

A Few Good Men:

A Common Sense Guide for Procuring, Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers



Rann Miller

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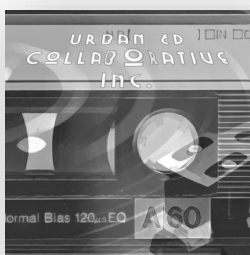


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“Our country’s story, written over more than two centuries, is one of challenges, chances, and progress”

- President Barack H. Obama

We are defined by how we approach the challenges that face us.

Our nation is as diverse as it has ever been. The demographics of those to be educated in schools across the United States is changing and schools leaders must be prepared to meet the needs of its students. As school leaders wrestle with attempting to close achievement gaps, manage student discipline and build cultural competence within the school, Black male teachers are needed more than ever.

Black teachers represent only 7 percent of the teaching population and Black male teachers represent an even smaller percentage. However, according to a NYU study, students of all races — white, black, Latino, and Asian — have more positive perceptions of their black and Latino teachers than they do of their white teachers. The message is clear: More Black male teachers are needed in America’s classrooms and more has to be done to keep them there.

This text is a common sense guide for how to find new leaders for America’s classrooms, how to retain them and how to build capacity for leadership from the pool of Black male teachers, written by a former Black male teacher. The purpose of this text is to help increase the numbers of Black male teachers across the nation.



Benefits of Having A Black Male Teacher in Your School

- Black male teachers serve as positive role models for Black students
- Black male teachers help to close the cultural competency gap within the school community
- Black male teachers refer fewer students for disciplinary issues

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urbanedmixtape@gmail.com

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Typography: Randy R. Miller Sr.

Manifesting Opportunities for Renewal and Empowerment, Inc. can be contacted via phone at 856-432-2370 or via email at urbanedmixtape@gmail.com

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE NEED FOR BLACK MALE TEACHERS	7
Changing Student Demographic	
Current Teacher Demographic	
Evidence for the Need	
PROCURING BLACK MALES FOR TEACHING	10
Making Spaces	
Where to look	
HBCU's	
District Collaboration	
Grooming from Within	
Make An Offer They Cannot Refuse	
PERSERVING AND PROMOTING BLACK MALE TEACHERS	15
Hire More Black Male Teachers	
Continue to Make Offers They Cannot Refuse	
Respect Their Knowledge, Ability and Purpose	
Cultivate Thought Leaders	
Promote the Village (Community)	
FINAL TIPS FOR MOVING FORWARD	24
Other Areas of Recruitment	
Reasons Why We Leave	
Who Are You Looking For? A Concluding Thought	
RESOURCES	27
REFERENCES	28

The Need for Black Male Teachers



CHANGING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Since the turn of the century, the demographics of public school students have shifted, and continue to shift, from majority White to majority non-White. According to 2016 National Center for Education Statistics report, from the fall of 2003 to the fall of 2013 the number of White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools decreased while the number of non-White students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools increased during that same period. According to the same report, the number of White students enrolled in public schools is projected to continue decreasing between fall 2014 and fall 2025 (from 25.0 million to 23.5 million) and to account for 46 percent of total enrollment in 2025. The percentage of students enrolled who are White was projected to be less than 50 percent beginning in 2014 and is projected to continue to decline as the enrollments of Hispanic students and Asian/Pacific Islander students increase; the number of Black students is projected to fluctuate during this period. These numbers prove that our schools do not look the same as they've used to. Neither should the people who teach them. However, the numbers prove that the teaching force has not changed with the student population.

CURRENT TEACHER DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics of teaching in America demand that we pay attention. The demographics which I am teasing out are that of the teachers in comparison to student demographics. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics, in the 2011-2012 academic year about 82% of all teachers were White while African-American teachers were 7% of the teaching population and Latino teachers were 8% of the teaching population.

The Need for Black Male Teachers

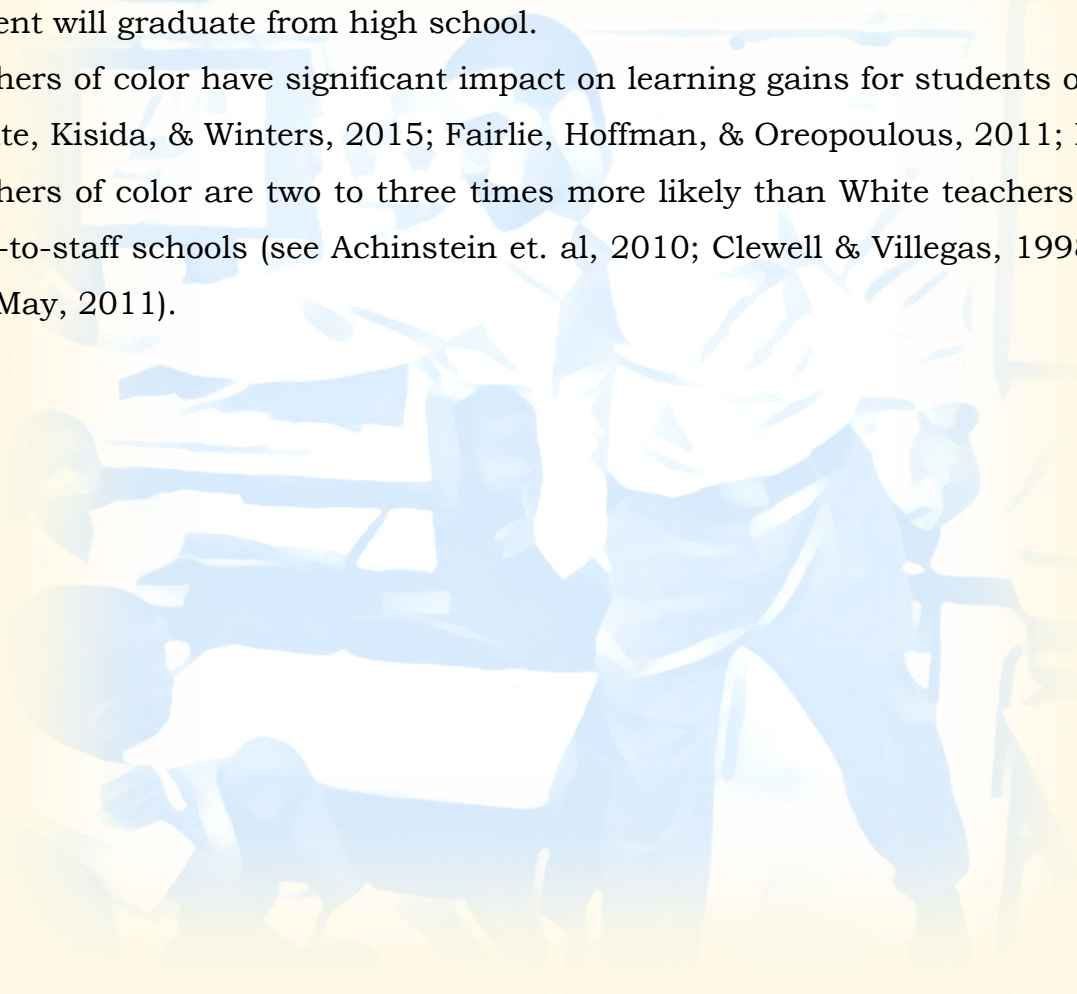
America's school-aged population is change, but not the population of those who are in the teaching profession. Those numbers look worse when you look at urban and inner-city communities where people of color make up the majority of the school-aged population. If you are a superintendent or district official, particularly in an urban and/or inner-city school and/or district, you must be aware of who you are; your faculty, administration and your student body in order to be effective. Being a culturally responsive with regards to policy and manpower is more important than ever.

EVIDENCE FOR THE NEED

The statistics show that students of color do not necessarily see themselves in the teachers that teach them. Male students of color may have an even harder time seeing themselves in the teacher workforce. If we were to use African American male students as an example; one could argue with evidence, that it is hard for those students to see themselves in the faculty who teach them. Black men comprise only roughly 2% of the U.S. teaching workforce according to Dr. Ivory Toldson of Howard University; that's 1 Black male teacher for every 534 students. According to Toldson, the percentage of Black male students is more than three times the percent of Black male teachers; and the percent of Latino male students is almost seven times the percent of Latino male teachers. This circumstance often presents a legitimate disconnect between students and teachers, specifically students of color and their White teachers. According to Jose Luis Vilson, a middle school math teacher in the Washington Heights/Inwood community in the Manhattan borough of New York City, the disconnect between White teachers and students of color creates major cultural divides between students and their teachers that are difficult to bridge and that contributes to the difficulties students from disadvantaged communities have finding more success in school and beyond. Addressing this disconnect is reason enough to add Black male teachers in school districts nationwide. Here is some more evidence of the value of Black male teachers:

The Need for Black Male Teachers

- According to a North Carolina Study, when matched with a Black teacher, Black students are less likely to face exclusionary discipline in comparison to White teachers.
- According to an NYU study:
 - * Black students prefer teachers who look like them because they better understand the challenges that come with being a racial minority.
 - * Same student-teacher connection is also said to be linked to teacher perceptions and expectations of students.
 - * Black students generally gave better scores to Black teachers and Asian students rated Black teachers even higher than Black students.
- According to a Johns Hopkins study, when a White teacher and a Black teacher consider the same Black student, the White teacher is 30% less likely to think the Black students will graduate from a 4-year college and 40% less likely to think the student will graduate from high school.
- Teachers of color have significant impact on learning gains for students of color (see Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015; Fairlie, Hoffman, & Oreopoulous, 2011; Dee, 2004)
- Teachers of color are two to three times more likely than White teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools (see Achinstein et. al, 2010; Clewell & Villegas, 1998; Ingersoll and May, 2011).



Procuring Black Males for Teaching



MAKING SPACE

Leadership at the district level must be resolute to add more Black male teachers to their faculty. Simply put, district leadership must commit to making space in their district for Black male teachers. Making space means dedicating new hire slots to Black male teachers. That might sound like a quota system but education is all about numbers. Some call them quotas, some call it targets, some call it growth; it's all the same no matter the name. We place quotas on the number of students needed to score proficient on state test, we create growth targets for students to achieve and we create benchmark targets for students, labeled in education statistics; graduating rates, dropout rates and teacher retention rates. How can you add more Black male teachers if you do have a target number? In order to create the goal, you have to dedicate something in order to achieve it. In this case, you have to dedicate a target number of new hiring slots to Black male teachers. Maybe you dedicate 5, 10 or 20. Maybe you dedicate 50 slots over 3 years. However, you develop your target and plan for achieving it is up to district leadership. However, district leadership must agree on a target to achieve to begin with. If you need two second grade teachers and two kindergarten teachers, you should aim for the desire and not the need. The desire accounts for the variables that impact teaching while the need accounts only for itself. It is true, a desire's deadline is reality; at some point you have to fill those teaching vacancies. However, give yourself more time to get what it is you desire for those vacancies. Some districts begin searches in May when they should have begun in March. Dedicate the time, effort and energy to reaching that target number of Black male teachers... but you **MUST** identify a target number of Black male teachers to hire.

Don't wait until you are about to interview candidates to choose your desired number. Make your choice at the beginning of the school year. Take inventory of your student

Procuring Black Males for Teaching

and teacher population at the start of the school year and from there make projections according to those statistics on the number of Black male teachers you'd like to hire. Begin cultivating Black male teacher candidates throughout the school year. Schedule an information session for all interested candidates; current teachers and novice teachers alike. This isn't a job fair where you are taking applications and giving interviews. This is an opportunity to showcase your school, your mission and offer information on what type of educator you are looking for. If hosting an in-person session doesn't make the most sense, host a webinar. But let everyone know early in the game that you're serious about hiring Black male teachers and here, we have the space for you to grow.

WHERE TO LOOK

Great; you've decided to hire Black male teachers. You dedicated space. You've hosted the info sessions and/or webinars. Now what? That alone won't bring Black male teachers running to your school. However, there are qualified candidates looking to be found. According to Dr. Ivory Toldson, in a 2012 analysis of the top 10 occupations among Black and White males who have at least a bachelor's degree, primary school teacher was the number one profession of college-educated black men (number 3 for White men and number 1 for Black women also); secondary school teacher was the fifth ranked profession of college-educated black men (number 14 for White men). This is evidence to show that Black men teach (see chart below).

The Top Ten Occupations Among Black and White Males Who Have At Least a Bachelor's Degree

Black Males			White Males		
Ranking	Occupation & Ranking	Number	Ranking	Occupation & Ranking	Number
1	Primary School Teacher (3)	66,854	1	Managers (2)	987,508
2	Managers (1)	58,241	2	Lawyers (13)	688,255
3	Accountants & Auditors (4)	47,148	3	Primary School Teacher (1)	667,255
4	Postsecondary Teachers (6)	37,902	4	Accountants & Auditors (3)	663,562
5	Secondary School Teacher (16)	31,067	5	Chief Executives (21)	597,209
6	Retail Salesperson (10)	29,187	6	Postsecondary Teachers (4)	575,602
7	Social Workers (56)	28,903	7	Sales Representative (27)	510,523
8	First-Line Supervisors, Retail Sales (9)	28,337	8	Physicians and Surgeons (12)	467,110
9	Education Administration (22)	27,353	9	First-Line Supervisors, Retail Sales (8)	401,748
10	Counselors (44)	26,048	10	Retail Salesperson (10)	350,939

*SOURCE: Toldson, I. A., & Snitman, A. (2010).

Procuring Black Males for Teaching

So where do you begin to look? Unfortunately, there are no quick fixes to addressing this problem. Even when you dedicate space to Black male teachers, desires have deadlines. You may have to pull the trigger on hiring someone who is not a Black male teacher to meet your hiring deadlines. However, there are some remedies to the problem of the Black male teacher shortage in your district. The short-term fix is to bring them to you. The long-term fix is to identify them and cultivate them early on. The mid-term fix is a little bit of both. Here are some of those optional fixes in greater detail.

District Collaborative Job Fair (Short-Term Fix)

PRO: Immediate response from eligible candidates

CON: Not Black male teacher candidate focused

This has been the tried and true method of teacher recruitment; host a job fair. Districts often collaborate amongst themselves or as part of a regional collective to host yearly job fairs; some districts host minority/diversity job fairs. If your district doesn't already do this, then you should do this as soon as possible. The plus for this method of recruiting is it introduces you to candidates immediately. The only work you have to do is host the job fair. Teachers are looking for work and you might be in line to successfully cast a very wide net. However, with that wide net is the potential to find only a few Black males in the applicant pool. To address that problem, you should consider hosting a Black male educator job fair. You will not have enough positions to host one on your own, so collaborate with other districts to host such a fair. More opportunities for employment will bring out more prospective candidates.

Historically Black Colleges and University Recruiting (Mid-Term Fix)

PRO: Concentrated area of Black male talent

CON: Competition with other institutions vying for their services

Districts recruit at colleges all the time. But what about recruiting at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's)? Higher concentrations of Black males are located at HBCU's versus primarily White institutions (PWI's). Black men at PWI's may outnumber Black males at HBCU's but they are scattered nationwide. HBCU's are located in a primary geographic area: the South and East Coast. According to a 2016 Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions report, HBCU's conferred 30% of all bachelor degrees earned by Black men in 2014. According to the same report, approximately 64% of teachers of

Procuring Black Males for Teaching

color who attended PWIs and 74% of teachers who attended MSIs have a BA awarded by a department/school of education; educators of color from minority serving institutions (MSI's) are more likely to receive baccalaureate training in education. If you need to find prospective Black male teachers, HBCU's are the place to begin your search.

Grooming from Within/In-House Recruiting (Long-Term Fix)

PRO: Can cultivate relationship with school and community early from an invested candidate

CON: Have to compete with forces likely to take candidate from their community

A great place to find prospective teaching candidates is from within your own student population. Encouraging your students of color, to think about teaching is a great way to cultivate a new pipeline of teachers from within. There are programs around the country who target Black men while still in high school to become teachers upon their graduation from college. District leadership must create such a program within their district; targeting Black male students as early as sophomore year and cultivating these men to becoming future educators in their communities. Black people have always had a strong incentive and desire to help improve their communities. Education is one of the best ways to do that. The intrinsic value of teaching people of your own community is something desires of fame and riches can deny. This strategy will not be an immediate fix to your current dilemma of figuring how to add more Black male teachers, but like every baseball team, you must simultaneously put a winning product on the field and build your farm system. District leadership must do the same; put together a roster of Black male teachers and build the farm system to resupply them in the future.

AN OFFER THEY CAN'T REFUSE

Catch phrases are great when creating a cult following for whatever it is you are trying to sell to the masses. Movies do this all the time. One of the great catch phrases was said in the Godfather and Godfather II, "I'll make him an offer he can't refuse." When recruiting Black males to come teach in your district, a job may not be enough to entice them. You're not the only person, or district, looking to hire Black male teachers. You've got to make them an offer they cannot refuse. Before, state governments would do that for you; providing pensions and free health insurance for state employees. Some of those benefits have departed the states. Now, districts have to be creative in how they decide to incentivize teaching, particularly those districts deemed "less desirable." The gold

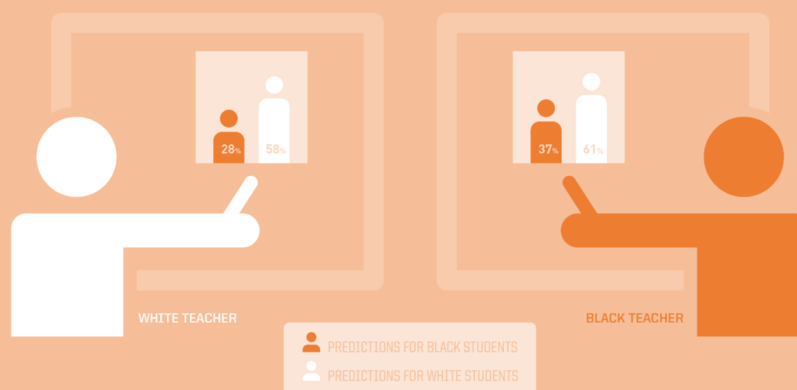
Procuring Black Males for Teaching

standard is usually tuition reimbursement. That's good, but it may not be enough. Unless your district reimburses dollar for dollar up to a semesters worth of classes, this may not impress a potential candidate. If you can find the money in the budget however, here are some ideas worth considering. You cannot do them all due to budgetary constraints, however if hiring Black male teachers is important to you, you should attempt to offer at least one of these benefits:

- Offer to pay for all teacher mentoring fees and alternative route coursework fees.
- Offer to pay for all graduate coursework in exchange for years of service upon receiving said graduate degree.
- Create a capacity building teacher to administrator program within your district where you train teachers to become administrators within your district (both in house and formal graduate training) and pay for all coursework, certifications and licenses.
- Offer a competitive salary and benefits package.
- Offer to send candidate to 1 conference per year of their choosing. Offer to reimburse them for travel and lodging.

TEACHER PREDICTIONS

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL GET
A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE DEGREE



The Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 asked two different teachers to predict the educational attainment of the same 10th grade public school students. Researchers found when a black teacher and white teacher evaluate the same black student, the white teacher is much less likely to predict that the student will graduate high school or complete college. For white students, black teachers also make higher predictions than white teachers, but the difference is much smaller.

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers



HIRE MORE BLACK MALE TEACHERS

Once you've hired a Black male teacher or multiple Black male teachers, don't stop there. You should repeat the steps that led you to finding and securing the services of a Black male teacher. Continue to host information session specifically for Black male teacher candidates. Continue to collaborate and participate in diversity job fairs. Continue to work with teacher education programs at HBCU's and attend job fairs at HBCU's as well. Meet with potential teaching candidates at HBCU's and interview them for your open faculty positions. Continue to cultivate Black males attending your schools; encouraging them to become teachers and assisting them along their journey. A continued effort in this endeavor will help establish your school and/or district as a welcomed destination for Black male teachers. Of course, you never wish to polarize other candidates in the name of hiring more Black male teachers, however, a focus on diversity within your faculty should be a response to the population that you serve and the community where you reside.

****YOU CANNOT EXPECT TO RETAIN BLACK MALE TEACHERS TO REMAIN IN YOUR SCHOOL(S) IF THEY ARE THE ONLY BLACK MALE TEACHER IN YOUR SCHOOL BUILDING OR WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT****

Black male teachers aren't just for schools with a high Black male presence. All students can benefit from seeing and learning from Black teachers in general. For example, in an NYU study conducted in 2016, researchers found that not only did Black students have positive perceptions of Black teachers, but Asian students preferred Black teachers more than Black students.

CONTINUE TO MAKE AN OFFER THEY CANNOT REFUSE

Previously, I spoke of making an offer that Black male teachers cannot refuse. You cannot assume that just because you show interest, or offer a Black male teaching candidate a job that he will choose to come to your school. You have to make that candidate, like any other sought after candidate, feel that you need him to in your building. He feels it from your offer package, your incentives package and your embedded systems of professional development and advancement.

Offer Package

The offer package a teacher receives in their offer letter isn't filled with huge bonus and a company car like the packages some receive in corporate America. It is understood that leadership may be limited by the district (and state) on what they can offer in a package to new hires. However, there are a few things that your district can do when you find a candidate that you need on your faculty who is a Black male. In addition to the baseline salary and benefits, here are some ideas you may be able to implement for a new candidate:

1. Offer a competitive salary (competitive with the surrounding districts in the region).
2. Offer a signing bonus.
3. Guarantee the opportunity to write curriculum in the candidate's content area for additional compensation.
4. Offer partial (or full) tuition reimbursement for graduate credits in exchange for years served
5. Offer medical insurance benefits at as low a cost as possible (this may be out of your control, but your district should attempt to negotiate for affordable insurance for staff that offers the best in services).

Incentives/Building Benefits Package

Generally, teachers look at things like the location of the school, size of the school, grade level of the school, school staff, school leadership and activities of the school as perks of working in a school. However, you should add to those perks. You may not be in the position to throw money at your candidates for everything; however you can do a few ideas that can show Black male teachers of your desire to keep them at your school:

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

1. Guarantee an additional prep period beyond what you are obligated to offer.
2. Guarantee the candidate will have his own classroom (in the age of limited school resources, this is huge).
3. Guarantee unlimited use of paper (or a paper quota per month and limited access to color printing).
4. Offer late day arrivals or early departures for achieving performance goals or for perfect attendance.
5. Offer to reimburse all teacher mentoring fees, if renewed for the next school year.
6. If the teacher is a non-traditional teacher i.e. alternate route (did not graduate with a teacher degree) offer to reimburse them for their certification course fees, if renewed for the next school year.
7. Offer to reimburse all certification fees, if renewed for the next school year.
8. Offer bonus compensation for meeting districtwide and statewide performance goals on standardized assessments.
9. Offer compensation program for staff with perfect attendance and no lateness
10. Offer full school year (Fall and Spring semester) tuition & fees remission for faculty enrolled in graduate school who are returning the next school year for success the previous school year: (1) meeting all district and statewide performance goals, (2) perfect attendance, (3) no tardiness, and (4) scoring in the 90th percentile for annual evaluation.

System of Professional Development & Advancement

Two areas of contention for all teachers are (1) professional development (PD) offered by the school and/or district they're employed by and (2) the room for advancement within their school and/or district. Black male teachers, like other teachers seek quality opportunities for both, however as a constituency, Black male teachers have their needs met in a "flavor of the month" way. What I mean by that is Black males are promoted in schools because it is a good look for the school. Black male teachers receive meaningful opportunities for PD because they've advocated for it or it's a "hot topic" where they are concerned. Advancement and PD must be intentional and implemented with surgical precision. Here are some ideas to think about when mapping out PD for the year (these ideas are some that you should do regardless of the racial composition of your staff):

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

1. Have a war chest to fund outside consultants and trainers to train and instruct your faculty. Rather than spend money on curriculum programs, invest your money in your faculty to learn how to collaborate to develop a school district specific curriculum program.
2. Don't call updates on school wide procedures, testing procedures, performance goals, and any "how to's" that are paperwork related i.e. filing reports, submitting grades, grading assessments or completing SGO's professional development. Updates on those items are called meetings.
3. Offer professional development providing content experts to train your content teachers.
4. Design PD targeted for Black male teachers. As a school and/or district, you must concentrate on their experiences and improving those experiences where they currently teach.
5. Tailor your professional development to encompass two key themes: (1) cultural competency/cultural relevance and (2) social justice. These two themes work hand-in-hand. Cultural competency isn't about teaching students of color only. It is about understand the various facets of culture that teachers interact with daily e.g. racial/ethnic, gender, technological, environment (not to be confused with nature, but the community locale). Students interact with each other and exchange knowledge and communicate on various levels. Teachers should be aware of all of these to understand their students better and to communicate with them better. Such understandings impact outcomes such as academic performance and disciplinary referrals. This focus helps to achieve the social justice aim – achieving justice in the classroom for the sake of the students and teaching justice so that students take the message and become advocates for the voiceless; in their communities and beyond.
6. Offer your Black male teachers the opportunity to present and facilitate PD for your staff. Afford them the opportunity to train their colleagues specific to their content with the themes of social justice and cultural competency embedded in their presentations. Let them be seen as intellectual leaders of your school, not simply vessels to help with disciplining students of color.

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

7. Offer school officials and administrators within your district racial (and gender) awareness training – to maintain consistency with the dual teacher professional development themes of (1) cultural competency/cultural relevance and (2) social justice.

Here are some ideas to think about creating, if you have yet to, when considering advancement programs within your school and/or district (these ideas are some that you should possibly implement for your entire staff). All of these things are good to add to a teacher's portfolio for their evaluation and also when applying for an administrative leadership position:

1. Create content departments e.g. English, science, social studies or create grade band team leaders for each grade. Suggest that Black male teachers take these academic/administrative leadership roles and provide compensation.
2. Encourage your Black male teachers to take on the role of a class advisor to gain experience with the administrative task similar to the role of a principal – fundraising, organizing events, conducting meetings and holding information sessions for parents and students (provide compensation).
3. Encourage your Black male teachers to take on the role of a teacher mentor. Try to pair them with a first year teacher in their content area. It is okay to pair them with a Black teacher but don't go out of your way to do this... If there are new Black teachers in your building, understand that the Black teachers will acquaint themselves without the need for district mandated mentoring.
4. Create a summer enrichment program for students (or host summer school) where students learn and/or sharpen skills necessary for the next school year and allow for teachers to serve as lead administrators for the session. Suggest that Black male teachers take this administrative leadership role and provide compensation.
5. Create a districtwide diversity teacher to administrator apprentice program to build capacity within your district and encourage your Black male teachers to apply. Your program should have the following components:
 - a. You should be linked with a state approved outside-vender education institute or a college/university that will offer the classes necessary for students to gain their principal's certificate. You should pay for these classes.

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

- b. You should help with filing for all certifications on behalf of teacher participants. All certification fees should be paid for.
- c. You should provide teachers an opportunity to complete a 1 year internship within your district where they have reduced class time to complete their internship.
- d. You should provide a mentor (either a current or former principal) and an advisor, who is a current administrator within your district, to assist the participants with all paperwork, course work and internship work.

If a Black male teacher saw that your school and/or district implemented half of what I listed, they would be on board for teaching at your school district. Walking away from a school with so much to offer would be foolish for them. Much of these suggestions would be great for all teachers but with a focus on your Black male teachers, you would set yourself apart as being at the forefront of the Black male educators movement.

RESPECT THEIR KNOWLEDGE, ABILITY & PURPOSE

Many Black teachers, while full of passion for educating all students, particularly students who look like them, are frustrated with how they've been defined by their colleagues and how they've been utilized in schools. Many Black teachers don't feel as though they are seen as content and intellectual leaders but rather they are seen as de-facto disciplinarians; that their specialty is to discipline those troubled students of color that non-Black teachers do not have the time to work with. This is unfortunate for Black teachers. Black educators have more to bring to the table than just their ability to use their cultural intelligence to discipline students that other teachers cannot.

In 2016, the Education Trust, a non-profit advocacy organization promoting high achievement for students of color and low-income students, spoke with Black teachers about their experiences working in schools. What they reported was that Black teachers are an asset to classrooms across the country. Black teachers are role models, parental figures and advocates for students. In addition to being harbors of content knowledge, they build connections and relationships with students of color that attach those students to the schools they attend. The report also unearthed some unfortunate and uncomfortable truths.

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

According to the report (you can read the whole report here: <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/ThroughOurEyes.pdf>):

- Black teachers found themselves restricted to only teaching Black students.
- Black teachers reported that they were limited to acting as disciplinarians instead of being respected for their ability to manage their classrooms.
- Black teachers reported that although they put in the extra time and effort, they still weren't heard in staff meetings.
- Black teachers found that although they related well to students, they had to “tone down” their personalities to be seen as professionals.
- Black teachers reported being pigeonholed by peers, parents, and administrators into specific roles based on these strengths, thereby limiting and diminishing their capabilities.
- Black teachers reported that without the acknowledgment of (or the chance to build) the pedagogical and subject matter expertise essential to their profession, they felt they lacked opportunities for advancement and were undervalued and unappreciated.

It is important that when you hire Black male teachers (and teachers of color in general), that you respect them for the professionals that they are. Showing that respect means welcoming their input and suggestions during formal and informal discussions. It also means looking to them to take on more academic leadership responsibilities. Finally, it means not abusing their cultural intelligence for immediate student management goals when others are assumed to be incapable. Include your Black male teachers in your strategic planning sessions for your school and/or district vision. Doing so builds loyalty and trust among your Black male teachers, in addition to your other staff. A commitment to diversity gains the trust of the community and makes your school and/or district an advocate of the community.

CULTIVATE THOUGHT LEADERS

With the advent of social media technologies, people can communicate with each other and share information in fun and innovative ways. You should encourage your Black male teachers to do the same.

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

Encourage them to become thought leaders; if they aren't already. Encourage them to share their knowledge and passion with the education community, and the local community. Their voice is vital to the communities they seek to join and impact. Have them create professional accounts for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media platforms where they can share their ideas and accomplishments with the world. They can also gain information and ideas for them to implement in the classroom. Encourage them to create a blog or website to write and journal their experiences and offer advice to those that may be in need of their knowledge. Encourage them to create a professional brand – themselves being that brand. This helps them to build a profile professionally that can provide cache when they are looking to make power moves in their career. Of course, offer them counsel on the pitfalls of putting your foot in your mouth. However, you should absolutely facilitate the development of your Black male teachers, and your entire faculty, as thought leaders. An increased profile may make for those teachers to receive opportunities that can take them away from your school and/or district. However, your goal isn't to stifle your faculty, but to develop them and groom the potential in prospects to eventually take their place. Your role is to be facilitator, not dictator.

PROMOTE THE VILLAGE (COMMUNITY)

Sometimes, Black male teachers (and Black teachers in general) can feel marginalized and isolated when working in a school district. During my teaching career, I spent much of it as the only Black teacher in the building and just about all of it as the only Black male teacher in the district. Earlier, I mention that while it is good to have Black male teachers serve as mentors, specifically to other Black male teachers, you shouldn't go out of your way to make that happen. Black male teachers and Black teachers in schools and districts in general, find ways to create spaces to meet to discuss issues specific to them; their interactions with colleagues, students, administration and parents. You should seriously consider creating these spaces within the school district for Black educators, specifically Black male teachers, to fellowship with each other in a way that encourages growth in the profession, provides professional and emotional support for the various challenges teachers have who wear Black skin, and establishes a network to help facilitate the recruitment and hiring of Black male teachers within your school and/or district. Black male educators are having formal gatherings of the sort to do these very things with the

Preserving & Promoting Black Male Teachers

support of their district leadership.

In Philadelphia, a group of educators began an organization called *the Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice*. The organization is dedicated to advancing the development, recruitment and retention of Black male educators in Philadelphia's public schools. The Fellowship has partners nationwide and has both the attention and support of the Philadelphia School District, state and national policymakers. The bulk of their work is in encouraging Black males to enter the teaching force. With that, they provide support; support for college entry or re-entry, support for teachers new to the profession and support for teachers looking to advance professionally. In Boston, the school district has formed *the Male Educators of Color Coaching Seminar Series* and *the Boston Teacher Residency Male Educators of Color Networking Group*, offering Black male teachers in Boston support inside and outside the classroom.

These groups are not the only one in the nation, however more school districts could benefit from Black male educators coming together to add to their numbers in the teaching profession. School districts shouldn't wait on ambitious and innovating Black male teachers to develop such a group in their districts. District leadership should take the initiative to create a group where Black male teachers can formally come together, support each other professionally and emotionally in addition to strategically plan how to help with their district's recruitment and retention of Black male teaching talent. As I said originally, you may not be aware of where to find talented Black males to teach. If you facilitate a continuous formal gathering of Black male teachers, you will indirectly (or directly depending on your intention) formulate a taskforce for Black male teacher recruitment and retention.

Final Tips For Moving Forward



OTHER AREAS OF RECRUITMENT

Some of the best places to recruit prospective Black male teachers are the classrooms within your building and/or district schools. School districts don't only rely on teachers to carry out the instructional goals of the district. They also rely on teacher supports to help carry out district instructional initiatives. Teachers are supported by instructional assistants or aides also called paraprofessionals (it all depends on the state as to the title that is designated). In some states, it is a requirement for an instructional assistant to have a bachelor's degree. If you find a Black male who is in that role, they are a possible candidate for your building; particularly if they have good relationships with teachers and students. Another place to look is in after-school/extended day programs. Many of these programs are staffed with college students whom may major in education. You might find some promising prospects there also. Lastly, while these candidates may not be the most desirable, they make the most sense: substitute teachers. The reputation for many substitute teachers isn't good. However, there are diamonds in the ruff if you're willing to look. None of these should be your go-to places to look for Black male teachers, but don't count these options out. You'll never know what you may find.

REASONS WHY WE LEAVE

This text focuses on how to attract and retain Black male teachers. However, it is important to note why Black male teachers tend to leave the profession. If you become aware of why Black male teachers leave the profession, you may seek to be preventative in the ways you cultivate the culture in your school and/or district to give Black male teachers every reason to stay. Here are some reasons why we leave the teaching profession (this is list does not offer every possible reason accompanied with detailed explanation):

Final Tips for Moving Forward

1. Feeling underappreciated and devalued as intellectual equals of non-Black (White) teaching colleagues.
2. Rigid structures that prevent their ability to be themselves when teaching and mentoring students.
3. The lack of cultural awareness amongst colleagues and the lack of cultural awareness/cultural competence focus by school and/or district.
4. An inflexible and rigid curriculum that is not open to creativity and adjustment.
5. Solely data-driven approaches to teaching and instruction.

There are many articles and text that express the various reasons why Black male teachers leave the teaching profession accompanied with detailed explanations as to why. Please refer to the following articles to educate you and your staff on the reasons and explanations for why Black male teachers leave the profession:

- **Why Black Men Quit Teaching:** https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/opinion/sunday/why-black-men-quit-teaching.html?_r=0
- **Black Teachers Are Leaving the Teaching Profession at Staggering Rates. But Why?** <https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/black-and-latino-teachers-are-leaving-the-teaching-profession-at-staggering-rates-but-why/>
- **The Reason So Many Black Teachers Leave the Job Early:** <http://hechingerreport.org/reason-many-black-teachers-leave-job-early/>
- **Why Teachers of Color Quit:** <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/12/why-teachers-of-color-quit/282007/>
- **The Invisible Tax on Teachers of Color:** https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-invisible-tax-on-black-teachers/2016/05/15/6b7bea06-16f7-11e6-aa55-670cabef46e0_story.html?utm_term=.bcc1c01722f0

WHO ARE YOU LOOKING FOR? A CONCLUDING THOUGHT

This text has dedicated itself to encouraging the thoughtful and intentional hiring of Black male teachers to schools nationwide. It is not the intention of this text to encourage the hiring of Black teachers for hiring sake. Assuming that all Black male teachers have a passion and love for teaching all students, particularly students of color, is a bad hypothesis to make. Not every Black male is meant to become a teacher. When looking for any teacher to teach at your school, there is a profile that you should have in mind.

Final Tips For Moving Forward

The same should be true for Black male teachers that you look to hire. You should seek men who are contentions of their role as a Black male teacher; men who are committed to the teaching profession and to the communities they serve as teachers. Hiring more Black male teachers is imperative. Equally imperative is hiring Black male teachers who understand who they are and what that means inside the classroom.



Resources

- Recruiting and Retaining Educators of Color – White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans: <https://sites.ed.gov/whieea/files/2014/01/Resource-Slides.pdf>
- Teacher Preparation Innovation and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's): http://www.teachingworks.org/images/files/TeachingWorks_Fenwick.pdf
- Call Me MISTER Free Tuition Teacher Education Program for African American Males: <http://www.multiculturaladvantage.com/opportunity/scholarships/detail/open/free-tuition-teacher-education-african-american-males.asp>
- For more information on the Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice, please visit: <http://1000x2025.org/>
- For more information on the Boston Male Educators of Color Coaching Seminar Series and the Boston Teacher Residency Male Educators of Color Networking Group, please visit: <http://www.bostonteacherresidency.org/> and <http://www.teachboston.org/diversity-in-bps/>
- Boston study on Black Male Teachers by Dr. Travis Bristol: <http://schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/TravisBristol-PolicyBrief-BlackMaleTeachers.pdf>
- The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males: <http://blackboysreport.org/>
- The Columbia Law School Center for Intersectionality and Social Policy Studies Report – Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Over Policed and Under Protected: <http://www.aapf.org/recent/2014/12/coming-soon-blackgirlsmatter-pushed-out-overpoliced-and-underprotected>
- Why Black Men Quit Teaching: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/28/opinion/sunday/why-black-men-quit-teaching.html?r=0>
- Young Black Men Ever Considered Teaching: <http://blackmenteaching.org/>
- Training More Black Men to Become Teachers: <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2015/12/programs-teachers-african-american-men/420306/>

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About The Author



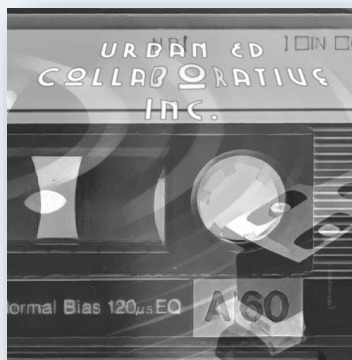
RANN MILLER

Rann Miller, Sr. is an educator with a passion for urban education and a heart for empowering students, families and fellow educators. He is also a husband and a father who is devoted to his family. He has a Political Science and Masters in Public Administration degrees from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

He has 6 years teaching experience as a social studies teacher for charter schools in Camden City, New Jersey. He has experience teaching social studies to grades 5 through 12, mentoring first-year teachers, coaching, writing curricula, facilitating professional development and as an assistant principal of school-wide discipline. Currently, he is a director of a federally funded after-school program in a New Jersey school district located in the southern portion of the state.

Rann is honored to be married to his wife of 7 years. Their union has yielded 4 beautiful children. He and his family currently reside in New Jersey.

Rann is an author of two books and a contributor to one book. He is the author of *The Double D's of Destruction: How Our Distracted and Desensitized Consciousness Is Destroying Our Communities and Failing Our Children* and *The Cooper Street Offense: A Philosophy for Reaching, Teaching and Discipling Black and Hispanic/Latino Students in Inner City Schools*. He is a contributor in *Black Male Teachers: Diversifying the United States' Teacher Workforce*.



Rann Miller

Urban Ed Collaborative Inc.

<http://urbanedmixtape.com>

urbanedmixtape@gmail.com

856-432-2370