

Black Men in Education Convening

By Sharif El-Mekki

Summary

This work supports the development of Black male educators. Sharif El-Mekki, Founder and CEO of the Center for Black Educator Development, shares data on the experiences of over 1100 Black men educators who attend the Annual National Black Male Educator Convening (BMEC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The data overwhelmingly demonstrates that attendees had a positive experience and felt the sessions were helpful to their work and/or personal growth. Given, Black male educators make up less than 2% of the teaching population, this conference is one major effort supporting their growth, development, and retention.

This project illustrates the importance of using culturally responsive practices highlighting:

- Racial affinity groups

Guiding Questions

After viewing the project, consider the following questions?

1. What resonated with you?
2. What did this spark in you or inspire you to think about?
3. What was an Aha moment for you while reading?
4. What is 1 thing you will do as a result of reading this piece? Explain.

Don't have time to view this project? Here is the cheat sheet with what we learned.

To support Black male educators, leaders must provide

Spaces where Black males feel

- Respected, valued, and comfortable
- Affirmed in their racial identity
- Safe to reflect and share thoughts
- Strong sense of belonging
- Strong sense of belonging to other Black men educators

Affinity space for Black male educators for

- Brotherhood
- Networking
- Fellowship

Learning opportunities (keynotes, panels, experiences, and etc)

- Addressing issues related to the experiences of Black male educators
- Culturally relevant practices
- Inspirational, motivational, and wellness speakers

Below are notable quotes and highlights from Black male educator attendees illustrating the benefits of spaces supporting Black male educators

- Being able to fellowship with Black Male Educators and see I am not alone in this work.
- Connecting with so many black educators and getting inspired to go back home and continue the work with renewed purpose
- This is my first year as an educator. Being in this space was the highlight, hearing from and receiving advice from seasoned educators was the highlight, feeling the strength of the black educator and our dedication to our students was the highlight.
- Bringing my black male aspiring future educators
- I was surprised and very appreciative that there was a break-out session for LGBTQ Black educators. As an educator for 30+ years, I've attended dozens of conferences, but this was the first affinity session I saw presented.
- Feeling like I'm a part of a larger movement and community.

Notable data points from attendees

| BMEC Objectives | Percentage Agree/Strongly Agree | Percentage Agree/Strongly Agree | Change |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| | Before Convening | After Convening | |
| I have a good understanding of the Black men educator experience. | 61 | 91 | +30* |
| I have tools and ideas to increase and retain the number of Black men educators in their ecosystem. | 44 | 68 | +24* |
| I am motivated to support Black men educators in my local area and gather support systems that are sympathetic to this work. | 89 | 94 | +5* |
| I know culturally responsive practices that will increase my effectiveness as an educator. | 69 | 85 | +16* |
| I have a good understanding of the work I must do to ensure I am in the best emotional and mental condition to teach at my best. | 74 | 89 | +15* |
| It is essential that Black men educators intentionally engage in self-care and work to address their emotional and mental needs. | 96 | 98 | +2* |

Tools for supporting Black Educators

Let's get started. Use this tool to help support Black male educators.

| GUIDE | NOTES |
|---|-------|
| <p>Safe spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways has your organization diminished microaggressions, racism, and other forms of oppression? • What are other ways to create safe spaces for Black folks? | |
| <p>Affirming Spaces</p> <p>In what ways has your organization created spaces where Black males feel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected, valued, and comfortable • Affirmed in their racial identity • Safe to reflect and share thoughts • Strong sense of belonging • Strong sense of belonging to other Black men educators | |
| <p>Affinity space for Black male educators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support does your organization offer for affinity spaces? | |
| <p>Learning opportunities (keynotes, panels, experiences)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What learning opportunities in and/out of your school/district/community does your organization offer for supporting Black male leadership development? | |
| <p>Attracting and Recruiting Black Male Educators</p> <p>What intentional ways is your organization recruiting Black male educators?</p> | |

