



**BLACK TEACHER PROJECT**  
**2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

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***[Through the BTP Inquiry Group program] I was reminded that I wasn't on this journey alone, even though oftentimes I feel like I am. This group has shifted a lot for me. I feel more ready and as if I am walking with an army of the strongest, brightest, and most loving soldiers. I am truly blessed to have this group, and I am already anticipating next year. ”***

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your support this past year! We couldn't have done it without you Black Teacher Project's 2017 to 2018 year was about building on the accomplishments from our first year of programming and developing systems to help us create further success. One of the achievements we're most proud of is our creation of a fellowship program. This new initiative allows us to both work more intensively with a smaller set of Black teachers and increase tracking of our support to measure the impact of our work. We also moved further toward our goal of being teacher-driven through the development of a membership program. Additionally, through working with school administrators in our hiring workshops for districts and by developing a corollary workshop focused on job search navigation, we have made progress in supporting Black teachers in new ways. Lastly, we expanded our role in the national conversation regarding how to ensure a diverse and representative teaching force by participating in discussions about retention and the innovative practices we've developed that support Black teachers to stay in the field. Overall, this past year was an unqualified success. We hope that you read through this report and gain some insight into what we are doing. Please don't hesitate to ask us questions.

Yours in solidarity,  
Micia Mosely, Ph.D.  
Director, Black Teacher Project

# OUR VISION

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Our vision is that all children will have access to a well-prepared, 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 an effective teaching force that reflects the diversity 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 an affinity with. Additionally, 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 goal is retention of Black teachers. Through that retention, the numbers of Black teachers will increase due to the fact that Black teachers leave the industry at higher rates than other groups. We achieve retention through programs that provide Black teachers with sustainability, community, learning about how to navigate systems and sometimes hostile environments, and support for development of culturally relevant pedagogy. We believe that the first step to having more Black teachers is not recruitment but retention of existing teachers and the development of school sites that are welcoming to Black teachers.

***“I feel supported and whole. I have a sense of community that will make it easier for me to thrive as a teacher next school year.”***

Black Teacher Leadership and Sustainability Institute (BTLSI) 2018 participant

Over the course of the following programs and events, we served 176 Black teachers as well as Black administrative staff, librarians, counselors, paraprofessionals, grad students, and others. This added up to 539 engagements over the course of the year.

**Our Year In Review**

**Timeline of Events**



*“ ONE OF THE REASONS WHY I CAME BACK TO THE SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE WAS TO GET ENCOURAGED AGAIN AND CONTINUE TO BUILD COMMUNITY WITH NEW BLACK EDUCATORS. I LOVE THE SPACE THAT BTP CREATES AND HOW IT GIVES EACH OF US AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE OUR TRUE AUTHENTIC VOICES HEARD.”*

-BTLSI 2018 PARTICIPANT

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## Fellows

This past year, we launched our Fellows program with 11 Black teachers. Fellows met as a group four times per semester to explore how to lead from the classroom. Over the year, each fellow focused on a goal, either about leadership or pedagogy. Examples of goals were: 1) development of a hip-hop math curriculum, 2) development of an environmentally focused curriculum, and 3) increasing meetings with parents. By the end of the year, all goals had been achieved.

## Members

142 founding members (teachers and administrators are included in this number) were inducted in November. Membership is based on having attended at least two events and positive assent to being a member.

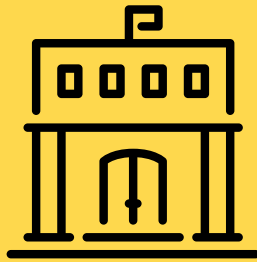
## National Profile/Partnerships

The national conversation around teachers of color and Black teachers, specifically, is moving from just focusing on recruitment to retention and sustainability. BTP is one of the few programs that demonstrated what race-based professional development can look like to support the retention of Black teachers. To amplify our voice in that conversation, we published an article on impact and gave presentations about our structures and practices. Our presentations have been leading to policy implications that support work like ours being counted towards professional development hours that teachers are required to do.

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In addition to our long term partners: National Equity Project; the Institute for Urban Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University; the University of California-San Diego; Teaching Residents at Teachers College, Columbia University; Black Female Project, this year we developed a partnership with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.





**4%**  
work in private schools

**41%**

of the teachers we work with have been teaching for four years or less



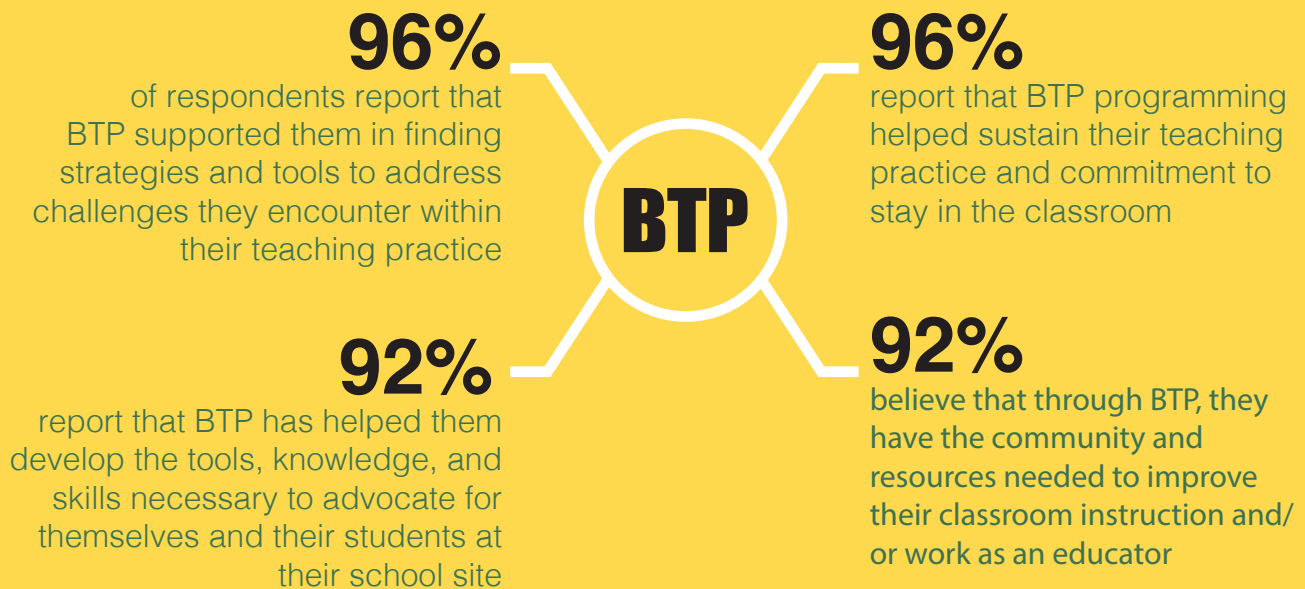
**74%**  
work in district schools



**22%**  
work in charter schools

\* statistics based on teachers who have participated in BTP programs.

## OUR FINAL SURVEY OF THE 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING RESULTS



**100%** would recommend BTP as a support and tool for Black teachers

## Inquiry Group Evaluation

The Black Teacher Project is in the midst of implementing our longer term impact evaluation strategy. However, we have some initial data regarding the impact of one of our programs, the Inquiry Group. In implementing the Inquiry Group support, Black Teacher Project posited that racial affinity groups would have a meaningful effect on Black teachers, particularly regarding their retention, sustainability, and navigation of systems. When asked about the most significant impact that the Inquiry Group had on their work, 24% of participants reported retention and increased sustainability; 29% better ability to navigate systems and colleagues, and 47% improvement in their their teaching effectiveness.

We determined these effects by asking each participant, at the beginning of their work with us, to define a dilemma that they would work on over the course of the year. At the end of the year-long process we asked them to assess the success they had achieved relative to that dilemma. Individual dilemmas included questions such as: how to authentically serve hard-to-reach Black students, how to bridge the gap between students' success and students' perception of their success, how to manage conflicts with white colleagues, how to successfully advocate for themselves or their students, and how to reach the families of Black students. Overall, all of those who had students at the forefront of their dilemma were directly concerned with ensuring the success of their Black students. More specifically, each dilemma was able to be categorized within one or more of the three areas we hoped to support teachers around: **retention, navigation, and effectiveness.**



# Retention

All participants who listed retention as their goal said that by the end of the program they had renewed their commitment to continue teaching. The dilemma of retention was often concomitant with other issues, particularly a feeling of loneliness in addressing microaggressions, racism, and institutional bias.

**“ I think I may have left the teaching profession, or at least left my school site, if I did not have the support of BTP to help me navigate the racism I experienced at my school.”**

**“ Being able to process my particular dilemma with allies within BTP helped me feel empowered to recognize a repeated experience I was having, use language to describe exactly what was happening, and bring up clear next steps that I needed from my administration in order to feel supported moving forward...My administration has actively sought out ways to support me and other Black teachers at our school since.”**

# Navigation

All participants who had indicated problems navigating systems and colleagues noted they had gained new tools, including confidence in how to successfully advocate or themselves and their students. Many noted they gained new tools that helped them navigate microaggressions, conflicts with colleagues, and systems that don't necessarily value their knowledge and/or experience.

# Effectiveness

For participants who were concerned with improving their effectiveness, they all reported acquiring new tools that have helped them to teach more effectively. Oftentimes, effectiveness for them meant being able to develop leadership around issues that are important to their Black students. For example, several participants spoke about making connections with the families of their students and getting them more involved in the success of their students.

**“ Engagement of parents is a hard thing to get in urban schools. However, with the help of the Black Teachers Project I was able to get 30 out of 44 parents to attend teacher conferences, attend student after school performances, and communicate with me about their child's progress. ”**



# Overall

All participants who listed retention as their goal said that by the end of the program they had renewed their commitment to continue teaching. The dilemma of retention was often concomitant with other issues, particularly a feeling of loneliness in addressing microaggressions, racism, and institutional bias.

***"In the matter of preserving and maintaining Black educators, I would simply say that it takes a village. BTP became MY village; a place where I felt cared for, protected, challenged, enriched, encouraged, replenished, and refreshed. I literally would leave each of our meetings totally enlivened and ready to live out my purpose and duty as a Black educator. The Black Teacher Project has served as a bulwark for me, and for that, I am grateful."***

Developing a voice of leadership for the most vulnerable students was a recurrent theme:

***"As a direct result of my experience in the Inquiry Group, I presented my dilemma at my school site about the negative impact of our Black students not learning about or even having conversation about their own history, culture, identity, or heroes beyond Malcolm X and Martin Luther King during Black History Month, and how withholding this knowledge from our students impacts their self-love, self-respect, respect for others, and self-efficacy. While my colleagues still may not fully understand the relationship between the lack of knowledge of self and self-hate and how withholding culturally relevant information from our students impacts life trajectory, they seemed to be able to envision the positive possibilities of how teaching these things could be empowering for our students. In addition to that, as a result of naming this inequity, other teachers were inspired to challenge and interrupt the status quo of other inequities that on the surface appeared to be student centered but when unearthed with an equity lens turned out to be more about power and position that were impeding change."***

Every single member reflected on how much the simple fact of community meant for them. One participant commented on how simply being in community with other Black teachers increased her capacity and knowledge.

***"Sharing a piece of myself that in other spaces is expected to remain hidden and not accepted was not only cherished but harmonizing. There was a longing that every educator in that room had and a sense of relief in finding a space not only allowing of but accepting of those parts of us. It was a space of solace, a space that allowed you to feel the feelings that are valid and too often invalidated. It was comforting to hear people say "me too" and have elders share their solutions or perspective to those problems. It is essential to have a place that is your own once a month that is free of whiteness, free of judgment"***

Probably the most powerful statement of the power of our process came from one teacher's reflection on what happened as a result of her Inquiry Group experience. Her dilemma was this: "How do I, as a Black, female, college educated, teacher with a degree in Black Studies, help my African American female students establish a positive self-image (in a society/system that encourages the exact opposite) so that they can honor each other, as they honor themselves?" The results she speaks of are powerful and show the depth of the process and its ramifications beyond the individual teacher.

***"Although I would consider our faculty to be pretty diverse, I am the only African American certificated teacher on staff. The Inquiry Group helped me uncover that I needed to tap into the resources that were already available to me by reaching out and initiating the conversation about our Black students. The process also helped me realize that it was acceptable for me to feel responsible for the success and cohesiveness of my African American students, however, it was unacceptable to continue to try and fight the battle on my own. It was good to hold myself accountable, but it was also important to ensure that my colleagues were holding themselves accountable as well. After participating in the critical process, I felt empowered to more openly address the aforementioned dilemma with my colleagues, as well as seek their help/input on how to address the issue as a whole school staff. The tools that I took away from the critical friends process allowed me to discover that many of my concerns were actually shared amongst my colleagues. As a result, meaningful conversations have been had, new ideas have been passed around and proposed (including the possible implementation of an African American Women's Studies class curriculum) and an affinity group for our African American mothers was born. There has even been more brainstorming and discussion around how to retain our African American students who are mothers by having a daycare."***



# Voices of Leadership



A majority of participants talked about gaining a voice as part of the Inquiry Group process. Simply being in the room with other Black teachers and hearing their own experiences reflected by others was empowering. As noted, development of this voice allowed teachers to be leaders for their students and themselves.

*“The most interesting piece of the protocol, was seeing the sincerity that came from different voices amongst the group, and the alignment of questions that were presented in response to my dilemma. One of the more pressing questions that was posed was: What have your colleagues said or done that makes you feel silenced? Although, I was unable to respond at the time, I realized that my response to this question has more to do with connectedness to the overall culture and community. As a Black teacher, in my current school community, the black professionals at my site constitute less than 5% of the staff. While I have a strong voice, often there are times that I do feel silenced. Internally, these encounters cause me to feel as if there is a blatant disregard of my expertise and breadth of knowledge in the profession, and in those moments it can be difficult to process such feelings without an emotionally charged defense.”*

## Thank You!

A thousand thanks to everyone who has been a part of BTP’s successful second 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.





**BLACK TEACHER PROJECT**  
**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

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