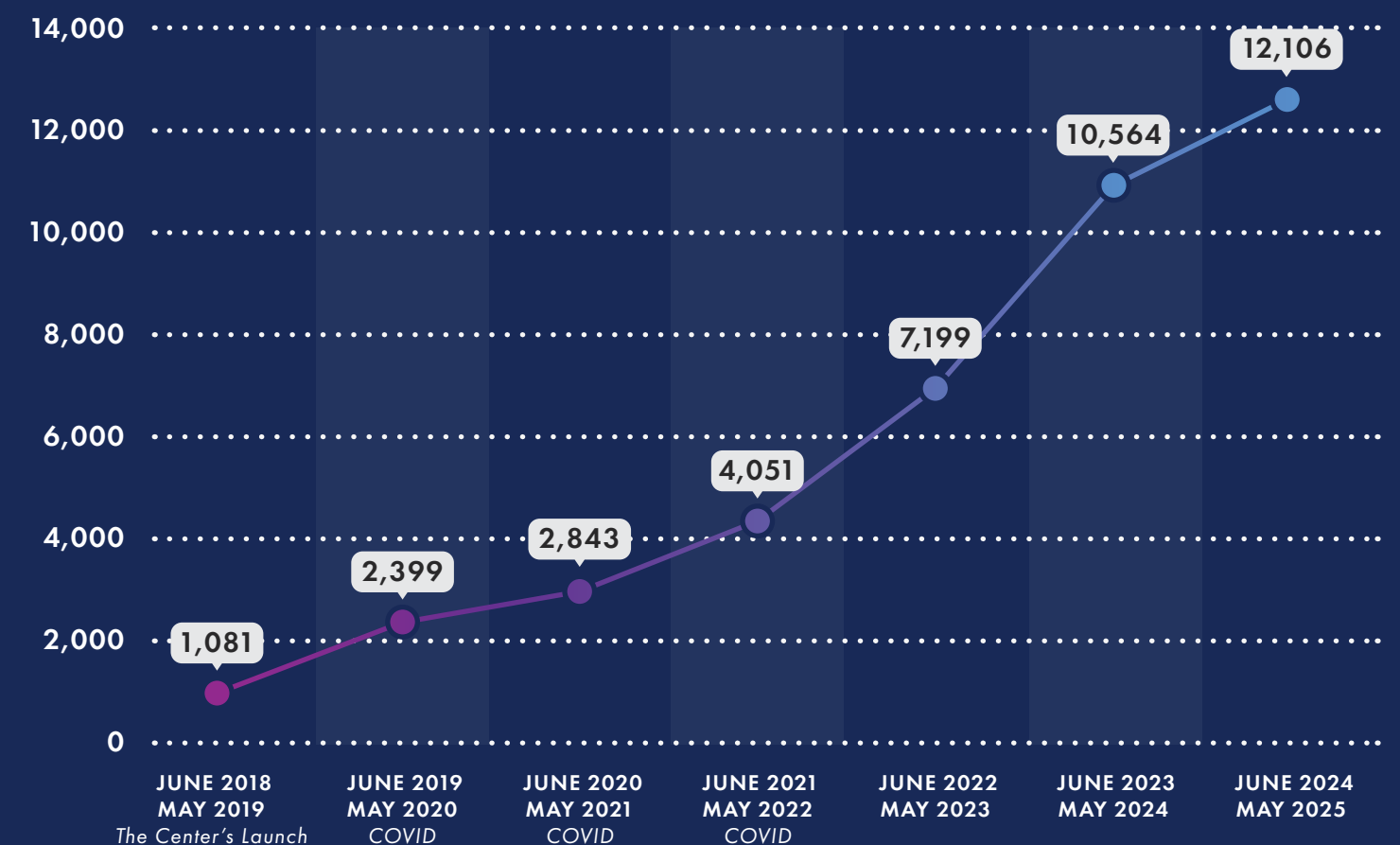
## OUR TEACHER DIVERSITY STATEMENT

To achieve educational equity and racial justice, the Center for Black Educator Development is rebuilding the national Black Teacher Pipeline to create an education workforce that:

- Mirrors the rich diversity of our students.
- Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practices and caring relationships as integral to teaching excellence in all disciplines and roles.
- Honors and advances Black pedagogy—the historic frameworks, philosophy and strategies that cultivate positive racial identities and social consciousness while deepening academic knowledge and skills.
- Promotes among all students a love of learning and intellectual excellence, strong racial identity and sense of social responsibility.
- Integrates Black history, perspectives and socio-political realities, as well as those of other marginalized communities.
- Holds high expectations for Black and other marginalized students—their academic success, well-being, social thriving, self-regard and role in the community—while, conversely, rejecting the discriminatory mindset that enforces the underachievement, over-discipline and more severe punishment of Black students.

We are committed to supporting educators of all backgrounds to create a workforce that advances these goals, knowing full well it will take everyone working together to create the future our students—and our nation—deserve.

### THE CENTER'S PARTICIPATION CONTINUES TO GROW





JOIN US IN AMPLIFYING  
 #WENEEDBLACKTEACHERS  
 TO HELP REBUILD THE NATIONAL  
 BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE.

## #WENEEDBLACKTEACHERS

Through a radical re-imagining, in 2021, the Center's young teaching apprentices launched the We Need Black Teachers campaign to encourage and empower their peers to seriously consider a transformative career in education.

Through digital organizing, student activists ignited and amplified the campaign using #WeNeedBlackTeachers to jumpstart an online dialogue with impressions now surpassing six million less than three years later. All to change the way all students, but especially Black students, experience education.

**18,606,803**  
**#WNBT**  
 CUMULATIVE IMPRESSIONS

**5,906**  
 ORGANIC POSTS



**23,442**  
 ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS



**545,078**  
 VIDEO VIEWS



**1.15%**  
 ENGAGEMENT RATE



**\$331,569**  
 SOCIAL VALUE



# TEACHING ACADEMY

The Center for Black Educator Development's flagship Teaching Academy is designed to foster in all high school students a love for learning and teaching through a Career & Technical Education course based on Black pedagogy and historical frameworks.

Offered all four years of high school for up to five days a week, the Teaching Academy invites high schoolers to explore a career in education with like-minded peers through a rigorous curriculum that includes project learning, instructional coaching and teaching apprenticeships, helping them make the connection between teaching and activism.

In collaboration with colleges and universities, participants have the option to earn credits toward an associate's degree in education as well as a paraprofessional certification. Teaching Academy participants are eligible for the Center's Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship that provides college scholarships, academic support, professional coaching and retention bonuses.



## 2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

We piloted the Teaching Academy in Philadelphia during the 2018-19 school year at Shoemaker Campus in partnership with Arcadia University. We formally launched the program in the 2019-2020 school year through partnerships with the School District of Philadelphia's Science Leadership Academy at Beeber, Mastery Charter School, Temple University and Community College of Philadelphia. Since then, we've brought the Teaching Academy to 444 students at schools in: Harlem and Rochester, New York; Camden, New Jersey; and New Paradigm in Detroit, Michigan.

In the 2023-24 school year, there were 87 students in the Center's Teaching Academy offered at Science Leadership Academy at Beeber and through Temple University Education Scholars. More than half (66%) were in grade 9 and about a fifth (22%) were juniors. The remaining 11 students were high school seniors. Almost all of the students (93%) are Black or Brown.

**Since 2021, 100 young men participated in the Teaching Academy.**

### SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

Freshman showed significant increases in:

- Interest in attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities post high school completion
- Social awareness around global citizenship and their individual and collective role as changemakers within the African Diaspora

Seniors showed significant increases in:

- Interest in educating and servicing Black students and families
- Analysis and understanding of identity politics within the education workplace
- Academic ownership and self-determination
- Social justice orientation

CALLING ON DISTRICT AND SCHOOL LEADERS:

Invest in the next generation of teachers. Contact us about bringing the Teaching Academy to your school.

INFO@THECENTERBLACKED.ORG



# WHAT TEACHING ACADEMY STUDENTS ARE SAYING

“The Teaching Academy invests in students early so they can learn and appreciate the long history of Black educators and activists whose shoulders they can stand on in their own journeys.”

**Ansharaye Hines**  
Assistant Director of CTE and Curriculum,  
Center for Black Educator Development

“My students respect and understand me, so I share my experiences and teach them in ways other teachers might not be able to.”

**Lailah Flemming**  
Science Leadership Academy at Beeber



“This is an exciting program that sparked my interest in teaching. It gave me real experiences of how the education system works and the foundations and principles that we stand on.”

**Rasheed Cummings**  
Science Leadership Academy at Beeber



“In this program, the students have respect for me. They understand me and I understand them. I get to share my experiences with them and teach them in a way other teachers might not be able to.”

**Ronald Smith**  
Science Leadership Academy at Beeber



“This course is also about friendships you make through the teaching community. It's like finding your tribe and similar, like-minded people.”

**Iman Byrd**  
Science Leadership Academy at Beeber

# BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE FELLOWSHIP

Based on the experiences of aspiring Black educator-activists, the Center for Black Educator Development created the Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship to address major barriers to pursuing teaching careers, namely financial stress and limited opportunities to be in community with peers.

Through a special partnership with the United Negro College Fund, the Center provides Black Teacher Pipeline Fellows:

- Academic support, professional coaching and networking opportunities
- Up to \$20,000 in stipends at the start of the fifth year of teaching
- Up to \$5,000 per year in last-dollar scholarships

Black Teacher Pipeline Fellows are expected to maintain a competitive college GPA, completing coursework supporting their academic research and professional development.

College students who participate in the Center's Teaching Academy or Freedom Schools Literacy Academy are eligible to apply for a Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship.



FUTURE BLACK TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE FUND:

## Contribute to the fund that fuels the Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship for future Black educator-activists.

[DONATE HERE](#)

## 2024 FELLOWSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, we piloted the Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship with four young Black men; in less than three years, we now have 54 young Black men and women fellows to whom we have distributed \$125,000 in scholarship funds.

But there could be exponentially more.

Last year, more than 600 qualified Black students applied for the 25 fellowships we had available. The demand, as well as the need, are clear.

Our hope is that we can continue to expand our network of supporters to expand the Fellowship so we can help more young people reach their dreams of becoming powerful educator-activists.

**Projected to have 100 additional Black Teacher Pipeline Fellows in 2025.**



# WHAT BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE FELLOWS ARE SAYING

“Through the Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship, I'm able to live fearlessly and become a fearless Black male educator.”

**Imere Williams**

Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship, Cohort 2022

English Teacher, Boys' Latin of Philadelphia

Master's Candidate in Teaching, Learning and Leadership,  
University of Pennsylvania School of Education

West Chester University, Class of 2024

“Through this Fellowship, I was introduced to a world where Black education is the focus, where people who look like me are in the classroom and excited about being in the classroom, mentoring other young Black men and women.”

**Horace Ryans III**

Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship, Cohort 2022

Octavius Catto Scholarship Success Coach,  
Community College of Philadelphia

Master's Degree Candidate in Urban Education,  
Temple University

Morehouse College, Class of 2024

“This Fellowship has blessed me emotionally, financially, professionally, and, most importantly, in finding community. I know I am not alone in my desire to rebuild the Black Teacher Pipeline. The Center and the Fellowship have supported me in every aspect.”

**Regina Banks**

Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship, Cohort 2023

African American History Teacher, Samuel Fels  
High School

Doctoral Candidate in Africana Studies,  
Temple University

Howard University, Class of 2024

“Teaching changed my perspective on life. When I look at my students, I see them in me.”

**Makiah Burroughs**

Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship, Cohort 2023

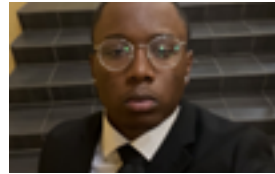
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher, Mastery Charter School  
Shoemaker Campus

University of Virginia, Class of 2024



# BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE FELLOWSHIP ROLL CALL

## 2024 Cohort



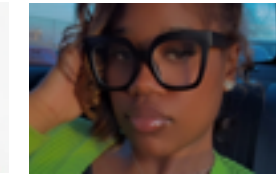
**BOBBY ARNOLD**  
Augsburg College



**COURTNEY BAGSBY**  
Southern University and  
A&M College



**ALLISON BENSON**  
Clark Atlanta  
University



**FAITH BRADLEY**  
Temple University



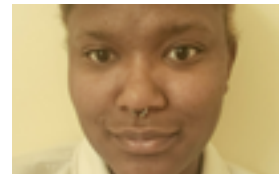
**ALEXIS CHAPMAN**  
The University  
of Alabama



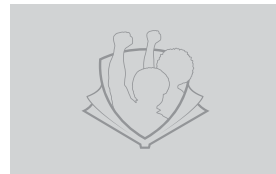
**STORM DISHMAN**  
Tennessee State University



**KAIA EDWARDS**  
Lincoln University



**LAYLAA FRAZIER**  
Indiana University  
of Pennsylvania



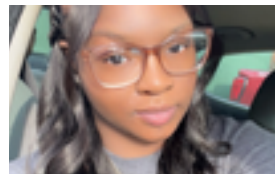
**KAYLIE HEDRICK**  
San Diego State  
University



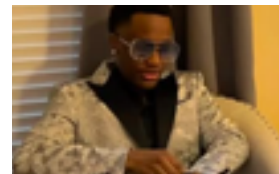
**BROOKLYNN HOWARD**  
Hardin-Simmons University



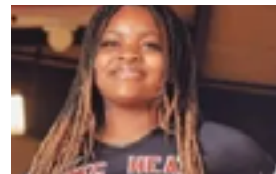
**JAH'MERE JACKSON**  
Howard University



**JABRIA MCCRANEY**  
The University of Memphis



**BRENDAN MCINTYRE**  
Howard University



**TAVIA MONTGOMERY**  
Rust College



**AKAYLA MORRIS**  
Temple University



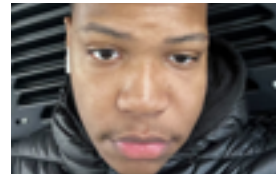
**ENOCH OMOTAYO**  
Morehouse College



**ALEJANDRO PASTEN**  
University of Florida



**JALIAH PERKINS**  
Southern Illinois  
University Edwardsville



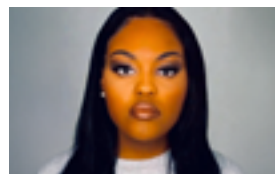
**ISAAC SANDERS**  
University of Pittsburgh



**ALEXANDRIA SMITH**  
Clafin University



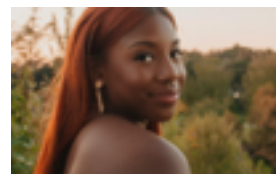
**AUTUMN SMITH**  
Penn State  
University Park



**MADISYN WASHINGTON**  
Spelman College



**RHYAN WHITE**  
Bowie State University



**GEMMIA WILLIAMS**  
Louisiana State University  
and Agricultural and  
Mechanical College



**AALIYAH WOOD**  
West Chester University  
of Pennsylvania

## 2023 Cohort



**TONI ABISUGA**  
Xavier University  
of Louisiana



**LAILA BALDWIN**  
Winston-Salem  
State University



**JOSHUA BANKS**  
West Chester University



**REGINA BANKS**  
Howard University



**LAURYN BASS**  
Tuskegee University



**TAYLOR BLACK**  
Tuskegee University



**KAYLAH BRISCOE**  
University of Delaware



**LEROY BROWN**  
Temple University



**MAKIAH BURROUGHS**  
University of Virginia



**COURTNEY DAYE**  
North Carolina A&T  
State University



**YOUMA DIABIRA**  
Xavier University  
of Louisiana



**KALEYAH FAVORS**  
Tuskegee University



**JAYLEN HARRIS**  
Illinois State University



**AARON HARVEY**  
Wayne State University



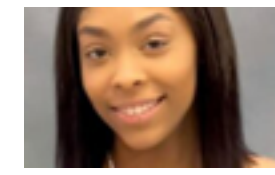
**BLAKE HAZELL**  
Temple University



**ALYSSA HOLT**  
Fisk University



**DYLAN JOACHIM**  
Washington &  
Jefferson College



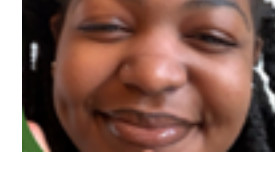
**JAIONA JOHNSON**  
West Chester University



**WAYNE JOHNSON**  
Clark Atlanta University



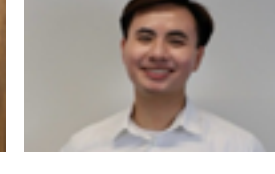
**RODRICUS MAGEE, SR.**  
Tuskegee University



**KAYLAH MORRIS**  
Temple University



**SARAH  
OGUNTOMILADE**  
University of Michigan



**TOMMY PHAM**  
Temple University



**JAVONTE TAYLOR**  
Alabama A&M  
University

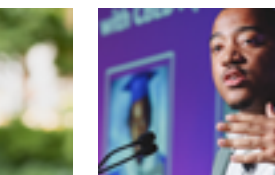


**CARMEN ELEXIA  
WOODS**  
Tuskegee University

## 2022 Cohort



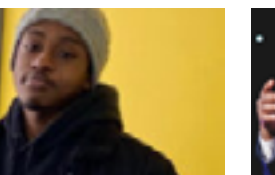
**FOLLY KOUEVI**  
Howard University



**HORACE RYANS III**  
Morehouse College



**BRYCE THOMPSON**  
College of Wooster



**IMERE WILLIAMS**  
West Chester University



## 2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Since launching our pilot in 2018, we've trained 621 teacher apprentices. For the sixth consecutive year, the Center for Black Educator Development offered Freedom Schools Literacy Academy at the following four sites in Philadelphia, as well as a national virtual program, with a total of 71 teacher apprentices and 138 elementary-school scholars participating.

- Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School
- William D. Kelley Public School
- Dr. Tanner G. Duckrey Public School
- Global Leadership Academy

Among the 42 high school "Junior Servant Leaders" and 39 college "Servant Leader Apprentices" who participated, 100% identify as Black and 25% identify as male, which is exponentially larger than the 1.3% current representation of Black men in the education workforce. Participants of the virtual program represent 15 states (AR, CA, DC, FL, MD, MI, MN, MS, NJ, NV, NY, PA, TN, TX, VA).

**In Summer 2024, 35 young men participated in the Freedom Schools Literacy Academy.**



## FREEDOM SCHOOLS LITERACY ACADEMY

Freedom Schools Literacy Academy, offered as a five-week in-person and virtual intensive summer program as well as a year-round afterschool activity, presents high school and college students a unique opportunity to explore the teaching profession through a framework grounded in Black pedagogy.

Guided by expert Black teachers, aspiring high school and college educator-activists learn about Black culture and history, engage in scholarly reading and intellectual discourse, gain experience structuring and leading classrooms of scholars in grades K-3 and become part of a close community of like-minded peers.

The young elementary school students receive much-needed quality tutoring, support and enrichment to help them make leaps in literacy.

The Freedom Schools Literacy Academy is built upon the legacy of Freedom Schools, a set of free educational programs and schools designed by and for Black people in 1964 Mississippi to expand civil rights, affirm Black identity and ensure a quality education for Black children.

Freedom Schools Literacy Academy participants are eligible for the Center's Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship that provides college scholarships, academic support, professional coaching and retention bonuses.





SIGNIFICANT RESULTS:

**Summer Teacher Apprentices**

By the end of the 2024 Summer FSLA program, 61% of high school “Junior Servant Leaders” and 73% of college “Servant Leader Apprentices” reported an interest in teaching.

Teacher apprentices reported increases in their academic self-efficacy, positive racial identity and social-justice orientation, as well as significant increases in performing well under difficult circumstances: 94% of apprentices agreed that “When things are tough, I can perform quite well,” 92% believed “I have acquired the academic skills to do whatever I decide to do,” and 92% knew “I can complete difficult tasks.”

All teacher apprentices reported having a lot of pride in their ethnic group: 98% had a strong sense of belonging to other Black or Brown people, 98% felt good about Black or Brown people, and 96% were proud of being Black or Brown.

Their social-justice orientation also significantly increased with 98% agreeing that “In the future, I will do my best to ensure that all individuals and groups have a chance to speak and be heard.”

Teacher apprentices also increased their skill in establishing a classroom community by 45%, classroom presence by 25%, using data and assessments by 100% and supporting diverse needs by 71%.



SIGNIFICANT RESULTS:

**Summer Young Scholars**

With a new literacy curriculum, Bookworm, in place, scholars in grades 1 and 2 increased their ability to read real words and nonsense words, while scholars in grade 3 improved in oral reading fluency.

Positive racial identity among scholars showed significant increases in reports of being happy to be Black or Brown (90% to 95%) and knowing books written about Black or Brown people (78% to 87%). There were also increases in responses to “adults care about me” (87% to 90%) and “I can be whatever I want when I grow up” (94% to 98%).

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN AVERAGES ACROSS ALL SITES

**POSITIVE RACIAL IDENTITY**

**78 TO 90%**

**NUMBER OF WORDS READ**

**133 TO 187**

**FRIENDS ON THE BLOCK READING**

**7.3 TO 10.1**



SIGNIFICANT RESULTS:

**Afterschool Program**

Six high school “Junior Servant Leaders,” 20 college “Servant Leader Apprentices,” and 100 scholars participated in the Freedom Schools Literacy Academy.

All teacher apprentices reported an interest in returning to the program and all families reported that they plan to sign their child up again.

Young scholars demonstrated statistically significant increases in their positive racial identity, the number of words read and Friends on the Block reading levels with results varying by site.

In Detroit, scholars demonstrated increases in words read correctly with an average jump of 4.6 levels (from 4.7 to 9.3). In Memphis, scholars increased by an average of 1.7 FOTB levels (8.9 to 10.6) and, in Philadelphia, scholars increased by an average of 3.4 levels (6.8 to 10.2).



## WHAT FREEDOM SCHOOLS LITERACY ACADEMY TEACHER APPRENTICES ARE SAYING

“The relationships I foster with scholars is a key factor in a successful teaching setting.”

“The most important thing I learned was that I can teach kids.”

“I have learned the importance of embracing yourself and your culture to impart wisdom and love to scholars who look like you.”

“FSLA helped me realize that I can work with kids, which is now a part of my future goals.”

“I learned how important community building is. We have to lean on each other and fill in the gaps so our children have the chance they deserve at success.”

## WHAT FREEDOM SCHOOLS LITERACY ACADEMY FAMILIES ARE SAYING

Almost all families (95%) reported that someone at Freedom Schools Literacy Academy communicated with them one or more times per week. The majority (88%) also agreed or strongly agreed the program operated smoothly and efficiently.

Parents also reported that as a result of the Freedom Schools Literacy Academy, their children had increased confidence, improved reading and communication skills, greater interest in learning and academics, personal growth and self-reflection.

“My child is more confident about herself.”

“Scholars are afforded an opportunity to be immersed in a complete African-American environment and have like minded teachers and classmates of African diaspora.”

“My child shares with me what she’s learning.”

“The staff really made the children feel welcomed and encouraged them to have a good day upon arrival. They’re always smiling.”

“My child reads on her own more now and wants to visit the library more often.”



# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & NETWORKING

**The Center for Black Educator Development professional-learning and networking offerings are unlike any other.**

We support the recruitment and retention of Black teachers through tailored workshops, affinity groups and events, including our annual Black Men in Education Convening. As a critical part of rebuilding the national Black Teacher Pipeline, we also advance the development of school cultures where all teachers and their students can thrive working closely with administrators and their entire school community.

This often requires leveraging curricula, toolkits and e-learning courses grounded in Black pedagogy and promoting anti-discriminatory mindsets that we created to fill a gap in resources for educators of color and anyone interested in advancing teacher diversity.



Whether districts, schools, universities or community organizations need consultation services, customized workshops or support to build their own affinity groups and events, the **Center for Black Educator Development is here for you.**



## PARTNER WITH US

We see professional learning and the cultivation of safe, welcoming and inclusive school cultures to be paramount to rebuilding the national Black Teacher Pipeline. In creating pathways for aspiring educator-activists, we must focus on recruitment and retention, ensuring they and their colleagues are equipped to continually teach all of their students superbly.



# CULTURAL PROFICIENCY WORKSHOPS

The Center for Black Educator Development conducts cultural proficiency workshops, tailoring presentations, dynamic discussions and activation exercises on the following topics:

Reflecting on One's Cultural Identity

Redressing Bias

Microaggressions Impact on Diverse Learners

Collaborating with Families

Building Culturally-Proficient Relationships with Students

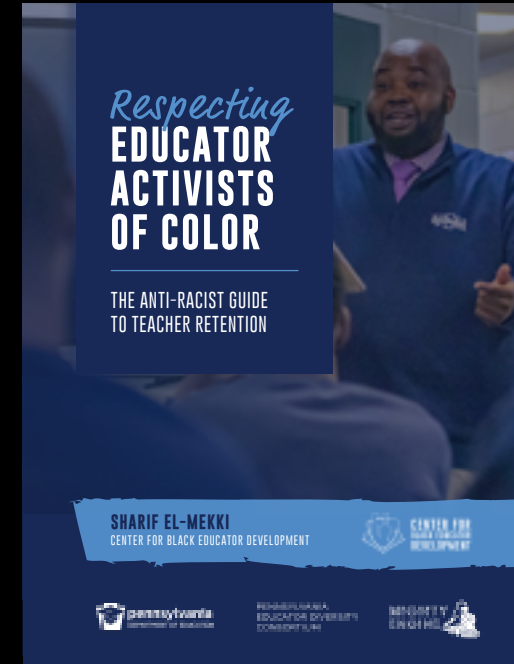
Modeling High Expectations

Drawing on Student's Cultural Knowledge to Inform Instruction

Formulating an Anti-Racist, Anti-Bias and Equity Driven Leadership Approach

Engaging in Difficult Conversations on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging

# RESPECTING EDUCATOR-ACTIVISTS OF COLOR: THE ANTI-RACIST GUIDE TO TEACHER RETENTION



Teachers leaving the profession early is a significant issue across education, but even more so among Black educators.

To help local schools and districts across the country keep more of their Black educators, the Center created this Retention Toolkit to create the kinds of school environments where all educators (and their students) can thrive.

In collaboration with Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium we published these (3) toolkits:

Culturally Relevant and Sustaining Education Competencies (CRSE) Toolkit

Recruitment Toolkit

Mentorship Toolkit



# 2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Drexel University

We led six sessions totaling 65 participants on the following topics:

- Drawing on Student's Cultural Knowledge to Inform Instruction
- Microaggressions Impact on Diverse Learners
- Formulating an Anti-Racist, Anti-Bias and Equity Driven Leadership Approach
- Collaborating with Families

## Fund for Advancement of Minorities (FAME)

We designed and moderated workshops focused on modeling high expectations for 15 aspiring Black educators identified by FAME.

## Journey into Education & Teaching (JET)

Through the Center for Black Educator Development's e-learning system, 40 JET participants took courses to further develop their cultural proficiency and learn about creating a safe, inclusive, and engaging learning environment for all educators.

# BLACK MEN IN EDUCATION CONVENING

Since 2017, the Center for Black Educator Development has hosted the nation's largest Black Men in Education Convening to teach, learn and be in fellowship together. These gatherings grew out of similar ones hosted in 2015 and 2016, which were known as The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice.

From the beginning, these annual conventions were designed to foster a brotherhood of Black men in education, who often face tougher working conditions at high-poverty, harder-to-staff schools and work in isolation without mentors or peers to turn to for support.

At each, we seek to continue the work of longtime, revolutionary educators like Dr. Martin Ryder and others, specifically focusing on the policies, practices, advocacy work and impact of Black male career educators.



## #BMEC2024 HIGHLIGHTS

This year, more than 1,200 attendees from 40 states and four countries (with 816 representing first-time attendees) gathered for three days in Philadelphia.

Inspired by the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the seminal book, "Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Students," by keynote speaker Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings's book, the #BMEC2024 theme was: "Deacons For Our Future: DreamKeepers Yesterday, Today, and Forever."

Attendees at our sold-out event heard from stellar plenary speakers and 170 breakout presenters and were able to partake in a range of professional-development experiences, from ancestral practices and poetry presentations to policy discussions and networking sessions.

Survey responses from #BMEC2024 attendees show statistically significant results in overall experiences tied to how presenters create safe spaces for attendees as well as the engaging nature and helpfulness of sessions in attendees' work and personal growth.

As many said, they felt they were poured into, leaving the convening more informed, energized and uplifted to continue their respective fight advancing racial justice and educational equity.

# #BMEC2025

SAVE THE DATE


NOVEMBER 20-22, 2025

LOEWS PHILADELPHIA HOTEL

PHILADELPHIA, PA

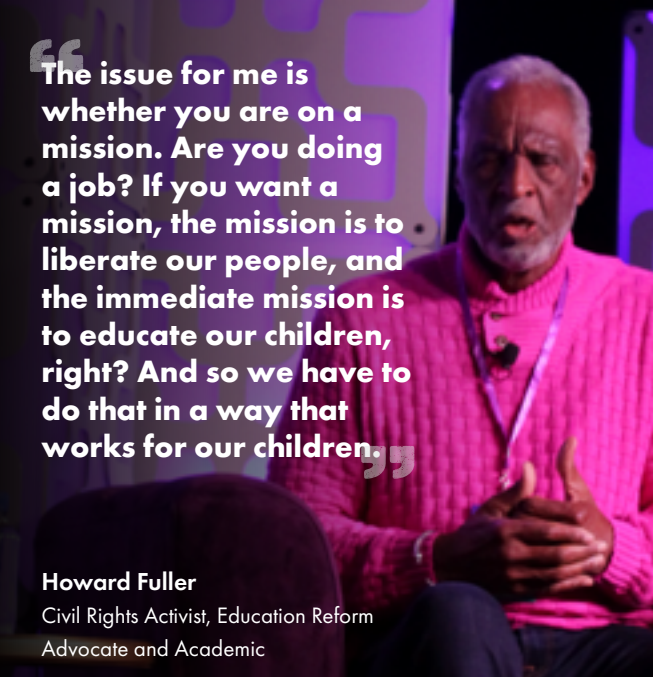
**#BMEC2024  
PLENARY  
SPEAKERS**

**“Oppressors are not opposed to training. What an oppressor does not want is education.”**



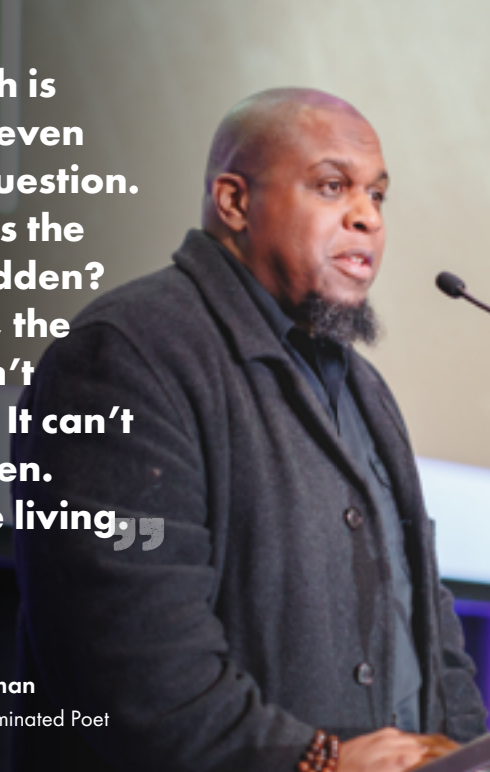
**Gloria Ladson-Billings**  
Pedagogical Theorist and Teacher Educator

**“The issue for me is whether you are on a mission. Are you doing a job? If you want a mission, the mission is to liberate our people, and the immediate mission is to educate our children, right? And so we have to do that in a way that works for our children.”**




**Howard Fuller**  
Civil Rights Activist, Education Reform Advocate and Academic

**“The truth is hidden even in the question. Where is the truth hidden? In truth, the truth isn’t hidden. It can’t be hidden. It is true living.”**



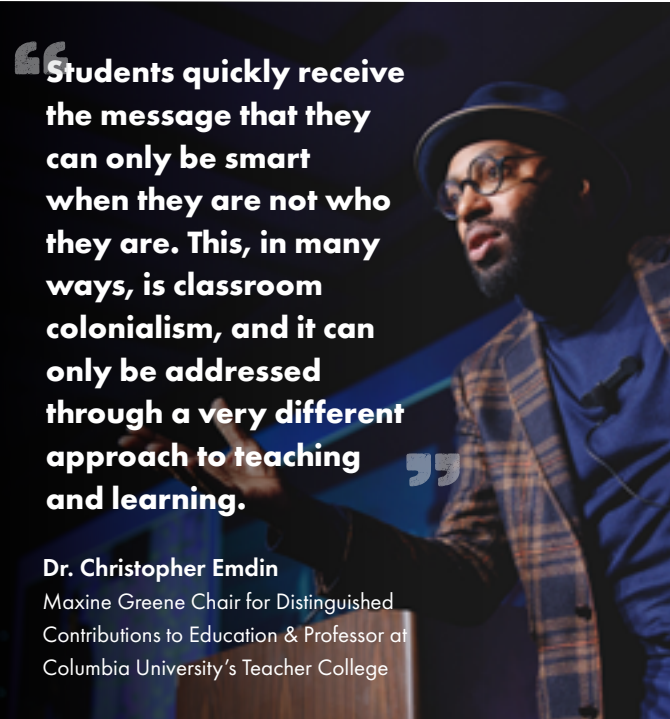
**Amir Suleiman**  
Grammy-Nominated Poet

**“There can be no liberation without education. Education is the very heart of liberation.”**



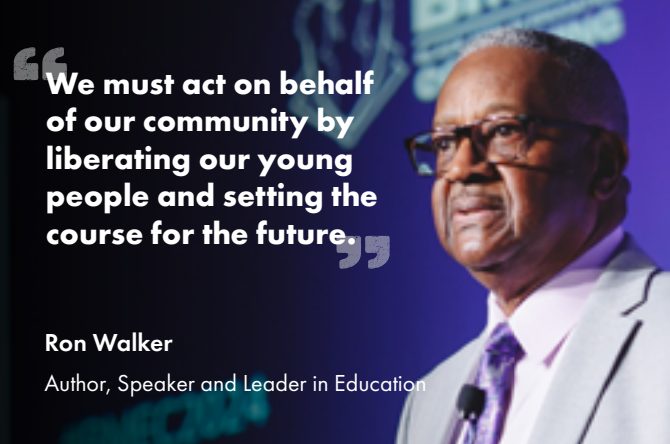
**Angela Davis**  
Activist, Feminist and Writer

**“Students quickly receive the message that they can only be smart when they are not who they are. This, in many ways, is classroom colonialism, and it can only be addressed through a very different approach to teaching and learning.”**



**Dr. Christopher Emdin**  
Maxine Greene Chair for Distinguished Contributions to Education & Professor at Columbia University’s Teacher College

**“We must act on behalf of our community by liberating our young people and setting the course for the future.”**



**Ron Walker**  
Author, Speaker and Leader in Education

**“We must integrate into a global society. But if integration means losing your humanity, and it does, then we must reject it. We can’t be revolutionary simply by embracing the conditions as they are.”**



**Greg Carr**  
Associate Professor of Afro-American Studies, Howard University

**“In order for teaching to be revolutionary, the learners have to be involved in whatever the creation of the curriculum looks like, as well as the community.”**



**Dr. Vanessa Dodo Seriki**  
Associate Dean, Morgan State University School of Education and Urban Studies

**“They don’t promote everyone to be school leaders. They promote everyone they think will be obedient.”**



**Dr. Muhammad Khalifa**  
Professor & Executive Director, Urban Education Initiatives, Ohio State University

**“I’m the mayor of this city, and I say I want more Black male educators in the city of Philadelphia; we need to continue investing in the attraction and recruitment of more male teachers.”**



**Cherelle Parker**  
Mayor of Philadelphia

# THE IMPACT OF BMEC FELLOWSHIP

Two #BMEC2024 attendees, Andre Samuels, an executive leadership coach, and Jacob Waites, the principal at Center City Public Charter Capitol Hill, share what it meant to meet at last year's BMEC as participants and lead their own workshop this year (Nurturing Excellence: Leader Development & Leadership Styles for Network and School-Based Leaders) with two other Black men in education.

All four men have organized their own convenings for Black men in education in D.C. based on the BMEC model.



**Jacob Waites:** I remember hearing several of my principal colleagues say they keep leaving. I don't know what to do with them. Part of what I thought then was the right thing to do was if these brothers could not find quality development and a quality leader, I wanted to be that for them. The opportunity for them to come together to see themselves possibly in me as a leader and also to see that and see myself in them as teachers.

**Andre Samuels:** When I was a school principal at one point in Washington, D.C., public schools, I had the highest number of Black male educators in the classroom and on the leadership team of any public school in Washington, D.C. I remember the recruitment process and being purposeful in seeking quality educators who looked like the students they were teaching.



**Jacob Waites:** I've had people tell me that they don't know what to do with me, they don't know how to develop me. I come to BMEC, and I'm able to be developed and poured into. And that's not something that we get often. So spaces like this are extremely important because we're educators, and we deserve quality development, and this is a great place for us to receive it.

**Andre Samuels:** We had to find each other — so we found each other here, and we represent three different states.

A mutual friend introduced us, and the other ironic part is Jacob is currently the principal of the school where I used to be the principal. And so as we're at a meeting and talking, Harold says, you know, he's the principal at Center City. So from there, it's just been constant communication, personal and professional.

We met here as participants regarding the professional space, and then the four of us just got together and said we would now try to move from participant to presenter. And then we presented together. This is what people are all about, right? Making these incredible synergistic kismet connections.



# #BMEC2024 ATTENDEES REPORT STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN THEIR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND MOTIVATION.



## AGREEMENT OR STRONG AGREEMENT

## PRE-CONVENING

## POST-CONVENING

I have a good understanding of the Black men educator experience.

**66%**  
(177/267)

**93%**  
(88/203)

I have tools and ideas to increase and retain the number of Black men educators in their ecosystem.

**40%**  
(108/267)

**80%**  
(162/203)

I am motivated to support Black men in education in my local area and gather support systems that are sympathetic to this work.

**93%**  
(249/267)

**96%**  
(195/203)

I know culturally responsive practices that will increase my effectiveness as an educator.

**70%**  
(189/267)

**87%**  
(177/203)

I have a good understanding of the work I must do to ensure I am in the best emotional and mental condition to teach at my best.

**95%**  
(253/267)

**97%**  
(197/203)

It is essential that Black men in education intentionally engage in self-care and work to address their emotional and mental needs.

**95%**  
(253/267)

**97%**  
(197/203)

Black men in education have the obligation to teach in ways that uplift and restore racial identities of their students.

**92%**  
(245/267)

**94%**  
(190/203)

I understand some of the historical contributions of Black people in education.

**86%**  
(230/267)

**91%**  
(185/203)

I am committed to learning more about Black people's contributions to education and grounding my work in the teachings of Black historians and educators.

**94%**  
(251/267)

**97%**  
(196/203)

## WHAT #BMEC2024 ATTENDEES ARE SAYING

“The highlights for me were the energy, racial affirmation, and the impact on men of color leading in education.”

“The conference truly was everything my soul needed, it was like being in church, at homecoming, and a family reunion, all in one space. From start to finish, it is hands down the best conference I have been to and am looking forward to next year.”

“I enjoyed being in a space where the quiet things we say to ourselves can be spoken out loud.”

“A highlight for me was the feeling of belonging and seeing men of color exhibiting kindness, professionalism, and a genuine love of serving others. Also, seeing men and women of all colors come together for the future. It was beautiful.”

“EVERY aspect of the conference felt intentional! There was great care and concern for every person that filled up each space at the conference. Your vision to pour into every participant was evident...We understand the assignment and we will not let what you planted in us this weekend be in vain.”

“The highlights for me were hearing from elders and pathmakers, and the opportunity to see different aspects of the BME universe on display.”



## PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

The Center for Black Educator Development works across all levels of policy-making to advocate for better outcomes for all students, teacher diversity and school cultures where Black teachers can thrive. In this and past years, we have supported the following:

### National

#### 1 Million Teachers of Color National Campaign

Campaign goal is to add one million teachers of color and 30,000 leaders of color to the education workforce.

#### Pay Teachers Act & The American Teachers Act

Legislation aimed at diversifying the teacher workforce and sustaining higher teacher salaries.

#### Strengthening Educator Workforce Data Collection Act

Legislation directs the Department of Education to collect increased disaggregated educator data published biennially through the Department's Civil Rights Data Collection to better track diversity recruitment and retention efforts, informing how the nation addresses teacher shortages.

#### Coalition to Reimagine the Teaching Role Appropriations Letter to Congress

Legislation strengthening multiple pathways and investing in innovative staffing models for educators.

#### Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program Appropriations Letter

Teach Plus-led letter requesting the Senate Appropriations LHHHS Subcommittee to restore the Teacher and School Leader Incentive Program to \$173 million in FY2025.

#### The National Black Teacher Pipeline Coalition

Since its founding in 2022, this national coalition has made significant strides raising awareness about the need for more Black teachers. A notable success was hosting the inaugural national Black Teacher Appreciation Day event at the U.S. Department of Education.

#### The Biden-Harris Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development

The Center's CEO, Sharif El-Mekki, served on this committee.

#### National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)

Considering the need for more Black and Latino teachers, the Center collaborated with NCTQ to launch the Teacher Diversity Dashboard designed to better support in benchmarking where we are with teacher diversity, while illuminating trends (overtime) to advance the goal of a more diverse teacher workforce.





## State

### Shapiro-Davis Transition Advisory Committee on Education and Workforce Development

The Center's CEO, Sharif El-Mekki, served on this gubernatorial committee.

### PA State Board of Education Code Chapter 49

Partnered with Pennsylvania Educator Diversity Consortium to develop Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education competencies, which are now required for all education prep programs.

### PA Senate Bill 99

Served on an education talent recruitment committee to craft a bill sponsored by Senator Vincent Hughes to revise the PA School Code, including measures to develop career and technical education programs; instruct the Senate Democratic Appropriations Committee on collecting and publishing education workforce demographics; and establish grants for Institutes of Higher Education to support dual enrollment programs.

### PA Senate Bill 300

Submitted a letter of support for PA SB 300, an act amending the act of March 10, 1949 known as the Public School Code of 1949, providing for a public job posting database for instructional vacancy data and for data transparency.

### PA Education Diversity Consortium

Helping to lead development of cultural-competence toolkits for educators to advance systemic policy changes supporting Black educator recruitment and retention, including the Center-authored RESPECTING EDUCATOR ACTIVISTS OF COLOR: The Anti-Racist Guide to Teacher Retention.

### PA Department of Education's Educator Workforce Committee

Supporting development of plans to: build a statewide workforce representative of students served; operate a streamlined certification process; and ensure high-quality preparation, professional growth and leadership development opportunities.

### SB 801 and HB 998, The Literacy Achievement for All Pennsylvanians Bills

Signed letter advocating critical importance of early literacy in our children's future learning. The Literacy Achievement for All Pennsylvanians bills could support early literacy by ensuring that every child has access to high-quality literacy teaching and instructional materials.

### Support of Fully Funding Student Teacher Stipends in 2025

Signed letter which calls on the Shapiro administration to fully fund the student teacher stipend program.

### Support of Early Literacy Funding in the PA State Budget

Signed letter which calls on the Shapiro administration to prioritize funding and related policy for evidence-based reading instruction in the budget proposal for 2025-26.



## Local

### Accelerate Philly: The School District of Philadelphia's Strategic Plan

Named partner of Accelerate Philly, the School District of Philadelphia's strategic plan that prioritizes student and staff safety, establishes deep partnerships with the community, and focuses resources on research-based strategies to improve student achievement.

### Philadelphia Councilwoman Rue Landau Resolution Designating May 9, 2024 as Black Teacher Appreciation Day

In honor of Teacher Appreciation Week, the Council of the City of Philadelphia celebrates Philadelphia's Black teachers for being unsung heroes of the community and positively impacting the lives of students and families far beyond the classroom.

The resolution was presented to the Center for Black Educator Development as evidence of the sincere respect of this legislative body.

### Philadelphia Councilman Isaiah Thomas Resolution Designating October as Black Male Educator Month

To recruit more Black men in the classrooms, where only 4 percent of teachers in Philadelphia identify as Black men, the City Council unanimously approved October as Black Male Educator Month.

### Philadelphia Delegation in Harrisburg to Fully and Fairly Fund Education in Pennsylvania with a Comprehensive Seven-Year Plan

Signed letter reminding the Philadelphia delegation to back their dedication to the children and youth of our Commonwealth with full and fair funding for public schools through a comprehensive seven-year plan.



## CONTRIBUTING PERSPECTIVE



### The Philadelphia Inquirer

by Njemele Tamala Anderson | Published Nov. 15, 2024

A recent report confirmed what educator Njemele Tamala Anderson already knew: The nation's teachers overdiscipline and more severely punish Black girls than girls of any other racial background.

#### Black girls, I see you.

Know, understand, and embrace the power of all your flyness and magic. You carry the legacy of phenomenal Black women who, throughout history, faced their fears with courage and determination, doing what needed to be done.

You are amazing beyond measure. Never let rolling eyes or a sneer defeat you because you're bigger than all of it. You can do anything and everything you put your mind to.

Indeed, in a world where Black girls are seen in their full humanity with unfettered promise, there would have been many other Black women seeking the highest office in the land before Vice President Kamala Harris, and it wouldn't have taken 99 tries before our city, Philadelphia, raised up our first Black woman as mayor.

Need more proof? Look no further than a recent, searing report from the federal Government Accountability Office.

It laid bare what many of us — especially lifelong Black educators like me — have known in our hearts for generations: Our nation's teachers, who are mostly white, even as the classrooms they lead are becoming increasingly diverse, overdiscipline and more severely punish Black girls than girls of any other racial background.

#### TEACHERS:

### Too many of you dehumanize Black girls.

The report acknowledges that racism and misogyny are likely causes. While I agree, this rhetoric can absolve educators of individual responsibility. Worse, it gives cover to those protesting that these are abstractions that don't apply to them and their classrooms.

So allow me to say it more plainly. Teachers: Too many of you dehumanize Black girls. In fact, you are "othering" them to the point of demonization.

Teachers, for you to do your job well, whatever your subject matter, we need to better prepare you by, among other things, helping you unlearn things you've been taught. To engage in "culturally relevant teaching," as researcher and theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings writes, teachers need to "examine the central aspects of their own or the predominant American culture" and its "intrinsic assumptions."

Once you do, you will start to see how schools, as microcosms of society, dominate and subdue Black girls, subjecting them to harsher discipline and more frequent suspensions and expulsions. The criminalization of Blackness starts as early as preschool, where Black toddlers don't differ from their white peers in their behaviors, just the level of melanin in their skin.

Only by becoming socially and politically aware can a teacher choose to become "an agent of change" over a "defender of the status quo," writes Ladson-Billings. We must dispel tropes that deny the humanity of our Black girls — like the one that adultifies and frames them as innately angry.

When a Black girl tells me she has "anger issues," I respond by saying: "Someone said that about you. Now, are you trying to live up to that? Because you don't have anger issues. Check those who are trying to break you."

The dehumanization of Black girls (and Black boys) — and their rightful rage in response — has a long legacy in this country. It is an unfortunate part of our national DNA.

The "genome editing" required to eradicate this particular sequence requires real work, and a lot of sincere introspection coupled with earnest activism, especially in places that should be temples to our wisdom: our schools.

Why is it so hard for teachers to see that our Black girls' perceived anger is a form of revolt "simply because ... [they] can no longer breathe," as political philosopher Frantz Fanon wrote?

And why is it the responsibility of Black girls, and not their teachers, to put a stop to what Michelle Obama calls the "circular logic" and these stereotypical "traps" by listening to them harder — rather than forcing them to get louder?

Educators and school administrators, as the Center for Black Educator Development espouses in promoting antidiscriminatory mindsets, give our Black girls the space to be heard and seen, their worth and feelings recognized. Ensure schools are safe spaces for them to learn. As their teachers, if you keep playing negative stereotypes about them, they will continue trying to defend themselves against your suffocating prejudices.

Whatever these young ladies bring, approach from a place of genuine concern. Whether you teach them or not, say hello and check in to see how they are doing. Are they eating and sleeping well and able to manage their schoolwork?

See them. Seek their trust.

Black girls: Look to the heroines in your own families.

If your mother can't make it to the parent-teacher conference because she's working late, see the power and resilience in that. Don't buy and internalize dangerous messages being peddled in our communities about family dysfunction, deficiency, and pathology.



BLACK GIRLS:  
Look to the heroines in your own families.



Educators and school administrators need to give Black girls the space to be heard and seen, and their worth and feelings recognized, writes veteran educator Njemele Tamala Anderson.  
AP Illustration/AP

Personal resilience is a trait to honor and aspire to. But it should never be a requirement, nor the only possible path forward for any Black girl who simply wants to live, grow, receive a quality education, and do nothing more than live up to her potential.

Black girls, proudly and lovingly choose your identity, embracing an expansive view of Blackness, but as you think about the intersectionality of who you are as complex human beings, think also about the intersectionality of oppressive messages. Create your own narrative rooted in knowing your worth and value.

Teachers, can you see the destiny of Black girls is linked to your own?

If you truly believe in this vital linkage, then you can't help but engage in what Raphael Randall calls "liberatory education," and your job will become more than a job: A mission to pour into Black girls high expectations, academic excellence, cultural affirmation, and sociopolitical awareness so they can actualize their full genius and humanity and rightfully inherit the world we live in together.

In my English class, we wrote a rap about education. The hook is: "Teachers, are you on a job or a mission?/Cuz our destinies are linked ... Are you a blessing or a curse?"

Be a blessing, and see our Black girls.

*Njemele Tamala Anderson is a veteran educator and a high school English teacher at Science Leadership Academy at Beeber. She serves on the University of Pennsylvania's Philadelphia Writing Project Advisory Board and is a longtime contributor to the Center for Black Educator Development.*

# OUR TEAM

“On behalf of the entire board, I extend our profound appreciation and admiration for your commitment to racial justice and education equity.

We are humbled and honored to work alongside such an incredible team of mission-driven educator-activists.”

Winston Cox  
Board Chair, Center for Black Educator Development



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**IS TEACHING  
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SUPERBLY WELL.**

—  
SHARIF EL-MEKKI

Founder and CEO



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