

# Black Teacher Project

## Annual Report 2017



“ I teach so that I can be an agent of change, either the flint that sparks the fire or the tinder that keeps the flame going. I teach because I enjoy the look in a student’s eyes when they realize that they can be successful. I teach because I believe in an education system that supports the importance of teaching the whole child. I teach so that I can provide students with at least one place in the world where they feel protected, loved, and cared for. I teach so that I can help students feel as if all their basic needs are being met. I teach, because in doing so, I know that I am fulfilling the age-old adage that admonished: Each One Teach One. And so, I teach.”

**Angela Normand, 11-year teacher, Brentwood, CA**



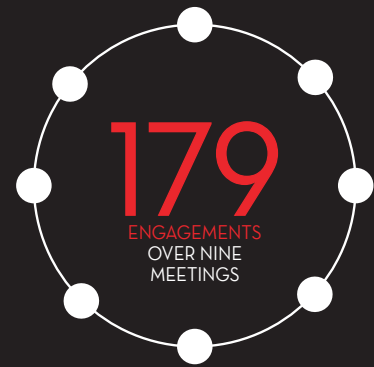
## Our Vision

Our vision is that all children will have access to a well-trained, well-supported Black teaching force. The Black Teacher Project (BTP) develops, sustains, and recruits Black teachers for schools in the United States. **Our goal is to create effective teaching force that reflects the diversity and excellence of Black people in this country** We believe that Black educators offer indispensable insights into the lived realities of navigating schooling institutions, as well as the social structures of the United States. Therefore, every young person, regardless of racial or ethnic identity, can benefit from the influence of highly effective Black teachers in their life. Black people comprise approximately 12 percent of the population in the United States. However, Black people comprise only 7 percent of all teachers. In ten years, we aim to assist in significantly raising the number of Black teachers in the classroom from 7 percent to 11 percent.

Black teachers are essential. The gifts that Black teachers offer are not simply strategies; they go beyond a set of buzzwords that can be implemented. **Instead, the empathy and vulnerability that Black teachers embody, in concert with culturally responsive teaching, push students in the direction of excellence.** [Research](#) bears this out—Black teachers have higher expectations for Black students, who thereby perform better, and white students benefit from Black teachers by having a role model to form a connection with. And all students prefer Black and Hispanic teachers—and with that sense of connection, Black teachers can take all students further down the road of learning.

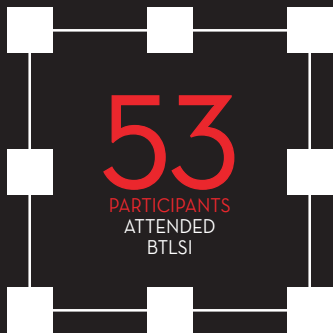
# Our Year in Review

**1. Black Teacher Inquiry Group:** Monthly meetings for Black teachers to engage in protocol-based participatory action research that deepens their equity-based pedagogy in an all-Black space. Inquiry Group topics ranged from implementing the Critical Friends Protocol and how to navigate microaggressions in the workplace, to how to advocate effectively for students of color.



**2. Black Teacher Book Study:** Monthly workshops focused on strengthening Black teachers' practice in the classroom utilizing the content of the book, *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*, by Zaretta Hammond. The guiding idea for the series was that participants would be able to manage implementing culturally responsive teaching practices at the school and classroom level. By reading the book, reflecting, and engaging in critical friendship with colleagues over the course of the school year, participants produced a [final project](#) to put into practice everything that they have learned (the link is to an example of a curriculum that a participant wrote).

**3. Black Teacher Wellness and Rejuvenation:** Monthly meetings with a focus on sustaining the holistic health and well-being of Black teachers. Attendees gained skills to support their physical, emotional, and social health as teachers and leaders in their community. One example includes "[Building Our Toolkit](#)," a rejuvenation night for Black teachers at all stages of their careers to come together, find affinity, name their stressors, express them, and be affirmed by the group.



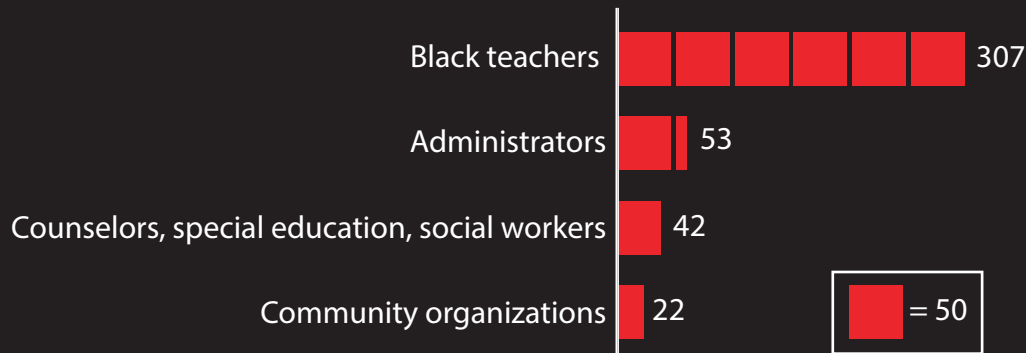
**4. Black Teacher Sustainability & Leadership Institute (BTLSI):** A national institute providing opportunities for participants to develop strategies for initiative and lifelong careers. Attendees went over the history of Black teachers in the United States, managing emotional triggers, growing equity leadership from within, and more, while using methods of constructivist listening, appreciative interviews, and helping trios, among others. The San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) provided scholarships for any district-employed Black teacher who wanted to attend. In Oakland, several principals and other administrators also provided scholarships. We also held a one-day institute in New York City with over 20 participants, some coming from as far away as Texas.

**5. Black Teacher Peer Support Spaces:** Monthly workshops focused on strengthening Black teachers' practice in the classroom. Peer support spaces are teacher-led, giving the opportunity for participants to take leadership and share their expertise in a given area. Some examples of this work include "Elder Wisdom: Teaching Through Turbulence," an all-Black, multi-generational space that included dinner, a discussion panel, and small group engagement for teachers of all ages to connect. During the panel, each elder talked about their experiences as a new teacher, described how the teaching profession has changed, and gave advice on staying in the classroom. Another peer support space we just started is the California Subject Examinations for Teachers and California Basic Educational Skills Test tutoring series for teachers of color. This program was the result of numerous teachers in our network who described the difficulty and cost of standardized tests that are required for teacher credentials; some teachers' lack of credential has prevented them from continuing on at schools that they have otherwise succeeded at. The tutoring sessions are kept to a small group of five to eight people and focus on test-taking skills as well as content. Because this is an affinity group, teachers can raise questions that they might not feel comfortable raising otherwise.

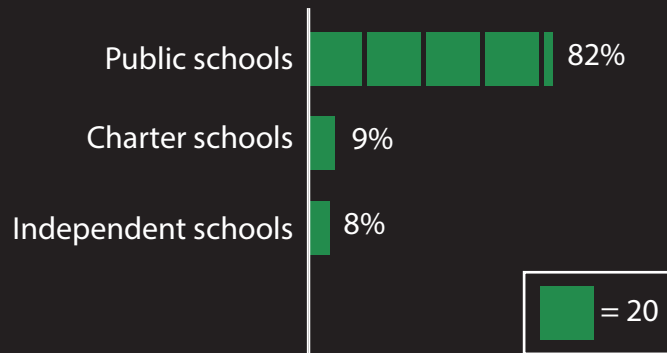


# Just the Stats, Please

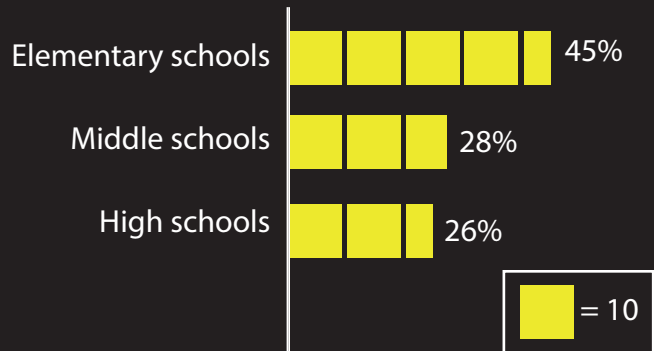
Below are the numbers of constituents we reached, both through our in-person and online programming.



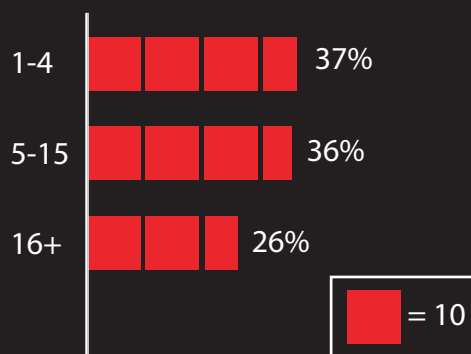
## Black teachers that teach at:



## Percentages that are from:



## Number of years of teaching:



**Number of Black teachers who came to two or more events**  
98 people or 32% of attendees

# A Few Program Highlights



(click picture to view video)

At An Evening to Celebrate Black Teachers, our year-end celebration, we honored and lifted up 28 teacher leaders who were active participants in and drivers of BTP programming (this also included involvement with our online campaigns, #MyBlackTeacher and #BlackTeacherMagic). **They, as teachers, truly made BTP programming and initiatives teacher led.**

During Women's History Month, in collaboration with the BlackFemaleProject, we hosted a panel of seven Black female teachers, who were at different points of their careers, speaking candidly about their experiences attempting to bring excellence to the classroom while navigating larger workplace dynamics. The event was facilitated by BTP executive director, Micia Mosely, and Precious Stroud, executive director of the BlackFemaleProject.

During Black History Month, we ran a social media campaign called [#BlackTeacherMagic](#), where Black teachers told stories of why they teach. This campaign was inspired by a meeting of our Book Study Group where author and educator Zaretta Hammond was leading a discussion about culturally responsive teaching. That conversation recognized the qualities Black teachers bring to their practice, emphasizing soul and spirit. By the end of the month, we'd had 15 Black teachers tell their stories and the reasons why they teach.

#BLACKTEACHERMAGIC



15 TEACHERS TOLD THEIR STORIES AND WHY THEY TEACH.

# Evaluation

"As a result of the institute, I feel more motivated to go back to the classroom. I loved the sustainability programs like Elder Wisdom and the Drop-In Center. All of the programming has been meaningful and thoughtful, particularly the inspirational programming which has helped with self-care. BTP programming has given me the power to show up and show up fully, sustained, knowing I'm not isolated."

**Independent school elementary teacher during a one-on-one interview**



As we have from the beginning, we will continue to track process evaluation measures of BTP affinity-based programming in order to ensure the quality offered. Our goal is to continually get feedback from our constituents about the quality of our programs. We get that feedback in a couple of different ways: surveys and individual interviews. We conducted two of our own surveys and were also able to give input into the design of the official OUSD teacher survey and receive those results. Over the course of the year we also met with over 25 teachers in one-on-one interviews where we gathered feedback about their needs as well as about how they view our programs. This feedback gets looped into our program design. We operate our programs in an iterative design style, meaning that we create a program based on what we know, and as it operates, we innovate and revisit and redevelop the design based on feedback. Our final survey of the 2016-17 school year included the following results:

90%

Teacher participants who would recommend BTP programming to a colleague or friend

87%

Felt BTP had helped them develop the tools, knowledge, and skills necessary to advocate for themselves and their students at their school site

82.7%

Reported that engaging with BTP offerings supported them in finding strategies and tools to address challenges they encounter within their teaching practice

80%

Believe that as a result of their work with BTP that they have the community and resources needed to improve their classroom instruction and/or work as an educator

80%

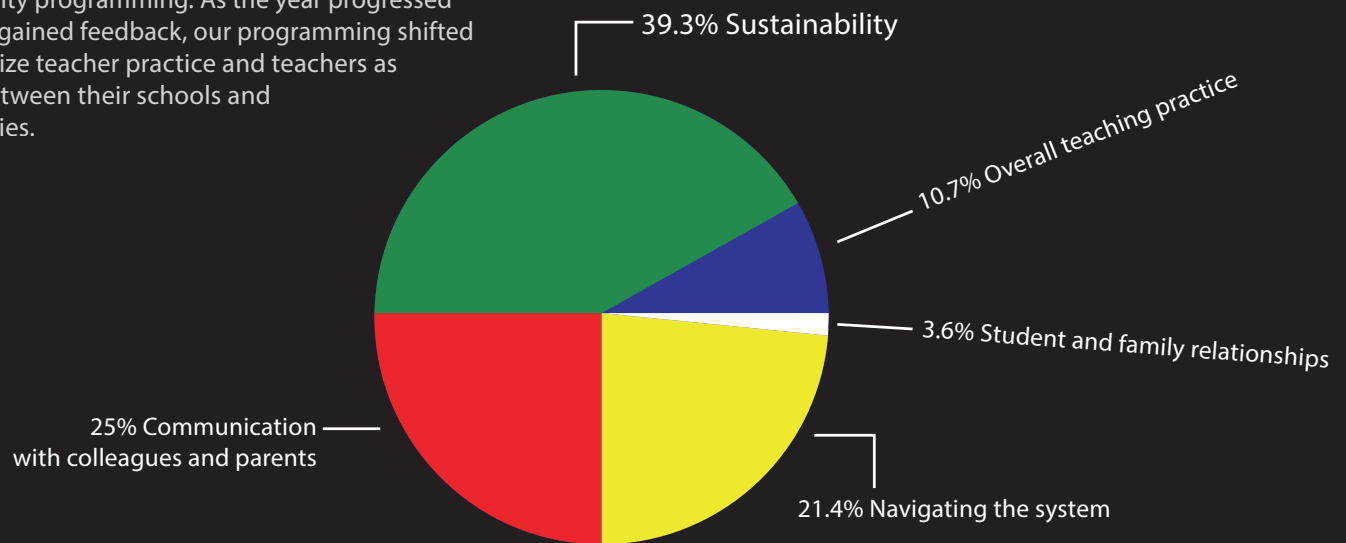
Felt more supported in their roles as a result of BTP programming

70%

Self-reported implementing new practices in their classrooms as a result of BTP programming.

When asked to identify one aspect of BTP programming that had the greatest impact on them, Black teachers reported the following:

These numbers reflect the focus of our programming this year. From the beginning we front-loaded sustainability programming. As the year progressed and as we gained feedback, our programming shifted to emphasize teacher practice and teachers as liaisons between their schools and communities.



## Reflections on Our Pilot Year

### Lessons learned

The Black Teacher Project sought to address an equity and racial justice challenge within our nation's K-12 schools. The challenge we have set for ourselves is to retain, recruit, and sustain excellent Black teachers. **Our pilot year consisted of focusing on teacher sustainability within the field, providing existing teachers with tools, knowledge, and resources needed to thrive at the schools of their choosing.** Our belief is that a well trained and supported Black teaching force leads to student success and achievement. Centering BTP's pilot program year on sustainability proved to be helpful in uncovering data as to 1. why Black teachers need both affinity-based professional and informal spaces and 2. what practices will actually sustain an excellent Black teaching force. Our way of both providing support and also gathering direct feedback about needs Black teachers have and how best to support them was through delivery of our programs, and listening through online engagement, evaluations, and interviews. Consequently, as a result of our first year's work we have learned several lessons about the impact of our engagement.

### Lesson 1:

**Affinity-based learning in an environment centered on Black excellence can combat feelings of isolation.**

### Lesson 2:

**Working in collaboration with each other and in tandem with culturally appropriate facilitation allows Black teachers to develop tools on how to navigate the system and dynamics at play at their school sites.**

### Lesson 3:

**Black teachers are eager to lead from the classroom—for their students, themselves, and their communities, but they need the skills and support to do so effectively in environments that do not always hear and respect what they have to say.**

One of the dilemmas investigated was how to support a student who was not receiving adequate resources and acknowledgement, and how to help that student thrive at school. The protocol group discussed different strategies to engage school administration, families, and teachers to support one of the few Black students at the school, who was also a teenage mother in need of supports the school could not always provide. When working through the dilemmas, a majority of participants expressed feelings of isolation at their worksite, and often spoke of being the “lone wolf” on their campus with so few Black teachers. **Together, though, the teachers were able to provide each other with support and collective strategies through the safety and trust that had been developed as part of the group.**

“Today I felt a sense of freedom and hopefulness that I haven’t felt in a very long time. I want to take on more challenges regarding policies at school.”

Participant in our 2017 BTLSI



“I teach because I owe a huge debt to my ancestors, who fought, bled, and died for my right to be free. I think it is important for young Black children to see Black teachers. They need to see that we are successful and educated and care about their futures. When I see the faces and minds of my students light up when they understand a concept or are able to do something they believed they could not, it warms my heart and grows my faith in our children. In this world there is so much bias and hate against our Black children. So it is my job as a Black educator to present a different narrative. It is my job to instill into the hearts and minds of my students that they are capable, intelligent, and, most of all, beautiful people who have much to contribute to this world despite the bias and hate.”

Anthony Arinwine, 16-year teacher, San Francisco, CA

### Partnerships

Partnerships have been critical to our success. Our deepest partnership is with our fiscal sponsor, the National Equity Project, who provide us space and support to develop innovative strategies to teach equity principles, while building the leadership of Black teachers. We are also partnered with the Institute for Urban Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, as well as the University of California-San Diego, to conduct research about the current conditions, health, and wellness of Black teachers. Conducting research on Black teacher health and sustainability is at the forefront of our mission, in the hopes that we will create a body of work that offers best practices on how to support teachers to stay effective and committed to the classroom. BTP has also partnered with Teaching Residents at Teachers College, Columbia University, to recruit Black teachers into their innovative social justice teacher education program, building a strong teaching force for New York City. Additionally, BTP is supporting San Francisco Unified School District and Oakland Unified School District in retaining and expanding their Black teacher force. We have developed deep partnerships and collaborative programming with groups such as the BlackFemaleProject, African American Male Achievement, African American Girls and Young Women Achievement Initiative, as well as community groups such as Dimensions Dance and other Black artists and activists. We continue to explore mutually beneficial relationships with other nonprofits such as Trellis Education.



# The Next Three Years

For the 2017-18 school year, we have refined our offerings to Black teachers based on the lessons we learned this past year. In addition to the affinity-based support we will continue to provide, we will add a Fellows Program to continue reducing isolation while increasing pedagogical support. Additionally, we will expand our services to include feedback to and training for school administrators, schools, and districts in order to create safe and equitable environments not only for teachers but youth, as well.

## Strategy 1:

Develop data-driven supports for Black teachers to be sustained professionally. Over the next three years, we will focus primarily on executing this strategy with the following goals in mind:

1. Build a thriving community of Black teachers in Oakland/SF (Bay Area)
2. Build a thriving community of Black teachers in Brooklyn/Harlem (New York City)

For Goals #1 and #2, success will be based on the number of BTP members, retention and engagement of those members, increased teacher effectiveness and student outcomes, and improved well-being. The primary levers to help achieve these goals are through BTP's programs, membership model, and cohort program.

### Professional Development and Support Programs:

These programs will include: Inquiry Group, Book Study, Wellness and Rejuvenation, and our Sustainability & Leadership Institute. What we called Peer Support Spaces will be on hold next year.

### Membership Model:

We will establish a membership model that is meant to build community, affinity, and ownership around the organization's continued success as a leader in supporting Black teachers. Because of this purpose, membership in BTP will be based on active participation in our programs and events, alignment with our vision, mission, and core values, and contribution to improving our offerings.

### Teacher Leaders Fellowship Program:

The purpose of this program is to provide experienced teachers (three to eight years) more focused and differentiated support, and provide a foundation for more diligent research around the impact of our programs. The goal is to have 15 to 20 teachers in each cohort that make a three-year programmatic commitment (along with a commitment to share data for five years). In their first year, fellows would participate in three to four whole group, intensive sessions (including BTLSI) focused on their own identity and leadership, as well as engage in a learning pathway that meets their development needs—either Inquiry Group or Book Study.

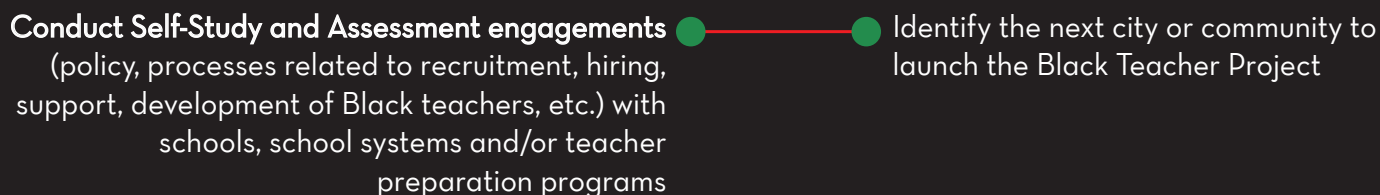
Additionally, while our base of operations is in the Bay Area with a particular focus on Oakland, we will continue exploring offering our services online for a broader audience. Our goal is to develop an online support platform for Black teachers nationwide within the next three years.

## Strategy 2:

### Create and transform the conditions and environments for Black teachers to thrive.

Over the next three years, the focus of this strategy will be to work with schools, school systems, and teacher preparation and credentialing programs to help identify barriers to recruiting and supporting Black teachers, and also provide advisory services to implement recommendations.

#### Two primary goals that BTP seeks to achieve in the next three years:



The purpose of the Self-Study and Assessment is to help schools, school systems, and teacher preparation programs identify the strengths and challenges of existing processes, policies, and systems related to recruitment, hiring, development, and support of Black teachers. These engagements may lead to further consulting and advisory work to support the creation and implementation of identified changes. Initial clients will be identified through existing partnerships, such as the National Equity Project, other affinity-based programs for teachers of color, new partnerships, and business development efforts. In three years, BTP will have developed its methodology and process for Self-Study and Assessment engagements and completed at least five engagements with schools, school systems, or teacher preparation programs.

To put a meaningful dent in increasing the number of Black teachers in the classroom, we will need to expand our reach and influence into new cities and communities, helping them to create the conditions necessary to attract and retain Black teachers. By the end of 2019-2020, the goal is to have identified a new city and begun piloting a few BTP programs to learn about the current work environment, resources, and needs of Black teachers in that community.

#### Process outcomes and/or impact outcomes

As we have from the beginning, we will continue to track process evaluation measures of BTP affinity-based programming in order to ensure quality of programming offered. Those measures and their attendant goals include:

90% of teacher participants rating BTP programming as highly effective;

80% of teacher participants who would recommend BTP programming to a colleague or friend;

80% of teacher participants feeling more supported in their roles as a result of BTP programming

70% of teacher participants showing evidence of implementing new practices in their classrooms.

However, we want to understand more about the impact of our work. Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, we will also track our participants' retention in Oakland schools. We will interview participating teachers to identify their reasons for remaining in or leaving the classroom and ways BTP has helped or could have helped retain them. We will gain a greater understanding of our impact through interviews with parents, students (as appropriate), teachers, and administrators to give a more nuanced understanding of the work we do.

Additionally, we will track not just retention but also how teacher improvement affects student outcomes. This will be for teachers who participate in the Fellows Program. Utilizing the research and tools that came out of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Measurement of Effective Teaching Project, we will track fellows over five years to determine their effectiveness in the classroom and how their teaching affects student outcomes through classroom observations, student test scores, and student surveys.

**BTP believes that effective affinity-group programming and supportive environments will improve recruitment, satisfaction, retention, and classroom performance of Black teachers, thereby yielding improved student outcomes across multiple measures of academic performance and social-emotional development.** While assisting teachers is our work, ultimately we strive to ensure brilliant students who will lead us to a more equitable and just society. As our motto says, "Every child deserves a Black teacher."

Ultimately our goal is to raise the academic and social-emotional achievement of students across the country through access to an excellent teaching force that reflects the diversity of the U.S. population. We will measure our impact by our successful support, retention, and recruitment of exemplary Black teachers. Through our efforts we seek to raise the proportion of Black teachers from 7 percent of the teaching force to 12 percent across the country (and to representative levels of Black students in the cities where we work) by 2027.

## Thank You!

A thousand thanks to everyone who has been a part of BTP's successful first year—teachers, school districts, administrators, facilitators, instructors, volunteers, partners, foundations, donors, supporters, friends, caterers, facilities, graphic designers, childcare providers, social media sharers, and more. We most definitely could not have had such an impactful year without you all! We are looking forward to an amazing new year with all of you.

## Onward!

