

# BLACK MALE EDUCATORS IN AMERICAN CLASSROOMS

*Recruitment, Retention and K-12 Impact*



*Edited by*

**SANDRA G. SESSOMS-PENNY**

**JOY W. TAYLOR**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To the Black male educators who inspire, challenge, and uplift. Your presence in classrooms, communities, and beyond is a testament to resilience, excellence, and unwavering dedication. You are not just teachers – you are mentors, role models, and pillars of hope for the generations you touch. This book is dedicated to your strength, your passion, and the profound impact you have on shaping minds and futures. May your work continue to ignite change and empower the leaders of tomorrow.*

*To Dr Kimberly M. Underwood, Thank you for your extraordinary leadership, guidance, expertise, collaboration, and compassion in the field of research. Your determination, vision, and search for knowledge provide the catalyst for exponential growth.*

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## About the Editors

**Dr Sandra G. Sessoms-Penny** is a University Research Methodologist and a Faculty at the University of Phoenix since 2009. She is also a Senior Research Fellow for the Center for Organizational Wellness, Engagement and Belonging. She is an alum of George Washington University, Old Dominion University, Troy State University (Montgomery), and Saint Leo University. Sandra has extensive educational leadership and human resources management experience from four sectors: public K-12 education, higher education, active-duty military, and small business ownership. Sandra formerly served as a school administrator and instructional leader for elementary, middle, and high schools in the state of Virginia. She is a motivational speaker, a community leader, and a volunteer tutor for English as a Second Language citizens. Sandra is a veteran of the US Air Force. Sandra is a recipient of the University of Phoenix John Sperling Distinguished Faculty Award (2024). She is also a co-recipient of the University of Phoenix President's Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (2023 and 2024). Sandra also received the University of Phoenix 2019 Distinguished Service Award for Scholarly Leadership.

**Dr Joy W. Taylor** is a Senior Research Fellow for the Center for Organizational Wellness, Engagement and Belonging. She is a former classroom teacher, a school principal, and a district administrator with more than 40 years of experience in K-12 education. Dr Taylor has been fortunate to work with a wide range of school improvement stakeholders and has documented success as a turn-around leader. The first-generation college graduate fully embraces the role education, mentoring, and strong relationships play in navigating a path to success in the world of public education. Dr Taylor has spent more than four decades giving back to students, their families, teachers, and community agencies to build a bridge for future educators and school leaders. She is an alum of the University of Central Florida and Nova Southeastern University. Dr Taylor is a co-recipient of the University of Phoenix President's Award for Research (2023 and 2024).

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**Kenyon Andrews**, a passionate Advocate for exceptional education, is reshaping traditional views with his groundbreaking research on intersectionality, disability, and cultural affirmation. As a dedicated doctoral candidate and an experienced instructor, he brings a unique perspective to tackling systemic biases and fostering truly inclusive learning environments. His work, highlighted in publications like “Disability, Intersectionality, and Belonging in Special Education,” introduces innovative strategies that empower diverse students. With a wealth of education, behavioral specialties, and mental health knowledge, Andrews plays a vital role in leading organizations toward positive change. He is transforming exceptional education by championing linguistically and culturally affirming practices while creating spaces that honor every facet of students’ identities. His initiatives inspire educators worldwide, encouraging them to reconsider inclusion and embrace the potential of all learners, regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. Andrews’ vision is paving the way for a more equitable and empowering educational system.

**Christa Banton** is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and currently is a Professor/Mental Health Counselor at Barstow Community College. She has over 25 years’ experience working in the government sector in mental health and social services. Dr Banton is also a Certified Clinical Trauma Professional with a specialization in abuse trauma. She has been teaching at the university level for the last 21 years and with the University of Phoenix since 2008. In addition, she is a Research Fellow for the Center for Organizational Wellness, Engagement, and Belonging. Her research interests include mental health, faculty support, workplace diversity, and academic achievement motivation.

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**Tonia Holmes-Sutton** is an Education Leader and an Advocate, empowering teachers in leadership development and advocacy of critical education issues such as diversity, equity, inclusion, restorative justice, and educator preparation, recruitment, and retention. Dr Holmes-Sutton, a highly accomplished and passionately driven educator and National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT), cultivates professional learning for educators through leadership, mentorship, coaching, and teaching. For nearly 25 years, she has served diverse and historically marginalized communities of learners, families, and educators in public and charter schools. She designs positive, supportive, and challenging learning and leadership environments, driving learner achievement as part of collaborative statewide and national networks of educators and leaders. Dr Holmes-Sutton is an alumna of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Hawaii Loa College.

**Derrick L. Love** is a visionary educational leader, author, and keynote speaker with extensive experience in school administration, curriculum development, and strategic planning. As the Chief Academic and Operations Officer at Pioneer Technology and Arts Academy, he supervises core curriculum directors and principals, evaluates instructional programs, and leads innovation activities in P-TECH and STEM. Dr Love has a proven track record of driving academic excellence and fostering positive learning environments. His commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion is evident in his ability to build collaborative partnerships with stakeholders and implement innovative instructional practices. In addition to his roles in K-12 education, Dr Love has taught at the collegiate level within doctoral programs at multiple universities. Dr Love holds a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Phoenix and a Master of Arts in Communications from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His numerous publications and presentations reflect his dedication to educational

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**Kareem Neal** is a self-contained special education teacher in Phoenix, Arizona. He has instructed students with cognitive delays for 24 years. He is the 2019 Arizona Teacher of the Year and is a 2022 inductee into the National Teachers Hall of Fame. He is on the board of directors for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) and the National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY). He was awarded an honorary doctorate from Northern Arizona University for his contributions to special education in Arizona. He is a 2019–2021 Understood Teacher Fellow and helped pilot the National Network of State Teachers of the Year Mentorship program. Kareem is now a restorative justice trainer and focuses on building community by eliminating bias that comes from a lack of connection with people who are different from each other. This work has led him to win the Arizona Education Association's Diversity Grant and be named vice president of the Phoenix Union High School District's Black Alliance. Kareem holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Seton Hall University and a Master of Arts in Special Education from Jersey City University.

**Stephen Charles Newbold, Jr.**, a native of Miami, Florida, is an award-winning artist-educator and currently serves as president of Art Education D.C., a regional affiliate of the National Art Education Association (NAEA). In 2024, Dr Newbold was honored with the Standing Ovation: Excellence in Teaching Award by the DC Education Fund. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida International University and is a three-time graduate of the College of Fine Arts at Florida State University, where he received a second Bachelor of Arts in Art History, a Master of Science in Art Education, and a PhD in Art Education. With 18 years of experience in K-12 education, he is driven to inspire and mobilize others through art that centers social justice. His research explores the lived experiences of Black males in K-12 learning environments—both as student and educator—prompting a deeper inquiry into the blues as a metaphor for navigating adversity and achievement. He has shared this work at multiple academic conferences, including the 2024 Art Education Research Institute (AERI) Symposium at the University of Cambridge,

and was recognized by NAEA as the 2nd Runner-Up for the 2025 Elliot Eisner Doctoral Research Award in Art Education.

**Joshua Parker's** mission in education and life is to “help people and solve problems.” Throughout his career, he has achieved both goals. He has served students and teachers within the Baltimore/Washington D.C. corridor in various positions, including an ELA Instructional Coach, a Language Arts Department Chair, a Secondary Language Arts teacher, a Professor, and a compliance specialist. He has also collaborated with teachers, administrators, and educational leaders throughout the country as the Senior Director of Programs and Engagement at Unbound Ed. He is now a Senior Consultant at Education First. Mr. Parker, a Teaching Channel Laureate and Education Week writer, was also a Lowell Milken Unsung Hero (2017), N.E.A. Global Fellow (2013) and the 2012 Maryland Teacher of the Year.

**Felicia Rutledge** liberates learning by leveraging brilliance as a creative strategist, an inclusive education and wellness Advocate, and pedagogy and systems innovator. She has led in various roles within education, including Teacher of the Deaf/Blind, a Teacher of the Deaf in early childhood through middle/high school education, a K-12 Project Facilitator for a Multi-Tiered System of Support (Language/Literacy and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports), a Regional Coordinator for Multi-Tiered System of Support and a Project Director for Nevada Special Education Technology Assistance. Dr Rutledge has been in the field of education for more than 20 years. She continues her commitment to scholar achievement, supporting families, human talent development, and implementing systems rooted in equity and liberation as a special education consultant, a coach, and an Advocate for scholar and adult wellness and brilliance.

**Derrick L. Sauls** is a Professor, an educational consultant, a researcher, a mentor, and a farmer. He is currently an Associate Professor at SHAW University. For over 20 years, he did research at Duke University, making discoveries in the lab and working with several Biomedical start-up companies (Sphinx Pharmaceuticals, Trimeris, and Apex Biosciences). He changed his mission, leading him into the classroom to “pay it forward.” The mission culminated with several initiatives at Saint Augustine’s University and SHAW University, educating students to increase the presence of Black educators in the classroom. Dr Sauls is heavily involved in prevention and intervention in health disparities and health equity. A list of accomplishments entails many research articles, especially those involving HBCUs, COVID-19, and food insecurity. He received his PhD from North Carolina State University in Food Science and Nutrition.

**Dwight C. Watson** has a distinguished career in higher education and K-12. He has served as a Professor, a university chancellor, the dean of students, a provost, a teacher, a literacy coach, and in numerous other roles since the early 1980s. Dr Watson designed and implemented policies and practices pertaining to diversity, inclusion, access, and equity. Working collaboratively with shared governance, he has overseen successful accreditation, assessment, and strategic planning. As a Professor, Dr Watson’s primary teaching focus is literacy development for young and adolescent readers. His scholarship has focused on

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## Chapter 1

# Black Male Educators Speak: Shaping Minds and Breaking Barriers

*Sandra G. Sessoms-Penny and Joy W. Taylor*

University of Phoenix, USA

### Abstract

Black male educators (BMEs) in K-12 education bridge the learning gap for all students and serve as influencers, positive role models, mentors, transformational leaders, and cultural representatives within the school community. BMEs support Black students through their shared experiences and backgrounds, which often impact student and community engagement to increase academic advancements for students and enhance awareness and leadership within the school community. The absence and underrepresentation of BMEs in schools and school leadership across America is noted. The results of a narrative inquiry revealed that there is inequitable access to successful pathways for BMEs based on their lived experiences. BMEs encounter stereotypical behaviors and microaggressions from school communities, leaders, colleagues, parents, and students, in their academic roles, thereby impacting their ability to effectively teach and serve as classroom and instructional school leaders. BMEs are expected to create and foster relationships with all stakeholders to create supportive learning communities and environments. They acknowledge differences while respecting diverse identities and use trust as a foundational focus. BMEs had the opportunity to speak out about the academic setting in the areas of equity of access, professional development, recruitment, retention, mobility, teacher preparation, professional development, socialization, and how they are perceived as teachers. Their challenges within the academic settings require intentional and persistent supportive strategies and creative initiatives. BMEs' voices resonate throughout the school community and society to remove barriers.

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**Black Male Educators in American Classrooms, 1–12**

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*Keywords:* Black male educators; career trajectories; K-12 teachers; self-efficacy; socialization; sociocultural; under-representation

## Introduction

Research indicates students of color perform better in schools when they have at least one teacher of the same race (Delhommer, 2022; Lindsay & Hart, 2017). Teachers of similar or the same race as their students, generally, tend to present a better cultural understanding of their students and set higher expectations for student success (Delhommer, 2022; Gershenson et al., 2015). Black teachers comprise 20% of the teaching profession in the United States, with only 2% representing Black males (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; NCES, 2020; Whitfield, 2019). Further, nearly one half of all US schools do not employ Black teachers (TNTP, 2024). Black male educators (BMEs) remain in high demand, especially with the increased growth of the minority youth population in classrooms (Jeter & Melendez, 2022).

Studies suggest that Black male students benefit from having a Black male teacher, as reflected in lower dropout rates, reduced disciplinary issues, rising standardized test scores, and enhanced views of schooling (Delhommer, 2022; Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Wallace et al., 2022). Black teachers are more likely to be familiar with the cultural needs of Black students, thus creating an opportunity for enriching academic achievements by Black students (Delhommer, 2022; Gershenson et al., 2015; Underwood et al., 2019). Recruiting and retaining BMEs continues to challenge schools as well as teacher preparation programs.

## BMEs Speak

Thirty-two BMEs located across the United States shared a common thread on the need to increase BMEs within the K-12 academic setting. They saw the need within the schools and shared their experiences. Many school districts are transitioning into majority minority student populations. School environments are a microcosm of society. Brooms (2020) asserted BMEs are deemed as cultural capital and culturally relevant within the education system where they often serve as role models and father figures (other fathering) for Black students.

A narrative inquiry approach involving semi-structured hour-long, one-on-one Zoom interviews was used to capture the socialization experiences of 32 K-12 BMEs across America. The findings suggest that school administrators play a critical role in the successful onboarding of BMEs as they acclimate to school culture (Harper, 2018). Mentorship, professional development, and feedback as well as clear expectations led BMEs to verify whether they feel supported during the socialization into new school cultures (Bristol, 2020).

## **BMEs Experiences**

The reasons BMEs identify as their reasons for entering and leaving teaching careers are wanting to help all students succeed in education and to provide a role model for Black students in understanding and applying the tools for future successes and giving back to their community (Manchanda et al., 2023). BMEs also encounter challenges with the value society equates to the public education system in pay equity, support from White counterparts and administration, and overall systemic racism (Zalanick, 2020). BMEs note there are low graduation rates of Black males due to disproportionate rates of behavioral discipline and suspensions. There are also difficulties for BMEs navigating teacher certification wherein culturally biased standardized assessments may impede their progress acceptance into programs and their success as educators. There are alternative pathways to become teachers that support BMEs. Irrespective of the certification pathway, Black male teachers note similarities within their experiences once entering the school environment. They are often recruited to teach in schools serving large populations of students of color, with many schools plagued by limited resources, and high teacher turnover rates. There are BMEs who have found a way to navigate the challenges and are successful in their endeavors.

## **The Narrative Inquiry Study**

The research included a critical examination of the career trajectories of BMEs from three perspectives: recruitment, retention, and mobility (Underwood et al., 2020). The research drew from socialization theory (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) frameworks to explore the underpinnings of diversity and inclusion within the educational landscape. CRT reflects how to examine and transform relationships among gender, race, identity, and power from a variety of perspectives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). CRT also examines the role and impact of racism in legal, educational, and social disciplines and provides theoretical context ingrained into American culture. Socialization theory describes the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to function within an organization.

The research questions guiding this study were: (1) What resources and/or process were to assimilate into the organizational culture of your school? (2) What have been some challenges and successes in developing relationships with school administrators? (3) As a BME, what do you believe is needed to keep current Black males in the profession and bring more into teaching?

Recruitment efforts were aided by two education-oriented nationwide entities. A purposeful sampling strategy along with a snowball sample strategy were used to recruit and select participants for the research. The participants were 32 BMEs located across the United States, aged 29–67 years old, with 1–40 years of teaching experience. They were employed in a variety of academic environments to include charter, private, magnet, and public schools across America.

Reflective quotes and personal narratives were collected to express the sentiments and life experiences of the BMEs as they participated in semi-structured

one-on-one interviews with the research team via the Zoom platform as the primary method of data collection. The interviews allowed the researchers to capture the participants' socialization experiences and historical perspectives of their roles in relation to others in the education domain. The 32 participants related inequitable teaching conditions, the lack of peer and leadership support, unrealistic accountability expectations, and scarce resources as common in most instances. Within the area of socialization, the majority of BMEs noted there were limited to nonexistent opportunities to receive the support needed to become acclimated to the school setting and experience success. In most instances, BME participants noted there was also limited role delineation, which led to isolation, taking on roles more consistent with that of a disciplinarian for other teachers' students, and of serving as athletic coaches.

Validity and reliability of the data were presented qualitatively through the elements of trustworthiness which included credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability. Trustworthiness was illustrated throughout the data analysis process. Data analysis included transcribing the data, member checking (members verified their transcripts were an accurate reflection of their interviews with the research), and triangulation of data (sources included the interviews, comparing and contrasting the participants' demographic data and teacher certification data, socialization experiences, personal perspectives, work experiences, and current conceptual framework on which the research was based using multiple and convergent sources to support the findings). Content analysis was by analyzing the words, themes, relationships, and meanings of the data and identifying patterns in the responses and narratives. Thematic analysis was also developed (using the interviews and transcripts of the participants – identify themes, topics, ideas and patterns that were reoccurring). The data coding process included three coding processes and use of Dedoose analytical software to validate themes and patterns. Internal auditing of data was implemented. Researchers developed a comprehensive coding manual (three researchers collaborated for investigator triangulation). Minimal outlier data were removed (incomplete and nonrelated responses). Data were interpreted and reported in subsequent reports to establish rigor and trustworthiness. The data collection process and the data analysis procedures contributed to interpreting and reporting the findings. The data aligned with the conceptual frameworks.

## **Findings**

The research participants reiterated the power and role of administrators and how their support of BMEs in the socialization process demonstrates their understanding of who BMEs are within the organizational structure and the value they inherently add to the school culture. Participants noted the administrators' effectiveness ranged from a broad spectrum of highly effective to severely limited depending upon their character and leadership style. Multiple participants reverberated, oftentimes, BMEs were the only teachers of color within their school or in some instances, one of two Black males or Black people within the school.

This awareness impacted developing relationships in schools where racial diversity and inclusion did not exist. BMEs observed how their peers, students, student parents, and administrators were engaged with adjusting to them and learning how to relate to them as male teachers and as Black men. Although some of the BMEs were familiar with this type of racial dynamics within a school or job, others were notably challenged, and some BMEs were made to feel uncomfortable by this framework early within and throughout their teaching career. BMEs recognized their visibility in the schools and teaching profession was minimal at best for a number of reasons. Adapting to the school culture and experiencing limited administrative and mentoring support regulated their retention decisions. One participant commented:

Sometimes, I've felt ostracized in school and sometimes just for that reason it felt like it was just because I was Black. I remember we had our colleagues for the science team and they were all White. They would have side conversations and they would have side outings. They would do stuff and a lot of times they wouldn't invite me to these things even though I'm on the same team as them.

Several participants commented they were unofficially selected as the chief disciplinarian for students with behavioral concerns and especially for Black students. Students were sent to their rooms for time out or to have a talk strictly because of the assumption that as BMEs, they could manage the student and the circumstances. There were mixed messages being sent from the administrators. While BMEs were expected to be strong disciplinarians, some were reprimanded or punished for not being nice or accommodating to their peers if they did not fit into the roles others designed for them beyond teaching students. The perceptions were enhanced when students, events, or conditions fell apart, the BMEs would be the first person called upon to get students under control for other teachers to teach. A participant commented:

Because I believe, my gifting, if you will, is being an encourager, the one that is most comfortable for me is the one where I get to pat people on the back and say, "Hey, you got it. You can do this. Keep going". So that's easy for me. The one where I am, if you will, forced to be a disciplinarian becomes a little difficult because I can do it, but it's not what I want to do. I want to be the one that encourages them to keep going. I want to be the one that pours into them and shows them how to be productive when it comes to their future opportunities.

Black male teachers' leadership skills were often exploited but not valued in several instances, especially among the younger teachers due to their newness in the teaching profession. The height of their leadership growth was relegated to coaching positions, but few were considered for leadership positions such as

curriculum leaders, school leadership teams, and administrators. The majority of BMEs were asked not to share their opinions of events taking place within the school's operation such as being a part of school leadership teams or in decision-making on activities impacting the school culture. BMEs were not viewed for their intellect or strong academic abilities. This enhanced the notion of being left out, ignored, and unappreciated for the values BMEs bring to the teaching profession. BMEs wanted to be seen as leadership candidates that could birth change to support student learning and build collaborative exchanges among their peers. Participants commented:

My current principal, I know that she respects me highly. I often get comments about things that I'm doing well. Or they'll come to me for advice for a lot of situations. But when it comes to hiring me for those positions, that has not happened.

I've had plenty of situations where programs were taken away from me. I've suffered monetary losses and, quite frankly, I do not want to say missed opportunities, but the situations where other folks who are much less qualified have received promotions such as administrators when I did not. I have often spoken with staff members and leadership about ideas and programs that I wanted to implement, and nothing would come of it. But then a few weeks later there would be a professional development about my topic or someone on the outside of the body takes the topic that I was intended to teach.

Several of the schools where BMEs were assigned had no cultural knowledge of Black people. The BMEs were relied upon to represent the entire Black culture to the school and the community. BMEs specified during their interviews that socialization was not taught in their teaching preparation programs. A lack of socialization required BMEs to adapt to their circumstances as best they knew how and to increase the school and community awareness of them as educators, as Black men and Black people. Sometimes, this would draw negative attention from their peers and administrators, especially when an issue of inequality would arise. For the BMEs, this also meant going into the school and utilizing their own social skills to adapt to their environment since most BMEs were not familiar with the school or community culture. Sometimes, these skills were appropriate for the circumstances, and sometimes, they were met with opposition. More importantly, the BMEs discerned that many school administrators needed additional diversity and inclusion training on how to relate to others who did not look, talk, or act like them. They all agreed there must be recurring support and awareness talks about race throughout the school community. One participant commented:

The demographics of the students began to change with students of color coming into the school. But it was often discussed among students that this was a very racist place. It was as if the teachers

are trying to teach the students that used to go here, and those students aren't here anymore. And so, a lot of teachers had a hard time adapting or adjusting to students of color in class. And so, it made for a challenging situation for myself and my colleague to be able to, not only represent, but to educate and to help these teachers to be able to relate with students of color. There was no type of cultural exposure. I don't initiate it; you would not see any cultural attributes or celebrations, for example, during Black History Month, there would just be nothing going on. No type of recognition of those things.

BMEs acknowledge most will be viewed as role models for students as they develop relationships with students they teach and those who come to know them. BMEs also acknowledge that their colleagues, parents, and administrators will look to them to take on some responsibilities in these areas. BMEs recognize they will not be compensated for these informal roles; they believe their presence will help students who tend to fall through the cracks and do not receive the attention they need. Being a role model differs significantly from being a disciplinarian. The participants acknowledge stereotypes have been attached to them, yet they strive to bring effective performance and connection to their work environment. BMEs are open to improvement with guided support, mentoring, and professional training. The role of an educator is one that requires energy and continued learning.

Several participants indicated they received respect and support from their administrators; however, administration fell short in terms of providing mentors (long term or short term) to BMEs in support of adjustment to climate and culture of the school. BMEs recognized some of the administrators wanted to capitalize on their knowledge of school history and on their relationships with the students, peer teachers, parents, and in the school community if they had been serving at the school for a long duration. Not all BMEs had this option; rather, some felt they needed to have a unique talent they added to the school culture such as leading or coaching special groups or possessed superior technology skills everyone needed or relied upon. Some BMEs stated that they packaged themselves as a commodity to make themselves invaluable to the organization.

BMEs were looking for administrators who could promote and facilitate change within the school. BMEs feel they are driven to do more in relation to their peers to be recognized for their contributions to the school community. BMEs want to be recognized for their individuality and their abilities to work as team players. They expressed administrators, especially White administrators, should be sensitive to the need for diversity and inclusive practices within the academic setting and to provide opportunities for BMEs to grow and develop their skills as leaders. This is especially important in settings where there is only one or few persons of color. BMEs indicated principals must be intentional in their efforts to build a sense of community and belonging for all. One participant commented:

They have a tendency to create these almost cult-like school cultures that are centered around getting in the building. I think what I saw very often in my schools is they would take these young, mission-driven, impressionable people who just graduated college and they would just indoctrinate them with this mindset that everything you do is for the kids, no matter the personal cost to you. And you're supposed to just throw yourself into this until you can't anymore. It is as if they are designed in a way to burn you out eventually because they don't expect people to stay. And so, it is basically this mindset of I am going to squeeze you for every drop I can get while I have you.

BMEs believe administrators should ensure curriculum support for new teachers, especially helping them learn how to find resources to teach the curriculum. Some of the participants were left to their own devices to learn how to develop their teaching skills on their own. They received evaluations of their job performance but not necessarily the training to help them to become better educators. The BME's believed their competency should not be challenged but groomed constructively through leadership and support via mentoring. Regular follow-ups to see how the BMEs are progressing and adjusting to new teaching environments enhances their sense of worth within the school community. BMEs expressed there should also be supportive follow-ups when there have been incidents that show some type of intervention is needed to help BMEs function well within their environment and align with their school's culture such as before, during, and after observations. A participant reflected upon an incident with the principal:

I feel like there are a lot of times administration kind of creates the standard and everybody just kind of falls in line and goes along with it. I remember there was one time when the principal came into my room and he observed me and he said, "Oh, that lesson was terrible. I don't know why you did that." For some reason, that same day I have another teacher who was acting as a lead teacher and she pushed in, and she saw me do the same lesson and then she went to him and said, "No, that lesson was fine. What was wrong with that lesson? I didn't see anything wrong with that lesson." And then he responded, "Oh well, you know, I just noticed this, that and the other, you know?" So, then, which is it? Is it really that it is a bad lesson or is something else going on?

Some degree of outreach must be incorporated in schools to promote the reality that BMEs make a difference in the school community. Outreach suggested by the BMEs:

They ask for advice, or I find different resources for them . . . , being able to find these resources and pass it on to them. . . ." "We had a