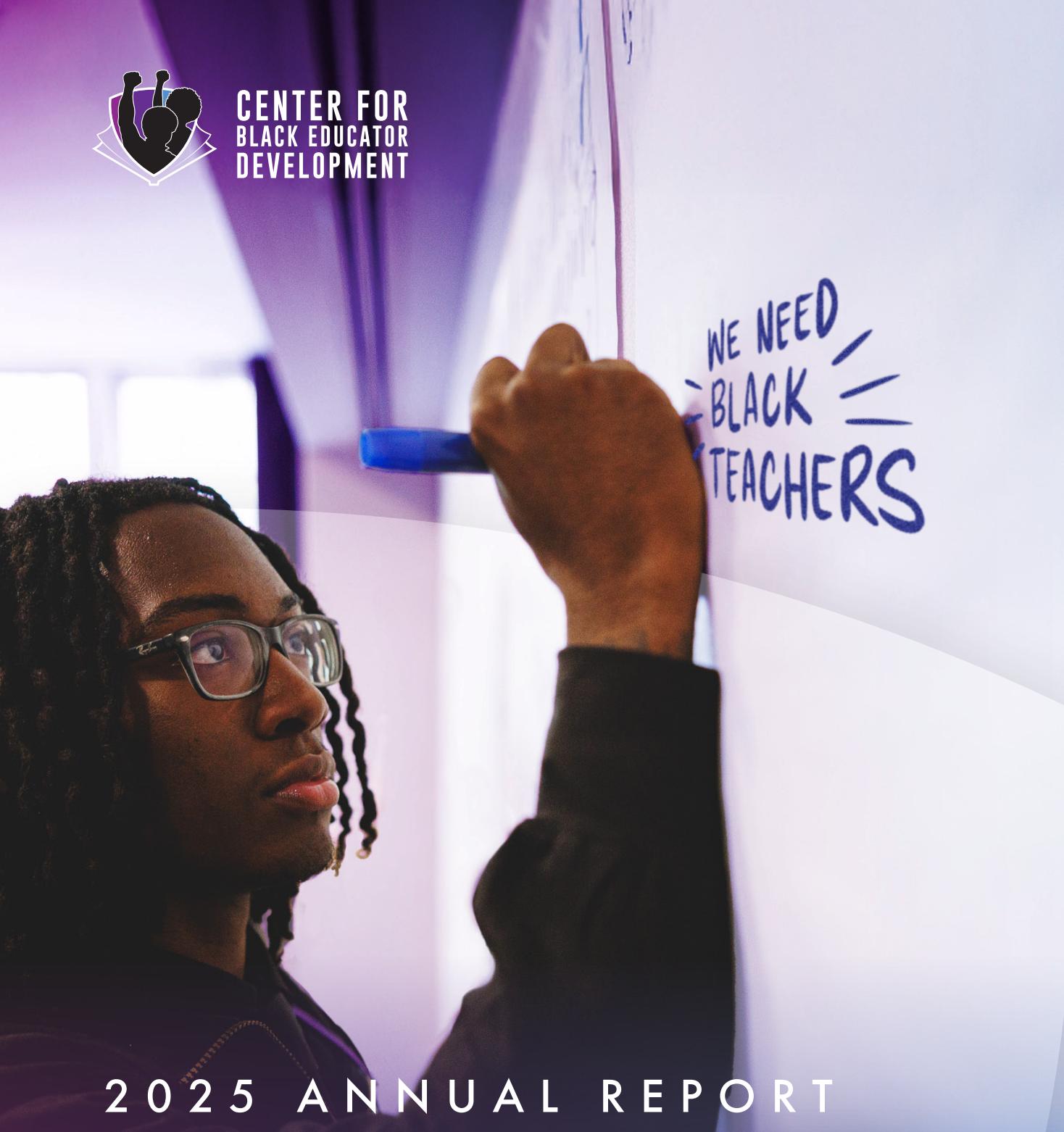




CENTER FOR
BLACK EDUCATOR
DEVELOPMENT



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**WE ARE REBUILDING
THE NATIONAL BLACK
TEACHER PIPELINE**



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

There's an old seafarer's piece of wisdom that says a storm may toss you about and shift your course, but it should never change your ultimate destination.

Well, in 2025, we clearly found ourselves in storm-tossed seas. But our destination has never been clearer, nor our journey more important.

Throughout the year, the entire Center for Black Educator Development team has remained laser-focused on our efforts to ensure the right of every student in this country to receive an excellent education.

To us, this means improving and diversifying our nation's teaching workforce, which has been at the heart of our mission since our founding. We ground all our programs and services in the well-established fact that students achieve stronger academic, socioemotional and life outcomes when they are taught by diverse, effective teachers that include people who look like them and share their backgrounds—all while reflecting and helping them build a future of limitless possibilities.

We believe this is a vital, irreplaceable aspect of delivering on the educational equity so foundational to the social justice we seek.

One thing 2025 proved—just as in every other year—is that many of our youth remain committed to becoming servant leaders by becoming not just educators but exceptional ones. They're willing to put in the hard work, receive the training and always go the extra mile to become the remarkable teachers we need them to be.

Can we do any less to support them on this journey?

That's why, this year, we sought to elevate our Teaching Academy Career and Technical Education course and Future Teachers of Excellence Fellowship for future educator-activists. We also doubled-down 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 8th annual Black Men in Education Convening in Philadelphia, we brought together more than 1,400 participants from 35 states, plus the District of Columbia, and three countries for a stellar lineup of plenary speakers, 120+ breakout facilitators and, most importantly, fellowship with one another.

Our progress over this past year was steady and impactful, despite the tempests that blew across our nation.

It's a truism that the only way to defeat a storm is to sail on and survive it. We did more than that in 2025. We set our course for years to come.

We remain grateful to all of you on this journey with us, helping us get to that better future just over the horizon.

In service,



Winston Cox
Board Chair



Sharif El-Mekki
Founder and CEO



WHY WE ARE REBUILDING THE BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE

All students do better when they see themselves reflected in the adults leading their classrooms, mirroring the diversity of our experiences, communities and worldviews.

The Center for Black Educator Development is committed to ensuring that every child receives an excellent education—no matter their background or circumstances—by recruiting, preparing, mentoring and inspiring the next generation of exceptional, diverse educators.

**FOR BLACK STUDENTS
ONE OR TWO BLACK TEACHERS DURING K-12 RESULT IN:**

- HIGHER EXPECTATIONS**
- ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT**
- INCREASED COLLEGE ENROLLMENT**
- LOWER RATES OF SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS**

Freedom Schools Literacy Academy, Dr. Tanner G. Duckrey Public School. Photo Credit: Andrew Huth



Why we say “rebuild” instead of “build” the Black teacher pipeline.

There was a time in this country when a robust pipeline produced scores of excellent Black educators.

What happened? After the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, desegregation triggered massive upheaval for Black teachers who had served in segregated schools. Across newly integrated districts, they faced widespread dismissals, discriminatory hiring and workplace marginalization.

Black teachers did not abandon their students. More than 100,000 Black teachers were systematically pushed out—fired, sidelined, and silenced—and replaced by less skilled, less experienced white teachers, discouraging generations of younger Black people from entering the profession.

It is long past time to restore what was stolen. As a nation, we must rebuild the Black teacher pipeline.



CENTER FOR
BLACK EDUCATOR
DEVELOPMENT



OUR MISSION & VISION

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

We envision a world where:

All Black students have access to high-quality, Black teachers from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade.

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.



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 racial, ethnic and experiential 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 rigor, positive racial identity and sense of social responsibility.
- Integrates Black history and current sociopolitical 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 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.

YEAR OVERVIEW

Whether measured in numbers, testimonials, lives changed or systems disrupted, the impact the Center for Black Educator Development had in 2025 is clear and compelling.

In our seventh year, we continued our evolution from a local start-up to a nationally recognized organization.

What began in 2018 with just 81 students at Mastery Charter Shoemaker Campus, the Philadelphia-based Freedom Schools Literacy Academy and Teaching Academy have grown to more than 13,000 participants in 40+ different states through multiple programs through 2025.

Through granting efforts from its partners, CBED has supported **956** aspiring and current educators since 2022.

Arcadia University
Black Girls Love Math
Boys Latin of Philadelphia
City Teaching Alliance Philadelphia
Gateway U

Healthy Kidz Inc.
KIPP DC Public Schools
Mastery Schools
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
Research for Action

Teach for America - Greater Philadelphia Region
Teach Plus Michigan
Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance
Thurgood Marshall College Fund

THE CENTER'S PARTICIPATION CONTINUES TO GROW



#WENEEDBLACKTEACHERS

The Center's high school Teaching Apprentices launched #WeNeedBlackTeachers in 2021 with two goals:

- To create awareness for—and profound impact of—Black teachers on students
- To encourage and empower their peers to seriously consider becoming a teacher

Now, in its fourth year, the campaign continues to gain traction with the 2025 engagement rate above 4%, much higher than the industry average of 1.34%.

CAMPAIGN IMPACT

2021-2025

7,600

ORGANIC POSTS



252,000

ORGANIC ENGAGEMENT



1.7 MILLION

VIDEO VIEWS



18.8 MILLION

IMPRESSIONS

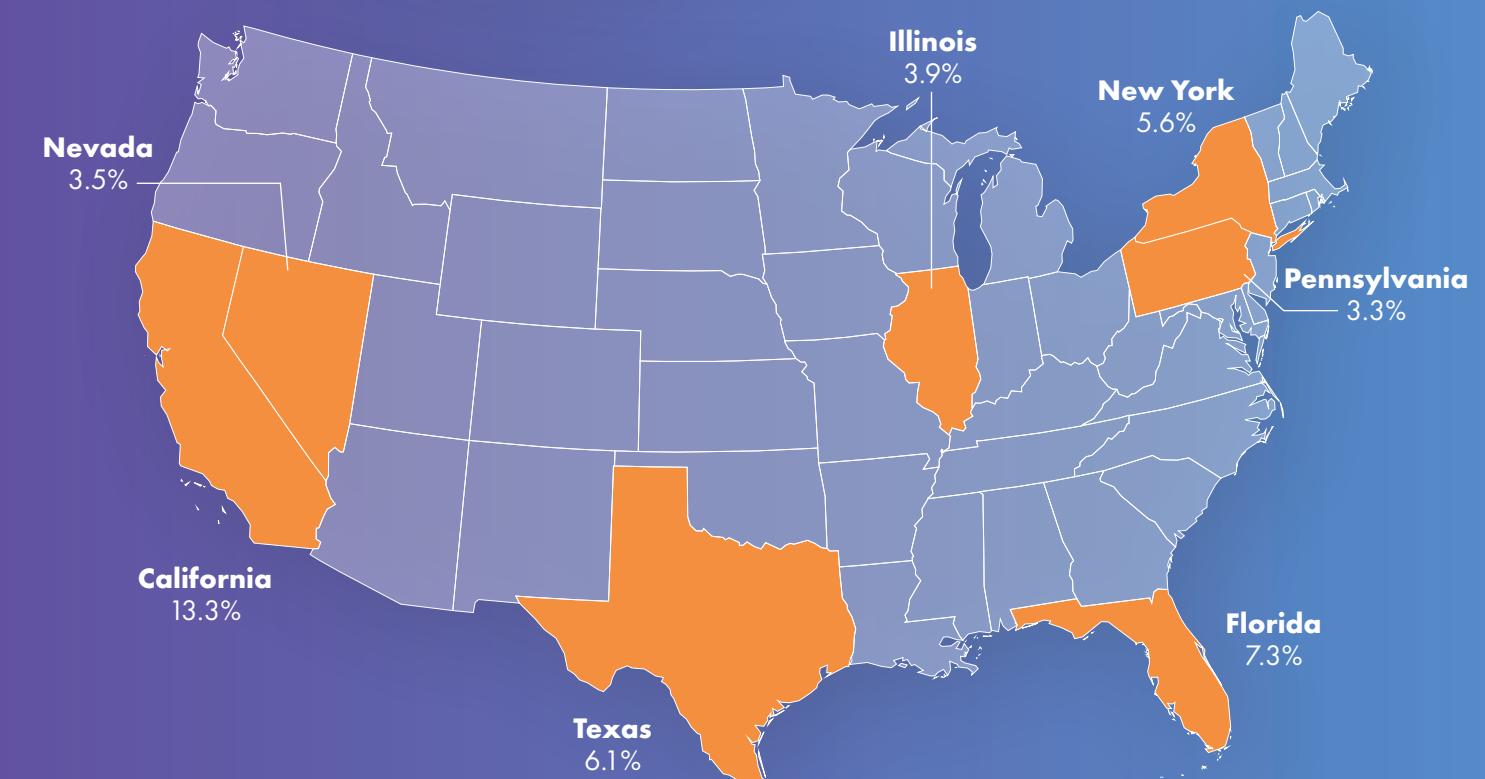
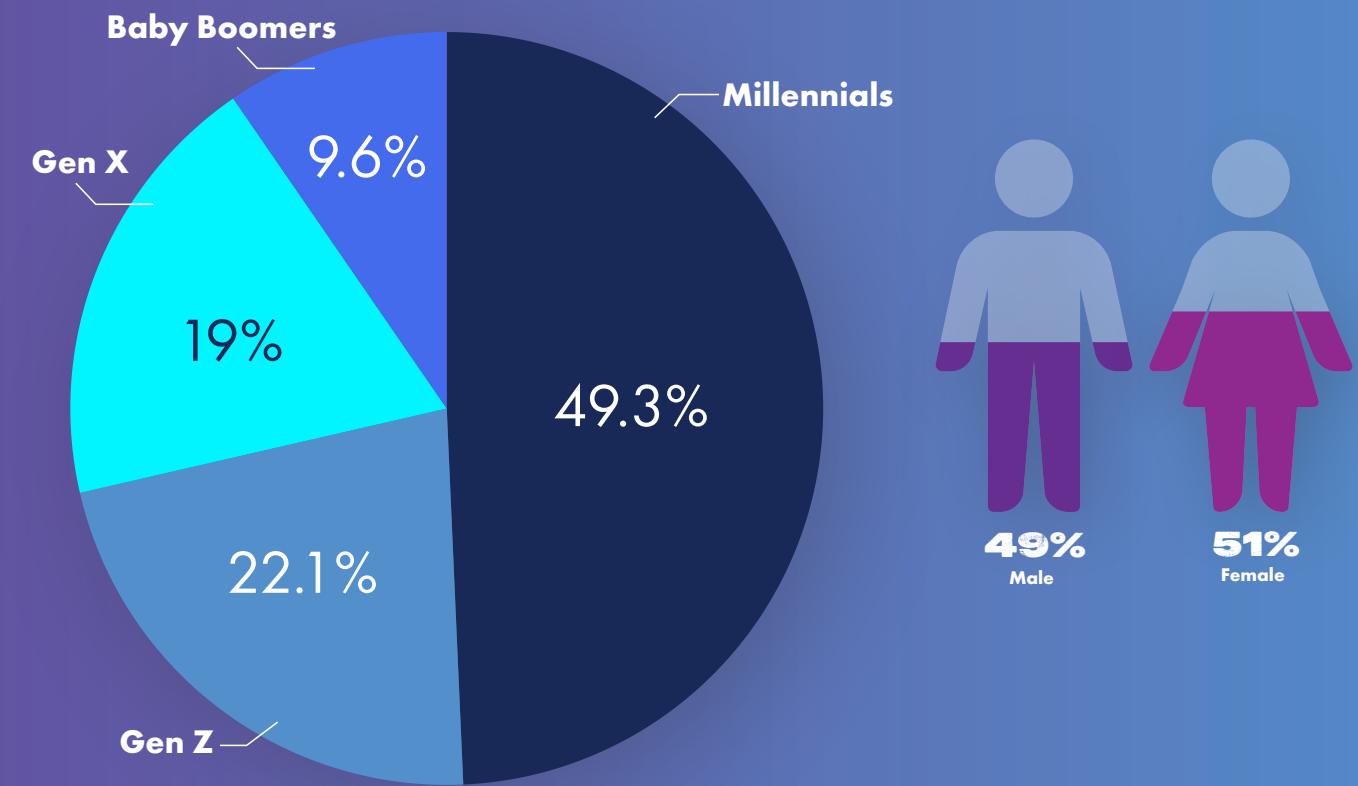


\$370,000

SOCIAL VALUE



Social Media Engagement Profile



WE ARE REBUILDING THE NATIONAL
BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE>>

FUTURE TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE FELLOWSHIP

The Center for Black Educator Development invests directly in aspiring educators through the Future Teachers of Excellence Fellowship:

- Academic Support
- Professional Coaching
- Peer Support
- Networking Opportunities
- Scholarships (\$5,000/year)
- Teaching Stipends (\$20,000 fifth year)

Piloted in 2022 with four young Black men, the fellowship now proudly counts 157 Fellows who have collectively received over \$300,000 in scholarship funds and other support. The 2025 cohort of 105 Fellows is our largest from our biggest applicant pool to date of 1,000+.

Apply for a Fellowship

Preference is given to past participants of the Center's programs. Fellows are expected to maintain a strong college GPA. Administrative support is provided by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).



Fund the Fellowship

Demand remains high with only one spot for every seven applicants. Make a contribution today.

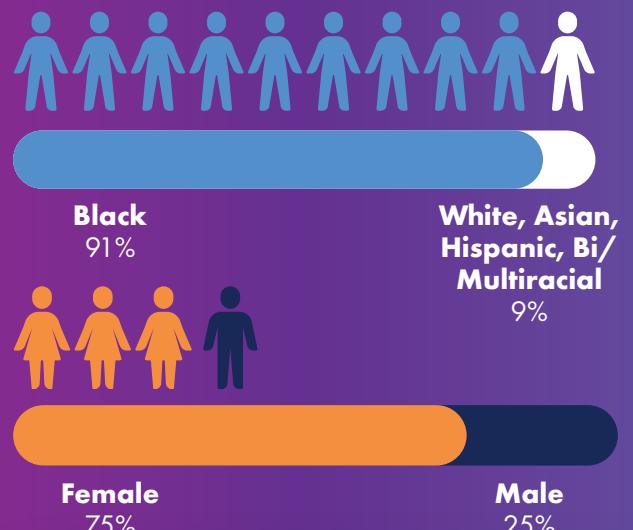
thecenterblacked.org/donate

Meet the 157 Future Teachers of Excellence Fellows

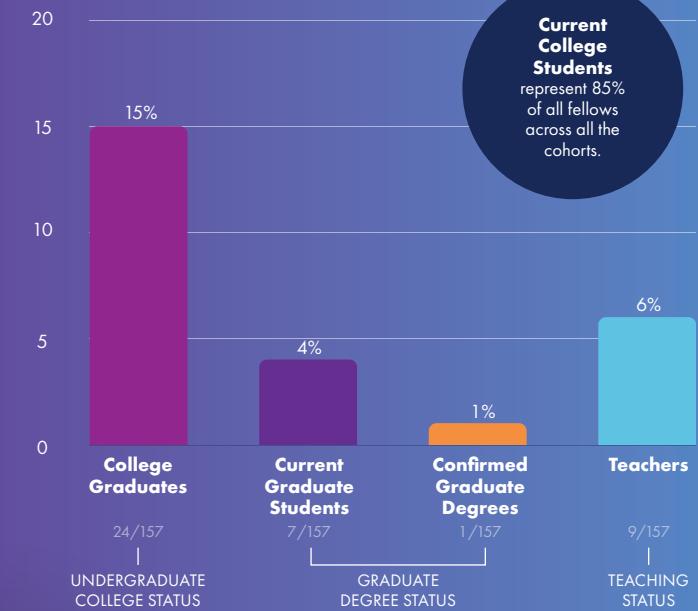
“I have found such a deep sense of community and love in this fellowship. The amount of support I feel is unmatched.”

Fellow, Cohort 2025

DEMOGRAPHICS



CAREER MILESTONES



FELLOWS' PROFILE

100%

Believe one of the purest forms of activism is teaching Black children superbly.

Committed to educational equity and teaching excellence for all.

Uniquely talented, accomplished and inspiring.

**AFRICANA STUDIES DOCTORAL STUDENT
AIR FORCE ROTC MEMBER
FOOD DRIVE ORGANIZER
HARVARD GRADUATE STUDENT
HBCU ALUMNI
LEAD TROMBONIST
SPOKEN-WORD POET
STEM SCHOLARS
BUDDING HISTORIANS
OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR
OPERA SINGER
COLLEGIATE ATHLETES
PUBLISHED AUTHORS
STUDENT GOVERNMENT REPS
TECH ENTREPRENEURS
VISUAL ARTISTS**

The Future Teachers of Excellence Fellows Roll Call

● Cohort 5 ● Cohort 4 ● Cohort 3 ● Cohort 2 ● Cohort 1



ROMANTE ADAMS
Anderson University



JAILEN ALSTON
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



SHAMYIA AUSTIN
Lane College



DESTINI BALLARD
Spelman College



HARRIET BANTO
Xavier University of Louisiana



KAIYA INGRAM
University of Central Arkansas



LORENZO JAMESBARRY
University of Oregon



KAYLA JOHNSON
Georgia Southern University



KHADARIUS JOHNSON
Jackson State University



RAYA JONES
Prairie View A&M University



DEHJA BARRETT
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University



SIERRA BOATWRIGHT
West Chester University of Pennsylvania



BRYSEN CAWTHON
Longwood University



A'NIAYA CHEESEBOROUGH
North Carolina A&T State University



JOCELYN CLYBURN
South Carolina State University



MWANGO KASUBA
Duquesne University



CAMERON KUYKINDALL
University of Tennessee, Knoxville



ASIAH LAKE
Alabama State University



SALAAM LATEEF
Xavier University of Louisiana



NOAH LEWIS
Howard University



KARLI CROCKER
Stillman College



NAILAH CRUMPTON
Winthrop University



SIERRA DAMERON
Virginia Commonwealth University



SHANA DAVENPORT
Regent University



SIRAYA DAVIS
Texas Southern University



MAYA LITTLEJOHN
Clark Atlanta University



COURTNEY LLOYD-BALDWIN
University of South Carolina Columbia



RAYMOND LOMAX
North Carolina Central University



ARREONA MACK
Delaware State University



TARYN MACK
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



RA'LEAH DAVIS
Norfolk State University



JAIDYN DAVIS
Jackson State University



STELLA-MOON DEVINE
University of Maine at Farmington



MACKENZIE DORTCH
Indiana State University



MICHAEL DUKES
Rosemont College



KARRINGTON MANIGAULT
Georgia State University



TAMARA MANUEL
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College



SYDNEY MAXWELL
Hampton University



AJANI MCCONNICO
Lesley University



KAICEY MCKENZIE
University of Missouri-Columbia



JASMINE DUNKLEY
Howard University



SIERA FAIRLEY
Kansas State University



DIAMONIQUE FRANCIS
University of Texas at Tyler



SEMOI FRANCOIS
Oakwood University



JORDAN FRANCZEK
Virginia Commonwealth University



HIME MOORE
Xavier University of Louisiana



TEANNA MOORE
University of Phoenix



KHALIS MUHAMMAD
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



SAYA ONISHI-COPELAND
Loyola University Chicago



NATIEL OSBORNE
Claflin University



ANGELICA FRANKLIN
Howard University



MADISON FRASER
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



MARLEY FRENCH
Prairie View A & M University



MARION FULTON
Claflin University



MADISON GAYNOR
University of Miami



MARIAH OVERTON
Widener University



MILAN POOLE
Virginia State University



NATASHA RAINY
Saint Joseph's University



NEVAEH SHECKLES
Bellarmine University



NATAISHA SHILOH
Bethune Cookman University



SEAN GLYNN
Springfield College



CAYLA GORDON
Rowan University



ZARAIAH GREEN
Oakwood University



ZHAIRE HAGER
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



ARI HALL
Clemson University



FAVOR SMITH
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



LEILANI SPAINE
Stevenson University



ANGELINA STOKES
Xavier University of Louisiana



JADA SYKES
The University of Memphis



NEVAEH TERRY
Delaware State University



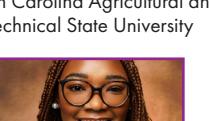
SHILAYAH HAMMOND
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff



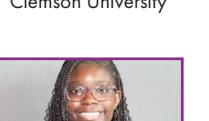
KE'LEJAH HECTOR
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



MYRACLE HIGGIN
Delaware State University



MALIYAH HILL
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



J'MARIE HINES
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University



ZAHRA VANDERHORST-WISDOM
Howard University



XYMESHA WALKER
Clark Atlanta University



TANIYAH WASHINGTON
Oklahoma State University



CIERRA WEAVER
Spelman College



CHRISTIAN WEST
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

The Future Teachers of Excellence Fellows Roll Call

● Cohort 5 ● Cohort 4 ● Cohort 3 ● Cohort 2 ● Cohort 1



MARIA WIGGINS
University of Phoenix



NOAH WILLIAMS
Delaware State University



ZAMANI WILLIAMS
Savannah State University



JASAAN WILLIAMS
Elizabeth City State University



ZACHERY WOODRUFF
University of Oregon



LERoy BROWN
Temple University



YOUNA DIABIRA
Xavier University of Louisiana



KALEYAH FAVORS
Tuskegee University



JAYLEN HARRIS
Illinois State University



BLAKE HAZELL
Temple University



AMINNAH WRIGHT
Tuskegee University



D'ANDRE WRIGHT
Rider University



ALANNA YANCEY
Delaware State University



KAMRYN YOUNG
Winston-Salem State University



COURTNEY BAGSBY
Southern University and
A&M College



JAONIA JOHNSON
West Chester University



WAYNEE JOHNSON
Clark Atlanta University



RODRICUS MAGEE, SR.
Tuskegee University



KAYLAH MORRIS
Temple University



SARAH OGUNTOMILADE
University of Michigan



ALLISON BENSON
Clark Atlanta University



FAITH BRADLEY
Temple University



ALEXIS CHAPMAN
The University of Alabama



STORM DISHMAN
Tennessee State University



KAIA EDWARDS
Lincoln University



JAVONTE TAYLOR
Alabama A&M University



CARMEN ELEXIA WOODS
Tuskegee University



REGINA BANKS
Temple University



MAKIAH BURROUGHS
University of Virginia



COURTNEY DAYE
North Carolina A&T State
University



LAYLAA FRAZIER
Indiana University
of Pennsylvania



KAYLIE HEDRICK
San Diego State University



JAH'MERE JACKSON
Howard University



JUSTIN JORDAN
Hampton University



JABRIA MCCRANEY
The University of Memphis



ALYSSA HOLT
Fisk University



DYLAN JOACHIM
Washington & Jefferson College



TOMMY PHAM
Temple University



FOLLY KOUEVI
Howard University



HORACE RYANS III
Morehouse College



BRENDAN MCINTYRE
Howard University



AKAYLA MORRIS
Temple University



LEAH NORWOOD
Howard University



ENOCH OMOTAYO
Morehouse College



JALIAH PERKINS
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville



BRYCE THOMPSON
College of Wooster



IMERE WILLIAMS
West Chester University



ISAAC SANDERS
University of Pittsburgh



KAMARI SCALES
Livingstone College



ALEXANDRIA SMITH
Claflin University



AUTUMN SMITH
Penn State University Park



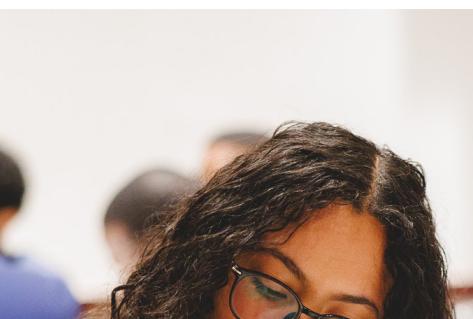
RHYAN WHITE
Bowie State University



CALEB WOLF
Florida State University



AALIYAH WOOD
West Chester University
of Pennsylvania



TONI ABISUGA
Xavier University of Louisiana



LAURYN BASS
Tuskegee University



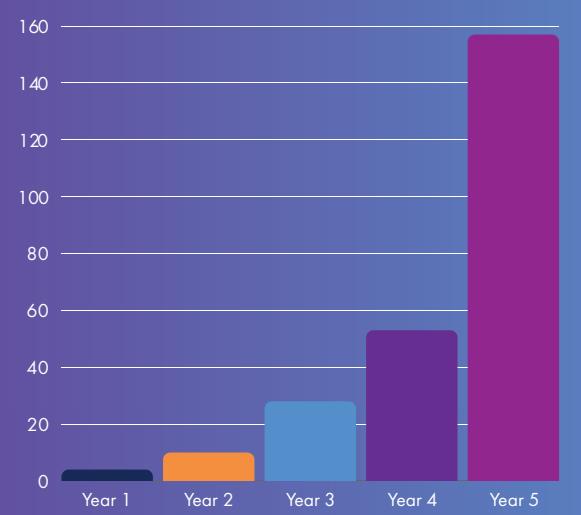
TAYLOR BLACK
Tuskegee University



KAYLAH BRISCOE
University of Delaware



COHORT GROWTH OVER TIME





WE ARE REBUILDING THE NATIONAL
BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE>>

TEACHING ACADEMY

The Center's Teaching Academy Career & Technical Education course is open to all high school students, but designed especially for Black students to explore a future in teaching alongside like-minded peers through:

- Foundational theories, project-based learning, instructional coaching, applied practice and teaching apprenticeships across all four years of high school for up to five days a week
- The LeCount-Catto Foundational Curriculum, a multi-year set of rigorous lesson plans created by Center faculty experts in Black pedagogy and history

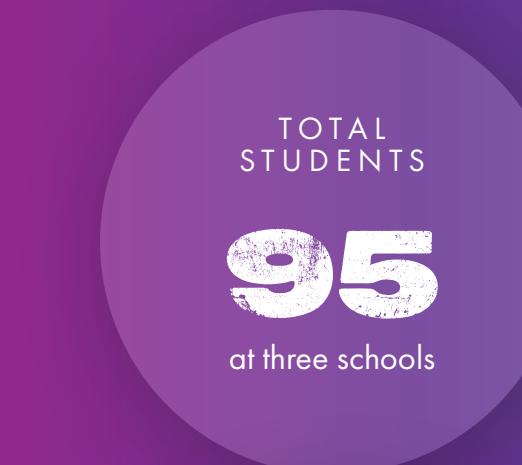
The Teaching Academy nurtures a love for both learning and teaching, empowering students to see themselves as scholars, change agents and future educators advancing a legacy of excellence and equity in education.

More Student Opportunities

- Credits toward an associate's degree in education
- Eligibility for the Center's Future Teachers of Excellence Fellowship
- Paraprofessional certification in partnership with local colleges and universities

Piloted on the Mastery Charter School Shoemaker Campus in 2018 through a partnership with Arcadia University in Philadelphia, the Teaching Academy has since expanded to eight schools (Philadelphia, PA; Camden, NJ; Harlem and Rochester, NY; and Detroit, MI), enrolling 516 students by the end of 2025.

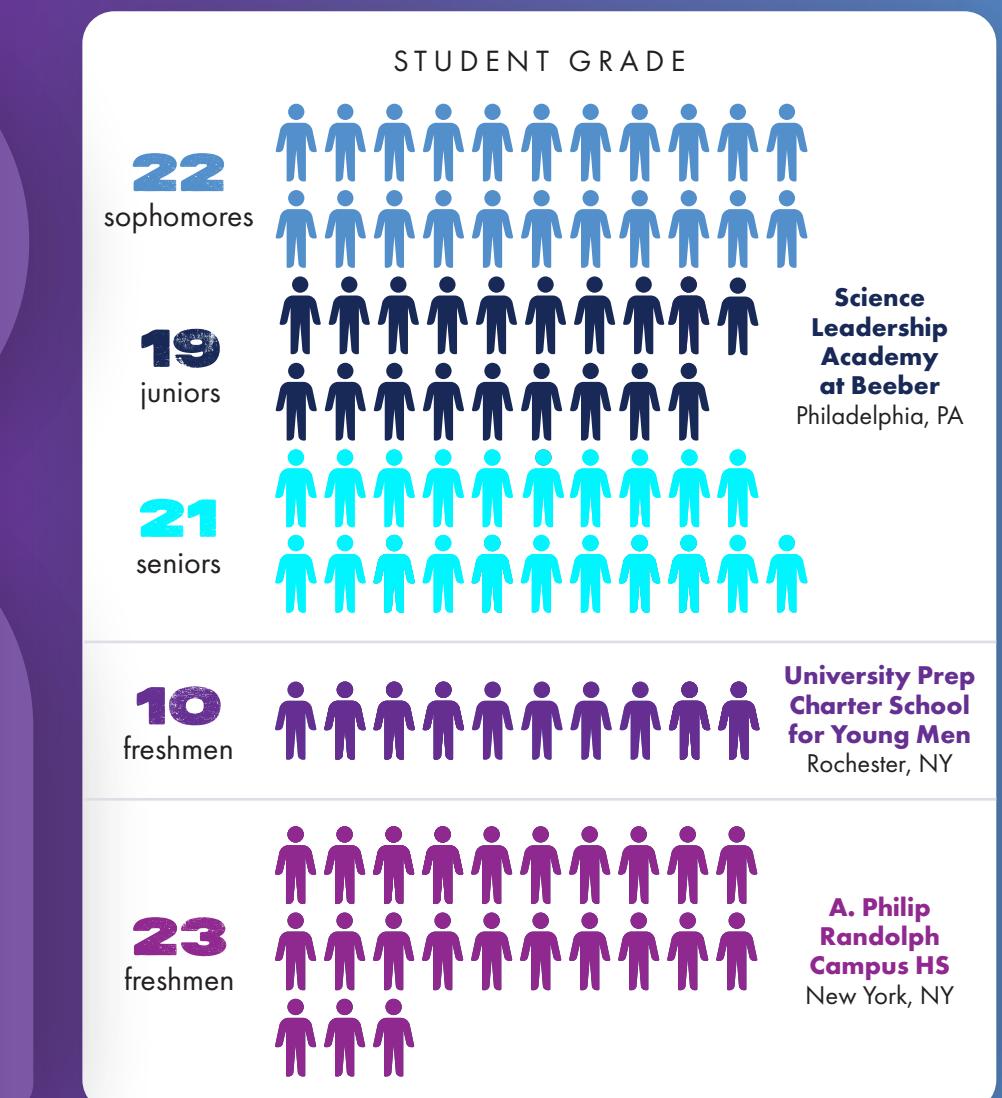
Teaching Academy Snapshot 2024-2025



RACE AND GENDER

71
BLACK

(equal number of male
and female students)





Teaching Academy: 2024-2025 Impact

The Teaching Academy had a profound influence on students' teaching aspirations, academic confidence, racial identity and civic engagement. Significant results, as noted, underscore meaningful changes that occurred, unlikely by random chance, but rather in connection to the Teaching Academy.

- Interest in teaching.** Students collectively demonstrated a significant growth in their interest in teaching (a 36% change), particularly in viewing education as a tool for empowerment and social transformation.
- Academic self-efficacy.** Students sustained high levels of self-perception tied to their academic abilities, resilience and strategies, demonstrating confidence in their ability to pursue excellence, persist in learning, develop critical skills and overcome challenges. We saw a noteworthy increase in the belief that they can complete difficult tasks (71% to 79%).
- Racial and ethnic identity.** Nearly all the Black students of the Teaching Academy (96%) reported that they are proud to be Black/Brown, unchanged before and after the program, and that being Black and having a strong sense of belonging to other Black/Brown people are important to their identity, both showing slight increases at or above 90%. All of this indicates very high and stable levels of racial and ethnic identity.

- Content expertise.** The LeCount-Catto Curriculum presents rigorous coursework on the historical, cultural and structural underpinnings of today's educational systems through an equity and social-justice lens. We note two significant changes discerned among the students:

Putting into practice awareness of political and social issues to make society more just (29% to 54%)

Ability to critically examine the structures that guide the process of education (65% to 90%)

- Social justice orientation.** Teaching Academy students maintained or increased their commitment to activism, equity, civic responsibility and collective empowerment from the beginning to the end of the course.

Teaching Academy: 2024-2025 Student Perspectives

Student reflections tell a powerful story of transformation. They describe growing confidence in teaching as well as evolving views about education and the personal fulfillment that comes from helping young learners.

“Teaching isn’t as easy as it looks. It comes with a lot of responsibility and leadership roles.”

10th Grader

“This has changed my perspective on the community and how I would go about impacting it.”

10th Grader

“[I was] able to teach middle school math and build connections with the students.”

11th Grader



**Interested in bringing the Teaching Academy to your high school?
Scan the QR code to get started.**



All student participants are eligible for a Future Teachers of Excellence Fellowship, offered by the Center for Black Educator Development and administered by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).

SOURCE: Teaching Academy Student Survey Report of 56 Students at Science Leadership Academy at Beeber.



WE ARE REBUILDING THE NATIONAL
BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE>>

FREEDOM SCHOOLS LITERACY ACADEMY

Each summer, over the course of seven intensive weeks, the Freedom Schools Literacy Academy provides high school and college students a compelling opportunity to explore the teaching profession through paid apprenticeships.

Teacher-Apprentices are guided by expert Black teachers as they:

- 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
- Become part of a close community of like-minded peers
- Join the ranks of past participants eligible for the Center's Future Teachers of Excellence Fellowship

Programming, which includes two weeks of training and five weeks of teaching apprenticeship, builds upon the legacy of Freedom Schools which were designed by and for Black people in 1964 Mississippi to expand civil rights, affirm Black identity and ensure a quality education for Black children.

Piloted in 2018 with 16 Teacher-Apprentices and 65 elementary scholars, the Freedom Schools Literacy Academy has nurtured the teaching aspirations of 987 high school and college students who have supported leaps in literacy of 1,579 young scholars since 2018.

SOURCE: Pre- and Post-Program Online Assessments of 43 Students.

Freedom Schools Literacy Academy Snapshot 2024-2025



JUNIOR SERVANT
LEADERS

45

high school students



SERVANT LEADER
APPRENTICES

37

college students



ELEMENTARY
SCHOLARS

160



VIRTUAL

1



PHILADELPHIA SCHOOLS

4

Guion S. Bluford Elementary School,
Dr. Tanner G. Duckrey Public School,
William D. Kelley Public School and
Kenderton Elementary School



Freedom Schools Literacy Academy: Teacher-Apprentices 2024-2025 Impact

The Freedom Schools Literacy Academy continued to provide a powerful model that combines academic enrichment, culturally responsive teaching and leadership development for Teacher-Apprentices.

- **Interest in teaching.** Teacher-Apprentices' interest in teaching remained stable and interest in teaching Black students remained consistently strong; however, there was a significant increase in their contemplation of career paths to teaching (+14%), reflecting a growing awareness of diverse possibilities and desire to be more intentional about their future directions.
- **Academic self-efficacy.** Teacher-Apprentices showed continued growth in self-perception of their academic abilities, resilience and strategies. We saw two statistically significant gains in their having strategies for handling academically challenging tasks (+19%) and belief in their ability to perform well when things get academically tough (+6%).
- **Racial and ethnic identity.** Teacher-Apprentices presented strong and affirming levels of racial and ethnic identity and pride with significant gains in their sense of belonging and active cultural engagement (+17%), suggesting a growing confidence and comfort in their racial and ethnic identity, as well as increased connection to affinity spaces and community-oriented activities.
- **Social justice orientation.** Teacher-Apprentices demonstrated strong and consistent commitment to social justice values, maintaining their commitment to activism, equity, civic responsibility and collective empowerment. There was a statistically significant gain (+9%) in their intention to engage in activities that promote social justice by the end of the summer.

SOURCE: Pre- and Post-Survey Report of 43 Teacher Apprentices.



Freedom Schools Literacy Academy: Teacher-Apprentices Perspectives

Beyond the data, the testimonials of the high school and college students reveal the deep impact of the apprenticeships, showing how teaching, mentorship and building relationships helped them grow in confidence, creativity and empathy.

“My favorite part was getting to know the scholars and building relationships in my classroom.”

College Sophomore

“I had to teach two different levels, and it was a challenge... I was doing a good job at multitasking and being creative and my students were truly making progress in their learning.”

College Sophomore

“Learned to be more confident.”

High School Senior

“The hands-on nature of the projects piqued [my students’] interest and got them truly engaged.”

College Senior

“Seeing growth in [my students’] confidence was my favorite part.”

College Junior

“I have learned...to let the scholar feel heard and free to make their own decisions.”

High School Junior

“I have learned how to look at a lesson plan and put it into action.”

High School Sophomore

Freedom Schools Literacy Academy: Young Scholars 2024-2025 Impact

The Freedom Schools Literacy Academy provided joyful, literacy-rich learning experiences rooted in both academic rigor and cultural affirmation.

Each day for three 45-minute blocks, Teacher-Apprentices taught early literacy using Bookworms K–5, a research-based curriculum focused on skill development and joyful reading through high-volume, grade-level and above-grade-level culturally-affirming texts.

The combination of structured literacy instruction, small-group differentiated instruction and one-on-one support fostered academic and personal growth.

- **Academic gains.** Assessment results show that scholars made meaningful academic gains in literacy with nearly nine in ten scholars meeting or exceeding expectations for literacy growth—a noteworthy outcome given national concerns around summer slides in learning.

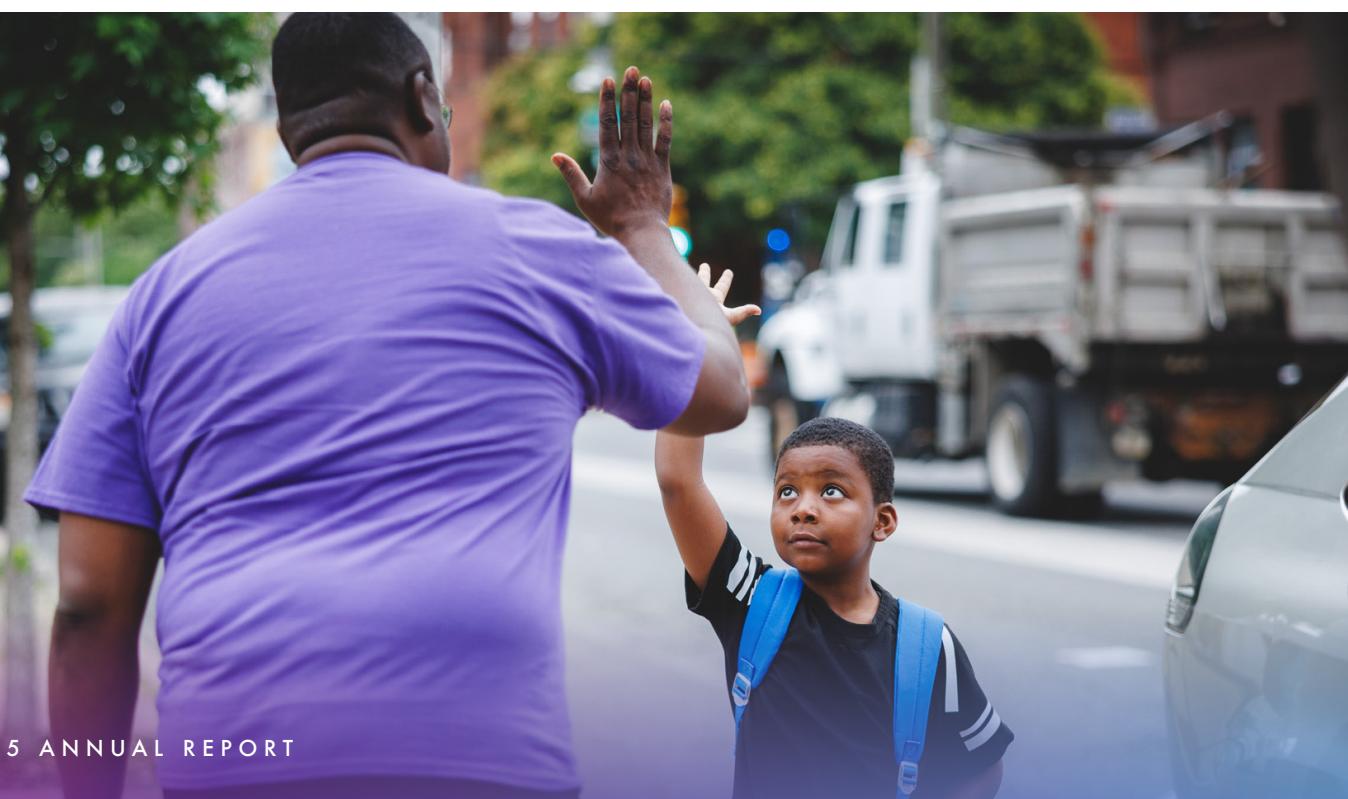
38% advanced at least one literacy group level.

49% sustained progress.

13% adjusted to a level better aligned with their needs and learning pace.

- **Racial identity.** Scholars showed significant gains in happiness about being Black or Brown (+21%) and their knowledge of Black/Brown people who have done great and amazing things (+15%) and of books written by Black or Brown people (+12%), both results underscoring a stronger sense of racial pride and belonging.
- **Self-perception.** Scholars also demonstrated significant growth across multiple measures of self-perception, including seeing themselves as someone special and a good reader (both +7%), feeling good about themselves (+6%), being proud of their schoolwork (+5%) and knowing adults care about them (+4%).

SOURCES: Pre- and post-assessments, including the Instructional Decisionmaking Inventory and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills measures of 108 rising 1st-3rd-grade scholars. Racial-identity and self-perception pre/post data analysis of 85 scholars.



Freedom Schools Literacy Academy: Family Perspectives

Family reflections reveal how the program not only strengthens students' academic confidence but also nurtures pride, joy and motivation to learn. Parents consistently share noticeable growth in their children's self-esteem and love of reading, affirming the deep and lasting effects of the Freedom Schools Literacy Academy.

I really like the genuine care of the children making them want to attend daily.

Parent of Rising 1st Grader

They really got [my child] reading. I've seen more in these few weeks than an entire school year.

Parent of Rising 1st Grader

Freedom School curriculum and staff boosted [my daughter's] confidence and understanding in her culture, the color of her skin and her hair texture. She is proud and wants to educate everyone around her. Thank you!

Parent of Rising 3rd Grader

[My child] got the opportunity to connect and build community with other scholars in the program who share an appreciation for community and their ancestors... This program reinforced skills we have been working to support at home.

Parent of Rising 3rd Grader

The way the teacher encouraged and supported the students was a beautiful thing to see, even as a virtual student! My son was eager to get on every single day...he loved it!

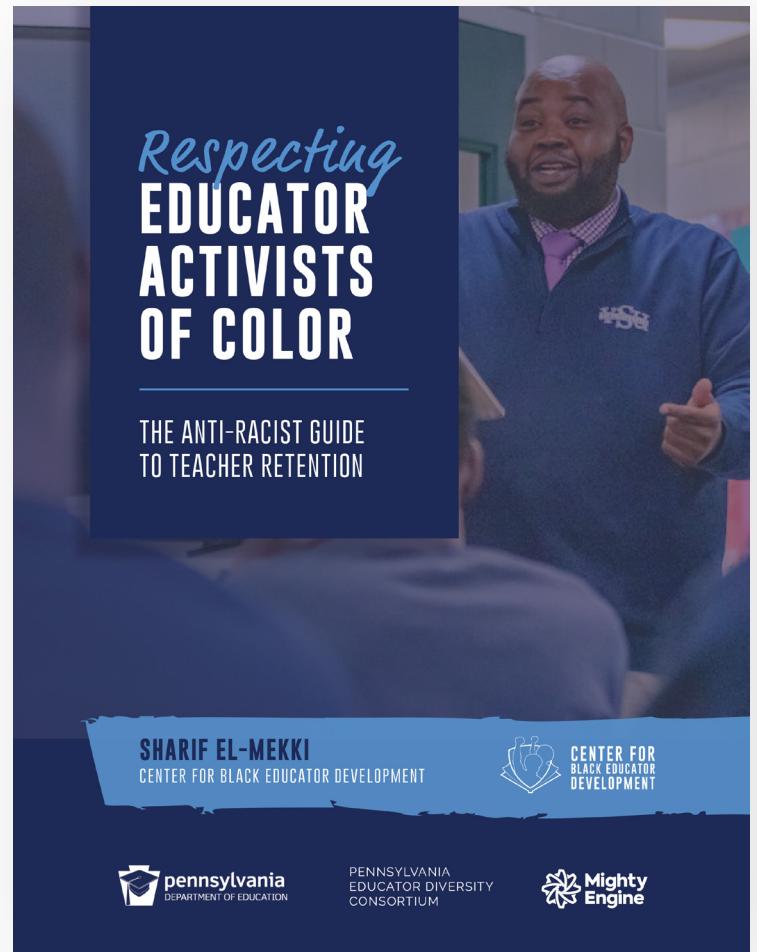
Parent of Rising 2nd Grader

WE ARE REBUILDING THE NATIONAL
BLACK TEACHER PIPELINE>>

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & NETWORKING

The Center's Professional Learning and Networking initiatives are designed to support not only the recruitment and retention of Black teachers, but also their flourishing through tailored workshops, affinity groups and events, including our annual Black Men in Education Convening held each fall in Philadelphia. Integral to these endeavors are:

- School cultures where all teachers and students thrive, working closely with administrators and their entire school community.
- Shared curricula, toolkits and e-learning courses grounded in Black pedagogy and promoting anti-discriminatory mindsets to address resource gaps.



**Respecting
EDUCATOR
ACTIVISTS
OF COLOR**

THE ANTI-RACIST GUIDE
TO TEACHER RETENTION

SHARIF EL-MEKKI
CENTER FOR BLACK EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PENNSYLVANIA
EDUCATOR DIVERSITY
CONSORTIUM

Mighty
Engine



**WORKSHEET 8
CHECKLIST FOR RECRUITING EDUCATORS
AND EDUCATOR-ACTIVISTS OF COLOR**

**WORKSHEET 10
SCHOOL CULTURE ASSESSMENT**

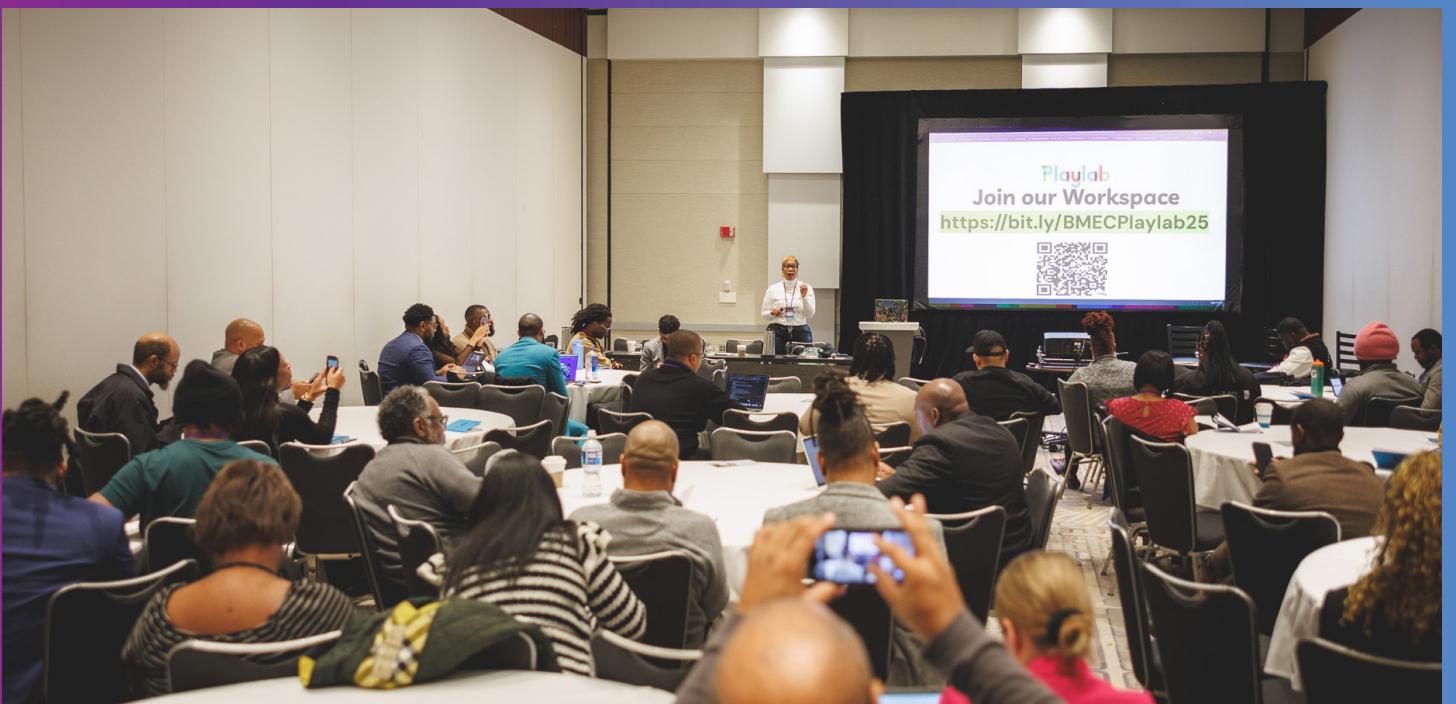
THE WHO'S OF OUR SCHOOL CULTURE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Leadership confidence: Educators, students and families are full confidence in their school's ability to advance the changes we need to recruit and retain education-activists of color.

2. Educator-student parity: Educators mirror the students they teach in their racial identities, life experiences and worldviews.

3. Family and community engagement: Families and other school community members feel welcome and valued.



2025 Highlight: AI in Education Leadership Catalyst

The Center piloted a five-week virtual learning series, once in the spring and again in the fall, entitled *AI in Education Leadership Catalyst* attended by 100 Black and Latino PK-12 education leaders from 20 states with GenAI partners: ISTE+ASCD and Latinos for Education.

Through a community-first, culturally-responsive approach, this program fostered collaboration and capacity-building to explore large language models and advance responsible AI use in education. By series end, participants created a training resource of AI-powered tools, as well as a plan for its usage by exponentially more peers.

Participant Profile

Participation requirements included: a minimum of five years educator experience; current leadership role; and demonstrated orientation towards equity and advocacy. All were selected based on their dedication to advancing learning outcomes for underrepresented communities and their enthusiasm for active engagement in a peer learning community.

The majority of the educators were Black women from urban districts whose schools receive Title I funding.

Series Impact

The series focused on sharing knowledge and increasing skills to harness AI for transformative, ethical and equitable teaching and learning, featuring expert speakers, interactive discussions, hands-on activities and collaborative problem-solving.

Pre- and post-assessments show remarkable acquisition of and growth in knowledge and skills directly applicable to their work with participants reporting:

 **100%**
Series helped them become more fluent with using AI for education

 **100%**
Plan to support colleagues with AI integration

 **98%**
Plan to use AI to strengthen their teaching practice or education leadership



BLACK MEN IN EDUCATION CONVENING

BMEC is no ordinary conference, and our 2025 gathering proved this beyond doubt.

As Dr. William Hayes, CEO of Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter School, proclaimed during the opening of this year's extraordinary three-day event in Philly, BMEC is really a "convening of the collective fight."

Since 2017, we have hosted this convening to foster a brotherhood of Black men in education who often face tougher working conditions at high-poverty, harder-to-staff schools and who frequently work in isolation without mentors or peers to turn to for support.

BMEC grew out of similar gatherings the Center's CEO, Sharif El-Mekki, and a small group of Black men in education hosted in 2015 and 2016, which were known then as The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice.

This year's convening theme, "Power to the Pupil: History, Hip Hop, & the Future of Teaching & Learning," was

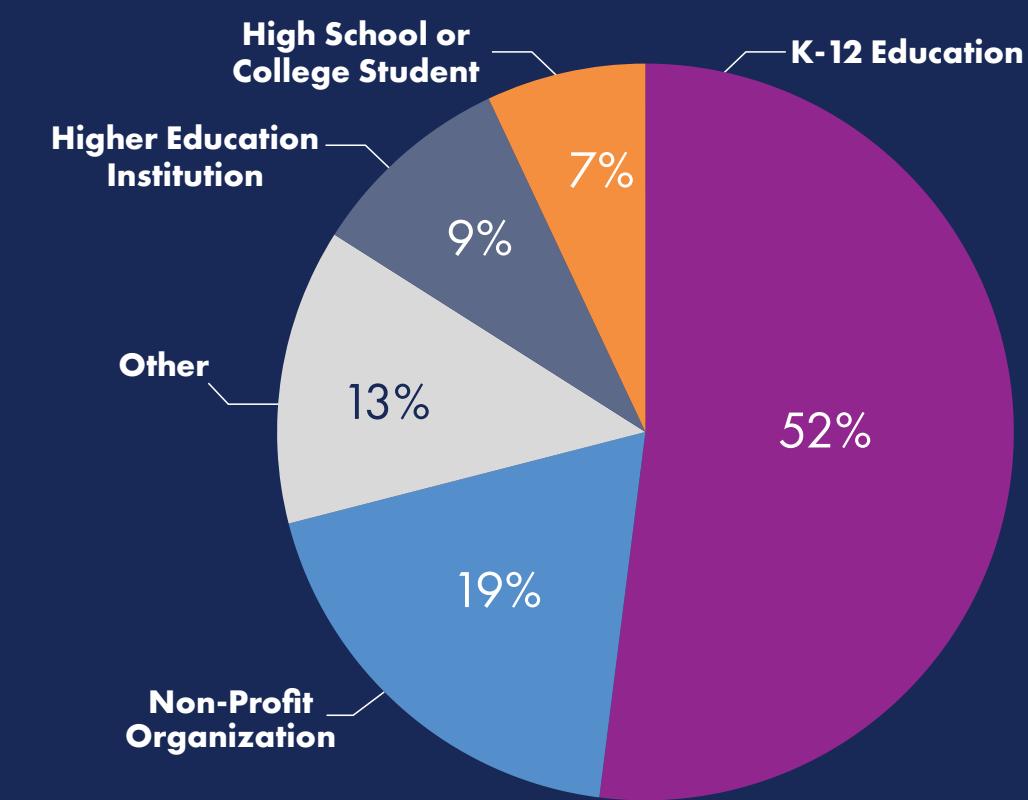
inspired by a confluence of historic markings this year: the 35th anniversary of Public Enemy's historic album *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back*, along with the 60th anniversary of the assassination of El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X), who emphasized education as a path to self-knowledge, dignity and liberation.

As we seek to address and accelerate change in rebuilding the Black teacher pipeline, our BMECs consistently bring together 1,000+ Black men in education (along with those who support them) to explore and share strategies for improving Black teacher recruitment, development and retention.

At #BMEC2025, more than 1,400 attendees from 35 states plus the District of Columbia, and three countries gathered in Philadelphia on November 20th-22nd for three days of plenary with more than 120 breakout sessions. Next year, BMEC will move across the street to the Philadelphia Marriott Downtown to accommodate the hundreds more we had to turn away.

Attendee Demographics

50%+ FIRST TIME ATTENDEES



#BMEC2026

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026

PHILADELPHIA, PA

BMEC Day 1 Highlights

Center Board Chair Winston Cox welcomed everyone before literally and figuratively handing off to Bryce Thompson, a proud member of the first cohort of the Future Teacher of Excellence Fellowship, who spoke about how the Center welcomes fellows to “come as you are” and “builds upon where you are,” calling on everyone to “make sure our kids feel the love and the power of what we are creating.”

Dr. Hayes showcased the multigenerational nature of BMEC when he asked all those under 30 and over 60 to stand to be recognized with thunderous applause, setting the stage for the continuation of a legacy we each carry. To honor our ancestors, Howard University Associate Professor of Africana Studies Greg Carr offered libations, invoking a repeated Àsé with the outpouring of each cultural and historic revelation.

Dr. Leslie Fenwick (award-winning author and dean emerita at Howard University’s School of Education) delivered a powerful, historically grounded keynote on the erasure of more than 100,000 Black educators in the decades following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Drawing on real stories of remarkable Black educators sidelined during this purge, she emphasized that it was an intended consequence of integration, as Black educators were systematically replaced by white educators, often with far less experience and fewer credentials.

In fortifying the “conjoined goal of racial and educational equity,” Dr. Fenwick urged the educators in the room to know and tell our truth. A panel of experts, moderated by Dr. Na’iliyah Nasir, President of the Spencer Foundation, expounded on Dr. Fenwick’s keynote address.



“The profession was taken from us. Black educators did not leave.”

Dr. Leslie T. Fenwick, Dean Emerita, Howard University School of Education

“Liberation requires letting go of internalized white supremacy and American exceptionalism.”

Dr. Greg Carr, Associate Professor, Africana Studies, Howard University

“Let history guide the way forward.”

Dr. Charise Cheney, Professor, Black Studies, University of Oregon

“Our survival and progress depend on self-determination, not external approval.”

Dr. Camika Royal, Director & Associate Professor, Urban Educational Leadership, Morgan State University

“Community, presence, and visibility matter—and educators should celebrate themselves.”

Dr. Ivory Toldson, Professor, Counseling Psychology, Howard University; Editor-in-Chief, *The Journal of Negro Education*; Chief of Research, Concentric Educational Solutions



BMEC Day 2 Highlights

“This is what a pipeline looks like.”

Dr. William Hayes, CEO, Boys' Latin of Philadelphia

Welcoming attendees back into community, Dr. William Hayes opened Day 2 grounding the room in joy, culture, purpose and responsibility.

Rachel Skerritt, Chief Strategy Officer at Attuned Education Partners, moderated a thought-provoking discussion, titled “Policy and Community,” which started with each panelist naming a Black educator who shaped their life. In their closing remarks, the panelists emphasized the need for collective self-determination, ideological liberation and rejecting internalized white supremacy.

“When we embody teaching with love, they see us.”

Kaya Henderson, Executive Vice President and Executive Director, Center for Rising Generations at the Aspen Institute

“The truth saved me, and it came from a Black teacher.”

Dr. John King, Jr., Chancellor, SUNY

“We need to provide opportunities for young people to leave their backyards.”

Dr. Lisette Nieves, Distinguished Clinical Professor, New York University

“The most important tool I have in the toolkit is a mirror.”

Tony Thurmond, California Superintendent of Public Instruction

“Talent is equally distributed, opportunity and access are not.”

Dr. Tony Watlington, Superintendent, School District of Philadelphia

The second panel, “Black Power and Education for Liberation,” moderated by T.J. Whitaker (Educator & Lecturer Columbia High School and Rutgers University), made way for an intergenerational conversation rooted in Black Power, community self-determination, cultural heritage and liberation-centered schooling.

The panel blended political education, lived experience and movement history with urgent commentary on the current state of Black education.

“We cannot pretend that education exists outside the structures of white supremacy. Liberation comes when we organize for power, not when we wait for policy to save us.”

Dr. Howard Fuller, Co-Founder, Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy

“Our classrooms must return to the ways of our ancestors, where teaching was a ritual, learning was sacred and every child was held in a circle of culture, spirit and community.”

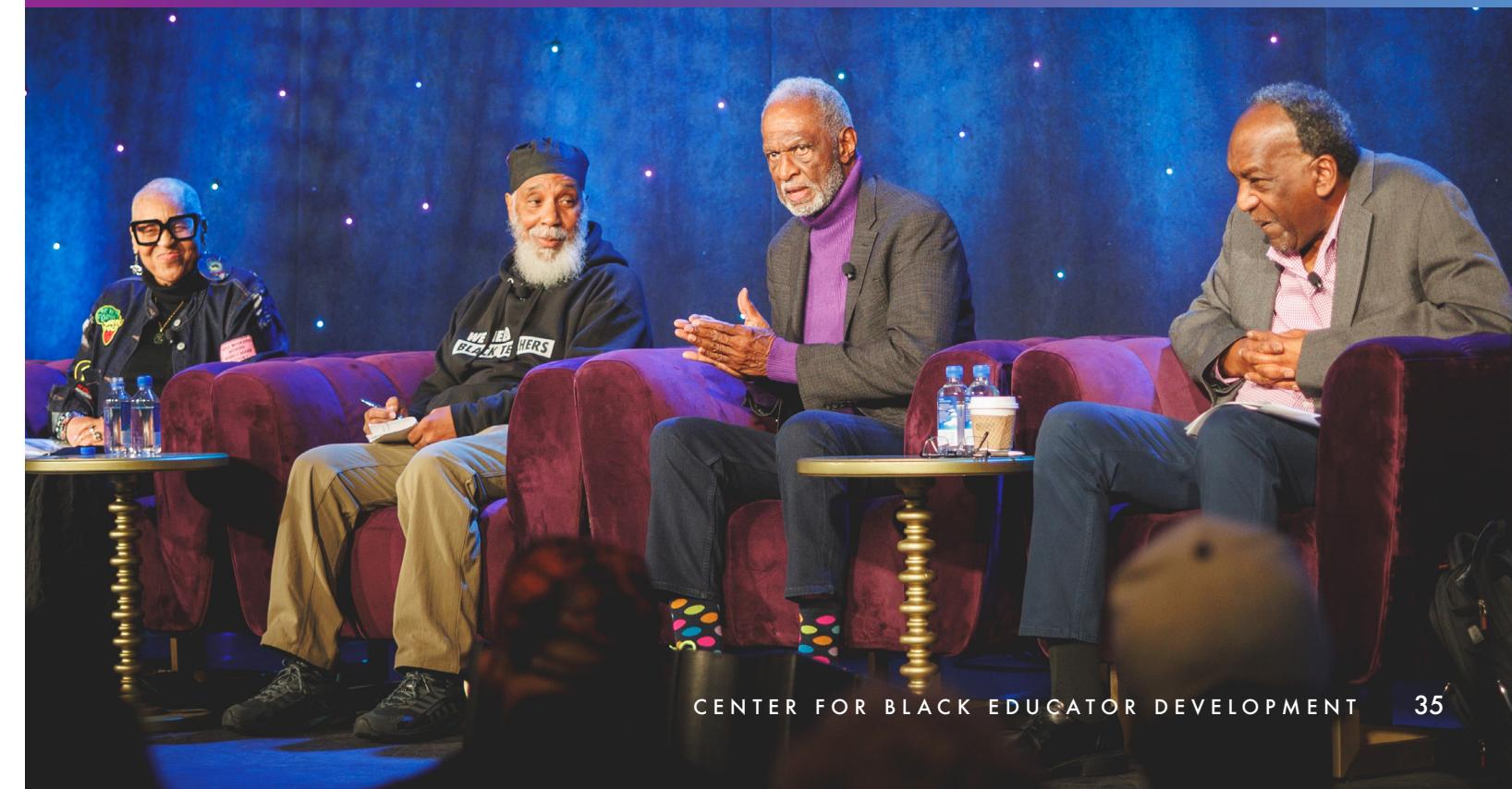
Mama Yasilí Majid, Black Panther Party Member

“To teach our children is a revolutionary act. A Black classroom is not just a room; it is a battleground for truth, memory and the protection of our young from the lies of this world.”

Baba Khalid Khamid, Activist For Justice and Freedom, Black Panther Party Member

“If educators do not know our history, they cannot guide our future. Teaching is political work, and those who step into our classrooms must be prepared for the struggle, not sheltered from it.”

Dr. Charles Payne, Director, Joseph Cornwall Center for Metropolitan Studies



BMEC Day 3 Highlights

On BMEC's closing day, Center for Black Educator Development Founder/CEO Sharif El-Mekki delivered a penetrating reflection that blended history, personal testimony, civil-rights lineage and today's social and political turmoil.

He spoke on the origins of the convening—early dinners that grew into a national movement—and the intergenerational nature of continued struggle, underscoring the collective determination it takes for sustaining Black community liberation.

“The pipeline is not just teachers. It’s the aunties, uncles, pastors, and neighbors who keep us whole.”

Sharif El-Mekki, Founder/CEO, Center for Black Educator Development



This year's Liberator Award was given to former Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Yvonne Savior, who is widely revered for her mentorship of young Black educators.

Poet Amir Sulaiman offered a compelling interactive meditation on ego, faith, service and creativity, connecting the emotional reality of what we do as Black educators to spiritual and artistic practice, reminding all of us that both love and heartbreak sharpen one's humanity and capacity to serve. As in past years, Poet Sulaiman's words will continue to energize our collective work beyond the convening.



“The point is to become someone whose heart can break and still serve.”

Amir Sulaiman, Grammy-Nominated Poet, Recording Artist, Harvard Fellow, Producer and Screenwriter



Chris Stewart (CEO of Brightbeam) moderated the much-anticipated panel, "Teaching Beyond the Classroom." Their collective insights grounded educator identity in voice and community responsibility as they emphasized how educators shape identity and possibility far beyond academic content.

They each modeled vulnerability, humor and truth-telling in discussing how mentorship, trauma healing, platform-building, and community engagement can shape Black youth and educator identity.

Framing teaching as a sacred, spiritual art, Drs. Chris Emdin and Lisa Delpit held a fireside chat emphasizing how real education requires listening to the "small voices" of the divine, honoring children as closest to that divinity, and remembering our own child selves to avoid reproducing harm.

They called on educators everywhere to create spaces of freedom inside oppressive systems, helping children to dream radically about who they can become.

“A teacher telling me I was special changed my life.”

Lupe Fiasco, Grammy Award-Winning Rapper, Songwriter, Producer and Visionary

“Education is not what you do in a classroom. It's what you take with you.”

Bomani Jones, CEO, Old Soul Production

“Young Black boys see fear in their white teachers by fourth grade.”

Etan Thomas, The Activist Athlete

“A person who has stopped dreaming cannot activate dreams in children.”

Dr. Chris Emdin, Maxine Greene Chair and Professor of Science Education, Teachers College and Columbia University

“Why would you let people who are insane with racism define who you are or who our children can be?”

Dr. Lisa Delpit, Founder and Principal Consultant, Delpit Learning; Felton G. Clark Distinguished Professor of Education (Ret.) Southern University

Grateful to Our BMEC2025 Speakers:

Mahmud Abdur-Rauf
Jason Acosta
Christopher Alberts
Jahleel Alieu
Jason B. Allen
Dr. Essence Allen-Presley
Njemele Anderson
Zaynab Baalbaki
Dr. Tasean Baldwin
Dr. H. Justin Ballenger
Councilwoman Cindy Bass
Gary Beidleman
Rep. Anthony Bellmon
Jamal Berry
Sekou Biddle
Maurice Blackmon
Kevin Burgess
Tia Borders
Jamaal Bowman
Dr. Mike Brown
Oris Bryant
Willie Buford
Dr. Roderick Carey
Dr. Greg Carr
Katie Choby
Charise Cheney
Clyde Cole
Dr. Donna-Marie Cole-Malott
Cassondra "Dr. Cass" A. Corbin-Thaddies
Tafshier Cosby
Jaida C. Cox
Winston Cox
Juliet Curci
Dr. Julius Davis
Kazmir Davis
Tammie "Renee" Davis
De-Lea Deane
Dr. Lisa Delpit
Alston DeVega
Dr. Crystal Edwards
Dr. Chris Emdin
Elonza Ervin
Dr. Leslie Fenwick
Raymond Fields, Jr.
Lupe Fiasco
Dr. Howard Fuller
Niki Garland
TaraShaun R. Gipson
Shayna Renee Hammond
Zaretta Hammond
Baba Hamid Khalid
Rep. Jordan Harris
Dr. William Hayes
Kaya Henderson
Abigail Henry
Quaran Hernandez
Dr. Mahalia Hines
Principal Baruti Kafele
Miriam Kamya
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Dr. Shauna D.A. Knox
William Krasnow
Lisa Lazare
Jeff Livingston
Dr. Constance Lindsay
Dr. Bettina Love
Mama Yasmin Majid
Dr. David McGuire
Steven McKinley Monson
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Larry Miller
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Dr. Camika Royal
Emily Sagor
Dr. Sonn Sam
Jamila Sams
Ms. Yvonne Savior
Darius Sharif
Mario Jovan Shaw
Latanya Simmons
Rachel Skerritt
Gavin Smith
David Spellmon
Chris Stewart
Amir Sulaiman
Etan Thomas
Councilman Isaiah Thomas
Kareem Thomas
Bryce Thompson
Tony Thurmond
Dr. Ivory Toldson
Curtis Valentine
Dr. Brandi Waters
Dr. Tony Watlington
Didi Watts
Peter Watts
Dr. Ron Whitaker
Thomas TJ Whitaker
William White
Senator Anthony Williams
Karen M. Williams
Troy Wilson, Jr.
Imani Wulff-Cochrane



BMEC2025 Survey Results

BMEC attendees left this year's gathering with powerful gains in motivation, knowledge and culturally responsive practice.

Participants reported substantial increases in their understanding of the Black men in education experience, the emotional labor required to sustain the work and the historical and cultural foundations that ground their practice.

Attendees emphasized a shared sense of community, empowerment and renewed purpose among Black male educators. They consistently described the convening as a catalyst for strengthening networks, elevating their voices in policy and practice, prioritizing self-care and recommitting to efforts that recruit, retain and develop Black male educators nationwide.

Respondents frequently noted feeling inspired by being in community with peers who look like them, affirmed in their identity, and energized to expand the work in their schools, cities and professional circles. Others reflected that they were leaving the convening more connected, motivated and determined to advocate for Black male educators and continue the ongoing work of advancing racial justice and educational equity.

What BMEC2025 Attendees Said:

“It was an honor to be a part of and witness the Black joy, celebration of identity and the love and connection of educators.”

“The most significant shift I am taking from #BMEC2025 is a renewed commitment to centering Black educator wellness and collective leadership as a foundation for sustainable school transformation.”

“BMEC bridged the gap of educators throughout generations to share their knowledge, experience and aspirations for elevating the influential importance of Black teachers, community engagement and academic achievement. It was warm, welcoming, and inspiring.”

“I need to be intentional about being a conduit for the learning and innovation that comes out of BMEC. We cannot afford to focus only on what happens this weekend.”

“This conference is what a real community feels like.”

“I am leaving with a clearer vision of how my voice and influence can create lasting impact for my students and school community.”

“I am leaving BMEC committed to building routines that honor student culture and create belonging. I am bringing back stronger parent engagement strategies to help our boys stay motivated all year.”



“It's amazing to witness the stark contrast between the lack of the Black men working as educators in my school, and the hundreds attending the conference. I plan to continue fighting for a teaching force that understands and connects with the lived experiences of students in Philadelphia.”

“I am leaving with a clearer vision for how Black men in education can lead with authenticity, community, and purpose. BMEC reminded me that our work is collective and our impact grows when we build together.”

“Teachers need fewer theories and more practical skills to stay in the profession. BMEC can fill that gap through short, focused skill tracks taught by master educators.”

“I'm so inspired by the elders and youth who are committed to learning more about themselves and how to create support systems and healthy environments for Black students.”

“The most valuable insights came from discussions centered on understanding our educational ancestry, analyzing historical setbacks, and most importantly, gaining actionable strategies and practical frameworks for advancing Black students.”

“As a white man working in the Chicago Public School system with Black men, not only can I, but I MUST engage more proactively with Black education. It's my duty to speak out.”



PUBLIC POLICY & ADVOCACY

The Center for Black Educator Development works to build a political and policy environment that promotes equitable outcomes for all students, strengthens teacher diversity and cultivates school cultures where Black educators can thrive.

We do this by advancing strategic key advocacy efforts.

National Public Policy & Advocacy

Reintroduction of the Respect, Advancement, and Increasing Support for Educators (RAISE) Act

CBED endorsed the RAISE Act, federal legislation—led by Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey and Congresswoman Jahana Hayes of Connecticut—to increase teacher compensation and strengthen workforce diversity by providing tax credits to educators.

Department of Education Protection Act

CBED endorsed Congresswoman Jahana Hayes' Department of Education Protection Act, which safeguards the U.S. Department of Education from efforts to dismantle or weaken the agency's operations and authority.

Declaration in Support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Preliminary Injunction

CBED submitted a declaration through the ACLU in support of plaintiffs seeking a preliminary injunction, affirming its commitment to protecting educators' rights and advancing equity in education.

Sign-On Letter to Congressional Appropriations Supporting Grow Your Own Educator Programs

CBED joined a TNTP-authored letter urging Congress to invest in evidence-based Grow Your Own educator programs within the FY 2026 appropriations bill, emphasizing the need to recruit, train and retain local talent to address teacher shortages and improve student outcomes.



State-Level Public Policy & Advocacy

Sign-On Letter Supporting Black Educators at LAUSD

CBED joined a collective advocacy effort amplifying support for Black educators in the Los Angeles Unified School District, affirming their essential role and calling attention to challenges facing diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

California Joint Budget Letter on Educator Workforce Investments

CBED endorsed a statewide budget proposal allocating \$300 million to strengthen California's educator workforce through grants, certification incentives and loan repayment programs for teachers in high-need schools.

Joint Budget Letter on Educator Workforce Investments

CBED joined a coalition letter urging the California Legislature to maintain \$264.2 million in proposed educator workforce investments within the 2025–26 budget, supporting grants, certification incentives and stipends that strengthen teacher preparation and retention.

Local Public Policy & Advocacy

Sign-On Letter to Increase Millage Transfer to the School District of Philadelphia

CBED joined a local advocacy effort urging Philadelphia City Council to approve a 1% increase in the millage transfer to the School District in the FY 2026 budget, generating an estimated \$25 million in additional funding for public schools.

Sign-On Letter to Governor Shapiro and Legislative Leadership on Structured Literacy

CBED joined the Pennsylvania Literacy Coalition and Teach Plus in urging state leaders to support evidence-based literacy legislation (SB 700/HB 684) and allocate \$100 million in FY26 funding to advance teacher training, coaching and access to high-quality instructional materials.

California Quality Teachers Policy Brief

CBED signed on as a supporting organization to EdVoice Institute's Quality Teachers Policy Brief, endorsing a statewide roadmap to ensure all students—particularly in high-need schools—have access to well-prepared and well-supported educators.

Sign on Letter Supporting Diverse Education Leaders Pipeline Initiative Program Reinvestment Campaign.

CBED joined a coalition letter urging California's state leadership to commit additional and ongoing funding to support the training, credentialing, and placement for TK-12 administrators of color.

School Funding Support Petition

CBED signed on to a citywide petition urging Pennsylvania lawmakers to increase state funding for Philadelphia public schools as part of Year 2 of the court-ordered plan to address the state's unconstitutional funding system and \$4.5 billion shortfall, reaffirming our commitment to equitable and adequate education funding.

JOIN THE CAUSE

Rebuilding the Black Teacher Pipeline is a generational effort, requiring all of us to work together strategically.

Here's how you can help right now:

Stay Engaged

Join our mailing list.

Follow us on social media and advance the conversation.

@CenterBlackEd    

Center for Black Educator Development  

Partner With Us

Host a Teaching Academy in your district or school.

Sponsor a Future Teachers of Excellence Fellow.

Contact Dr. Orpheus Williams, Chief Program Officer, at Orpheus.Williams@cbed.org.

Make a Contribution

thecenterblaked.org/donate.

We have an ongoing need for support to help us advance our mission and promote the next generation of talented Black educators, and your donations are always critical and appreciated.

But this year, we also have a special campaign to mark the 100th Anniversary of Carter G. Woodson's call to honor Black educators and education as liberation. In partnership with Blackprint 20, we're seeking to raise \$100,000 specifically to expand our Teaching Pathways programming.



OUR TEAM



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CARTER ANDREWS**
Professor, Department
of Teacher Education,
Michigan State University



DR. HEATHER HARDING
Executive Director
Campaign For Our Shared Future

I always say that next to teaching, working at the Center for Black Educator Development is the most fulfilling career I've ever had.

Mimi McKee, Managing Director of External Affairs



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REVOLUTIONARY
AT THE SAME TIME.

DR. LESLIE FENWICK

Award-Winning Author & Dean Emerita
Howard University School of Education



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