Gaining Greater Awareness of the Barriers Preventing Prospective Black Male Educators from Entering the Profession

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ABSTRACT

In effort to provide greater context for the need for more black male educators, the various approaches to recruit and retain black male educators, current issues in school discipline pertaining to urban students of color, and potential bias and discrimination that may hamper the hiring of black male educators, this summary is intended to survey each topic in a comprehensive, yet brief manner. What is clear is that there is a lack of diversity and representation in the educator workforce in America's classrooms and students are suffering because of it - especially students of color. To the extent we care about the educational trajectory of America's students, and our society at large, it is a must that we take whatever measures possible to provide students with what we know matters: quality curriculum that promotes cooperation and critical thinking to prepare students to be agents in their society of the future; safe and caring learning environments that dignifies students' differences and individuality and all their complexities, and educators who are pedagogically and content proficient, as well as student-centered who honor students' diverse cultures.

INTRODUCTION

In effort to provide greater context for the need for more black male educators, the various approaches to recruit and retain black male educators, current issues in school discipline pertaining to urban students of color, and potential bias and discrimination that may hamper the hiring of black male educators, this summary is intended to survey each topic in a comprehensive, yet brief manner. What is clear is that there is a lack of diversity and representation in the educator workforce in America's classrooms and students are suffering because of it - especially students of color. To the extent we care about the educational trajectory of America's students, and our society at large, it is a must that we take whatever measures possible to provide students with what we know matters: quality curriculum that promotes cooperation and critical thinking to prepare students to be agents in their society of the future; safe and caring learning environments that dignifies students' differences and individuality and all their complexities, and educators who are pedagogically and content proficient, as well as student-centered who honor students' diverse cultures.

It will take enormous effort and commitment on behalf of policymakers, community members and educators working in concert to provide the best learning environment possible for America's children. Hopefully, this brief can help point us in the right direction pertaining to increasing the representation of black male educators in our schools among other issues explored herein. As an issue decade in the making, taking meaningful steps to address the deficit of black male teachers will benefit all America's students, thus justifying all efforts to solve this issue today.

Prior to positing any solution, we must first have a clear understanding of the context wherein problems are situated. It is my intent, in what follows, to not only suggest recommendations to mitigate a variety of issues connected to the absence of black male teachers in schools, but to properly contextualize each issue so that we understand each issue more comprehensively, beyond isolated statistics and quantitative metrics. Further, I attempted to indicate examples of what some school districts, states, and post-secondary institutions are doing to help address issues including the lack of black male teachers, black male collegiate graduation rates, and disparities in school discipline in public education that impacts black students' graduation rates and more broadly, their lives outside of school.

This survey will first begin by broadening our collective understanding of the shortage of black male teachers beyond a statistical data point, but more so an issue that may be bound by geography and perceived available occupational opportunities for black male college graduates. Our conceptions of a dearth of black male educators must include an understanding of where, traditionally, more occupational opportunities presented themselves for college-educated black males. Regional contexts, matter. Where black people live matters. When we make attempts to understand the shortage of black male teachers without taking into account the role the not-too-distant history plays in where college-educated black men see and seek occupational opportunity, its breadth or deprivation; and if we ignore the importance of connecting where the bulk of black Americans live and where most college students elect to attend college - in-state and close to home, and instead seek solutions in a one-size-fits-all national approach, it is likely we'll miss opportunities to understand this issue clearer, and settle for less-than effective solutions.

Secondly, we'll explore the topic of recruitment and retention of black male teachers. Again, we discuss the issue of demography, educational attainment, geography, and sexist interpretations of the teaching profession as each plays a significant role in the low numbers of black male teachers in America's classrooms today. And while most reports continue to cite that 77-79% of America's teachers are white[1] and that nearly 60% of America's teachers are white women, what typically goes under the radar that only 17% of America's teachers are white men[2]. Simply, isolating the problem of a deficit of black male teachers as unique to black Americans misses the more salient point that men across races and ethnicities are largely pursuing other occupational avenues outside of education. From that perspective, it is imperative that any

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[1] Schaeffer, K. (2021). "America's public-school teachers are far less racially and ethnically diverse than their students". Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/12/10/americas-public-school-teachers-are-far-less-racially-and-ethnically-diverse-than-their-students/

[2] Reeves, R. (2024). "Missing Misters: Gender Diversity among Teachers". American Institute of Boys and Men. https://aibm.org/research/missing-misters/

approach to attract black men to teaching must include a recognition of how our society has traditionally isolated teaching as "women's work".[3] [4]

Third, our article will delve into the role teacher unions, school districts, nonprofits and colleges/universities play in efforts to increase the numbers of black male educators. To be sure, each entity following guidelines set forth by Every *Student Succeeds Act* (2015)[5], has made steps to increase the presence of black male educators in the classroom. Still, we explore some significant historical events that led to the sustained decimation of black educators, namely the desegregation of American public schools during the Civil Rights Movement, and the "accountability era" the emerged following the passage of *No Child Left Behind* (2001) to elucidate the shortage of black educators was not an organic occurrence, but the direct result of politics, even if well-intentioned. From there, varying approaches will be identified to illustrate how various institutions and organizations are making attempts to restore what has been eroded. From there, we'll briefly unpack "what works for black boys" beyond the oft-referenced "achievement gap" to connect broader contexts to help explain the academic outcomes we're seeing. We must begin to conceptualize academic outcomes as indicators of societal opportunity or marginalization - not intellectual capacity or academic perseverance of black boys. We have to understand the societal and historical contexts wherein masses of black children are situated in our society and recognize that whatever outcomes result within schools is a reflection, not an initiator, of their contextual reality. If we wish to see better academic outcomes from black boys and girls in schools, significant approaches must be implemented to improve their lived contexts outside of the schoolhouse.

Further, to understand the lingering shortage of black male teachers since the accountability era, it would be imprudent to ignore employment discrimination in hiring that depresses black male representation in schools. In this section, we spend some time describing how rampant employment discrimination is even for educated black Americans within the field of education. This significant issue is too often left unexplored, leaving our understanding of the shortage of black males in the classroom to be described as a shortage of "supply"- a limited pool of qualified, prospective black male teacher candidates. Research, however, suggests the issue may also be one of demand; that districts that have the availability to hire black educators, refrain from doing so even when black applicants are similarly qualified as white applicants who are eventually hired. If the approach to address the shortage of black male teachers only includes increasing the number of interested candidates, but does not address possible discrimination in hiring, we recognize black male representation in the classroom will not improve.

Finally, our submission concludes by examining disparities in school discipline policies that place black students as targets. Modern school disciplinary policies that place a premium of enforcement on minor school behaviors are connected to disproportionate suspension and

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[3] Apple, M. W. (1985). Teaching and "Women's Work": A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis. Teachers College Record, 86(3), 455-473. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146818508600306

[4] Sadker, D. & Sadker, M. (1989). Sexism in American education: the hidden curriculum. In D. Warren (Ed.), American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work. New York: Macmillan.

[5] National Coalition on School Diversity. (2020). Including Racial and Socioeconomic Diversity in ESSA District Plans. Policy Brief 10. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED607737.pdf

expulsion rates of black students, both of which correlate to higher rates of retention and withdrawals from school. Further, with the majority of schools with a predominant population of lower-income students of color having police stationed inside school buildings, the risk of routine student misbehaviors being escalated into criminal matters presents even greater concerns for students of color. With a greater presence of black male teachers in America's schools, research shows suspension rates and disciplinary referrals decrease for black students; yet another reason to prioritize increasing the numbers of black male teachers in America's schools.

Assuredly, this brief will not be the last word in conveying the urgency for policies and institutions to do what is necessary to increase the amount of black male teachers working in America's schools. The intent here was to present, albeit briefly, a broader context of how we got here, why we're still here, and why it matters to so many to get more black male teachers into the classroom.

AUTHOR POSITIONALITIES

- I, Keith E. Benson, am a black male public-school teacher of twenty-one years at Camden High School in the Camden City School District (CCSD) in Camden, NJ; adjunct professor of political science, and mentor to novice male teachers of color in southern New Jersey. Within my tenure as public-school educator, I was also the president of our District's teacher union from 2017-2024.
- I, Nadine Melendez Benson, am an Afro-Latina graduate student in the School of Public Administration at Rutgers University-Camden. The bulk of my graduate studies and work experience centers on matters of homelessness and non-profit neighborhood development in Camden, NJ.

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE NUMBERS

Today, the southeastern United States, is the region of the country where most black Americans reside (56%)[6]. It follows then, that the states with the highest percentage of black teachers, and the education prep programs that produce the highest number of black male educators are in right-to-work (RTW) states with comparatively weaker collective bargaining rights for teachers. The states with the highest representation of black educators, Georgia (24.7%), Louisiana (19.9%), Mississippi (19.9%), Alabama (17.6%), North Carolina (14.7%), District of Columbia (14.1%), Tennessee (13.6%), South Carolina (12.7%), Virginia (11.3%), Florida (10.4%) are also the states with highest the only states where the black educators comprise over 10% of the educator force[7]. With the exception of the District of Columbia, all of the aforementioned states are RTW states. Additionally, of the Top 50 institutions enrolling black male students in degree granting, teacher prep programs, forty-five are in the south, and forty-six are in RTW states; and of the Top 5 institutions enrolling black male students in teacher prep programs nationally, three are online programs (Ashford University, Grand Canyon University, and Liberty University) and two are traditional institutions, Georgia State University and Jackson State University[8]. Again, geography and accessibility matters.

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[6] Moslimani, M., et al. (2024). "Facts About the U.S. Black Population". Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/

[7] Black Educator Collaborative. (2023). Data and Statistics. https://blackteachercollaborative.org/stats/

[8] Richardson, S., Jones-Fosu, S., Lewis, CW. (2019). Black Men are Present: Examining

Despite the reality that similarly situated educators in RTW states make significantly less in salary and enjoy comparatively fewer working benefits[9], the numbers indicate still, a higher concentration of black teachers work within this construct. When compiling the data points of where black Americans reside, the historical legacy of Jim Crow and the emergence of RTW states, and the institutions that enroll the most black males in teacher prep programs, we have to rightfully consider the possibility that black male students who are attending college elsewhere are pursuing other disciplines of study with the belief that they have occupational opportunity in non-education avenues that may not appear, or functionally be as accessible in other regions of the country like the South or Midwest. The most common majors among black college students[10] are:

- Law and Public Policy 15%
- Psychology and Social Work 12%
- Health 10%
- Business 9%
- Social Sciences 9%
- Computers, Statistics, and Mathematics 9%
- Communications and Journalism 8%
- Physical Sciences 8%
- Biology and Life Sciences 7%
- Industrial Arts, Consumer Services, and Recreation 7%
- Education 7%

As can be determined above, the bulk of black college students are dedicating their intellectual and academic pursuits toward other disciplines aside from education with education being tied for the 10th with "industrial arts, consumer services, and recreation" as most common major among black undergrads. As disappointing as this may seem for the field, we have to recognize this as a decision grounded in pragmatism indicating most black college students do not see education as an occupational path that is viable, or worth pursuing long term. Many college students are aware that functionally, in order to secure employment as an educator after college, they must pass two standardized assessments, Praxis I (core) and Praxis II (content knowledge), complete a degree in education, in addition to securing sufficient credit hours in a curricular content area - this does not include the semester to a year's worth of student teaching where in students are charged with doing the work of an educator without the compensation for the labor or preparation. Essentially, the barriers to entry into teaching for college students are multiple, especially college students who do not have the financial stability to participate in unpaid labor. These multiple barriers, coupled with decades of teachers being demonized in politics and public narrative, coalesce to make the profession of teacher far less desirable to pursue.

Enrollment Patterns in Education Degree Programs. Journal of African American Males in Education, 10(1).

[9] Scherer, J., Gould, E. (2024). "Data show anti-union 'right-to-work' laws damage state economies". Economic Policy Institute. https://www.epi.org/blog/data-show-anti-union-right-to-work-laws-damage-state-economies-as-michigans-repeal-takes-effect-new-hampshire-should-continue-to-reject-right-to-work-legislation/#:~:text=On%20average%2C%20workers%20in%20RTW,job%20growth%20have%20proven%20inaccurate.

[10] Carnavale, AP., et al. (2016). African Americans College Majors and Earnings". The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Recommendations

- Recognize the multiple barriers in place that may discourage interested teacher candidates from entering the profession
- Consider how exams to become teachers, most common across states Praxis I and Praxis II, may seem objective, but inherently favor some students over others for a myriad of reasons. Thus, jettisoning the use of such exams, and instead allowing students' college transcripts and coursework to be a sufficient standard will increase access to the field
- Subsidize student teachers. Quite simply, many students from lower income backgrounds cannot afford to participate in required student teaching and all of the associated demands. By paying students teachers a stipend per semester, it honors their work, demonstrates consideration of the associated costs involved in student teaching, and incentivizes college students to get involved in teaching not only for the preparation, but also for their own financial gain
- Shift the public messaging about teaching. Many are well versed in the attacks against teachers made by policymakers, lobbying groups, and in popular media. It has an impact. Prospective teachers recognize that teachers have been under attack for nearly three decades and are leading capable students of all ethnicities to look elsewhere pertaining to their professional pursuits. The public narrative about the teaching profession needs to change. Policymakers as well as the general public need to extoll the value of teachers, the importance of teachers to our society, and indicate the financial/tertiary benefits of teaching.

LOCATING AND CULTIVATING BLACK MALE EDUCATORS

With respect to the question of effective recruitment/retention of black male teachers, it is vital to have an accurate portrayal of the scope of this issue. By the numbers, there are roughly 333M Americans, 48M of whom identify as black which equates to 13.6% of the US population[11]. The median age of black Americans is 32.1. years. About 7.8M (26.1%) black Americans aged 25-61 possess a bachelor's degree across disciplines and 14% of black Americans aged 25-34 have earned a bachelor's degree across disciplines[12], compared to 36% of white Americans of the same age. There are about 20.01M black men in America, which equates to 6.1% of the US population[13]; 4.5M (24.9%) black men have at least a bachelor's degree across disciplines[14]. There are roughly 3.2M full-time teachers in America's public schools[15]; 77% of whom are white, 60% of America's teachers are white women, and 17% of America's public-school

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[11] Moslimani, M., et al. (2024).

[12] Barshay, J. (2023). "College completion rates are up for all Americans, but racial gaps persist." The Hechinger Report. https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/61037/college-completion-rates-are-up-for-all-americans-but-racial-gaps-persist

[13] Data Commons. (2024). https://datacommons.org/place/country/USA?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&cpv=gender,Male&hl=en

[14] Bridges, B. (n.d.). "African Americans and College Education by the Numbers". https://uncf.org/the-latest/african-americans-and-college-education-by-the-numbers#:~:text=Among%20students%20enrolled%20in%20four,lowest%20completion%20rate%20at%2040%25

[15] National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). "Fast Facts: Back to School Statistics". https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372#:~:text=How%20many%20teachers%20were%20there,in%20private%20schools%20(source).

teachers are white men. Perhaps more astounding is that nearly 90% of elementary school teachers are women[16].

For nearly thirty years, black teacher representation hovered between 6 and 7%[17]. Today, the black teacher force (254,200) makes up roughly 7% of public-school educators[18] with black women numbering around 182,400 (6%) and black men numbering roughly 50,000 (1.3%)[19]. Additionally, there are roughly 7.4M black students (7.4% of whom are black males), roughly 15% of America's student body[20].

Broadly, what the numbers indicate is a general imbalance between the sexes pertaining to representation within the field of education, where the gap between women and men teachers tilted greatly toward women irrespective of the races. In fact, the gender gap between white female and male educators (60%-17%) is as pronounced as it is between black female and male educators (6%-1.3%).

Further, there are twenty-five states in America where the black population (which includes children) is under 10%, thus accounting for blacks' comparative low population in states could help explain the scant representation of black educators in America's classrooms, specifically pertaining to representation of black men. The region where most black Americans reside, the southeast (56% of black Americans), not surprisingly, has the strongest representation of black educators. By percentage of black educators in each state, Georgia (24.7%), Louisiana (19.9%), Mississippi (19.9%), Alabama (17.6%), North Carolina (14.7%), District of Columbia (14.1%), Tennessee (13.6%), South Carolina (12.7%), Virginia (11.3%), Florida (10.4%) are the only states where the Black educators comprise over 10% of the educator force. Texas and Delaware (8.4%)[21] in addition to the states referenced above, are the only states where the black educator force is above the national average (6.7%). By virtue of residence, black teachers are far more represented in the southeast, and in urban districts where the student body is primarily students of color, and where a plurality of students qualify for free and reduced lunch[22]. As such we should expect to see higher representation where black Americans reside in higher concentration compared to where they have far less population concentration. Not considering

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[16] National Center for Education Statistics. (2023). Characteristics of 2020–21 Public and Private K–12 School Teachers in the United States: Results from the National Teacher and Principal Survey. https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2022113.

[17] Sanders, M., Lewis-Watkin, K. & Cochrane, K. (2019). Bridging the Diversity Gap through Out-of-School Time Learning Activities: A Focus on African American Students. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337949863_Bridging_the_Diversity_Gap_through_Out-of-School_Time_Learning_Activities_A_Focus_on_African_American_Students

[18] Black Educator Collaborative. (2023). Data and Statistics. https://blackteachercollaborative.org/stats/

[19] USA Facts. (2023). "How many Black male teachers are there in the US?". https://usafacts.org/articles/how-many-black-male-teachers-are-there-in-the-us/

[20] Sanders, M., Lewis-Watkin, K. & Cochrane, K. (2019). Bridging the Diversity Gap through Out-of-School Time Learning Activities: A Focus on African American Students. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337949863_Bridging_the_Diversity_Gap_through_Out-of-School_Time_Learning_Activities_A_Focus_on_African_American_Students

[21] Black Educator Collaborative. (2023). Data and Statistics. https://blackteachercollaborative.org/stats/

[22] Schaeffer, K. (2021). "America's public-school teachers are far less racially and ethnically diverse than their students". Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2021/12/10/americas-public-school-teachers-are-far-less-racially-and-ethnically-diverse-than-their-students/

geographic and residential factors can broadly skew our collective understanding of the black male teacher representation issue. In summation, geography matters. Where black Americans reside in greater numbers, is where we see the greatest representation of black educators. Further, the gender disparity between educators across races largely can be attributed to a long-held belief that teaching is "women's work", specifically in the primary grades. There is more parity between the sexes in the secondary grades (9-12)[23], but as there are far more primary/elementary schools (78,000 combined) in America than high schools (20,100)[24], it stands to reason that there would be more representation of women teachers in public education - specifically white women.

On Campus

The dearth of representation of black males in American classrooms begins on college campuses as education, as an undergraduate major, does not rank in the top-ten among black undergrads. And with only 40% of black men graduating college with a bachelor's degree within six years[25] (compared to 63% of white males) combined with fewer black students showing an interest in education, results in less representation of black males in classrooms. And while some may use the disparity in college graduation rates as further evidence of an apparent "achievement gap", what must be noted here is black students disproportionately identify as "first generation" college students and "independent", "non-traditional" students who balance full-time work and familial responsibilities - albeit, with less financial support. Additionally, mandatory standardized exams for continuing in teacher prep programs (namely Praxis I) and exams to secure licensure have had a catastrophic impact on prospective black educators since their implementation in the 1990s.[26]

"Across the HBCU community, faculty and administrators were sharing their angst and concern about what they were witnessing: Praxis I was wiping out the Black teacher pipeline… The perception that Praxis I was wiping out the Black teacher pipeline was not unfounded. Beyond my own universities, witnessed changes in the teachers-of-color pipeline across seven southeastern states during my tenures as a foundation program officer, program director, and principal investigator for three large-scale teachers-of-color pipeline programs funded by the Wallace Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. Everywhere I looked, I found that HBCUs —which produce 50% of the nation's Black teachers even though they comprise only 3% of the nation's higher-education institutions—were especially sensitive to the impact of Praxis I pass scores." - Dr. Leslie Fenwick[27]

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[23] McLoughlin, D. (2024). "How Many Teachers Are There in the USA?" https://wordsrated.com/number-of-teachers-usa/

[24] MDR Marketing. (2024). "How Many Schools Are in the US?" https://mdreducation.com/how-many-schools-are-in-the-u-s/#:~:text=High%20schools%20(sometimes%20called%20senior, for%20every%203.16%20elementary%20schools.

[25] Bridges, B. (n.d.). "African Americans and College Education by the Numbers".

[26] Taylor, ED., Plika, S. & Coons, A. (2017). "To What Extent Are Ethnic Minority TEacher Candidates Adversely Affected by High-Stakes Assessments?" NEA Research Brief. National Education Association. https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/Minority%20Teacher%20Candiadtes%20and%20High-Stakes%20Assessments.%20NBI%2016%202017.pdf

[27] Fenwick, L. (2021). The History, Current Use, and Impact of Entrance and Licensure Examinations Cut Scores on the Teachers-of-color Pipeline: A structural racism analysis. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. https://aacte.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CREA-v4.pdf

What's more, in 2012 even among black males who did graduate from college and completed a teacher prep program, only 23% went on to pursue teaching as a career[28].

Still, the largest incubators for black educators, of both men and women are (HBCUs), most of which are state schools located in the deep South. For many black students in other parts of the country who attend college in their given states, they are often financially disincentivized from attending college out-of-state, which means they will be less likely to attend the very institutions that are most likely to develop them into eventual educators.

Following guidance from Every *Child Succeeds Act*, Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) and nonprofit organizations, much like HBCUs have taken deliberate steps to address the diversity and gender gaps in America's classrooms by initiating programs designed to recruit Black men into the profession. Arne Duncan's TEACH Initiative (2011) aimed to develop 80,000 male teachers from underrepresented backgrounds by 2015, Clemson University's Call Me Mister Program (SC), Rowan University's Men of Color Hope Achievers (NJ), Mississippi Teacher Residency (MS), Black Men Teach (MN), African American Male Teacher Initiative (TX), He Is Me Institute (MA), Teacher Village Initiative (CA), and Center for Black Educator Development (PA) are just a few examples of programs across the country working to provide support and training for prospective black male educators and increase their presence in America's classrooms.

Recommendations
- Investigate the numbers thoroughly. While it is obvious that numerically there is a comparative shortage of representation of black males in classrooms, it is not sufficient to simply repeat that low number (2%) and begin making actionable recommendations to bolster black male representation. Questions for investigation include: *Is it evidence of a residential issue? Is it an issue of demographics? Is it a gender issue? Is it an issue of college completion? Is it a course selection issue? Is it a retention issue?*
- Monitor persistence and completion of programs intentioned to yield more black male educators. From there monitor how many participants are hired, where they are working, and retention rates. Taking a longitudinal view of data gathering will help policymakers pinpoint what works, where, and why. We will have a more comprehensive understanding of what warrants replication both at the programmatic level, and what factors warrant consideration in transitioning participants into practitioners - what it takes to retain them.

NOTE: *While the preceding did attempt to help contextualize matters pertaining the shortage of black male educators by focusing on population, geography, educational attainment, followed by referencing a few programs that are working to increase black male representation in schools, what warrants greater scrutiny is demand in hiring; namely, inquiring if there is a true desire for school districts to hire more black male educators.*

INSTITUTIONAL ROLES IN RECRUITING BLACK MALES INTO THE PROFESSION

Pertaining to a teacher union's role in recruitment of black educators and black male educators, specifically, there's not much of a formalized role for staff recruitment as that is typical solely

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[28] Lewis, CW. & Toldson, I. (2013). Black Male Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce.

within the purview of a district's office of human resources. Further, in that the bulk of employment recruitment takes place through ads on district websites and career search engines like *LinkedIn* and *Indeed*, district participation in campus career days, interpersonal interactions between districts and potential job seekers happens less frequently, thereby, reducing teacher union's opportunity to recruit potential educators alongside the hiring district.

This is not to imply school districts and local teacher unions do not work collaboratively to recruit educators in isolated instances, only that such a partnership is typically informal and situational. The National Education Association (NEA) and its state affiliates, however, do have preservice teacher unions aimed at recruiting student teachers into teacher unions and providing techniques and approaches to improve their professional practice.

NEA's Aspiring Educators Program[29] supports, develops, and empowers diverse, pre-service teachers with the resources, networks, and opportunities to lead in their schools, communities, and in all phases of their career. Aspiring Educators matter because they are the leading voice of the next generation of educators and leaders in this nation. Aspiring Educators make a difference because of their passion, commitment, and vision as association members who believe in public education and its potential to uplift individuals, families, and communities.

With respect to the recruitment of black men into the teaching profession specifically, there are vital points that either encourage or discourage black male participation as educators. Lewis and Toldson[30] indicate there are "critical stages" of black males' journey into the classroom. Efforts to recruit must include:

- Improving black male graduation rates from high school
- While there is a gender gap with girls graduating from high school at higher rates across ethnicities, only 76% of Black boys in 2023 graduated "on-time".[31] (This is not to suggest these young men never complete high school eventually, only to indicate they did not "on time" - and if one does not finish high school, the likelihood of them enrolling in a college or university is less likely)
- Increasing recruitment and enrollment into teacher prep programs in high schools and colleges/universities[32]
- Since the passage of ESSA states have implemented a variety of approaches to attract prospective Black teachers
- *High School Pipelines* - as part of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, high schools in forty-six states partner with local colleges whereby students begin getting exposed to collegiate education coursework as a mechanism to prepare potential teachers (ex: Teacher Recruitment Education and Preparation program, Colorado)
- *Grow Your Own Initiatives* - Designed with the goal of reaching people who are already part of the school community, school districts across twenty-six states seek to transition their district's non-degreed/non-certificated support staff into certified teachers

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[29]NEA. https://www.nea.org/about-nea/our-members/aspiring-educators

[30] Lewis, CW. & Toldson, I. (2013). Black Male Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce.

[31] Reeves, R. & Kalkat, S. (2023). Racial disparities in the high school graduation gender gap. Brookings Institute. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/racial-disparities-in-the-high-school-graduation-gender-gap/

[32] National council on Teacher Quality. (2023). Policies to Increase Teacher Diversity.

- *Post-Collegiate Residency Programs* - six states (California, Minnesota, Louisiana, Mississippi, Virginia, New York) offer residencies whereby residents participate in a yearlong pre-service experience working in a classroom alongside a mentor teacher, all while receiving additional coursework aligned to residents' classroom experience often without pay, or for a small stipend
- *Apprenticeships* - Twenty-three states offer teacher apprenticeships where participants learn the skills for a job through a combination of coursework and practice under the supervision of a mentor teacher while earning an hourly wage. Participants can eventually earn a license, and sometimes also a degree. Apprenticeships are recognized by the US Department of Labor
- Enhancing teacher prep program completion/gain access into the profession - factors contributing reduced persistence of black men in completing undergraduate studies including feelings of alienation, marginalization, lacking support and external realities, are similar factors contributing to black men pursuing other academic disciplines aside from education. Additionally, Black males' educational experience prior to college heavily influences their desire to enter into teacher prep programs to become teachers or abstain from the discipline altogether.

Black males' educational experiences may have resulted in them not pursuing or enrolling in education degree programs[33]. As black male college students progress on campus, with limited exposure to black male professors or administrators, they are limited to images of black males on campus in largely, athletic or support positions, and may deter enrollment in education degree programs.

Conversely, that black males have the potential to positively impact children through education, is a source of inspiration for enrolling in education programs as impacting the next generation is a strong motivation for black males to pursue education degrees[34] [35]. Additionally, black male teachers credit their experiences with mentoring, strong family support, the belief in the importance of education - and desire to give back to the community as essential factors to their decision to enter a teacher preparation program[36].

As noted above, universities are making efforts to attract black male students into the education profession by recruiting them while still on campus and providing them with support and the sense community that improves likelihood of persistence.

- **Call Me Mister Program (SC)**; Clemson University, Claflin University, Benedict College, Morris College, Western Carolina University

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[33] Caton, M. T. (2012). Black Male Perspectives on Their Educational Experiences in High School. Urban Education, 47(6), 1055-1085. https://doi-org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/10.1177/0042085912454442

[34] Richardson, S., Jones-Fosu, S., Lewis, CW. (2019). Black Men are Present: Examining Enrollment Patterns in Education Degree Programs. Journal of African American Males in Education, 10(1).

[35] Smith, W. A., Hung, M., & Franklin, J. D. (2011). Racial Battle Fatigue and the MisEducation of Black Men: Racial Microaggressions, Societal Problems, and Environmental Stress. The Journal of Negro Education, 80(1), 63–82. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41341106

[36] Wallace, D. L., & Gagen, L. M. (2020). African American Males' Decisions to Teach: Barriers, Motivations, and Supports Necessary for Completing a Teacher Preparation Program. Education and Urban Society, 52(3), 415-432. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124519846294

- **Men of Color Hope Achievers (NJ)**; Rowan University
- **Man, Up Teachers Fellowship**; University of Memphis (TN), Mississippi State University (MS)
- **Dr. Carter G. Woodson Black Male Teacher Fellowship**; Delaware State University (DE)
- **Black Male Teachers College**; Bowie State University (MD) - starts in 8th grade
- **M.AL. E (Males for Alabama Education) Initiative Scholarship**; Alabama A&M University

NOTE: *Up to this point, much of the focus has been dedicated to increasing the supply of eligible and willing prospective black male educators. What has not been explored up to this point in the report is whether the demand to hire Black male teachers matches the increasing recognition of the need for, and increasing the supply of, more Black male teachers. This topic will be explored more comprehensively further in the text.*

Recommendations
- Encourage school districts to alter their recruitment practices away from passively relying on applicants to respond to ads on the internet, by taking proactive measures to make connections with black male teacher prep participants throughout their participation in programs their career search
- Forming lasting and authentic relationships with prospective teacher candidates is an investment toward landing candidates as eventual employees
- Monitor persistence and completion of programs intentioned to yield more black male educators. From there monitor how many participants are hired, where they are working, and retention rates.
- Broaden access to teacher prep programs at the post-secondary level where black male students, even before graduating high school, are beginning to see themselves as eventual educators and earning college credits throughout the process

RETAINING BLACK MALE EDUCATORS

In reference to the matter of retention of black male educators, much has been written concerning the sustained exodus of black teachers, including black male teachers. It bears noting that prior to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954), the education field provided college-educated black Americans a profession whereby their commitment to education would be honored and actualized, while gaining initial entry into the middle-class - specifically in an era where access to professional employment was restricted due to their race. Immediately following court ordered desegregation, and despite phenomenal pedagogical achievements in the classroom, black teachers and administrators suffered immensely following desegregation losing over 40,000 jobs over the subsequent thirty years[37] . The black teacher workforce never rebounded. Since the 1990's, black teachers only comprised between 6-7% of the teacher workforce.

Following the height of the education reform movement post-*No Child Left Behind* (2001) and

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[37] Milner, H. R., & Howard, T. C. (2004). Black Teachers, Black Students, Black Communities, and Brown: Perspectives and Insights from Experts. The Journal of Negro Education, 73(3), 285–297. https://doi.org/10.2307/4129612

Race to the Top (2009) where urban districts and schools were taken over by state and city governments, or charter management organizations (CMOs), thousands of black teachers across the country, again, lost their jobs. This modern loss of black teachers was connected directly to education reform and the portfolio management approach of urban school districts[38] and urban school closure[39]. In Camden, NJ for instance, under New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's appointee for superintendent, Paymon Rouhanifard, a Teach for America alum who had been in education for only 18 months, systematically jettisoned significant numbers of Camden's black teachers[40]. Staggering losses of specifically black teachers occurred in most urban districts including Chicago, Washington, DC, Detroit, New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Camden (NJ). In sum, the localities and districts that were most likely to hire black teachers (including black male teachers) prior to the education reform era, are districts that are attended by primarily lower-income students of color, the specific constituency that are statistically most likely to perform poorly on mandated state assessments and be subject to severe sanctions. And when such students predictably performed poorly on high-stakes standardized tests, entire districts and schools were taken over, and black teachers disproportionately were blamed for student "failure" and professional ineffectiveness, and subsequently lost their jobs.

Today, not only is there critical urgency in recruiting black male teachers, but also identifying approaches to retain the near 50,000 black male teachers who are currently teaching. Black teachers new to the profession exit the classroom at higher rates than white teachers despite methods employed by schools and districts to retain them[41] as high poverty schools in challenging contexts where higher concentrations of black teachers are likely to work, continue to experience high turnover. To be sure, retention of any new teacher is increasingly difficult as 44-74% of beginning teachers leave the profession within five years[42].

Much like any new teacher, black male teachers, like employees in all other professions, need to feel fulfillment, professional autonomy and competence, and a sense of relatedness in their professional lives. Additionally, they desire opportunities to exhibit mentorship and leadership - all within an educational space that supports community and collegiality. The problem is, as stated above, black teachers are more likely to serve in schools subject to accountability pressures which lessens autonomy, increases sanctions based on student performance, increases administrative surveillance, and erodes teachers' sense of competence and professionalism, thus increasing the likelihood of teachers exiting the profession.

Wright (2020) suggests black male teachers enter the profession looking to make a difference

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[38] Dixson, A. D., & Rousseau-Anderson, C. K. (2016). And We Are STILL Not Saved: 20 Years of CRT and Education. In A. D. Dixson, C. K. Rousseau Anderson, & J. K. Donnor (Eds.), Critical Race Theory in Education: All God's Children Got a Song (2 ed., pp. 32-54). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315709796-5

[39] Buckley, K. E., Henig, J. R., & Levin, H. M. (2010). Between public and private: Politics, governance, and the new portfolio models for urban school reform. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press

[40] Weber, M. (2021). "Camden Sheds Black Teachers at a Uniquely High Rate". New Jersey Policy Perspective. https://www.njpp.org/publications/report/camden-sheds-black-teachers-at-a-uniquely-high-rate/

[41] Ahmad, F.& Boser, U. (2014). "America's Leaky Pipeline for Teachers of Color: Getting More Teachers of Color into the Classroom". Center for American Progress. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED561065.pdf

[42]Papay, J. P., Bacher-Hicks, A., Page, L. C., & Marinell, W. H. (2017). The Challenge of Teacher Retention in Urban Schools: Evidence of Variation from a Cross-Site Analysis. Educational Researcher, 46(8), 434-448. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X17735812

in the lives of children with whom they closely identify[43]. When examining the professional experiences of black teachers who remained in the profession in an urban context beyond five years, teachers shared implementation of culturally responsive curriculum that offer opportunities for social justice in the communities they serve as well as their desire to champion social justice through pedagogic practices, classroom management, and through personal experience within in their practice. Additionally, Ingersoll et. al (2019), writes, "Teachers from under-represented racial-ethnic groups not only are likely to be well suited to teach students from under-represented racial-ethnic groups, this view holds, but they are also likely to be motivated by a 'humanistic commitment' to making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged students"[44]. Interestingly enough, though health benefits and a reliable middle-class wage are factors influencing black male teachers to enter the profession, pay or salaries are not the sole reasons they decide to either stay or go. The reasons staff reported wanting to stay in their profession were based on goodwill; in providing students with academic, social, and emotional support. Additionally, school-based supervisors providing relevant and deliberative professional development as well as positive and constructive feedback was found to improve staff competence, morale, and ultimately retention. In short: administrators matter in retaining black male educators.

Recommendations
- Implement methods to track district hiring and retention numbers of black male educators
- If the aim is to increase the number of black male teachers in American classrooms, there must be deliberate effort put forth to track hiring and retention as both are necessary to grow the numbers black male educators
- Use research to make decisions pertaining to what elements of educator employment enhances recruitment and retention of black male educators
- There is a growing body of literature indicating best practices of recruiting black males into the profession, as well as retention; not referring to research when determining approaches to recruit and retain, increases the likelihood to arrive at inadequate solutions

WHAT "WORKS" FOR BLACK BOYS
Pertaining to the question of what works for black boys toward mitigating gaps in academic outcomes, it would be a mistake to isolate the schoolhouse as the setting wherein comparative disparities initiate. When surveying quantitative measures of academic outcomes between black boys and every other demographic, the numbers indicate a deficit across metrics. Black boys have the lowest rate of high school completion, college attendance, college graduation[45], and the highest rates of dropouts, school suspension, expulsion, and incarceration[46] [47].

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[43] Wright, D. (2020). Black Teachers in Urban Schools: Why do they Stay?
https://etd.auburn.edu/bitstream/handle/10415/7235/Wright%20Debra.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y
[44] Ingersoll, R., May, H., & Collins, G. (2019). Recruitment, employment, retention and the minority teacher shortage. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 27(37).
[45] Lewis, CW. & Toldson, I. (2013). Black Male Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce.
[46] Del Toro, J. & Wang, M.T. (2021). "The Longitudinal Inter-Relations Between School Discipline and Academic Performance: Examining the Role of School Climate". American Psychologist.
[47] Davis, C.R. (2017). "Why Are the Black Kids Being Suspended?" An Examination of a School District's Efforts to Reform a Faulty Suspension Policy Through Community Conversations. *School Community Journal, 27*(1).

Where it would seem the problems stem from, and can be resolved at, the schoolhouse, the reality is the school context alone cannot mitigate the compounding impact of generations of systemic racism and sustained societal opportunity gaps. While certainly injustices within schools can be addressed more deliberately, i.e., the higher likelihood of black boys being placed in special education, elevated levels of out-of-school suspension, in-school arrests, and expulsion, and less access to advanced placement classes, we must recognize that many such issues initiate at the policy level, not black male students themselves. School discipline protocols are district and administrative decisions that can be amended so long as the motivation to reduce such discipline practices that target black boys exists. Further, school curriculum that could embrace black boys in attempts to address academic disparities, or further marginalize black boys thereby sustaining such disparities, are established through state politics, and are implemented at the district and building levels. Finally, as laws are socio-political constructions that dictate legality and illegality alike, it follows that black boys would be the demographic most ensnared in the criminal justice system as the most economically alienated constituency.

Further, we must contend with the reality that local schools are reflections of the communities wherein they're situated. A community that is disinvested and starved of resources, sends children from that community into local schools that, at the conclusion of the school day, send those children back to their community that is suffering from disinvestment and starved of resources. Largely, schools and its educators put forth herculean effort in working to navigate the negative societal realities some children are forced to contend with by focusing their energies on delivering effective pedagogy, and while there are success stories of black boys from underserved communities "beating the odds", the reality is schools, alone, are not equipped to mitigate the numerous societal issues black boys face in their daily lives outside of school.

In trying to meet the developmental needs of urban youth, school districts and communities have long recognized the benefit of establishing mentoring programs for urban youth, especially boys. Typically, mentoring programs for boy's center around an extra-curricular interest like sports, entertainment, and entrepreneurship, wherein the goal is exposure and providing youth with positive adult supervision to keep them "off the streets". The drawbacks to such an approach are few such mentoring programs explicitly work to improve students' academic standing, are entirely voluntary, participation is subject to the external realities of participants, and participation typically dwindles as boys advance in age. In some instances, cities and urban school districts are employing measures to help students find employment in effort to meet students' economic needs, but to the extent most jobs offer minimum wages and are not career oriented positions, such programs simply serve an immediate economic need rather than presenting urban youth with a long-term solution to improve their economic condition.

With respect to college enrollment and graduation, it is important to note most black college-bound students are either "first generation", or non-traditional students. And similar to a growing proportion of America's undergraduate student body consisting of "first generation" and non-traditional students, black students are comparatively less likely to complete their post-secondary schooling because of the operating realities of their status. Despite popular conceptions that black students are not going to college, the reality is many apply, get accepted,

and start their postsecondary education journey. Whether feelings of alienation and marginalization on campus; a lack of clarity in the financial aid or degree navigation process, or a feeling of being unprepared for their academic journey, several disparate influences lead black students to abandon their collegiate journey prematurely.

Various entities including policy analysts, researchers, universities, nonprofits and philanthropists recognize the unique travails and support "first generation students" need to complete their degree. Intended to assist "first generation" and non-traditional students in graduating college, programs have been funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Dayton (OH), Jacksonville (FL), Mesa and Phoenix (AZ), NYC and Riverside City and San Francisco (CA)[48]; and the Ford Foundation in funding Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation (MRDC) has published voluminous evaluative studies of programs with similar goals[49]. And while more black men earning college degrees certainly assists in making them more "employable" and expands opportunities to access middle-class wages, it is far from a certainty.

On the bright side however, academically, urban youth, including black boys are graduating high school in higher numbers today than in generations past. Public schools are doing a better job of getting black boys to graduation, and where some withdraw from high school temporarily, districts are making concerted efforts to enroll them in GED, alternative, or "gateway" programs aimed at getting students back on track to continue their academic journey. Additionally, prior to the COVID19 shutdown, black students were enrolling in post-secondary institutions in record numbers, yet more than half did not complete their degree within six years. The Education Data Initiative (2023) reported that black college attendance increased 33% from 1976 to 2022, while white college enrollment fell by 24% over the same period[50]. Black college attendance and graduation rates were at all-time highs[51] prior to the COVID-19 pandemic as "college graduation rates for African Americans increased 500% with 26% of African Americans over 25 possessing a college degree, where in 1972, only 5.1% possessed a college degree" [52]. In short, there are some encouraging signs.

Recommendations
- Recognize disparities in comparative academic outcomes between black boys and other demographic is not evidence of an "achievement gap" but is a result of historical and

[48] Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. New Initiative to Double the Number of Low-Income Students in the U.S. Who Earn a Postsecondary Degree - Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. https://www.gatesfoundation.org/ideas/media-center/press-releases/2008/12/new-initiative-to-double-the-number-of-lowincome-students-in-the-us-who-earn-a-postsecondary-degree

[49] Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. https://www.mdrc.org/work/projects/college-completion-fund-project

[50] Hanson, M. (2022, June 12). College Graduation Statistics [2023]: Total Graduates per Year. Education Data Initiative. https://educationdata.org/number-of-college-graduates

[51] Paul, K. (2018). "African-American college graduation rates hit all-time high, but economic outcomes lag". Market Watch. https://www.marketwatch.com/story/college-graduation-rates-for-african-americans-are-at-an-all-time-high-so-why-arent-their-finances-2018-03-01

[52] Wilson, V. & Darity, S. (2022). "Understanding black-white disparities in labor market outcomes requires models that account for persistent discrimination and unequal bargaining power." Economic Policy Institute. https://www.epi.org/unequalpower/publications/understanding-black-white-disparities-in-labor-market-outcomes/

societal forces that initiate outside of school settings

- Consider how disciplinary policies and curricular decisions impact black boys' schooling experience
- This is not to suggest that black boys be granted lower academic or behavioral expectations, but remaining cognizant that discipline policies and curricular decisions have an impact on students, particularly those most marginalized in society at-large, which includes black boys
- Welcome approaches that get students, including black boys who may have fallen behind, back on track. The investment in keeping black boys focused and dedicated to their education, increases the likelihood they will consider moving forward with it beyond high school and into college
- Meet college students where they are and provide whatever support is needed to get students, primarily "first generation" and non-traditional students to graduation
- Whether it is funding, or mentorship, we must recognize that not all college students are arriving on campus with the same level of familial support as others, and may need additional support in order to persist and make it to graduation

DISCRIMINATION IN HIRING

With respect to bias in recruitment and hiring, over the last twenty-five years, unemployment for blacks has remained roughly double that of whites[53]. According to a 2019 report by the Economic Policy Institute, as of late 2018, black unemployment sat at 6.5%, and Latino unemployment at 4.5%, with white unemployment half that of blacks at 3.1% [54]. In the Fall of 2021, black men had jobless rates of 7.3% compared to 3.4% of white men [55]. Irrespective of education, even as America experiences moments of economic prosperity or recession, black unemployment remains consistently double that of white unemployment, and has so since 1971 [56].

Contrary to the meritocratic platitude of education being the "great equalizer", educational attainment for black job seekers is an insufficient antidote against employment discrimination. In 2018, the Economic Policy Institute found that the legacy of employment discrimination persists at roughly the same levels as 1968 despite nearly "90 percent of younger African Americans (ages 25 to 29) graduating from high school, compared with just over half in 1968".[57] The Education Data Initiative (2022) reported that black college attendance increased 33% from 1976 to 2022, while white college enrollment fell by 24% over the same period[58].

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[53] Levine, M.V. Race and Male Employment in the Wake of the Great Recession: Black Male Employment in Milwaukee and the Nation's
Largest Metro Areas 2010; University of Wisconsin Milwaukee: Milwaukee, WI, USA, 2012

[54] Williams, J. & Wilson, V. (2019). "Black workers endure persistent racial disparities in employment outcomes".
Economic Policy Institute.https://www.epi.org/publication/labor-day-2019-racial-disparities-in-employment/

[55] Aratani, L. (2021). "Black Americans continue to see higher jobless rate despite market recovery". *The Guardian).*
https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/dec/24/black-americans-jobless-rate-job-market

[56] Wilson, V. & Darity, S. (2022). "Understanding black-white disparities in labor market outcomes requires models
that account for persistent discrimination and unequal bargaining power." Economic Policy Institute.

[57] Jones, J.; Schmitt, J.; Wilson, V. 50 Years After the Kerner Commission; Economic Policy Institute: Washington, DC,
USA, 2018

[58] Hanson, M. (2022, June 12). College Graduation Statistics [2023]: Total Graduates per Year. Education Data
Initiative. https://educationdata.org/number-of-college-graduates

Additionally, black college attendance and graduation rates were at all-time highs prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. "College graduation rates for African Americans increased 500% with 26% of African Americans over 25 possessing a college degree, where in 1972, only 5.1% possessed a college degree"[59]. Paradoxically, according to a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2016, experiences of workplace discrimination based on race worsen and are more frequent the more formally educated black people become [60].

Perhaps most concerning of all, is despite black students increasingly taking steps to add to their personal human capital reasoning that it will position them to secure gainful employment and mitigate the effects of persistent racial discrimination, black college graduates, like all black jobseekers, are still twice as likely to be unemployed a year after graduation as their white counterparts[61]. Moreover, across every level of educational attainment, black jobseekers who have a college degree have similar rates of unemployment as whites who possess only a high school diploma.[62] [63]

Likewise, employment discrimination against hiring black teachers has been a documented occurrence. D'Amico et al.[64], examined the racial composition of a school district's teacher labor market through teacher application data and subsequent hiring decisions in a large district and found all things being equal "white teacher candidates were significantly more likely to be hired than Black candidates" calling into doubt the argument that (the lack of) supply of black teachers is the sole issue causing the low numbers of black teachers, specifically black male teachers. The study also indicated that active recruitment of prospective black teachers worked as evidenced by a surge in black teacher applicants - indicating that black applicants wanted to be teachers, still prospective black teachers were not hired in comparison to equally qualified white teachers.

Recommendations
- In effort to understand the absence of black males in classrooms, we must consider the issue not merely as a supply-side issue, but also one of possible discrimination preventing black male teachers from entering the profession
- Audit and track recruiting approaches employed by districts which can indicate their commitment to attract black male educators
- Establish a tracking system whereby school districts account for the number applicants received by black male teacher candidates

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[59] Wilson, V. & Darity, S. (2022).

[60] Anderson, M. (2019, May 2). College-educated blacks more likely to have faced discrimination. Pew Research Center. Retrieved September 8, 2023, from https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/05/02/for-black-americans-experiences-of-racial-discrimination-vary-by-education-level-gender/

[61] Morrison, N. (2020, June 18). Black Graduates Twice as Likely to Be Unemployed. Forbes. https://www.forbes.com/sites/nickmorrison/2020/06/18/black-graduates-twice-as-likely-to-be-unemployed/?sh=4efac7b077eb

[62] Wilson, V. (2015, December 17). Black unemployment is significantly higher than white unemployment regardless of educational attainment. Economic Policy Institute. https://www.epi.org/publication/black-unemployment-educational-attainment/

[63] Wilson, V. & Darity, S. (2022).

[64] D'Amico, D. et al. (2017). "Where Are All the Black Teachers? Discrimination in the Teacher Labor Market" (2017). Accountancy Faculty Publications. 3. https://commons.und.edu/acc-fac/3

- From there, districts not only account for how many applications were received by black male applicants, but also, how many received interviews, how many were subsequently hired (or not), and how many were retained

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES TARGETING BLACK BOYS

The "no excuses" model and zero tolerance disciplinary policies are school-based iterations of "broken windows" policing implemented primarily within urban public schools and mission-oriented corporate charter schools[65]. Intended to improve both student behavior and academic outcomes, "no excuses" disciplinary approaches penalize even minor behavioral infractions, including unauthorized cell phone usage, insubordination, truancy, and lateness, and being out of uniform[66]. Neither "no excuses" nor zero tolerance policies differentiate between serious and non-serious offenses, nor do they distinguish intentional troublemakers from students with behavioral disabilities leading to stiffer administrative penalties and the potential criminalization of students who violate school discipline policies.

Predictably, students of color from low-income backgrounds, students with behavioral disabilities, and students who are underperforming academically are the most common targets of such disciplinary models[67]. The Justice Policy Institute[68] and Advancement Project[69] report that Black students make up 17% of students nationwide, yet 37% of suspensions and 35% of expulsions occur, even though such exclusionary punishments have far-reaching, detrimental consequences for students experiencing them[70].

The school to prison pipeline, or "schoolhouse to jailhouse track," refers to the pattern of tracking students out of education systems through zero tolerance policies and directly and indirectly into juvenile and adult criminal justice systems[71]. "Tough on crime" policies in schools are associated with a higher level of school-based disciplinary matters interpreted as criminal events.

The image of urban youth and their schools as dangerous has been popularized in media and news coverage[72] (Benson, 2020), thus justifying a greater police presence to monitor, presumably, "delinquent" youth. In 1975, only 1% of schools had a police presence, but by 2004, that number ballooned to 36%, with 24% of elementary and 42% of high schools having a police

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[65] Bulkley, K. E. (2004). Revisiting decision making and disaggregating charter schools: A comment on "market-versus mission-oriented charter schools." Social Science Quarterly, 85(5), 1057–1060. www.jstor.org/stable/42955981

[66] Golann, J. W. (2021). Scripting the moves: Culture and control in a "no-excuses" charter school. Princeton University Press.

[67] Heitzeg, N. A. (2009). Education or incarceration: Zero tolerance policies and the school to prison pipeline. Forum on Public Policy, 2009(2). https://eric. ed.gov/?id=EJ870076

[68] Justice Policy Institute. (2011). Education under arrest: The case against police in schools. Justice Policy Institute. https://justicepolicy.org/wp-content/ uploads/2022/02/educationunderarrest_fullreport.pdf

[69] Advancement Project. (2005). Education on lockdown: The schoolhouse to jail house track. Advancement Project. www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/ Education-on-Lockdown_Advancement-Project_2005.pdf

[70] Witt, H. (2007, September 25). School discipline tougher on African Americans. Chicago Tribune. www.chicagotribune.com/chi-070924discipline-story.html

[71] Heitzeg, N. A. (2009).

[72] Benson, K. E. (2020, June 10). I live and work in Camden, the New Jersey city that disbanded and rebuilt its police force. We've been upheld as a model for cities like Minneapolis, but there's a lot more to the story. Business Insider. www.businessin sider.com/camden-new-jersey-police-disbanded-but-theres-more-to-story 2020–6

presence. Over the past 30 years, police presence in schools has increased by 58% [73]. As of 2013, 51% of schools with a majority black and Latino student body had law enforcement in their schools. As such, school policing represents the fast-growing sector of law enforcement with full-time school-based police officers (school resource officers, SROs) being assigned to 58% of the nation's schools. SROs are sworn officers with full arrest powers whose presence has increased by 64% between 2005 and 2015, with some states passing legislation to station SROs in all schools. The staffing of full-time SROs is set to expand further in states like Arizona, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia [74] (ACLU, 2017). Since 1975, urban school administrators have been raising alarm about the presence of police in schools and creating a police-state and carceral environment as opposed to a learning institution [75] (ACLU, 2017).

A growing body of research suggests the presence of SROs in schools can escalate otherwise routine school disciplinary matters to those governed by the legal system, likely contributing to a 21% increase in juvenile arrests for children under 15 (Curran et al., 2019). Some school districts, however, are beginning to rethink the law-and-order SRO approach. Recognizing the highest number of juvenile arrests over ten years were initiated by Philadelphia School District (PSD) SROs, the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) and PSD created the Philadelphia Police School Diversion Program in 2014. The intervention program prohibits the arrest of any child under ten for misdemeanor offenses on school grounds. Students who would have ordinarily been arrested are referred to the voluntary program. In lieu of receiving a disciplinary consequence like arrest, suspension, or expulsion, participating students' families receive home visits from social workers and the ability to receive support services [76].

In December 2022, after phasing out all 400 SROs following the State Police Reform Act, Boston Public Schools (BPS) hired 18 school safety staff to connect with young people deemed to be involved in or at risk of becoming involved in gangs and violence. BPS' School Safety Staff will also monitor students' social media, after-school activities, and students at bus stops and other "hot spots." This approach is not without detractors from juvenile justice advocates who believe it is an embodiment of over-policing of black and Latino students [77].

The criminalization of students, often students of color, is problematic, but the approach of pushing students out and away from the school site has negative downstream effects in the lives of students beyond the fragmentation of their academic experience. Students who are suspended often are more likely to be retained; and the more students are retained the higher the likelihood of their opting out of school altogether - the same holds true for students who

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[73] American Civil Liberties Union. (2017). Bullies in blue: Origins and consequences of school policing. American Civil Liberties Union. www.aclu.org/report/ bullies-blue-origins-and-consequences-school-policing
[74] American Civil Liberties Union. (2017).
[75] American Civil Liberties Union. (2017).
[76] Goldstein, N. E. S., NeMoyer, A., Le, T., Kreimer, R., Pollard, A., Taylor, A., & Zhangdre, F. (2021). Evaluating impacts of the Philadelphia police school diversion program: An alternative to arrest policing strategy. National Institute of Justice. https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/evaluating-impacts philadelphia-police-school-diversion-program-alternative
[77] Martin, N., & Watson, A. (2022, December 23). Boston public schools' proposed school safety positions draw outcry from juvenile justice advocates. The Bos ton Globe. www.bostonglobe.com/2022/12/23/metro/boston-public-schools proposed-school-safety-positions-draw-outcry-juvenile-justice-advocates/

are expelled. And as we know, the likelihood of eventual criminal adjudication and incarceration for people who do not graduate high school is statistically significant. As black boys are disproportionately suspended and expelled, it warrants questioning if school discipline policies themselves sustain the "school to prison pipeline", where students who are not best served within schools eventually find themselves mired within the criminal justice system.

Fortunately, such discipline measures including suspension and expulsion, and the use of SROs are beginning to be scrutinized at the governmental level and individual school districts. In New Jersey for instance, a 2016 law holds that students who are in 2nd grade or below cannot be suspended or expelled (unless a child exhibits extreme threats to school safety).

Some districts are recognizing negative school behaviors exhibited by students may be indications of broader ecological issues a student is experiencing in their lives outside of school, and in response are instituting Social Emotional Learning, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Training, and Multiple Tiered Systems of Support within their school curriculum. Such attempts are efforts in schools to provide an environment for students, to confront their traumas and difficulties that may be the root cause of negative behaviors that often result in suspension or expulsion. Additionally, some districts are making efforts to make tighter connections between their surrounding community and the school site by inviting community members into the school in a mentorship and supervisory capacity for students. This approach is gaining wider acceptance specifically in urban districts to provide students with greater and regular access to male role models. Schools in Dallas (TX) and New Orleans (LA) are some of the latest implementers of this approach to student behavioral modification.

Recommendations
- Keep agents of the criminal justice system outside of school in order to keep students safe from exposure to the criminal justice system
- Allow routine disciplinary matters to stay school-based issues for students to learn from, with the possibility of escalation into criminal matter
- Employ behavioral modification approaches like ACEs Training, and Multiple Tiered Systems to address the holistic needs of students rather than relying on suspension or expulsion as a method to achieve behavioral mediation
- Welcome approved community members into schools to foster a greater sense of security, order, and community for students and educators alike

CONCLUSION

When considering the questions, how do we get more black males to enter the profession, and what works academically for black boys, we have to remain cognizant that what we are witnessing, in many cases, is the result of policy decisions. Which means, if policy can contribute to the erosion of black male representation in the classroom and comparative underachievement in academic outcomes on behalf of black boys, then policy changes can help in being the solution.

We must first begin by asking ourselves the correct questions, rather than reflexively operationalizing intuition in response to what statistics may suggest. With respect to the

shortage of black males in the classroom, it appears we must first understand this issue to be grounded primarily in demographics and population concentration. As indicated herein, we recognize that where most black Americans reside, in the southeast and urban areas with higher concentrations of persons of color and lower-income residents, those are also the areas where we see the highest percentages of black teachers. Additionally, the most proficient incubators of black male teachers are HBCUs, which again, are concentrated in the south. Consequently, every state in the south, where more black Americans reside, and where more HBCUs are located, have an overrepresentation of black teachers compared to the national percentage of 6.2%. As encouraging as this appears, it also may tell a story mired in discriminatory hiring in other sectors of the economy whereby education may appear to the most likely path to securing gainful employment the is stable, and pays a middle-class wage, whereas other regions of the country have higher numbers of urban areas and white-collar opportunities that are actively pursued by college-educated black males.

In exploring recruitment and retention of black male teachers, again we must consider demographics and educational attainment of black males and sexist interpretations of the teaching. Recruitment, retention, education attainment and traditional sexist perspectives each play a significant role in the low numbers of black male teachers in America's classrooms. Isolating this absence of black men in teaching as an issue distinct to black Americans dismisses the point that women across races dominate in gender distribution as men of all ethnicities traditionally, and still, are overwhelmingly pursuing other occupational avenues outside of education. Thus, any approach to attract black men to teaching must include a recognition of how our society has traditionally isolated teaching "women's work."

In delving into the role teacher unions, school districts, nonprofits and colleges/universities play in increasing the numbers of black male educators, each is making strides to increase the presence of black male educators in the classroom. It is imperative that we remain aware of significant historical events that led to the decimation of black educators, namely the desegregation of public schools and the accountability era in recognition that today's shortage of black educators was not circumstantial but a direct consequence of politics, even if well-intentioned.

As for "what works for black boys" and beyond the oft-referenced "achievement gap", there must be urgency in connecting broader contexts to help explain the disparity in academic outcomes. We must develop an understanding that academic outcomes are indicators of sustained societal marginalization of black Americans generally, but black boys specifically. We must appreciate the societal and historical contexts wherein black children are situated and recognize that whatever outcomes result in schools is a reflection - not an initiator of that reality. And, if we want to see better academic outcomes from black boys, significant alterations in approach must be implemented to improve their lived contexts outside of the schoolhouse as well inside. To gain a broader understanding of the lingering shortage of black male teachers, it is important to identify the role discrimination in hiring plays in preventing prospective black male educators from entering the profession. This is a significant issue that is often left unexplored, thus obscuring our understanding of the shortage of black males in the classroom to be defined as a shortage of qualified, prospective black male teacher candidates. Research shared suggests the issue may be that districts who have the opportunity to hire black male educators, refrain from doing so even when black applicants are similarly qualified as white

applicants. If the approach to address the shortage of black male teachers only includes increasing the number of interested candidates, but does not address possible discrimination in hiring, representation in the classroom will not improve.

Finally, this article explored disparities in school discipline policies that place black students, black boys specifically, as targets. Modern school disciplinary policies that place a premium of enforcement on minor school behaviors is connected to the disproportionate suspension and expulsion rates of black students, both of which correlate to higher rates of retention and withdrawals from school. With a greater presence of black male teachers in America's schools, research shows suspension rates and disciplinary referrals decrease for black students; yet another reason to prioritize increasing the numbers of black male teachers in our schools.

Over the course of these few pages, it was my hope that the varied conveyances of the explored issues and their recommendations prove somewhat useful as we all remain committed to pursuing the educational experiences for America's children, which includes black boys. Additionally, I remain hopeful that this report spurs further action in getting more black male educators in the profession and in front of students, where they are proven to benefit so many.