



CENTER FOR  
EDUCATIONAL  
OPPORTUNITY  
ALBANY STATE UNIVERSITY

**Black Male Fellow Experiences**  
**Building**  
**Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning**

**Report prepared by F. M. Nash**  
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*Rumley Brand Management and Consulting*



## Abstract

Scholarly research on the benefits of having male teachers of color in the elementary classroom has become widely circulated. However, effective recruitment, support, and preparation of male teachers of color to provide effective instruction and tend to students' social and emotional learning has not. This research was used to examine how support in a Man the Bay Fellowship, designed to prepare Black male teachers for culturally reflective and restorative staffing in elementary schools, cultivate their capacity to effectively develop students' academic, social, and emotional knowledge and skills. The Fellowship is grounded in three components: employee housing, culturally reflective and responsive personal and professional development, and strategic employment in elementary schools. Through semi-structured in-depth interviews, the supports that Fellows identified were categorized into four themes (1) brotherhood, (2) Black male educators as advocates and first responders, (3) teachers build social and emotional competence by teaching and learning to teach, and (4) accountability for academic, social and emotional learning. The results indicate that the Fellowship provides wraparound support for Black male teachers through the three Fellowship components and that these components are interdependent and critical to Fellows' success. The results also indicate that the design of the Fellowship is instrumental in helping Fellows to navigate the structural and systemic oppression that they face as they transition into the teaching profession. From an exploratory perspective, this study emphasizes key components for culturally reflective and restorative staffing to take place in elementary schools and provides insight into how the Man the Bay Fellowship promotes and practically strengthens Fellows to engage in high quality instruction to develop students' academic, social and emotional aptitude.



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Educational Innovation

Teachers who are culturally matched with their students tend to have higher expectations and serve as positive role models in their students' development. These teachers provide students with opportunities to engage with a rigorous curriculum through a variety of instructional methods. Additionally, teachers who are culturally matched with their students recognize the academic and social scaffolds necessary to support their students' success. Currently, teachers of color account for 7% of the total teaching population across the K-12 educational landscape; students of color account for 15% of school populations (NCES, 2017). Historical and current trends show the majority of teachers in today's classroom are White female teachers from middle class backgrounds (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016). As the population of students of color continues to rise, the cultural mismatch between teachers and students will continue to grow. These mismatches can hinder the formation of strong relationships with students, and sometimes contribute to teachers' lowered expectations of students of color. Cultural mismatches can also disrupt the meaningful implementation of innovative instructional practices, such as culturally responsive teaching, ultimately exacerbating the disconnect of the community sharing in the learning process of students. Consequently, the cultural mismatch in today's classrooms most impacts Black male students (Gershenson et al., 2016).

In fragile communities, particularly those that serve historically underserved populations, teacher turnover has previously been described by scholars as a "revolving door." Teachers list a variety of reasons for leaving their schools and the teaching profession: lack of student discipline, students being significantly underprepared academically, lack of leadership support, lack of autonomy, and cultural mismatch between them and the community. Schools in fragile communities can lose as many as half of their teaching staff in five years (Allensworth,

Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009). There are many teachers who leave schools in fragile communities for more affluent and less diverse schools. This is a significant point: teachers don't leave the profession--they leave the schools where they teach (Achinstein, Ogawa & Sexton, 2010; Ingersoll, 2000; Ingersoll & May, 2012). This revolving door effect serves as a disruption to the students' academic trajectory, and the students' perception of caring and trusting adults essential for building their social learning, emotional learning, and long-term success (Jennings & Frank, 2015). Further, the recruitment and preparation of male teachers of color is hindered during their K – post-secondary experience, and in the social injustice that plague Black males in their everyday lives.

Teacher preparation programs, traditional or alternative, which target the recruitment and development of teachers of color must value teacher candidates' lived experiences, and leverage these experiences to build their self-efficacy and capacity to teach. These programs must have a culturally responsive curriculum and pedagogy. Additionally, programs must recognize and draw upon past experiences from teachers of color who are likely to be in unique positions for working with students of color, in the likelihood that they may have and do have experiences with similar institutional/societal injustices, and opportunity challenges (Kohli, 2009). However, race or cultural match alone will not eliminate educational achievement gaps for students if their teachers do not have the self-efficacy, content, or pedagogical knowledge to teach.

Teachers of color often describe their informal roles in schools as disciplinarians and as props for the shortcomings of the educational system (Griffin & Tackie, 2016; Miller, 2019). Teachers of color must be provided with preparation programs that value their intersecting social identities, experiences, and voices. Toldson (2011) shares that pathways to teaching programs for



candidates of color must embrace a deepened sense of community, purpose, and intention to support their technical development as a teacher. This support should be supplemented with aspects of teaching that work towards meeting students' academic, social, and emotional needs. By leveraging the cultural strengths of teachers of color and reimagining how we prepare them to teach, the power of culturally reflective and restorative staffing can be more fully realized to further benefit our students.

This exploratory research study describes elements of a fellowship program designed to improve access to high-quality education for families living in fragile communities. There are two populations served through this research: (1) male teachers of color recruited to teach in fragile communities within the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and (2) the students and families living in those fragile communities. Male teacher candidates of color recruited into the Man the Bay Fellowship are graduates of Historically Black Colleges and Universities with an interest in teaching and who culturally match the school populations they serve. Additionally, teacher candidates span a variety of disciplinary majors, native geographic locations, and experiences working with youth.

Subconsciously, most teacher preparation programs perpetuate deficit mindsets towards students of color and reinforce systems of oppression, thus serving as facilitators for institutional stereotypes of fragile communities and students. Bayview-Hunter's Point in San Francisco is considered an urban community with a population of approximately 34,000 people, of which 33% are African American, 33% are Asian American, and 25% are Latinx. Descriptions of this community regularly include "underrepresented," "underserved," and "traditionally marginalized," all of which center the position of persons of color within the communities that





are served as having a deficit or lacking. Moreover, the term “urban,” has also become code for predominantly Black and Latinx communities, which has become normalized to imply these communities are laden with crime, poverty, and low achievement (Watson, 2011).

The Man the Bay Fellowship Program recognizes the value of the collective within the communities it serves, and the potential that students who live within those communities bring with them to school and share with their families. Through an asset-based approach to serving fragile communities, the program aims to bring educational innovations to teaching and learning by focusing on the preparation of Black male teachers to build students’ academic, social and emotional competence. The specific educational innovation of the Man the Bay Fellowship Program is culturally reflective and responsive teacher preparation that includes a focus on leadership, wellness, and advocacy. The Fellowship actively works to disrupt traditional teacher preparation cultural barriers while supporting the Fellows through affordable housing, culturally responsive and social justice-oriented educational training, and professional networking for educators of color.

The Man the Bay Fellowship Program addresses the cultural mismatch between teachers and students in order to positively impact fragile communities in the San Francisco Bay area. The global impact of cultural mismatches in education has contributed to chronic loss of seat time due to disproportionate disciplinary rates of students of color, and a persistent academic achievement gap that serve as the bedrock statistics for the school to prison pipeline, and dropout rates (Skiba et al., 2011; US DOJ, 2014). Recruiting and preparing male teachers of color to serve in communities where students of color live and learn helps to restore a sense of strength and pride within students, their families and their communities. Male teachers of color reflect a



cultural match with their students and serve as a living demonstration of academic prowess and behavior. Further, male teachers of color are positioned to integrate students' everyday lived experiences into the classroom; they empathetically build students' sense of self-worth and ability as trusted adults who are potentially defying their perceptions of men of color in their communities. Lastly, the Man the Bay Fellowship Program purposefully recruits and prepares teacher candidates for elementary schools, where recent scholarship posits that cultural matching at this level results in significant long-term impacts (Gershenson et al., 2018).

This exploratory study sheds light on the research question:

*What specific supports of the Man the Bay Fellowship Program, facilitated by Urban Ed Academy, increase Black male teacher capacity to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of elementary school youth in the San Francisco Bay Area?*

## 2. Relevant Literature

### 2.1 Teacher Preparation and Culturally Reflective Staffing

Traditional teacher preparation programs--even those focused on equity and social justice--have a tendency to cater to the dominant teacher population: White, middle class, and female.

Preparation programs that support teacher candidate learning of multicultural education and culturally relevant pedagogy often neglect to support teacher candidates of color authentically with understanding of the construct, oftentimes resulting in teacher candidates of color serving as de facto representatives for minority students and communities. Moreover, the curriculum in these preparation programs can lead to an “othering” of students in fragile communities (Bell, 2016, Zeichner, 2011).

One result of cultural mismatch in schools and preparation programs that reiterate deficit mindsets is what researchers call “stereotype threat.” Stereotype threat is a phenomenon that is characterized by the tendency for specific, racial, gender or other identity groups to underperform in areas for which they have negative stereotypes. For example, when Black



children are asked what their race is prior to an academic test, they tend to perform more poorly than when they are asked their race at the end of the assessment. Aronson and colleagues (2002) found that if Black students are encouraged to embrace the idea that intelligence is not a fixed capacity, it disrupts the cognitive schema that causes Black students to underperform academically due to stereotype threat. Thus, we suggest that if students of color are taught by teachers who can establish multi-stranded relationships with students--understanding and caring for their identity and academic success, because they endured stereotype threat and developed strong identities and skills to navigate their cultural, racial, and academic worlds--then they will be more likely to embrace opportunities and challenges that lead to student academic success. Thus, the Man the Bay Fellowship Program's culturally reflective and restorative staffing process is specifically designed to combat stereotype threat in the teaching and learning process through cultural matching.

Several researchers have asserted that Black students often experience a school culture and structure that is drastically different than those they most frequently see in their homes and communities (Rouland et al., 2014) Further, Allensworth, Ponisciak and Mazzeo (2009) indicate that students in high minority, high poverty schools experience higher rates of teacher attrition than in more affluent and less diverse schools, with many of these schools losing over half of their teaching staff every five years. This leads to fragmented instruction, decreasing rates of academic success, increasing mistrust in adults and authority, and limited social and emotional skills that lead to prosocial behaviors and long-term success. However, when students have culturally reflective teachers and role models in the school setting that minimize this difference, students experience greater levels of success. In 2018, Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay and



Papageorge argued that having one Black teacher during elementary school positioned Black students to have a higher likelihood of attending college. If elementary school students experienced learning with this teacher by third grade, they were 13% more likely to achieve post-secondary college outcomes, and if they experienced two teachers, the percentage more than doubled. This is considered the “role model effect” or the “race effect.” Culturally reflective and restorative staffing provides students with cultural role models who are highly qualified and committed to serving the community for a minimum of four years.

Easton Brooks (2013) and Milner (2006) suggest that highly qualified Black teachers are uniquely positioned to teach Black students because of cultural understanding of their students’ home and community life. Black teacher retention rates are often higher than the retention rates of White teachers in high-needs, culturally diverse urban schools (Achinstein et al., 2010). Black teachers tend to retain employment in schools within fragile communities because of their perception that they can contribute to the betterment of society and their community, they enjoy working with diverse populations, have a strong sense of teacher efficacy, and can serve as role-models and cultural translators for students who attend neighborhood schools (Achinstein et al., 2010; Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Cochran-Smith, Ludlow, Ell, O’Leary & Enterline, 2012; Griffin & Tackie, 2017; Tamir, 2009).

In some circumstances, it is also because of the life experiences of these teachers that they are empathetic to the life conditions of youth they teach (Mckinney, Berry, Dickerson, & Campbell-Whately, 2007). One particular reason why teachers of color remain in high minority schools past their novice years is because they have a disposition for social justice in education and may see themselves as social justice educators (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Cochran-Smith



et al., 2012). Johnson (2011) points out that in-service teachers base their instructional decisions on their own experiences. Therefore, instructional decisions made by teachers of color are less likely to be made on mainstream expectations and more on cultural values and modes of thinking that maintain high expectations for students.

The teacher preparation curriculum for the Man the Bay Fellowship Program is intentional in drawing on the internal motivators of teacher candidates for them to engage in teaching elementary students of color. Specifically, and intentionally, the housing provided to teacher candidates within the program is located within the communities that they serve. Additionally, community asset mapping and engagement is an ongoing task within the preparation program so that teacher candidates develop a sense of pride and rapport with the community.

## 2.2 Social and Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning refers to the process and methods used to promote social and emotional competencies (Cohen, 2001). Social and emotional competence measures the ability to understand, process, manage, and express an individual's emotions and engagement in interactions and relationships with others. Development of students' social and emotional competence is critical to their long-term well-being. The ability to self-regulate, engage in productive interactions, and make responsible decisions develops student resilience and coping power, which is important for students across all grade levels, but especially for younger children (Cohen, 2001; Durlak et al., 2011). Supporting the development of students' social and emotional skills can lead to long-term life success by reducing high-risk, antisocial, and maladaptive behaviors (Weissberg & Greenberg, 1998).



Teachers must also possess strong social and emotional skills, which continue to be developed over time. When teachers are aware and draw upon their own social and emotional competence, they know when to listen intently to students, not be overwhelmed by their own emotions when interacting with students, and make proactive decisions about when to offer immediate support and when to be patient (Aspen, 2018). Further, when teachers are in tune with their own social and emotional competence, they feel a strong sense of self-efficacy, seek self-care, feel empowered and empower students. Therefore, teachers with strong social and emotional skills have the ability to stave off secondary traumatic stress, which teachers who care for their students in fragile conditions often experience, helping to mitigate burnout (Friedman & Farber, 1992).

Culturally responsive instruction is often associated with academics but is also important for social and emotional learning. Teachers who are aware of how racially and ethnically diverse students display their emotions, and the intensity of emotional displays, are in better positions to support skill development. Since research on social and emotional skills also correlates to students' academic achievement (Larsson & Drugli, 2011), teacher education preparation programs will need to prioritize teacher development curriculum with ideas, techniques and strategies to intentionally and actively build student social and emotional competence in culturally affirming and appropriate ways (Onchwari, 2010; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).



### 3. Analytic Frameworks

#### 3.1 Sociocultural Theory

Nasir and Hand (2009), in their review of sociocultural theories, summarized that the intersection of race, culture and schooling are important, and what individuals engage in and avoid are connected to their identities. How teachers view themselves as learners is as important as the skills they develop in learning to teach. Lave and Wenger (1991) share that people take on new roles and new ideas about themselves as they become more proficient in their area of interests, such as teaching. While there are several sociocultural theories, as scholars across disciplines attempt to understand the way individuals behave and learn in social contexts, this exploratory study will draw upon one key idea of sociocultural theory. The key idea that is used as an analytical lens in this study is how Fellows draw upon their relational and ideational resources to develop and leverage their teaching identities, to support students' social and emotional learning.

Nasir and Cooks (2009) define relational resources as “the positive relationships with others in the context that can increase connection to the practice” (p.47). In their study, Nasir and Cooks found examples of relational resources in the opportunities that track athletes took to connect with their coaches and other members of their team. These connection points were structured so that the individual athletes became members of a cohesive team while developing fundamental skills, and correcting mistakes, for performing as a track athlete. In Hyater-Adams, Hinko and Finkelstein's (2015) study on the understanding of adult physicists and their racial identities, they found that relational resources surfaced for each of their participants and that one participant specifically stated the impact of her teacher on her decisions to become a physicist. Another participant in this study referenced a fellowship program as a relational influence in his decision to become a physicist. The Man the Bay Fellowship Program provides structured



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relational opportunities for Fellows to engage in throughout their enrollment in the program. Fellows are roommates with one another and participate in professional minority community events as part of their required experiences.

Ideational resources can be enabling or disabling and refer to, “ideas about oneself and one’s relationship to, and place in the practice, and the world, as well as ideas about what is valued or good” (Nasir & Cooks, 2009, p. 47). As Fellows enter into the field of education, they must consider their identity as Black men and as teachers and make decisions about who they want to be as a Black male teacher; their ideal self. In the work of Nasir and Cooks (2009) ideational resources for track athletes included determining what was worthy of being learned in the practice of hurdling, deciding on who one wanted to be as a hurdler, and the track meet performance, a culminating event of their practice. As Fellows have opportunities to network across the San Francisco educational community and interact more immediately with their school-based staff, they have opportunities to identify and define their ideational resources. In other words, Fellows have the opportunity to adapt the learning that happens in non-culturally affirming and reflective spaces in ways that help them to define who they would like to be as Black male teachers. Additionally, they receive support from the Fellowship, similar to Nasir and Cooks’ athletes, in preparation for engaging in culturally reflective and restorative teaching in schools.

### 3.2 Critical Race Theory

Founded in legal studies’ scholarship of the 1970’s, Critical Race Theory (CRT), focuses on the critical examination of race, racism, and power in social systems and how race intersects with other social groupings, such as gender and class. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) applied CRT to the field of education to underscore how the institution of schooling valued some voices over





others, departing from the normative discourse and conversations about school reform, and that race was undertheorized in educational contexts. Miller (2018) notes that today CRT is used to “demand attention to race in teacher and student experience.”

Gloria Ladson-Billings (2013) cites key themes of Critical Race Theory to make sense of them in education. The five themes of critical race theory are (1) racism as normal, (2) race as a social construction, (3) intersectionality and anti-essentialism, (4) interest convergence, and (5) voice or counternarrative. These five themes are similar to themes identified by other CRT scholars such as Zamudio, Russel, Rios and Bridgeman (2010) and Delgado & Stefancic (2017). Of these five themes, most relevant to this exploratory study of the Man the Bay Fellowship are race as a social construction, intersectionality and anti-essentialism and voice or counternarrative.

“Scientists generally agree that no biological basis for race exists and social scientists concede that it is a social construct” (Ladson-Billings, 2018, p.1) Race is a socially constructed category that relies heavily on difference. This difference can be in the form of skin color, hair texture, eye shape, lip size and more. This construction has been used as the basis for creating hierarchy and ideology of white supremacy. As a result, significant disparities exist, as can be seen in academic achievement of students and the teachers who serve students.

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) define intersectionality as the examination of race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation and how their combinations play out in various settings” (p.51). As singular individuals we represent multiple identities and we perform those identities in a number of ways, never knowing which is leading the reactions of others during interactions (Ladson-Billings, 2013). This leads to the call out by critical race scholars for anti-



essentialism. Essentialism “is the belief that all people perceived to be in a single group think, act, and believe the same things in the same ways” (Ladson – Billings, 2013, p. 40). Essentialist thinking leads to stereotyping and assumptions of people of color as monolithic.

Narratives, or stories, are often reflective of the perspective of the storyteller – those in power who have an audience that is willing to listen to the story that is being told. These narratives can become the bedrock of history, the truths behind what really happened. A counter-story is a contrasting story that describes the narrative from a different perspective. Counter-stories are often presented to take note of expanding and gaining perspective and advance larger concerns, not simply to share personal stories.

Ladson-Billings, and other CRT researchers, explain that race matters, history matters, voice matters, interpretation matters, and praxis matters when considering critical race research. They argue that while efforts may on the surface appear futile, the struggle towards racial equality is transformative for society and social groups engaged in the struggle. CRT is used here as an analytic framework to explore the experiences of Black male teachers who have crossed the country to teach in what are deemed “fragile” communities in San Francisco, California.

## 4. Research Procedures

### 4.1 Methods

The methods chosen for this basic qualitative study included semi-structured interviews with each Fellow. This interview structure was best suited to elicit an understanding of the supports that were provided to them through the Fellowship; these supports contributed to their capacity to build students’ academic, social, and emotional learning. The qualitative data analysis methods that were used for the study were cyclical coding procedures. These procedures supported interpretation of the data and the examination and reexamination of the findings in



relation to the research question and the theoretical frameworks of sociocultural theory and critical race theory.

#### 4.2 Context

Urban Ed Academy (UEA) seeks to in-migrate 100 Black male teacher-fellows into Bayview Hunter's Point, San Francisco, CA to teach in every elementary school in the district. The initiative, Man the Bay, secures teacher job placements for program Fellows (within SFUSD schools) while also providing them workforce housing during a four-year service commitment. The initiative requires integration between four program components: culturally reflective recruitment across the country; culturally relevant personal and professional development; strategic placement of teachers in the district's ecosystem; innovative approaches of incentivizing homeowners and property owners to house Fellows at wage-friendly rates.

The Man the Bay Fellowship Program is unique in its aims and supports. Aims of the program include leveraging cultural matching of teacher candidates and students at the elementary level; focusing on social and emotional competence and technical teaching skills; and building leadership skills for equity and social justice at the micro and macro levels of the educational system, based on direct teaching experiences serving students of color. Supports provided by the Fellowship include professional mentorship, performance coaching, substantial housing subsidies, community enculturation, job placement/assignment within the educational ecosystem, and social networking within the city ecosystem.

#### 4.3 Participants

This study examined 8 Black males in the Man the Bay Fellowship Program. Participants are college graduates who are employed as instructional assistants, general education teachers of record and teachers for after-school and Saturday school programs at the elementary and middle



school levels across San Francisco, California. These Fellows come to the program as novice unlicensed educators. School placement areas varied in demographics, socioeconomically, and racially. All names are pseudonyms. Table 1 summarizes Fellow name, gender, age, university institution, conferred degree, hometown and place of residence prior to relocating to San Francisco, California.

**4.3.1. Table 1: Fellow Demographics**

Name	Gender	Age	Undergraduate Institution	Degree	Hometown	Former Residence
Andre	Male	22	Delaware State University	B.S. Sociology	Springdale, MD	Dover, DE
Bouie	Male	29	Texas Southern University	B.S. Music Education	Atlanta, GA	Houston, TX
Ethan	Male	27	Texas Southern University	B.A. Radio Television Film	Longview, TX	Houston, TX
Kenneth	Male	22	Delaware State University	B.S. Forensic Biology	Salisbury, MD	Dover, DE
Mosi	Male	27	Texas Southern University	B.S. Administration of Justice	Benton Harbor, MI	Houston, TX
Nicholas	Male	25	Delaware State University	B.S. Biology	Brooklyn, NY	Dover, DE
Siah	Male	25	Delaware State University	B.A. Communications	Brooklyn, NY	Dover, DE
Xavier	Male	28	Delaware State University	B.A Mass Communications	Newark, NJ	Dover, DE

#### 4.4 Data Collection

Once Fellows agreed to participate in the study, they were scheduled to participate in semi-structured interviews. All of the interviews were conducted virtually, audiotaped, and none exceeded 90 minutes. Interviews were lengthy to allow for Fellows to share their responses in story form, as culturally appropriate when sharing counter-stories. Fellowship leadership also notified researchers that it was important to create time and space for Fellow elaboration. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) posit that qualitative research attempts to uncover participants' understanding of their experiences (p.24). Through the engagement of the Fellows in semi-



structured interviews, data was collected on how they identify Fellowship supports in developing the social and emotional skills of students. Semi-structured interviews allow questions to be used flexibly, gather specific data required from all respondents such as how they are making meaning of social and emotional learning, and have no predetermined wording or question order (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through interviews the researcher was able to “describe the shared experiences of several informants by collapsing their thoughts into themes that describe the Fellows’ experience contributing to the overall description of how supports within the fellowship enable Fellows to engage students in social and emotional learning (McCaslin & Scott, 2003).

#### 4.5 Limitations

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, interviews were conducted once schools were closed but not at the end of the school year as previously designed. Therefore, Fellows had not completed their education training seminar for the school year and were unable to speak to the entirety of that experience, particularly those Fellows who were members of Cohort 2.

### 5. Analysis and Results

A cyclical coding process was used to analyze the data that emerged from the interviews conducted to respond to the research question. The coding analysis supported the interpretation of the data, and the investigation of the findings in relation to the research question (Creswell, 2013, Stake, 1995). Upon analysis of interview data, four overarching themes emerged as fellows shared their experiences of ways in which the structures and supports within the Man the Bay Fellowship (MTB) increased their capacity to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of elementary school youth. The four themes which emerged were (1) brotherhood, (2) Black male educators as advocates and first responders, (3) teachers build social and emotional



competence while teaching and learning to teach, (4) accountability for academic social and emotional achievement.

These themes were developed after interviews were conducted and transcribed. Transcriptions were reviewed to ensure accuracy of the transcript, and then were read for placement of marking codes from the interview ‘line by line.’ After additional re-readings and markings, the definitions were collapsed into axial codes to move from descriptive to analytic codes for supports Fellows identified; to support social and emotional learning of elementary school students. The axial codes were then challenged, expanded, and reduced as necessary until the four themes of support emerged. Table 2 outlines the analytic process with an example from theme one, brotherhood. Appendix A includes an expansion of this table for each of the four themes.

**5.0.1 Table 2. Emerging themes of supports for Fellows in the Man the Bay Fellowship**

Theme	Meaning	Categories	Primary codes	Evidence from data
<i>Brotherhood</i>	<i>Fellowship of non-monolithic Black men with shared experiences that sharpens one's ability to teach</i>	<i>Culturally reflective and restorative staffing</i>  <i>Black male Identity</i>  <i>Fellowship connections</i>	<i>Tone of voice</i> <i>Trust and connections</i> <i>Deserve to teach</i> <i>Fellowship exchange</i> <i>Black men are successful</i> <i>Black men are compassionate</i> <i>Black experience as non-monolithic</i> <i>Representation</i> <i>Influence of teachers of color</i> <i>Real truth</i>	<i>“When I go home to three other teachers who are aspiring teachers who are, you know, lesson planning and all that, or I get to vent or debrief about how their day or the challenge of the day was. That makes this journey so much better.” – Nicholas</i>  <i>“These kids go through many microaggressions and stuff like that and then I’m reminded that they have a lack of representation” - Andre</i>



## 5.1 Brotherhood

*“We listen to hip hop and we speak in metaphors.”*  
- Xavier

The theme brotherhood is composed of three categories which developed from axial coding; culturally reflective and restorative staffing, Black male identity, and fellowship connections. This theme describes the nuances associated with how the Fellows see themselves as Black males, their purpose, and engagement in the Man the Bay Fellowship experience. Further, this theme describes the brotherhood of non-monolithic Black men with shared experiences that allow them to build their own social and emotional competence, which is essential to building students' social and emotional attitudes, skills and behaviors.

## 5.2 Culturally Reflective and Restorative Staffing (CRRS)

The MTB experiences at Urban Ed Academy facilitate the development of educators of color, specifically males of color, into the teaching profession at the elementary level. As a part of MTB recruitment efforts, the benefits of men of color in the classroom are shared from a research and cultural perspective. Further, the entire MTB staff are people of color. All of the Fellow's supports provided through MTB are intentionally culturally reflective and restorative. It is clear that CRRS is not only beneficial in the classroom with elementary students but also in the development of these Black male educators.

Fellows expand upon their understanding of the critical need of culturally reflective and restorative staffing throughout their interviews:

“...Well, all in all, first and foremost is representation. I feel like it's a symbol of hope...For example, President Obama, people weren't expecting him to fix all of everybody's problems, but people saw him as a symbol of hope. People saw him as a figure that this is possible...” - Andre



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Fellows describe that representation is only a part of what is needed for students. Representation for students and families is important, but that same Black male representation is equally important for non-Black educators and colleagues. Bouie shares that with representation also comes an “actual belief” that students of color can do well. Many of the Fellows described that even if students do not wish to have a future career as a teacher, what representation in the classroom shows them is that they can be a professional in the future. “I’ve hoped to influence a bit of my students from other races that I teach, specifically my Pacific Islanders” (Bouie). Reiterated across all of the themes that became visible through this study was Fellows’ desire for all students of color (e.g. Pacific Islander, Somali, Latinx), not only Black students, to build their academic, social and emotional competence.

“I might not be able to change the world, but if I could spark a lot of plugs for those who learn from me and teach with value, I can create a chain reaction and I can change the pattern [of potential negative or detrimental life circumstances and outcomes]” - Xavier

Fellows communicated the seriousness of representation and the influence of teachers of color on students of color, but moved beyond student access to teachers of color via representation to the need to care about, and care for students. They describe the importance of unscripted implementation of the standards-based (sometimes scripted) curriculum and the integration of social and emotional learning into academics. For these Fellows, this was the urgency factor for culturally reflective and restorative staffing; with representation came connections and role models of successful Black men. “I can find different ways to teach the subtleties and the core subjects in a classroom. I can always find ways to bring in social emotional learning. This is urgent, and we do have to go and do it (teaching) right” (Bouie). Fellows emphasized that it was not enough to be a person of color in a classroom, although that





makes a difference, but to be a well-trained and highly effective Black educator matters more.

Support within the fellowship aligns with one of the phrases mentioned by Bouie in the words of his coach, “helping me, helping you, helping us [communities of color].”

In order to connect with students, one Fellow describes a cultural connection that has a likelihood to be misunderstood by non-Black educators but builds students social competence and supports their academic motivations.

“It’s the way I connect with my students. It’s just the way we engage...Some students always ask about my hair, [even though] they have the same hair. [They ask] what do you use on your hair, Mr. Mosi?... I wouldn’t expect someone with a different type of hair to understand the importance of talking about [Black] hair ...” - Mosi

Ethan echoes this same sentiment and elaborates:

“As a man with melanin ...the way that I teach, everything that comes out is really critiqued, everything you say is put in the limelight...everything you wear is in the limelight. The way your hair is styled, the way your eyebrows curl, your eyelashes curl, everything about you is really critiqued. At the same time, we’re [students’] leaders, they look at us as big brothers, or father figures, or uncles. They may have [these figures] at home, but at the same time they may not have a big brother...so it’s really filling in the void of the missing male in their life that is around our age...*they’re so interested in our lives...*”

“Being Black is kind of like being in your own club or fraternity...it’s just a sense of relation...they [students and parents] feel like I’m their kinfolk, I’m their relative.”  
– Xavier

Culturally reflective and restorative staffing is also important in the community as students’ parents and families see Fellows outside of school. Fellows identify themselves as role models in the classroom, in the hallways, outside on the playground, and off school grounds in the community where their students live. “When parents see Fellows in the community their excitement is evident by the smiles on their faces” – Xavier.



### 5.3 Black male identity

Among the Fellows, racial identity surfaced as a shared category that was reinforced through internal support of the fellowship and disregarded by support external to the Fellowship, “I wish the [external] trainings were more catered towards our demographic” (Andre). This was a constant reminder to each Fellow within the brotherhood that they were all different and all important.

Two Fellows mentioned their success in being the first in their family to graduate college with a degree. Three Fellows are fathers. One is a military veteran. Another Fellow had a family member who served in the United States House of Representatives. And yet, another Fellow shared the experience of having his voice left unheard during his childhood. Fellows are simultaneously entrepreneurs and advocates of social justice. The Fellows draw upon their individual strength, the natural leaders in the group, their confidence, their authenticity and the mindset that they deserve to be teachers to quell the whispers, the questions, the micro-aggressions and feelings of discomfort due to racial difference that they encounter in trainings and schools where they worked. They looked toward the brotherhood to be the light.

“Martin Luther King has a quote that says “Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.” So it was like if I could be the light to drive out hate...[that’s who I will show up and be] and creative, and animated, and proud of who I am and myself as a Black man.” – Xavier

“I feel successful. I feel accomplished. I feel empowered in a sense. I feel a need to grow. I was just taught better growing up to always be great no matter what...that is something that just goes along with me, whether I choose it to or decide not to...it’s there...along with my experience.” - Ethan

Collectively the Fellows shared:

“I’m not here to fit anybody’s box or be a statistic of what a [Black male] teacher should be. If I wear a hoodie or a button up, I should be seen the same. If I dress nicely and yet I don’t talk “white” I still deserve to be here. I’m grounded, I’m detail-oriented, I’m a



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storyteller, I come with a lot of energy, I'm trustworthy, honest, confident, enthusiastic, goal-driven. I draw upon my faith and my ancestors. Urban Ed Academy is supporting me to get better and in turn I am helping the Fellowship get better" (Mosi, Bouie, Nicholas, Ethan, Siah, Xavier).

#### 5.4 Fellowship connections

In navigating the purpose of culturally reflective and restorative staffing, Fellows described the influence and benefits that their internal community of aspiring Black male teachers has had on their life. Fellows describe the opportunities to engage in shared experiences through training and spaces, as roommates. Further, within these experiences and spaces, Fellows described how natural it was to be around other Black male teachers and how venting and debriefing supports their capacity-building to teach and support their classroom community. The following quotation provides insight into how fellowship connections emerged as a category.

"I really reflect a lot on my track career, my cross country career...in a race, everybody is pulling the best out of everybody...coming towards the end it gets hard... you get stiff...your legs feel like rock...you're out of breath, your lungs [are] heavy, everything [is] heavy...and it's like man I have two more days in this week, I have to finish through the tape..." - Ethan

"When you're able to attend training with your brothers, your peers, your colleagues, and your roommates all in one, you know, you're able to break things down after a meeting." - Bouie

"I'm here with the same few people who are on the same mission as I am. Of course, our personal goals or our passions are different, but at the same time, when I go home to three other teachers who are aspiring teachers who are lesson planning and all that, I get to vent or debrief about how the day was challenging. That makes this journey so much better. Right. As opposed to just being a Fellow versus a part of a powerful and growing team." - Nicholas

"[The Fellowship director] knows how we learn, he speaks in metaphors and analogies. We mostly listen to rap all day, not all day, but we listen to hip hop and we speak in metaphors... It helps us to get it...we just get better that way." - Xavier

Fellows describe the fellowship connection in ways that allow them to navigate the

tension between showing up authentically and within the normative structures of the educational



system. The importance of being able to call each other “brothers, peers, colleagues and roommates” was a recurring theme as Fellows describe themselves as non-monolithic, which surfaced in the Black male identity category, but also in the fellowship connections category as they learn about themselves through feedback from other Black males with shared experiences. Bouie specifically notes that “we operate with the iron-sharpens-iron mentality,” thus drawing upon the strengths of the Fellows and the members of the MTB support team to build their capacity to teach.

### 5.5 Black male educators as advocates and first responders

*“Choosing my passion over my dreams”*  
Mosi

The theme of Black male educators as advocates and first responders is drawn from the axial categories, Fellow teacher-specific identity, and connecting with parents to build student social and emotional competence. This theme describes how the Fellows honor individuality and community and recognize the need to overcome oppressive structures and approaches to education.

### 5.6 Teacher-specific identity

Each Fellow shared that their race came before their profession. However, they recognized the importance of naming their teacher identity and described being called upon to reflect on a teacher-specific identity. While identification as a Black male teacher was acknowledged, the intersection of race and professional identity did not emerge as a category for Fellows as their racialized Black male identity did in the brotherhood theme. Underscored in Fellows’ descriptions of supports to teach students prosocial skills and ways to manage their emotions was Fellows’ acknowledgement that they must hold themselves accountable for student lifelong



success. This accountability is described as honoring individuality, being competent, serving as a positive role model and taking on the responsibility of uplifting younger generations.

“Teachers are like first responders, like nurses, freaking cops, firemen. Like we are the first line of defense. Teachers are good and they don’t get the credit at all. [So, I know] I am going to make an influence in the child’s life for the positive, more positive than negative...Education is a necessity for our people, especially.” - Siah

“I’m an educator that is competent and culturally responsive...and I am consistently and continually getting better and better.”... “I am a Black male in a system that has been known to oppress us, has been known to set us up. There are ways for us to fail still. So, I’m not going to come off like another member for the system which I am employed by.” - Bouie

“People are individually different and that’s what makes us individuals. So, ...I’m strategic about what I do for sure as a teacher.” - Mosi

“I have a relationship with my students that is open, and I tell them to feel free to challenge me. I never want to cut corners and sell my students short.” – Nicholas

“I see myself as a public figure...I’m a pillar of the community...I’m integrated into a very beautiful community, talented community. It just needs a little more direction and encouragement to get the community to where it wants to be. But I definitely feel like I’m becoming a pivotal force in the community.” - Ethan

An aspect of each of the supports (i.e. CRRS, Housing, Teacher placement) provided to Fellows in the program reference back to oppressive structures that contribute to the lack of housing availability in the community they serve, culturally reflective and responsive supports provided to teachers of color and the impact of policy, funding, cultural mismatches, etc., that have contributed to dwindling student populations and low student achievement in public schools in the communities where the Fellows teach. This begins to show throughout Fellows’ interviews as they draw upon some of the concepts of social justice education; the value of student voice, positive influence rather than saving and fixing students and families, celebration of the depth of identity, and the individual to meet the needs of all students. Mosi describes how his



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grandmother always told him when he was growing up that he would work with kids one day. He told her “nah, I want to be an FBI agent. That’s my thing.” Eventually, after applying and being denied and then applying and being accepted, his decision rested between becoming an FBI agent and joining the Man the Bay Fellowship:

“I asked myself, if you're going to impact the world, how would you do it? And the answer would always come back to me [saying], you [work with] the next generation this will be the future. And so, that's how I ended up, you know, choosing my passion over my dreams.” - Mosi

### 5.7 Connecting with parents

Parents were identified as stakeholders in the community who needed to be heard, heard from, supported and uplifted. Fellows described the need to gain respect from parents, stand on common ground and be seen as a part of the community. This is why the housing support provided through the Fellowship is an essential component.

“In going to a Brown Bombers game ... I honestly see myself as a person from the community, in the community. Parents recognize you and say “Oh, that’s my child’s teacher.” I feel like I’m from here.” - Xavier

Fellows also shared stories of conversations with parents that asked parents to self-reflect on the importance of their child’s academic performance. This was to support the parents but also because of a responsibility that Fellows assumed they had for providing the academic, social and emotional support for students while they were in the Fellow’s care.

“Because if the parents don’t respect you or know who you are as a teacher, you can never get to that child. It is important to understand the student’s circumstances and even do home visits.” - Nicholas

### 5.8 Teachers build social and emotional competence while teaching and learning to teach

*“I try to be [an] open minded individual, but as a Black male that is a stigma. Like we’re not supposed to be kindhearted and caring, passionate.” - Andre*



In Fellows' descriptions of the supports received to incorporate social and emotional learning into their teaching practice, they reference not only the practices used in classrooms, such as community circles and check-ins, but also the supports they have received to support their own social and emotional well-being. Two categories compose this theme; teacher social and emotional competence, and emotion in social and emotional learning.

### 5.9 Teacher social and emotional competence

Fellows described their experiences working with their coach, teaching instructor, Fellowship leadership and teaching as supports for building and managing their own social and emotional skills. Specific social and emotional skills that were refined and developed in Fellows during the fellowship include:

- Engaging in and refining problem-solving strategies
- Gaining more self-awareness as a teacher
- Taking on various perspectives
- Strengthening relationship skills
- Visualizing and setting goals
- Applying feedback
- Managing emotions
- Embracing change

"I'm becoming more open minded to different perspectives and meeting people [students] where they are." - Andre

"As far as my colleagues, you know, [MTB] staff, I mean there is an abundance of support. It's more than a normal person would get. I think that is neat for the task because the support for what we are doing is needed." - Mosi

"[The MTB recruiter] said we have to make sure you keep growing, which helps. We have to help you keep on learning and we have to make sure you have a place to lay your head. We can't help a brother if we hurting a brother, you know? That will always stick with me. They got us." - Bouie

"I love [seminar instructor]. She gets us involved. We have to do learning activities and it's just different things we have to do. You have to work hard. One thing that I learned about our training is that you have to...you can't just go to a training and then go home



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and do nothing. Yeah, you have to work on what you just learned and actually have to prepare the lesson.” - Xavier

Fellows described a variety of instances where they experienced micro-aggressions in the spaces:

“It’s not just about being emotional all the time. It’s about self-control and discipline.”  
- Siah

“One time I was working, and someone came into the computer lab and they were being very disrespectful to the workspace...so I had to end up leaving my workspace and going somewhere else in order to continue my lesson. I felt very disrespected...and to this day I haven’t communicated with that person.” - Ethan

“I don’t think anybody will ever feel equipped [to deal with microaggressions or racism] because somebody could just say something completely out-of-pocket that’ll just leave you sitting there confused [and upset]” - Andre

“Certain teachers are trying to act culturally “black” or because they listen to hip hop they can relate to you...and certain other things whereas [I] have to work ten times as hard because every little thing [I] do is going to be scrutinized ...no matter what the other teachers are doing...if you’re two minutes late, or you’re getting there right on time you have to deal with that stereotype of “you know Black people are always late”...just that underlying racism.” - Xavier

As Fellows shared disheartening stories of their students with other teachers and in training with non-teachers of color, they also shared how they wanted to create classrooms of love and the emotional stress that sometimes comes from a laser-like focus on social and emotional learning.

### 5.10 Emotion in social and emotional learning

Fellows recognized the importance of teacher language in social and emotional learning and referenced “warmth” in their language. One of their training seminar resources included the American Institute of Research’s ten teaching practices that support building student’s social and emotional skills. Teacher warmth is one research-based skill that promotes developing students’ social and emotional competence. The warmth of a Fellow’s language helped to build





relationships, which in turn laid a foundation to engage with students. According to Fellows, student development of necessary social and emotional skills would follow relationship building.

“You have to be able to get students to trust you and then you can notice their [emotional] stress. I know a lot of my students’ backgrounds and just know what they’re going through. Certain days are better than others [and sometimes] they need love, they need that social and emotional support. I can give them that and [it is] so awesome.”  
- Xavier

“[Using] your voice with so much warmth... I’ve definitely learned to slow down my speaking and be able to give these kids some joy.” - Bouie

Fellows expressed the need to recognize that there are stigmas in communities of color when it comes to showing compassion and care for others. What has been instilled in students and in Fellows is to “man up” (Xavier). Fellows raised grave concern over perpetuating this myth as well as stigmas associated with mental health.

“It’s easy to isolate students or let them isolate themselves...and that [becomes] a pattern... I work to find ways to engage each of my students.” - Mosi

“So many of [our] students have experienced trauma and they are repressing it at such a young age, they’re bottling it up.” - Andre

Many of the Fellows articulated that part of their work in building students’ social and emotional competence was in sharing with students that it is okay to have conversations about their problems and emotions. That it was ok to be kindhearted, caring and compassionate, and that the Black community needs support to overcome experiences with trauma. To serve as a role model for students they teach, Fellows described their ability to adapt to challenging situations when in the presence of students, to confront with kindness microaggressions they experience, to show love and to use humor as techniques to cope with some of the emotions they experience as teachers in the education environment.



### 5.11 Accountability for academic, social, and emotional achievement

*“I’m not willing to give up on any student”  
- Andre*

This theme recognizes the Fellows’ commitment to specific skill-building during academic instruction and the technical and practical implications of being accountable for academic, social, and emotional learning. The categories that comprise this theme are social in social and emotional learning, and student academic achievement.

### 5.12 Social in social and emotional learning

Connecting back to alignment with being a social justice educator, Fellows describe ways in which they intentionally focused on humanizing the teaching and learning experience. They describe seeing students as individuals and building community collectively, while cultivating environments that support social and emotional learning. Additionally, Fellows make clear that they see teaching as a role in service to students. Throughout the Man the Bay Fellowship, Fellows are exposed to a number of ways to build community, through collective learning, engagement in cultural events, cohort meetings, bonding events, retreats, collaborative project work and more. They describe ways that they have strengthened their connections with those ‘back home’ and developed new connections in their new community. In service to students, they create community in the classroom by individually speaking with students, providing students with small gifts, and recognizing when student feelings should be validated even if the behavior they exhibit is not. When asked to describe a scenario to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of kids, Siah shares:

“...[They] just literally break down when they talk to me about everything. I love that they feel like [I am] open enough to just have a conversation with me; and they curse [during it] and they say like, oh, I apologize. And they redo the whole sentence and it’s totally perfect.”



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Fellows recognized the intersectionality of their race, class, and positional identity when building relationships with students:

“I am definitely [the students’] role model, a rags-to-riches story that they can watch...it definitely makes me know that when I’m there I need to be there...and once it’s time for me to put on my cape...I have to be there in full effect...when I come to the kids and they’re crying at their lowest, I’m like “Hey man, keep your head up King.” - Ethan

Fellows also find shared interest with students and recognize that perhaps they cannot reach every single student directly but can pair students with other members of the school community, whether female teachers of color or MTB staff. Fellows use technology to provide scenarios and examples to breakdown larger concepts; and they remind students that they, too, are human, and they make mistakes, they hurt, they have experiences that they share and those that they do not. They solicit feedback from students and remind students that “school may not be the most fun thing, but it’s important” (Andre).

### 5.13 Student academic achievement

Fellows described relevant instruction, motivating students, challenging students, progress monitoring and differentiation as they described ways in which they “planted seeds” of social and emotional learning while focusing on academic content. They reflect on the use of funds of knowledge and technical aspects of their teacher training. These reflections shed light on how their learning has been converted into practice. They suggested that the teacher effect was essential to overall students’ academic, social and emotional achievement.

“In my ideal environment, my students would be answering questions that they didn’t ask before. I tell my students I’m not going to give you the answer, you have to think. I’m going to pick your brain and have you think [through the answer]. I am not going to give you the answer and then you think you don’t have the ability to do it [the work].” - Mosi

“I want to teach in such a way that the kid is able to reach back to somebody else and teach what they learned. I can also teach the content in a way that it can scale up to a



fourth grader or scale down to a kindergartner. My students share what they are learning from me with the people around them, sharing with their family members, and their siblings.” - Bouie

Fellows describe their confidence in students developing self-management and social-awareness skills and taking ownership of their own learning by building trust in other students. Trust-building strategies include pairing students with someone who may be academically stronger but who the student already trusts and then explicitly teaching skills in relationship building, “I tell him to give them advice not answers” (Siah). Fellows describe incorporating scenarios and events that students describe to them from their home or being outside on the playground into formal instruction, through schema mapping, being culturally responsive and backwards planning, to push students to be their best selves, leveraging what they already know.

“I remind students that, hey you can memorize those rap lyrics and you can memorize your schoolwork like that too.” - Xavier

[To a student whose third language is English and who wants to be a nurse.] “Your time is going to come. There is no reason why you can’t move to the next reading level. You have to master this level first. You don’t just go from third grade to clinicals, right? In nursing you have to start at entry level.” - Mosi

*This same student in computer science:*

“Hey, if Mr. Mosi’s here, then I know I’m going to get my work done.” - Mosi

Ethan explains the importance of knowing students well in order to differentiate instruction to meet students where they are and to engage them academically, socially, and emotionally. This reflects the theme of the Teaching and Leading seminar that the Fellows participate in during their fellowship, humanizing the teaching and learning experience, relationships matter.

“I like to do one-on-one...[that is] the only way we can understand what a student actually needs individually...and examine their work behaviors and just kind of make notes on



how they may receive information. They may receive information through visual, or they may receive information through hearing, or this one retains information through writing...examine each child's...work habits.”

Fellows make sure that while caring for students, success with academic performance during school also contributes to their lifelong success:

“As a Black male, I express to them the seriousness of literacy, and knowing how to do math, and knowing how to count money...with me, coming from or experiencing that culture in the past, it allowed me to know how to talk to them and know [how to use] the lingo and how to communicate with them and meet them where they are ...” - Ethan

## 6. Discussion

This exploratory study responds to a call to examine the support provided by the Man the Bay Fellowship to build the capacity of Black male educators to develop the academic, social and emotional competence of their students. Fellows drew heavily on relational resources that were provided by the Fellowship, as well as the learning opportunities they were provided to engage with each other, their students and the community. While there was not a linchpin support that Fellows described, the integrated system of support and value of their identity by students, families and MTB provided them with the confidence to engage with students in building prosocial behaviors. Xavier describes this integrated system. All names are pseudonyms.

“Having that support or that backbone of Ms. Motley and Ms. Thomas who gives you that tough love, sometimes you need that tough love...or Ms. Reid, just being the operations help, she manages things and makes sure everything is done in a timely fashion and she gives a different type feedback than Ms. Thomas. Ms. Harris is exceptional, an exceptional teacher because honestly I don't know what kind of teacher I would be without her...I see my mom teach and I grew up under it...but, Ms. Harris, she knows her students (Cohort 1, 2, 3)...we're her students...she's helping me get through the Pathways program. The coaches that we do have...I'm learning how to manage up now. I didn't know where it could help but I'm learning a lot more and that support is there. Mr. Scott and Mr. James, honestly them bringing me out here was all the support I needed from them. The fact that they are able to trust me to be in the classroom while they're out still trying to work and bring aid to the company and make sure we're fine and we're great for the children...those two guys are great, exceptional leaders. Mr.



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James, the way he speaks is how we learn...him with his metaphors and analogies...he's meeting us where we are. Mr. Littlejohn, Ms. Gil, we just started working with them for the past couple months. Mr. Littlejohn, he's a great example. He's in education, he knows what he's talking about, his confidence level is there when it comes to talking about what he knows...seeing a Black man like that...dressed nicely, talking, not speaking quote-on-quote "white" just because he's speaking with a sense of knowledge and wisdom. Getting all of these supports and putting them together...with that it's a lot and sometimes it can get overwhelming...but...I feel like the support is there...they may not be there physically all the time but I know mentally, with heart that they're there..."

Although these supports are not elaborated in detail in this report, from Fellows' descriptions, the language that they use and the stories that they reference – it is evident that there are supports that are available to help them build their capacity to model for students what is being modeled for them: 1) Brotherhood - a sense of "looking out" for the Fellows through the housing arrangements at wage-friendly rates, 2) Culturally relevant personal and professional development - as a platform to build social and emotional competence while teaching and learning to teach, and 3) Strategic placement of teachers in the San Francisco Unified School District - being thoughtful about the Fellows presence and academic, social, and emotional competences being received, setting them and the students up for success.

Through both vicarious and mastery experiences, Fellows are building their capacity to cultivate environments of love, joy and safety for all students. As Fellows heavily drew upon relational resources throughout this year, they maintained that they may all be Black males but they resisted the essentialist nature of racist thought through the diversity of their experiences, their language, their style, their hair, and their attitudes, and converged around the counter-narrative that beautiful and talented, not fragile, communities can thrive with culturally reflective and restorative staffing.



From the data, Fellows described a resistance to focusing only on Black students and a resistance to reiterating the hegemonic narrative of Black male educators and what the “ideal” Black male educator would look and sound like in schools. Fellows overemphasized the qualities that they saw as most important in being Black and being an educator, such as trustworthy, confident and goal-driven. While Fellows demonstrated a sense of confidence and advocacy for culturally reflective and restorative staffing, they also did not make racism in schools a moot point. There were several examples of microaggressions that the Fellows experienced. Yet, drawing on their relational resources of the brotherhood and MTB staff, they are learning ways to be present and heard in challenging spaces.

The themes from this study show that the intersectionality of these Fellows often vacillated between leading with their identity as a teacher and leading with their identity as a Black male and sometimes considering their class. Very early in their careers as educators these young men have begun to tell stories of who they are as teachers and who they hope to be through empowered voices. They rely heavily upon their relational resources while sharing stories and perspectives about the value of serving as an ideational resource for their students and their families. With a clear vision of the need and benefits of culturally reflective and restorative staffing, these Fellows see ways to impact generations of students and they also acknowledge the impact that they are having on the educational spaces they occupy. The start of their counter-narrative reads, I will be employed but not a part of a system designed to fail me.

## 7. Conclusions and Considerations

This research was conducted to inform the Man the Bay Fellowship on what specific supports were being provided to Black male teachers working in fragile communities in the San Francisco



Bay area that supported building students' academic, social, and emotional learning. However, this research also serves to influence the broader field of teacher preparation and practice at the elementary school level through recommendations on how to appropriately and intentionally support the development of male teachers of color towards teacher licensure.

It is clear that Black male teachers understand that “teachers must understand what students already know (knowledge that is deeply grounded in culture), so that they may build on the knowledge students have” (Tellez, 1999, p. 558). This is not constricted to K-12 grade levels, but also to post-secondary institutions and alternative teacher preparation pathways. Foster’s (1995) work on Black teachers suggests that “when students and teachers share a common cultural background and are able to engage in productive interactions, it is possible that they might develop attachments to education that they otherwise might not” (p.575). As the Fellows described, throughout the year their connections to their students and families grew stronger because of their ability to live in the community, the practical nature of their training, and the continued encouragement and reminders from Man the Bay staff. Fellows underscored their understanding of the importance of cultural reflective and restorative staffing. CRRS serves as a foundation for “actually believing” that students’ academic, social and emotional skills could be developed, even by Black male teachers in training.

Ladson-Billings (2009) claims that students of color are often marginalized by dominant cultures within educational institutions and that it is important that teachers understand students’ racial and ethnic identities and utilize their knowledge of students’ backgrounds to develop relevant and empowering curriculum. Relational and ideational resources which were found in the supports of the MTB Fellowship are often the same resources that are taken for granted or





suppressed in the recruitment and preparation of Black male teachers. Fellows within this program draw upon culturally relevant pedagogical approaches that are modeled and taught in their Fellowship to connect academics to social and emotional learning and engage in effective community relations.

Clearly, the Man the Bay Fellowship is providing a benefit to Fellows who are participants. From the interview data collected through this study it will be important for the program to continue to develop Fellow supports, where appropriate, in the realm of mental health, continued work towards dismantling systemic racism at the institutional level (developing Fellows into anti-racist educators), while raising the consciousness and awareness around the potential perception of the Fellowship to reproduce toxic masculinity and patriarchal structures. Any of the unintentional consequences mentioned could hinder the Fellows' growth and their efforts in building students' social and emotional learning. For example, Fellows talked of physical strength to demonstrate strong character to students and conversations with parents regarding social and emotional learning support for their child's academic achievement. Although, Fellows talked incessantly about the need for relationship and partnership with parents, there were a few Fellows who shared thoughts which align to patriarchal norms in the same conversations they discussed students with multiple siblings who were attending the same school, and the impact on student academic, social and emotional learning.

There are three recommendations that may be explored to build on this initial exploratory study. The first recommendation is to study how Fellows impact the communities that they serve from the perspective of stakeholders (i.e. parents, students, colleagues). Another recommendation is exploring more in depth any one of the three supports provided to Fellows to



determine what about the specific support is unique and what component of the support has the most impact on Black male teachers. Lastly, a third recommendation is to examine the impact of systemic racism of the Fellows and the advancement of the Fellowship. As Xavier shared with the interviewer, not everyone is ready to have Black male teachers in their schools and racism is ever-present.

“Fighting against the odds of the systematic racism and the fight against change...I did notice when we were coming [to the school and events] that a lot of people don't like change...that's something that no one had ever seen before...seeing a lot [of Black male teachers] coming in...it'll be jealousy, envy, people just going into panic mode.” - Xavier

Ending quote:

*“I've always been a part of a championship team; I've always known how to win, and I've always known what it takes to win. I appreciate that everyone on my team is skilled and talented at what they do. Having a team makes me feel a lot more confident in the moves that we're making, it makes us more powerful than just me doing it. A group of us coming together with the same goal and the same motive, we can move this rock.”*

*- Ethan*



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## Appendix A

**Table 2. Emerging themes of supports for Fellows in the Man the Bay Fellowship**

Theme	Meaning	Categories	Primary codes	Evidence from data
<i>Brotherhood</i>	<i>Fellowship of non-monolithic Black men with shared experiences that sharpens one's ability to teach</i>	<i>Culturally responsive and restorative staffing</i>  <i>Black male Identity</i>  <i>Fellowship connections</i>	<i>Tone of voice</i> <i>Trust and connections</i> <i>Deserve to teach</i> <i>Fellowship exchange</i> <i>Black men are successful</i> <i>Black men are compassionate</i> <i>Black experience as non-monolithic</i> <i>Representation</i> <i>Influence of teachers of color</i> <i>Real truth</i>	<i>"When I go home to three other teachers who are aspiring teachers who are, you know, lesson planning and all that, or I get to vent or debrief about how their day or the challenge of the day was. That makes this journey so much better." – Nicholas</i>
<i>Black male educators as advocates and first responders</i>	<i>Fellows honor individuality and community and recognize the need to overcome oppressive structures and approaches to education</i>	<i>Teacher Specific identity</i>  <i>Connecting with parents</i>	<i>Accountability</i> <i>Competent</i> <i>Culturally responsive</i> <i>Role model</i> <i>Depth of identity</i> <i>Social justice mindsets and principles</i>	<i>"You're a Black teacher and people say, tell me more. Like, you know, there's a story to be told.." – Nicholas</i>  <i>"From one family to another, light...unifying this village" - Bouie</i>
<i>Teacher's build social and emotional competence while teaching and learning to teach</i>	<i>Adult social and emotional competence is essential for supporting culture in classrooms and relationships</i>	<i>Teacher social and emotional competence</i>  <i>Emotion in social and emotional learning</i>	<i>Overcoming stigmas</i> <i>Classroom of joy</i> <i>Importance of relationships</i> <i>Backgrounds as important</i> <i>Trauma</i> <i>Adapt/Cope</i> <i>Perspective Taking</i> <i>Capacity building</i> <i>Support tools</i>	<i>"Everybody's compassionate or even competent to be emotionally invested in something, ....[but] to have the stamina to have that conversations can be emotionally draining" - Andre</i>  <i>"The classroom is love." - Bouie</i>
<i>Accountability for academic, social, and emotional achievement</i>	<i>Specific skill building of students during academic instruction; the technical and practical implications of teaching</i>	<i>Social in social and emotional learning</i>  <i>Student academic achievement</i>	<i>Relevance</i> <i>Motivation</i> <i>Challenge/Rigor</i> <i>Progress monitoring</i> <i>Goal setting</i> <i>Differentiation</i> <i>Relationships</i> <i>Skill building</i> <i>Academic instruction</i> <i>Togetherness</i>	<i>"All the scientists aren't old, or they aren't one race. You can start being a scientist today by doing research and doing your part for a greater cause" – Nicholas</i>  <i>"School may not be the most fun thing, but it's important." - Andre</i>





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**Black Male Teacher Fellow Experiences  
Building  
Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning  
Tables and Graphics**



# the fellowship

---

**20** hrs  
WEEK  
IN TRAINING  
& COACHING

  
**8**  
SCHOOLS  
SERVED IN  
**SFUSD**

GRADES  
**K-5**

REACH  
**600+**  
STUDENTS

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where the  
**fellows**  
come from

- 1 Springdale, MA › Dover, DE › San Francisco, CA
- 2 Atlanta, GA › Houston, TX › San Francisco, CA
- 3 Longview, TX › Houston, TX › San Francisco, CA
- 4 Salisbury, MA › Dover, DE › San Francisco, CA

- 5 Benton Harbor, MI › Houston, TX › San Francisco, CA
- 6 Brooklyn, NY › Dover, DE › San Francisco, CA
- 7 Brooklyn, NY › Dover, DE › San Francisco, CA
- 8 Newark, NJ › Dover, DE › San Francisco, CA

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# the fellows

Andre 22	Bouie 29	Ethan 27	Kenneth 22	Mosi 27	Nicholas 25	Siah 25	Xavier 28
 Springdale, MD	 Atlanta, GA	 Longview, TX	 Salisbury, MD	 Benton Harbor, MI	 Brooklyn, NY	 Brooklyn, NY	 Newark, NJ
 Delaware State University	 Texas Southern University	 Texas Southern University	 Delaware State University	 Texas Southern University	 Delaware State University	 Delaware State University	 Delaware State University
 B.S. Sociology	 B.S. Music Education	 B.A. Radio Television Film	 B.S. Forensic Biology	 B.S. Administration of Justice	 B.S. Biology	 B.A. Communi- cations	 B.A. Mass Commu- nications
 Grade 5	 Grade 2	 Grade 4	 Grade 2	 Grade 1	 Grade 3	 Grade 3	 Grade K

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when reviewing all  
credential teachers  
nationwide

less than 2%

ARE  
AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MEN

less than 3%

ARE  
LATINO  
MEN

in California

78,000+

BLACK STUDENTS  
ARE IN SCHOOLS WITH  
NO BLACK TEACHERS

MORE THAN HALF OF  
SCHOOLS DON'T HAVE  
A BLACK TEACHER



109,000+

LATINEX STUDENTS  
ARE IN SCHOOLS WITH  
NO LATINEX TEACHERS

workforce housing development - filling a need and fortifying community



\$1.6M

AVERAGE COST  
OF HOUSING IN  
SAN FRANCISCO



NO. OF  
BLACK MALE  
TEACHERS  
LIVING IN SF



BLACK  
HOMEOWNER  
RETENTION  
IN SF



QUALITY & QUANTITY OF  
AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING OPTIONS  
FOR NEW TEACHERS

# **Urban Ed Academy: Man The Bay Fellowship Essential Employee Housing Strategy: The Social Exchange**

## **Urban Ed Academy**

A San Francisco-based nonprofit, Urban Ed Academy (UEA) relies on evidence-based approaches to make education more equitable. Through community based programming and an effort to place more Black male teachers in elementary classrooms in the Bay area, Urban Ed Academy demonstrates values of excellence, energy and education. Urban Ed Academy is invested in fundamentally changing the landscape of teacher recruitment, culturally reflective and responsive training and teacher support, including housing.

In existence since 2010, Urban Ed Academy has always been focused on meaningful learning experiences for Black and Brown youth. Initially cultivating young minds through a Saturday program, UEA knew that more touchpoints and interaction were necessary -- the solution -- place men of color in elementary classrooms as full-time classroom teachers. Since 2018, UEA has been investing in solutions that drive towards that goal.

## **Man the Bay Fellowship**

The Man the Bay Fellowship supports communities by recruiting men of color who are recent college graduates to teach in communities with large populations of students of color. Fellows are recruited from Historically Black and Minority Serving Colleges and Universities and are non-education majors. Fellows typically leave their home and college towns to impact the Bay area community. Urban Ed Academy supports Fellows by securing teacher job placements within the San Francisco Unified School District while also providing Fellows with workforce housing and mentorship. In turn, the Fellows serve for four years in elementary schools in the community, helping to address the teacher shortage and achievement gaps by being culturally reflective of the community they serve and teaching in culturally responsive ways. The Man the Bay Fellowship program is intentionally designed to affect change and increase representation in classrooms.

The Fellowship's three support program components: culturally relevant personal and professional development; strategic placement of teachers in the district's ecosystem, and innovative approaches for incentivizing homeowners and property owners to house fellows at wage-friendly rates in the communities they serve are



interrelated supports that are essential to ensuring that students in schools with high minority populations not only have access to teachers through cultural matching but learn from these teachers, which impacts their lifelong wellbeing.

### **Fellowship Aims**

The Man the Bay Fellowship aspires to ensure that every male student in the Bay area experiences learning from a male teacher of color. The Fellowship focuses on the academic, social, and emotional wellbeing of students by bringing into spaces where students spend the majority of their time -- schools -- young men of color who have a passion to inspire younger generations, strengthen communities, and close achievement gaps.

Determined to translate research into practice, the Man the Bay Fellowship draws upon studies that show when boys of color have male educators of color, they are more likely to graduate from high school, experience increased self-esteem, and have a greater chance of pursuing a four-year college degree. Gershenson and colleagues (2016) found that the impact of teachers of color on students of color is significant when students are assigned to at least three teachers of color. Acknowledging that this is a rare practice because of the overwhelmingly white and female teaching force, even a single male teacher of color at the elementary level will have a significant impact on all students, especially students of color, and explicitly male students of color.

The Man the Bay Fellowship intends to leverage strategic placement of teachers into the district ecosystem to provide male students of color in the Bay area with more than one male teacher of color. Actively supporting Fellows in developing the technical competence to teach, they are also provided with strategies for building the social and emotional competence skills in students, and leadership skills for equity in themselves. Man the Bay moves beyond addressing the need for representation of male teachers of color at the elementary level and towards credentialed male teachers of color in classrooms as teachers of record for students.

Ultimately, the Fellowship aims to provide culturally affirming, relevant, and rich support to male teachers of color as they positively affect and impact the students that they teach.

## Outcomes

While each support provided to Fellows has its own individual outcomes, collectively the supports are designed to support Fellows in:

- Developing strong identities as Black male teachers,
- Affirming the cultures and experiences of their students,
- Providing high quality instruction to elementary-age youth,
- Cultivating school and community relationships by engaging families through trust and accountability,
- Strengthening advocacy skills for the students and communities they serve, and;
- Engaging in personal social, emotional, and professional development and self-care strategies

## Focus on Employee Housing

### Significance

With the research at hand that led to the creation of Man the Bay, multiple conclusions arose highlighting the hurdles that Black men face when entering adulthood. Housing presented itself as the first leg of the stool in order to support the Fellows and the Fellowship. In San Francisco, the most expensive city in the United States, living in the community on a teacher's salary isn't feasible for a first year teacher. With the Bayview community that UEA serves, there are social ramifications of affordable housing and gentrification that make it even more difficult to live in the community, even if it was fiscally possible. Urban Ed Academy is in the business of building community and being a part of the community wherever they are trusted to do work in Bayview and San Francisco. For UEA to meet its goal of ensuring that Black male teachers have a larger presence, a workforce housing solution had to be found.

Not only was a housing solution critical to the success of the program, but it needed to be significant, to last for the duration of the 4-year Fellowship commitment. Cultivating school and community relationships by engaging families through trust and accountability is extremely important. It is very difficult for that take place when teachers don't live in the community. The perception of limited understanding of a child's life can impede an educator's ability to connect with a student, or be a primary reason a child can be reached. The potential to affirm the cultures and experiences of their students, provide high quality instruction to elementary-age youth, and strengthen advocacy skills for the students and communities they serve are quietly, yet greatly jeopardized when the essential members of the community can not afford to live in the community. Whether police, firefighters, nurses and health care workers, or educators, the inability

or unwillingness to live in the community one serves puts at risk the quality of their service and access to opportunities their service represents to society.

### Key Components

This innovative activity that is supporting the housing of the Man the Bay Fellows is what Urban Ed Academy calls their **Social Exchange Framework**. This Social Exchange rests on the concept of community leveraging one another for the collective good. UEA depends on two levels of engagement with property owners, as a first step within the Social Exchange; the minority single family homeowner, and the minority landlord.

On one hand, if a person or family has a house that meets the following criteria, they are a good candidate for the Exchange:

- They own
- They have an empty room or living space for a Fellow
- They are willing to house a Fellow/s
- They have a willingness to offer below market rates

The second level of engagement is the minority landlord. Due to the nature of the Fellowship, depth of involvement from the Fellowship Director position, and scheduling details of all the Fellows, the below prerequisites are important:

- Ability to offer full site control for at least four years
- Willingness to house Fellows
- Willingness to offer below market rates

Community members with the willingness to listen and support their community, if they can, add a lot of value and are a prerequisite for the success of the Social Exchange. In exchange for this level of willingness, Urban Ed Academy essentially conducts capital campaigns on behalf of the properties under their purview in order to restore the home or property of the party in the exchange. Negotiating a fair price for the access UEA needs for Man the Bay has been in line with the value added to the property at large. While there are general house rules for the Fellows that accompany their presence at the property, that's all there is to it. Nothing fancy, just community trust and hard work.

As a non-profit organization that is doing impactful work, that impact doesn't happen without strategic partnerships. **Partnerships** in the workforce housing sector could take on multiple iterations, depending on focus. The leadership at Urban Ed is very focused on conserving their financial resources, and really scaffold where they spend actual capital versus leveraging social capital. The professional services



(architects, engineers, lawyers) can be large drags on budgets before any physical work (general contractors, if needed) is approached. The leadership at UEA has had a scaffolded approach to fundraising that hasn't always included actual money.

Maneuvering the professional services space with regard to workforce housing has been a “needs-based” ask for specific properties under review or control, as in-kind donations. Many firms that perform the services mentioned above, that are common within workforce housing, have community projects they volunteer on, or offer hours of service as donations in place of dollars. The workforce housing partners with which UEA has had the opportunity to work appreciate the intentionality of how the leadership at UEA approaches the workforce housing sector, and how that spills over into the relationships they build with practitioners in the space.

Lastly, the UEA leadership knew where they wanted to go and the number of housing quarters to which they needed access. They guided the following efforts and will continue to do so until the goal is reached. The goal of having a male teacher of color as a general education, credentialed teacher, in every elementary school in San Francisco will require over 50 separate housing solutions for the waves of Fellows coming through the Fellowship. **Continuous Filtering** for available property owners that meet the predetermined criteria is the last key component. At the beginning of the Fellowship, and the beginning of the Social Exchange Framework (before it was called that) the workforce housing was a labor-intensive exercise. Understanding where the value proposition could be for everyone involved, in order to support and uplift the community, required a lot of selling of the concept, selling the why, selling the leadership team, and communicating the capacity to be trusted with such responsibility as access to someone's property; conveying the property would indeed be improved rather than damaged after the negotiated period of time. When word of the Fellowship was advertised in San Francisco, and the need for housing options was attached to the content communicated about the Fellowship, Man the Bay was met with a lot of skepticism, given the housing crisis in the San Francisco Bay Area. Approaching the third year of the Fellowship, there has been less advertising yet more unsolicited offers. Because of a little longevity, and while the rental rates of property owners are below market value, people meeting the stated criteria are reaching out to Urban Ed Academy. Regardless of whether or not the conversations are initiated by UEA or simply received, **Continuous Filtering** remains essential.

### Impact of Teacher Housing on Teacher Recruitment

The impact of teacher housing on teacher recruitment is a plus in terms of getting young men to consider the mission-based effort that is Man the Bay. The basic need of housing being met as a condition of employment is crucial and telling about the

importance of the need, and about the leadership team's commitment to the housing need as a non-negotiable. There are a couple of tentacles worth exploring: First, what impact does offering housing for the Fellowship do for the perception of teaching for the Fellow and their role as a teacher? Second, what does offering housing as a baseline for teaching mean for the profession as a whole? Urban Ed Academy believes that given the crisis in which Black and Brown communities are living, the statistical difficulty that traditional schools and methods having in educating the Black and Brown children in those communities, and the subpar administrative gumption to make bold decisions to save the educational opportunities of generations of children, something fundamentally different, and drastic, needs to be done.

The idea of elevating the importance of the teaching profession to levels of importance similar to the military is a real possibility. The educational outcomes that too many children of color are limited to receiving leave them behind in life, even before it really gets started for them. Those educational outcomes often detail prospective life outcomes, and this represents a deadly cycle. A cycle with which society should be at war. When recruiting teachers to enter the classrooms of young Black and Brown children, education needs to do what the military does, house your most important frontline individuals. The impact on teacher recruitment, from the Urban Ed Academy perspective, is undeniable and a lynchpin for the success to date.

Finally, the amount of work and development that is required to build and maintain the platform that allows Urban Ed to achieve this posture is of such intensity that leadership anticipates it will grow in interest from the larger educational community. When this housing benefit is taken into account, with the effort, energy, and efficacy of the Social Exchange model, the importance of teaching is elevated for the recruit (the potential teacher). A newfound perspective for the importance of the job of teaching is almost immediately understood and appreciated. If low-income Black and Brown neighborhoods had this kind of workforce housing model as a norm, the view of the profession would not only change for the better, but it would begin to become a destination for the most passionate and capable of society who wish to serve their communities. The vibe and energy that teachers take into the school building and into their classrooms is the pace-setting mechanism they control daily. The subconscious positivity and importance of what you (the teacher) are doing daily takes on a different importance when the elements associated with your presence as a teacher are seen through this light of Culturally Reflective and Restorative Staffing. How you show up is different, because your perspective on the profession is different - positively different. Hopefully the efforts of Man the Bay and Urban Ed Academy are built upon and deployed with all deliberate speed.

# **Urban Ed Academy: Man The Bay Fellowship Strategic Placement of Teachers in San Francisco's Educational Ecosystem**

## **Urban Ed Academy**

A San Francisco based nonprofit Urban Ed Academy (UEA) relies on evidence-based approaches to make education more equitable. Through community based programming and an effort to place more Black male teachers in elementary classrooms in the Bay area, Urban Ed Academy demonstrates values of excellence, energy and education. Urban Ed Academy is invested in fundamentally changing the landscape of teacher recruitment, culturally reflective and responsive training and teacher support including housing.

In existence since 2010, Urban Ed Academy has always been focused on meaningful learning experiences for Black and Brown youth. Initially cultivating young minds through a Saturday program, UEA knew that more touchpoints and interaction were necessary -- the solution -- place men of color in elementary classrooms as full-time classroom teachers. Since 2018, UEA has been investing in solutions that drive towards that goal.

## **Man the Bay Fellowship**

The Man the Bay Fellowship supports communities by recruiting men of color who are recent college graduates to teach in communities with large populations of students of color. Fellows are recruited from Historically Black and Minority Serving Colleges and Universities and are non-education majors. Fellows typically leave their home and college towns to impact the Bay area community. Urban Ed Academy supports Fellow's by securing teacher job placements within the San Francisco Unified School District while also providing Fellows with workforce housing and mentorship. In turn, the Fellows serve in elementary schools in the community for four years by helping to address the teacher shortage and achievement gaps by being culturally reflective of the community they serve and teaching in culturally responsive ways. The Man the Bay Fellowship program is intentionally designed to affect change and increase representation in classrooms.

The Fellowship's three support program components: culturally relevant personal and professional development; strategic placement of teachers in the district's ecosystem, and innovative approaches for incentivizing homeowners and property owners to house fellows at wage-friendly rates in the communities they serve are

interrelated supports that are essential to ensuring that students in schools with high minority populations not only have access to teachers through cultural matching but learn from these teachers, which impacts their lifelong wellbeing.

### **Fellowship Aims**

The Man the Bay Fellowship aspires to ensure that every male student in the Bay area experiences learning from a male teacher of color. The Fellowship focuses on the academic, social, and emotional wellbeing of students by bringing young men of color with a passion to inspire younger generations, strengthen communities, and close achievement gaps into the spaces where students spend the majority of their time -- in schools.

Determined to translate research into practice, the Man the Bay Fellowship draws upon studies that show when boys of color have male educators of color, they are more likely to graduate from high school, experience increased self-esteem, and have a greater chance of pursuing a four-year college degree. Gershenson and colleagues (2016) found that the impact of teachers of color on students of color is significant when students are assigned to at least three teachers of color. Acknowledging that this is rare practice because of the overwhelmingly white and female teaching force, the impact of a single male teacher of color at the elementary level will also have significant impacts on all students, especially students of color, and explicitly male students of color.

The Man the Bay Fellowship intends to leverage strategic placement of teachers into the district ecosystem to provide male students of color in the Bay area with more than one male teacher of color. Actively supporting Fellows in developing the technical competence to teach, they are also provided with strategies for building the social and emotional competence skills in students and leadership skills for equity in themselves. Man the Bay moves beyond addressing the need for representation of male teachers of color at the elementary level and towards credentialed male teachers of color in classrooms as teachers of record for students.

Ultimately, the Fellowship aims to provide culturally affirming, relevant, and rich support to male teachers of color as they positively affect and impact the students that they teach.

## Outcomes

While each support provided to Fellows has its own individual outcomes, collectively the supports are designed to support Fellows in:

- Developing strong identities as Black male teachers,
- Affirming the cultures and experiences of their students,
- Providing high quality instruction to elementary-age youth,
- Cultivating school and community relationships by engaging families through trust and accountability,
- Strengthening advocacy skills for the students and communities they serve.

## Focus on Teacher Placement

### Significance & Key Components

San Francisco is a beautiful place. The Bay Area is its own place, and is second to none. It's known for being a welcoming and diverse place, and it is. With a bustling economy that is home to some of the largest technology giants in the world, the Bay Area, and San Francisco specifically, aren't immune to the ills of American life for people of color. More often than not, areas like San Francisco are actually leaving people of color behind socioeconomically at a faster rate than any other demographic. Those same inequities show up in the disparities within the school districts. Current Urban Ed Academy leadership arrived in 2016. The climate within the San Francisco Unified School District was, and still is, one of high standards, inclusion, and equity. The same way the city and area is unintentionally leaving behind families and children of color, especially Black and Latinx, unfortunately the school district hasn't performed for those families as well as they'd like either. Both entities are working jointly where it makes sense to provide more resources and policy amendments to atone for the lagging standard of quality these families and children are experiencing. The adoption of a community school model in under-resourced communities provided an on-ramp for current UEA leadership to implement Man the Bay. For a small organization to be trusted with the opportunity to be the community-based organization that represents the newly adopted community schools model, a lot of credit is owed to the founder of the organization and all of the staff members prior to 2016.

Understanding the level of depth that Urban Ed Academy has in the community is important. The close nature of the work, and pride in the relational aspects of the work in which the organization is involved are vital characteristics to understanding the strategic teacher placement aspect of Man the Bay. Urban Ed Academy is a Black-led organization that is trusted by the school district and the City/County of San Francisco to be a nexus of contact to the Bayview-Hunters Point community through the children

and their families. The benefits of this level of involvement and trust can't be overstated. It is a needed aspect for the Man the Bay Fellowship to be successful, and is a primary driver of UEA being able to help strategically place the Fellows with environments believed to be a good fit for all parties.

Mentioned previously was the relational aspect of the Urban Ed Academy dynamic, and how much pride is taken in being accessible to the community they work with and serve. This familiarity with principals across the city of San Francisco Unified School District, and the familiarity with school cultures and neighborhood underpinnings are factors in the teacher placement dimension. The Fellowship Director's ability to connect with the Fellows during their pre-service year, when the Fellows are tested weekly and expected to meet certain bars of production and preparedness, is a "secret sauce" of the teacher placement aspect. Everyone works differently, prepares differently, and responds to criticism, constructive or not, differently. The opportunity for the Fellowship Director to speak with school leaders about the personalities of Fellows and to discuss prospective hiring processes is invaluable. While there are no perfect matches or guarantees, and once a Fellow is eligible for the classroom as a credentialed teacher they must submit to each principal's hiring protocol, having a year of interactions with Fellows and long-standing relationships with district and school leadership offers a promising potential for successful strategic teacher placement.

Another key factor for the teacher placement aspect of Man the Bay, and the program at large, is the small population of Black residents in San Francisco proper. The newness of the Culturally Reflective and Restorative Staffing model requires refining, like any other new initiative. UEA is an organization responsible for young people in elementary schools and the Fellows in the program. The leadership doesn't take that responsibility lightly, and they recognize the attention and care needed at every level when looking to truly push the system toward equity. Moving too fast, because the need is present, or starting with a larger sample size than 40,000 Black residents would greatly jeopardize the ability for UEA to get it right, and affect larger populations of Black and Brown in the future. The current sample size is large enough to gain an understanding of the Fellowships impact, without getting diluted with more need than what the current version of Man the Bay can assume capacity for.

### **Impact of Strategic Placement**

The strategic placement of Fellows within the San Francisco Unified School district relies on the building of authentic relationships among principals, district office administrators, UEA leadership, Fellows, and community members. As these young men of color are becoming a part of the SFUSD community and working to transform and strengthen the educational experiences of students in under-resourced schools, it is vital that bonds exist that allow them to grow. Relationships stem from others believing

that men of color need to be actively engaged members of their school community and provided with support to be successful in an institution that was originally not designed for them. Additionally, through strategic placement, Fellows help to cultivate inclusive and equitable school communities by acknowledging and affirming the rich cultures that exist where students and their families live. Through strategic partners with a shared vision and value for what Man the Bay can do in the San Francisco community, strategic placement is successful.

The random placement of teachers in schools that “have space,” or “lack men” does not support the retention of men of color into the profession, honor them as teachers and professionals, nor see them as an asset to the communities they serve. However, the strategic placement of Fellows does, by linking human capital resources with relational resources, investing in the personal and professional development of men of color, and providing an opportunity for Fellows to directly impact the students and families in the areas where they live. Placement, therefore, cultivates safe and supportive climates and offers support for pragmatic solutions to theoretical, research-based evidence.

Programs aimed at teacher placement must recognize that shared vision must also be accompanied by authentic relationships and strategic placement of human capital resources. UEA embraces the intentional coordination and alignment of resources, programs, and partnerships in order to make indelible marks on the San Francisco community that demonstrate an energized and necessary focus on placing male teachers of color into elementary school classrooms.

# **Urban Ed Academy: Man The Bay Fellowship Culturally Relevant Personal and Professional Development**

## **Urban Ed Academy**

A San Francisco-based nonprofit, Urban Ed Academy (UEA) relies on evidence-based approaches to make education more equitable. Through community based programming and an effort to place more Black male teachers in elementary classrooms in the Bay area, Urban Ed Academy demonstrates values of excellence, energy and education. Urban Ed Academy is invested in fundamentally changing the landscape of teacher recruitment, culturally reflective and responsive training and teacher support, including housing.

In existence since 2010, Urban Ed Academy has always been focused on meaningful learning experiences for Black and Brown youth. Initially cultivating young minds through a Saturday program, UEA knew that more touchpoints and interaction were necessary -- the solution -- place men of color in elementary classrooms as full-time classroom teachers. Since 2018, UEA has been investing in solutions that drive towards that goal.

## **Man the Bay Fellowship**

The Man the Bay Fellowship supports communities by recruiting men of color who are recent college graduates to teach in communities with large populations of students of color. Fellows are recruited from Historically Black and Minority Serving Colleges and Universities and are non-education majors. Urban Ed Academy supports Fellows by securing teacher job placements within the San Francisco Unified School District while also providing Fellows with workforce housing and mentorship. In turn, the Fellows serve for four years in elementary schools in the community, helping to address the teacher shortage and achievement gaps by being culturally reflective of the community they serve and teaching in culturally responsive ways. The Man the Bay Fellowship program is intentionally designed to affect change and increase representation in classrooms.

The Fellowship's three support program components: culturally relevant personal and professional development; strategic placement of teachers in the district's ecosystem, and innovative approaches for incentivizing homeowners and property owners to house fellows at wage-friendly rates in the communities they serve are interrelated supports that are essential to ensuring that students in schools with high



minority populations not only have access to teachers through cultural matching but learn from these teachers, which impacts their lifelong wellbeing.

### **Fellowship Aims**

The Man the Bay Fellowship aspires to ensure that every male student in the Bay area experiences learning from a male teacher of color. The Fellowship focuses on the academic, social, and emotional wellbeing of students by bringing into spaces where students spend the majority of their time -- schools -- young men of color who have a passion to inspire younger generations, strengthen communities, and close achievement gaps.

Determined to translate research into practice, the Man the Bay Fellowship draws upon studies that show when boys of color have male educators of color, they are more likely to graduate from high school, experience increased self-esteem, and have a greater chance of pursuing a four-year college degree. Gershenson and colleagues (2016) found that the impact of teachers of color on students of color is significant when students are assigned to at least three teachers of color. Acknowledging that this is a rare practice because of the overwhelmingly white and female teaching force, even a single male teacher of color at the elementary level will have a significant impact on all students, especially students of color, and explicitly male students of color.

The Man the Bay Fellowship intends to leverage strategic placement of teachers into the district ecosystem to provide male students of color in the Bay area with more than one male teacher of color. Actively supporting Fellows in developing the technical competence to teach, they are also provided with strategies for building the social and emotional competence skills in students, and leadership skills for equity in themselves. Man the Bay moves beyond addressing the need for representation of male teachers of color at the elementary level and towards credentialed male teachers of color in classrooms as teachers of record for students.

Ultimately, the Fellowship aims to provide culturally affirming, relevant, and rich support to male teachers of color as they positively affect and impact the students that they teach.

## Outcomes

While each support provided to Fellows has its own individual outcomes, collectively the supports are designed to support Fellows in:

- Developing strong identities as Black male teachers,
- Affirming the cultures and experiences of their students,
- Providing high quality instruction to elementary-age youth,
- Cultivating school and community relationships by engaging families through trust and accountability,
- Strengthening advocacy skills for the students and communities they serve, and;
- Engaging in personal social, emotional, and professional development and self-care strategies

## Significance

The Man the Bay Fellowship increases the availability of culturally reflective teachers in underserved neighborhoods. With Black men representing less than 2% of the teaching corps nationally, we posit that this disparity did not happen accidentally -- it was the result of institutional design, fueled partially by systemic racism. One issue with the recruitment and preparation of male teachers of color is the mismatch between the needs of Black male candidates and the offerings in programs that microwave teacher preparation and discount the depth needed to prepare a young male teacher of color for this work. UEA is developing a personal-professional training curriculum specifically for Black males in tandem with SFUSD and advisors from local universities.

## Key Components

### *Culturally Reflective Staffing*

As with the culturally reflective and restorative driver behind the Man the Bay efforts, Urban Ed Academy and those who provide primary support to the Man the Bay Fellows are people of color. The Man the Bay Fellowship clearly recognizes that culture is important and a strong part of peoples' lives. Culture influences an individual's views, values, humor, hopes, loyalties, and fears. Individuals draw upon the strength of the culture as support to navigate challenges and carry out plans, in this case, teaching plans. Using a village approach of support, Fellowship staff is able to culturally connect, understand and draw upon the lived experiences of Fellows to dig deep and leverage the strengths, knowledge, and cultural experiences they have to cultivate Fellows into the leaders and teachers they have chosen to be in the community.

### *Cultural Understanding and Advocacy*

People of color in the United States share experiences along lines of discrimination and systemic racism. It can be said that this is a part of the culture of

communities of color. To whatever extent this is true, there are two myths that are perpetuated in traditional teacher preparation programs: (1) teachers of color do not need to be taught how to engage in culturally responsive instructions by virtue of the shared experiences mentioned previously, and (2) teachers of color do not need to develop advocacy skills because they endure hardships and know how to overcome challenges. These myths are certainly inaccurate. It is true that Fellows are able to make connections and develop relationships with their students at a faster rate than their non-Black counterparts, but this does not mean that relationships automatically convert to culturally responsive instruction and advocacy skills.

While the majority of students that Fellows teach are African American, there are also students who come from Somalian culture, Mexican culture, and cultures within the Pacific Islands. Therefore, it is the belief of the Fellowship that along with culturally reflective and restorative staffing, Fellows must also develop and implement culturally responsive and affirming pedagogical practices. Fellowship staff understand the importance of continuing to learn about one's culture and to learn about the culture of others. Fellows are supported in this development by attending cultural events in the community, practicing how to incorporate strategies and techniques for culturally responsive and sustaining instruction, and cultivating inclusive classrooms for students and their families.

Advocacy is deeply rooted in understanding that culture influences peoples' views, their values, their hopes, their loyalties, their worries and their fears. Fellows live in the community where they teach, facilitating their awareness of students' culture. This close proximity to students and their families allows Fellows to listen and learn as men of color, teachers, and engaged community members. In turn, Fellows form social networks to support the advocacy of effective, resourceful, and equitable learning for students. They also develop skills in self-advocacy, peer-advocacy, and systems-level advocacy through their teacher training professional development and performance coaching. As these skills grow over time, Fellows' investment in the community also grows.

### *Focus on Wellness*

Fellows are provided with wellbeing support along the six dimensions of wellness: social, emotional, intellectual, environmental, physical, and spiritual. The Fellowship does not prescribe any uniform routine or curriculum of wellness that Fellows must follow. The supports with which Fellows are provided are designed to strengthen their understanding of what it means to be well, to be present and in-the-moment with the students they serve. Fellows receive group and one-on-one performance coaching designed to empower Fellows by identifying their areas of strength and growth to set

goals within one or two of the six dimensions of wellness. In group coaching, Fellows are guided through materials and topics from a curated curriculum that has been introduced to them from their performance coaches. The information and varying perspectives the information unearths is used to expand the Fellows' perspectives about one another, the community they serve (how someone else is interpreting it), and the role they play in the community. This includes how that role may produce levels of pressure, or anxiety, and how to properly cope with and develop roadmaps for effective self-help. Further, in their technical training, Fellows have multiple opportunities to explore the intersectionality of their identities with an emphasis on their social and emotional wellbeing.

### *Aligned Teacher Preparation Curriculum*

Fellows engage in a Teaching and Leading Seminar during their initial year in the Fellowship. This seminar serves as a bridge to transition Fellows into the world of education, mitigating barriers that often exist for teachers of color as they transition into licensing programs and their teaching career. The seminar has five main themes

- Personal and Teaching Identities
- Pedagogical Excellence
- Communities of Practice and Action Research
- Equity and Social Justice
- Leadership and Advocacy

Fellows engage in 22 weeks of seminars as they develop competence in understanding everything from educational jargon to the systems and policies within education that breed inequities for students. Fellows actively design and teach lessons, collect and analyze data, strengthen their ability to integrate social and emotional skill-building while developing students' literacy and mathematical skills, and complete an action research project.

### *Impact of Culturally Relevant Personal and Professional Development in the Field of Education*

Cultural matching has a strong impact on the ways in which individuals view themselves. The Man the Bay Fellowship is intentional about providing support that contributes to the development of the "whole" Fellow. Fellows engage in training and coaching from staff of color who provide culturally responsive and affirming activities that are intended to empower Fellows to develop and strengthen dispositions and skills that are necessary to be highly effective teachers. Moving away from the microwaved approach to teacher preparation, embracing the lived experiences of men of color, and cultivating a professional learning space where men of color feel safe to ask questions,

air frustrations, share their thoughts through storytelling, and learn individually and collectively but not competitively, the landscape of men of color in classrooms will change. Further, when preparation programs follow the lead of Man the Bay; recruiting male teachers of color who are passionate about seeing students be successful, affirming male teachers of color as they enter into the teaching profession, creating a sense of belonging within the fellowship, and providing culturally relevant personal and professional development, the impact on students, especially Black male students, will inevitably follow. From the research, the impacts anticipated are increases in academic outcomes and attendance, and decreases in behavioral referrals and suspensions. The impacts on the workforce pipeline include additional male teachers of color who have a network and support system to leverage and lean on as they navigate a system not originally designed for them.



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**Black Male Fellow Experiences**

**Building**

**Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning**

**Black Educators in the Bay**

# Black Educators in the Bay

*Mosi, Ethan, Bouie, & Xavier*

Man the Bay Fellowship  
Urban Ed Academy

## What's the problem?

There is no question that a lack of diversity in teaching staff is a prevalent issue across the United States. Less than 2% of America's teaching force are Black males and less than 3% are Latino males. While together each demographic makes up over 30% of the general American population, if one looks deeper into the underpinning of the diversity gap, and explores the lives of that 2 and 3% of teachers, an encouraging story emerges. A story of resilience, identity, community, support, leadership, and recognition. A band of selfless warriors who, despite the odds and demographic isolation, have committed themselves to educating children – a most vulnerable population.

This is a deeper dive, where we take a look at the existing Black male teacher experience and how a new venture in San Francisco, CA has implemented a framework to support the 2% and 3% who have answered a call to lead, teach, and develop the potential of some of America's brightest children. Though San Francisco is home to a Black population of about 45,000 (5.6%), less than half the percentage across the US, there is no reason to undermine the need for demographic representation among teachers. Urban Ed Academy believes that "Every child deserves to see themselves in the classroom." Urban Ed Academy (UEA) was founded to eliminate the achievement gap in education for children of color – one interaction at a time. UEA executes this interaction with a three-strand approach, with the vision of making sure every student in San Francisco has one Black and or Brown teacher before the sixth grade. The initiative includes:

- **S.M.A.R.T. Saturdays** - a bi-weekly STEM-based creative and educational program that focuses on instilling readiness to learn and eagerness to excel in the classroom through culturally competent instruction.
- **The Green Hacker Hub** - an open air, child focused tech center in Bayview "where children can come, hang out, and learn after school."
- **The Man the Bay Fellowship** - a "systematic approach that aims to recruit, train, and retain male graduates of color from Historically Black

- Colleges and Universities with a commitment to becoming elementary school teachers in San Francisco.”

### Man the Bay Fellowship

The Man the Bay Fellowship supports communities by recruiting men of color who are recent college graduates to teach in communities with large populations of students of color. Fellows are recruited from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and are typically non-education majors. Urban Ed Academy supports Fellows by providing extremely deep training platforms (personal and professional) for them to obtain all of the credentials needed to be in the classroom, as well as workforce/teacher housing, and help with securing teacher job placements within the San Francisco Unified School District. In turn, the Fellows serve the community for four years, helping to address the teacher shortage while also helping to close the achievement gaps; by being culturally reflective of the community they serve, restoring a cultural aptitude of leadership, and teaching in culturally reflective ways. The Man the Bay Fellowship program is intentionally designed to affect change and increase representation in classrooms. The Fellowship’s three support program components: 1) culturally relevant personal and professional development, 2) strategic placement of teachers in the district’s ecosystem, and 3) innovative approaches for incentivizing home/property owners to house fellows at wage-friendly rates in the communities they serve.

The Man the Bay Fellowship aspires to ensure that every male student in the Bay area experiences learning from a male teacher of color. The Fellowship focuses on the academic, social, and emotional wellbeing of students by bringing into the spaces where students spend the majority of their time -- the school -- young men of color with a passion to inspire younger generations, strengthen communities, and close achievement gaps. For the purpose of discussing the importance of support for these teachers, the remainder of this article will center on the experiences of the Fellows who are a part of this unique Fellowship.

There is a swath of research that confirms the efficacy of culturally competent instruction and representation in the classroom. There is limited research on the teachers who are the representation and provide the culturally competent instruction for students of color.

- Who are they?
- How do they teach?
- What skills do they have and what supports do they draw on to effectively educate students and instill values of learning in a culturally competent manner?



The following narratives examine the profiles of four teachers in the Man the Bay Fellowship and seek to answer these questions. More specifically, the grounding question of this research is, “What are Black male teacher experiences as they aim to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of elementary school youth in the San Francisco Bay Area?”

These fellows’ stories will respond to that question as they paint pictures of resilience, identity, community, support, leadership, and recognition alongside the fight for visibility and respect within the public education system.

Name	Mosi I.
Age	27
University	Texas Southern
Degree	B.S. Administration of Justice
Currently Teaching	Kindergarten

### Mosi’s Experience

*“Support is paramount. I come from a place where a lot of Black men don’t make it out. You don’t see a lot of 27-year-old Black men overcoming the statistics.”*

As a college graduate and military veteran, you might think that Mosi elicits respect from everyone he encounters. This is not always the case for this Fellow who draws on his background of varied experiences and “being treated differently in the world” and brings them into the classroom to support his students’ individual learning paths, respecting the uniqueness of each child and acknowledging them as a whole person with distinct circumstances.

While he has support in the classroom, it is not uncommon for this Fellow to face a lack of support due to unfamiliarity and the attitudes attached to co-workers with seniority and tenure. *How can a teacher be successful without the support and guidance of those who have the most experience?* They pull on an inner reserve of strength, rely on teachers who do not display egregious attitudes, and call on the immediate support system embedded in the Fellowship to which they belong – this includes the staff of UEA, co-Fellows, and local community members whose children are engaged in UEA programming.

The staff and administration at Justin Row Elementary has provided this Fellow a welcoming environment and the tools to be an effective teacher. He is not seen as a drop-in paraeducator, but as a teacher and comrade who is there for the same reasons they are – to provide a rich and well-rounded education for youth. Many of the teachers

– non-Fellows – don't know where their child goes after they leave the classroom, but when they see that a Black male teacher is taking the time after work hours to provide a more culturally rich education experience, the Fellow feels a distinct sense of pride and duty. It is as if the idea of no child left behind applies to teachers. For the child to succeed, the people involved in educating them must also succeed. The Fellow is supported by teachers who understand that each player in the realm of providing education is important, but no one player is more important than another. The Black male educator must be acknowledged as an equal in the education system, and must receive outside support and council from those with whom they work and to whom they report.

Alongside the support received by co-workers, school and Fellowship staff, this Fellow may call upon his experience in the military to strengthen classroom management skills. His leadership and speaking skills command “a sense of respect” from his students – “They see someone who is strong.” As a teacher who knows he has different students in the classroom, this Fellow draws on the experience of “having been treated differently in the world.” Each student is regarded as an individual with a racial difference, a cultural difference that adds to the classroom and that must be paid attention to. By acknowledging the uniqueness of each child, who they are as a whole person with distinct experiences, children are supported in their individual learning paths. As a high school wrestler, technique and strategy is what brought this Fellow victory. Using that experience to plan and draw out a schedule gives the Fellow space to engage students individually, because there is structure in the classroom. Students respect that structure because the Fellow respects them, does not isolate them, and connects with them by ‘bringing security to the classroom’.

What has made this Fellow successful in connecting with his students and creating culturally competent space is the diverse experiences he has had as a wrestler, a military veteran, and a Black man. The support he receives from his co-Fellows, teachers, and UEA staff provides him the space to relieve stress, but they also provide him with classroom practices and strategies that have worked for them in the past. He can focus more on student engagement rather than giving attention to unsupportive teachers and other staff. Many students see him as a “big brother” and community member, in addition to teacher.

Name	Ethan S.
Age	27
University	Texas Southern
Degree	B.A. Radio, Television, Film
Currently Teaching	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade

### Ethan's Experience

Much like Mosi, Ethan has the support of his immediate surroundings. He is regarded among regular people and by other teachers and UEA program administrators as “a pillar of the community,” and by children’s families as someone who can help provide “a little more direction and encouragement” to the children at his school. As a previous member of a championship sports team, this Fellow has used sportsmanship and teamwork to excel in classroom management, making connections with students, and in achieving the common goal of academic excellence. What winning looks like in the classroom is a combination of a joint effort between students, teachers, staff, skill/talent, and the willingness to adapt to changes inside and outside the classroom.

This Fellow has a rags-to-riches story very common among Black male youth who may have adverse life experiences as youth but were later supported through community programs, mentors, and other role models. He chooses to reflect that lived experience on his students to express common ground and a sense of ‘we are not that different.’ Many of his students point to this commonality as the reason they see him as a role model; ‘he has excelled in life and so can we’. With that recognition, the Fellow then assumes an evolving role of teacher, mentor, and super-hero. The established sense of familiarity and comfort among the teacher and his students removes any disinterest in learning and provides them with a safe space for expression.

“express to them the seriousness of their literacy, and knowing how to do math, and knowing how to count money...with me, coming from or experiencing that culture in the past, it allowed me to know how to talk to them and know the lingo and how to communicate with them and meet them where they are so I can still convey my message to them. They may not understand me if I say "help your friends," "do good for your friends," "don't hit your friends," "you need your friends." They may relate more to "don't you wanna help the homeys?", "don't you want to see the homeys make it?"...being able to translate all of that is using everything that I've learned in order to communicate...”

The use of common nomenclature to articulate a message is not new and not everyone can use the same phrasing. The rich lived experience and cultural background of the Fellow makes this effort genuine and honest, more so than if a White

male teacher tried to use the same language with his students. Relatability stands to be a driving support of teacher and student success.

Beyond relatability, one-on-one connections also provide the support a Fellow needs to be a successful educator, and as they provide a space for others, there may need to be a space for them to engage in one-on-one support. One-on-one support can be difficult to foster if a Fellow must manage educator biases, and their work and personhood being constantly critiqued by students. Teachers and other staff may delay work orders or prevent the Fellow from requisitioning a room, so they do not have an adequate space for programming. Consistency is important, especially for youth, so when other teachers get in the way of this, the Fellow's teaching plan is hindered. Whether equally or not, this affects the Fellow's ability to teach and students' environment to learn. It is necessary for the Fellows to have an adequate learning environment to teach, as they are learning the craft. Consistency and structure keep youth focused on the material, instead of exploring and questioning new changes which can waste valuable instruction time.

After the smoke clears and the Fellow has a room in which to teach, he must then manage the scrutiny that comes from his students. This scrutiny does not come from a malicious place but is more curiosity. Imagine students asking the question *how do I become like you?*

"As a male [with melanin]...the way that I teach, everything that comes out is really critiqued, everything you say is put in the limelight...everything you wear is on limelight, the way your hair is styled, the way your eyebrows curl, your eyelashes curl, everything about you is really critiqued, because at the same time, we're their leaders, they look at us as big brothers or leaders or father figures or uncles, they may have that at home but at the same time they may not have a big brother...so it's really filling in the void of the missing male in their life that is around our age...they're so interested in our lives..."

The Fellow's life exists under multiple microscopes, but less often does he have the chance to work through the scrutiny he faces. He is hyper-aware of how he presents himself to his students, seeking to learn from his mistakes and providing a better learning atmosphere by adopting a relatable posture and communication style. He must find ways to adapt to unfairness in the workplace, not having equal access to space and materials. He must connect with his students one-on-one while maintaining the role of teacher, mentor, and role model. While the Fellow is open, adaptable, resilient, and forthcoming, it must be noted that one-on-one support is also necessary for the Fellow to thrive. Instead of a microscope, he would have a mirror that is not his own to help him

discover tactics and strategies to support his role as a teacher-in-training, mentor, and role-model.

Name	Bouie
Age	29
University	Texas Southern
Degree	B.S. Music Education
Currently Teaching	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade; 5 <sup>th</sup> grade

### Bouie's Experiences

"I see myself as a teacher" and "others see an aspiring Black brother." - Bouie

More is to be said about the secondary and indirect support that comes from both the community and from representation in the workplace, and their role in affirming a teacher's identity. Bouie's community and school district leadership have affirmed his personhood as a Black male educator. Typical barriers, such as having to email a secretary to get to district leadership, are few and far between. The Superintendent is available at events, speaking with teachers and interacting with colleagues. His presence and willingness to have even a short conversation is appreciated by Bouie, showing him that he is valued and can, too, one day be a Superintendent. His identity is affirmed and strengthened by the representation of a Black male educator in leadership. Visibility has made all the difference in how Bouie perceives himself in the workplace.

"...when I see teachers that are achieving phenomenal things and, and just, just man...they're killing it, you know, I just remind myself that...I can lesson plan with them anytime I can...go to their office hours or I chat with them about, you know, an idea I may have had or like a spin on something that they did before and I want to get their thoughts on it. So like that, that definitely makes you feel valued too..."

While representation can support a teacher's identity, access to that representation further supports a teacher's ability to mature his skills and feel valued. Can we then draw the conclusion that the same applies to the children in a teacher's classroom?

Bouie has found strength in the connections and access he has to teachers and leaders in his school, and knows he has the opportunity to mirror that experience in his classroom. He is aware of the fragility of children and that strong presence is needed to assist their development. He brings strength and structure, in addition to kindness, a

desire to be a better teacher for his students, and an aptitude of communicating in a way that meets the needs of each individual student and the classroom as a whole.

“I'm a caring and passionate individual...I'm an educator that's competent and culturally reflective. I believe that my job is to educate and I just firmly plan on consistently and continually getting better and better at...education... how best to convey information and keep people engaged and how to...help free somebody else because I believe I am free.... Sometimes seeing is believing.

Regardless if you get plenty of love at home or not, the fact is...a loving environment, just being privy to...an area in which...proper...interactions are happening and...kindness is present...it's crucial.” - Bouie

The intentionality behind Bouie's teaching leaves his students enamored and entranced, so much so that they share it with the people around them, their families and siblings. His lessons are delivered in a way that meets children where they are and also challenges them. His lessons can be scaled up or down a few levels to meet the competence of a first grader or a fourth grader. In parallel, just as he can see the Superintendent, engage with and learn from him and put the lessons into practice, Bouie is able to impart an education to his students that encourages them to become teachers and take what they learn back to their household and their circle of friends. In the way that he leads his classroom, providing an avenue for his students to become their own teachers, he establishes accountability of learning and active participation and support between classmates. At the beginning of the school year when Bouie administers an assignment that asks his students to state what they plan to achieve, he plants a seed of ownership in his students' learning. Due to their buy-in, when he remarks that a student “has not been achieving what they said they've been doing,” he is able to monitor their progress based on those initial goals. He instills a respect for boundaries, rules, protocol, and guidelines that “get them to grow from where they are to where you want them to be.”

The verbal agreements and intentional connections are further supported by the classroom setup. It is bright and colorful. Reinforcement of the expectations are plastered on the walls through explanations, reminders, and classroom achievements. The flexible seating arrangements allow for various learning environments (i.e. reading sections, science experiment areas, and open play). Beyond his personal dedication to teaching in a way that meets his students where they are, Bouie is just as intentional in creating a welcoming environment for learning and academic excellence. Though not an exact model of how Bouie has received support and guidance from the educational leaders and coworkers in his community, it is apparent that the support he receives from

those leaders emboldens his efforts to create a similar space of learning and support in his classroom.

Name	Xavier
Age	27
University	Delaware State University
Degree	B.A. Mass Communications
Currently Teaching	Kindergarten

### **Xavier's Experience**

A recurring theme among Man the Bay Fellows is how the support and acceptance they receive from their communities plays a pivotal/essential role in how they see themselves and view their experience as an educator. The same is true for Xavier, who has found his place in the community where his school, Rider's Bay Elementary, is located. He is aware of his role as an educator and is secure in his identity as a Black male teacher. Walking throughout his community he is recognized. "Oh, that's my child's teacher! Oh, that's Mr. X!" he hears parents' echo as he walks on Pablo Street, or Malcolm X Street, or when he's going to a Green Goblins game. As a New Jersey native, the acceptance and community support that Xavier receives has the added benefit of making him feel like he is home. Despite being a new Bay Area resident, he feels as though the community is his own. As a Man the Bay Fellow, Xavier has also found support from the program's staff. Metaphors and analogies are used by Mr. James, the Deputy Director of UEA, to communicate abstract concepts and new teaching techniques. He is a role model to the Fellows; a Black male in leadership and education who is confident and wise.

"The way he speaks is how we learn... he's meeting us where we're at" - Xavier

Xavier is the student and the teacher. Using what he's learned from Mr. James, in addition to some tough love, constructive feedback, and assistance in time management from other program staff, he becomes equipped with the techniques that he will use in his classroom.

Much like how Xavier views Mr. James as a role model and leader, along with Mr. James' role as Program lead, Xavier views himself as a teacher, a leader, and community member. Despite these bonds, Xavier has not always received the support he needed from his non-Fellow colleagues to instruct his class. He has had to contend with the views of those who saw him as an outsider, as "a threat" upon his arrival.

“When I first arrived it was very difficult, I didn't feel very supported...I felt attacked, kind of was very demeaning, I felt like I didn't have a voice, I didn't know how to operate in that vicinity, that workplace..I realized everyone is going through their own battles to fight.” - Xavier

When Xavier first arrived at Rider's Bay Elementary, he did not feel supported by his fellow teachers. He felt attacked and belittled, like he did not have a voice. Showing their true colors, Xavier had to deal with offensive jokes and mimicking of Black Culture as a means of relating to him. Unfortunately, this led to teachers being *too* comfortable around Xavier. Whether those teachers knew their actions were offensive or not, Xavier realized he had to work ten times harder to be accepted and dispel any ideas that all Black people were the same. Dealing with initial assumptions and biases can be draining. However, because of his commitment to his students and his perseverance, Xavier continues to work towards dissolving prejudice and preconceived notions. In addition to his human supports, Xavier draws understanding on how to cope with microaggressions from literature, such as the book *The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz*, and from words to live by, such as “kill them with kindness.” Xavier was met with less resistance and people let their guards down as he demonstrated this kindness. However, Xavier cites that everything he does is under scrutiny and he has had to consistently show something different and “beat the odds,” demonstrating flexibility and nuance.

As a Black male teacher, flexibility and nuance are important. When not explicitly practicing the skills he learned from program staff in a controlled setting, and reading books to help him deal with how other teachers acted towards and around him, Xavier has to lesson plan and prepare to teach his students. He used those acquired skills in his classroom to create an environment that enhanced the learning experience through adaptive learning techniques and culturally competent curriculum. Using rhythm and music, Xavier found ways to connect with the students in his class, particularly the young Black males. He develops lessons that tap into the commonalities they share in their families, musical interests, and lived experiences to create an open and inviting environment that simultaneously reinforces trust. The level of structure and thought put into planning lessons that incorporate the familiarity of students' daily surroundings is Xavier's way of meeting students where they are. He brings out their strength and desire to learn by allowing them space to do what he wants them to do, *learn*, by giving them something they want to do.

Xavier's experience as an educator has come full circle. Once a young Black elementary student, he now assumes the role of a teacher of young Black male students. He becomes a student once more, learning from role models like Mr. James



through metaphors and analogies, and receiving techniques for managing personalities and his classroom from Man the Bay Fellowship staff and books. He then turns back to his role as a teacher, also serving as a role model for the students in his classroom, creating space for creativity and acceptance by incorporating familiar themes from their lives. Xavier's story demonstrates how, despite circumstances, representation and support are beneficial for both teachers and students. While the biases held by others can not necessarily be controlled, having the structure and tools to manage or mitigate such thinking allows educators to focus on their classroom and their students.

## Closing

Recruiting and preparing male teachers of color to serve in communities where students of color live and learn helps to restore a sense of strength and pride within students, their families and their communities. Male teachers of color reflect cultural match with their students and serve as a living demonstration of academic prowess and behavior. Further, male teachers of color are positioned to integrate students' everyday lived experiences into the classroom; they empathetically build students' sense of self-worth and ability as trusted adults who are potentially defying the perceptions of men of color in their communities. The Man the Bay Fellowship purposefully recruits and prepares teacher candidates for elementary schools, where recent scholarship posits that cultural matching at this level results in significant long-term impacts (Gershenson et al., 2018).

Despite the benefits and successes of the Man the Bay Fellowship, it is clear that structural racism, bias, and interruptions to the normal ways of "doing school" bring about challenges for Fellows to endure along their journey. However, with a dedicated UEA staff, and the Fellowship designed to leverage Fellows' strengths, build upon their passions and carry forward the work of effective teaching, the network of highly qualified males living in the communities where they serve will impact the lives of a significant number of students of color and their families, well beyond the walls of the school. This is why UEA is positioned and prepared to continue the work of Culturally Reflective and Restorative Staffing.

## Citations

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