Creating Systems of Support for Black Educators Through the Black Educator Teacher Residency Program

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Introduction

The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* landmark court case arguably changed the landscape of education, particularly for Black youths. The desegregation of schools afforded Black youths access to the same resources and school buildings as their White peers. The premise for this decision was that separate could never be equal and that all children have the right to free and appropriate education. Despite the many gains reaped from this monumental decision, what is not often discussed is how this court ruling affected Black educators and how the disappearance of Black educators has had a long-lasting effect on the performance of Black youths.

Despite efforts to recruit educators of color, the teaching profession continues to disproportionately reflect the diverse students served in schools across the country (Kohli, 2021). California State University, Bakersfield has become committed to redesigning the educational system through residency programs (Whipp & Geronime, 2017). Recognizing the unique obstacles and barriers for potential Black credential candidates combined with the need to diversify the educator pipeline and workforce, California State University, Bakersfield launched the Black Educator Teacher Residency (BETR) program in January 2022.

This article examines the research supporting the need to diversify the educator pipeline, explores various factors contributing to deterring Black educators from the profession, and examines how the BETR program at California State University, Bakersfield is working to support Black educators on their journey to entering the teaching profession.

Significance to the Field

The Need to Diversify the Educator Pipeline

The BETR program at one university is committed to assisting the diversification of the educator workforce. The prioritized goal of this work is to grow and sustain the BETR program through recruitment efforts, pedagogical practices designed to support Black credential candidates and their respective students, and support for Black educators as a means to work toward retention.

Through these efforts, one university intends to continue to use data-driven means to identify best practices for Black credential candidates, to leverage and infuse these best practices to support Black youths in K–12 spaces, and to create systems of support throughout and beyond the credential process as a means to assist with retention efforts.

Although support for recruitment, preparation, and retention of all students is imperative, this work focuses specifically on ways we can prepare and support Black educators given the unique obstacles and barriers that Black educators face attempting to enter and remain within the field of education. In particular, the BETR program addresses the need for highly qualified Black educators as a means to more accurately reflect the diverse populations served in K–12 classrooms.

The need for this type of work is based on appreciable data that demonstrate a high need for an increase in the number of Black educators and identity-centered curriculum inclusive of Black youths.

According to a report from the Education Trust (2022), "California teachers don't reflect the diversity of the state's student population and not much is being done to improve that." Research has indicated that all students benefit from having access to racially and culturally diverse educators and that students of color thrive in educational settings where their teachers

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share the same cultural and/or racial backgrounds (Education Trust, 2022).

Research has told us that an educator with the same racial and/or cultural background increases students' success (Education Trust, 2022). As a report from the Learning Policy Institute (Carver-Thomas, 2018) stated, a study found that "Black k–3 students assigned to a Black teacher in their first year of the STAR program were 15% less likely to drop out of high school and 10% more likely to take a college entrance exam" (p. 4).

Similar results were reported from longitudinal data from North Carolina; "the benefit of having a Black teacher for just 1 year in elementary school can persist over several years, especially for Black students from low-income families" (p. 4). According to the most recent national statistics, approximately 16% of students in public schools are Black, but only approximately 7% of their teachers are Black (Synder et al., 2019). This disparity can have a profound impact on the achievement and lifetime outcomes of these students. Research has shown that students of color do better in school and consider going to college at higher rates when taught by teachers with similar racial and demographic backgrounds (Synder et al., 2019).

The power of having a teacher of color helps to undermine some of the many stereotypes about a particular marginalized group and allows all students to be exposed to different racial and cultural backgrounds, working to develop understanding and empathy (Carver-Thomas, 2018; Kohli, 2021; Muhammad, 2020).

The Learning Policy Institute (Carver-Thomas, 2018) argued, "Studies also suggest that all students, including White students, benefit from having teachers of color because they bring distinctive knowledge, experiences, and role modeling to the student body as a whole" (p. 5). Recent report cards for the state of California show that despite White educators making up slightly over 60% of the educator workforce, only 22.6% of students are White (Education Trust, 2022).

More startling, Black educators make up only 3.8% of the educator workforce in California (Education Trust, 2022). Although universities across the nation are rushing to recruit more candidates of color, we acknowledge that the work extends beyond recruiting diverse candidates.

According to the National Policy Institute (Carver-Thomas, 2018), "the pool of potential Black and LatinX teachers dwindles along the teacher pipeline" (p. 5), indicating that the work needed to diversify the educator pipeline extends beyond recruiting potentially diverse teacher credential candidates. While student populations continue to diversify at exponential rates, the educator workforce has largely remained stagnant. Despite efforts to recruit Black and Brown educators starting in the 1980s, little has changed with regard to teacher demographics (Kohli, 2021).

Being Black in White Educational Spaces

Prospective Black educators experience multiple obstacles rooted in historical and current racial inequities that contribute to their disproportionate representation in the teacher labor force. One significant factor deterring many potential Black educators from entering the profession is their own K–12 experiences. While much of the conversation revolving around the recruitment of Black educators focuses on how their presence can boost student achievement, "less attention has been spent unpacking what it means when teachers have experienced racism in their own K–12 education" (Kohli, 2021, p. 29).

There is appreciable data acknowledging that many Black youth have negative K–12 experiences, often rooted in racism. These negative experiences persist into higher education as well, again deterring potential Black educators. As Kohli (2021) stated, "students of Color who pursue teaching often continue their racialized struggles in their teacher preparation" (p. 35).

Given the overwhelming Whiteness of teacher education programs, Haddix (2016) argued that teacher candidates of color often experience "their racial and linguistic identities being marginalized, undermined, and silenced" (p. 3) throughout their credential experience.

Acknowledging the harm many Black youth experience in K–12 educational spaces, along with the continued harm and exclusions Black credential candidates experience in higher education and teacher preparation programs, the BETR program aims to acknowledge and rectify harms caused in educational spaces.

Recognizing the symbolic, systemic, and curricular and instructional violence that Black students face in their educational experiences (Boutte et al., 2021; Kohli, 2021), the BETR program aims to eliminate harmful, traditional practices and work toward an inclusive approach to learning that best supports the needs of Black credential candidates.

Curricular and instructional violence as it pertains to Black students is defined by "the Whiteness of curriculum, materials, texts, and the absence of normalized teaching of African and African American histories day to day, week to week" and also speaks to the ways in which "Black history is mistaught, distorted, sanitized, and/or omitted in schools" (Boutte et al., 2021, p. 7).

Recognizing curricular and instructional violence and the ways in which it leads to feelings of alienation and disconnectedness, the BETR program intends to disrupt these harmful practices by having an Afrocentric curriculum and utilizing pedagogical strategies grounded in theories of thriving (Darling-Hammond, 2018).

Recognizing the unique obstacles that Black educators face entering a predominantly White workforce, the BETR program infuses inclusive practices that recognize and honor Black histories, excellence, and ways of being. Residency programs are an important lever for increasing the number of Black educators who enter and persist in the teaching profession and who will ultimately improve outcomes for all students, Black students in particular.

Research has shown that residency programs recruit more Black educators than traditional teacher preparation programs and that retention rates are higher for graduates of residency programs than for teachers prepared in traditional programs (Snyder et al., 2019). The BETR program at one university is committed to putting systems of equitable practice into place as a means to build and diversify the educator pipeline.

As such, this article explores the effectiveness of the systems of support put into place within the BETR program at California State University, Bakersfield

Methodology

In an effort to rectify curricular harms that may have been caused in traditional educational spaces, the BETR program has intentionally worked to create a program curriculum with an Afrocentric lens, centering on Black excellence, identity, and

ways of being at the core of curriculum and instruction. The BETR curriculum committee gathered to discuss how credential courses could shift from a traditional Eurocentric lens to an Afrocentric lens to best support BETR residents as they become change agents.

Inspired by the work of Gholdy Muhammad, the team utilized the historically responsive literacy (HRL) pedagogy framework as an overarching framework for program curriculum design. Acknowledging that an effective historically responsive curriculum needs to center on student identity and include an embedded scaffolded approach that focuses on the cultivation of skills, intellect, and criticality (Muhammad, 2020), the team began engaging in regular planning meetings to clearly define Afrocentrism within the BETR curriculum. We then identified major desired themes that we wanted to integrate throughout the program and began constructing an Afrocentric credential program curriculum.

The team identified that modeling culturally responsive and sustaining practices would be fundamental in approaching this work. Since the HRL framework was utilized in creating the Afrocentric curriculum for the BETR residency, the discussion of this work will be framed in accordance with the pillars of the HRL framework (Muhammad, 2020). The outcomes of our discussion and the resulting program development are described below.

Pursuit of Identity

Muhammad (2020) reminds us to be responsive, to know our students deeply. In an effort to model culturally sustaining and historically responsive pedagogies, we have designed a curriculum that is centered on residents' identity and their funds of knowledge. As Muhammad (2020) states, "it is our job as educators to not just teach skills, but also to teach students to know, validate, and celebrate who they are" (p. 69).

Identity is fluid, multifaceted, and largely shaped by social and cultural environments (Sutherland, 2005).We recognize that Black youths rarely see themselves reflected in the curriculum, and when the stories and experiences of people of color are included, they have largely been told by others. It was critical for the BETR curriculum team to provide ample opportunities for the residents to see themselves authentically reflected in the curriculum.

In an effort to disrupt these patterns and allow Black residents and students to reclaim autonomy in classroom spaces, the curriculum is designed to create ample opportunities for residents to explore their individual identities as well as the Black experience and Black excellence at large.

Acknowledging that "teachers cannot get to skills or content-learning standards until students see and know themselves in the curriculum designed for them," the curricular design for the BETR residency starts with Black excellence, identity, and ways of being. According to Muhammad (2020), "if Black studies is understood, the hope is that the teacher becomes better prepared to respond to the needs of students of color and other marginalized students in schools" (p. 77).

As such, the BETR curriculum explores what it means to be Black in America, both historically and in modern-day society. Additionally, residents explore obstacles and barriers specific to Black youth, including the opportunity gap, the discipline gap, and Black English in educational settings. Residents also explore the history of Black educators, Black history in K–12 curriculum, lack of diversity and representation in educational settings, and other Afrocentric equity issues embedded in the educational system at large.

Residents engage in fruitful discussion inspired by the "danger of a single story" and practice identifying and selecting additional voices and perspectives in their own curricular materials and design. They dig into the unique experiences of Black male and female students and their unique needs with regard to literacy and language inclusion.

Additionally, residents are exposed to research that demonstrates the importance of teachers of color and the impact these teachers have on diverse populations of students. Through these various activities, there is not only an intentional foundation centered on identity that is being built with the residents, but also critical modeling that demonstrates how to replicate these pedagogical practices in their respective K-12 classrooms.

Pursuit of Skills

Recognizing that "students need rich and meaningful experiences when learning skills—experiences that engage mind and heart and help shape positive school histories" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 98)—there has been intentional work to closely align coursework with the clinical practice element of the residency curricular design. The BETR curricular development team fully recognizes that "our students need the skills to access the knowledge learned; otherwise, knowledge is a confused mass without useful application. We want students to act on the knowledge they learn" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 97). As such, we have relied on research and data from TeachingWorks to implement a practice-based approach to credential preparation.

TeachingWorks is a program based on research conducted at the University of Michigan School of Education. The program "designs resources and supports educators to enact equitable teaching practice that nurtures young people's learning and actively disrupts patterns of injustice (University of Michigan School of Education [UM], 2022). TeachingWorks is grounded in the following three pillars of work with preservice educators:

> **Design** practice-based approaches to preparing teachers for the complex work of teaching and creating classrooms for justice.
>
> **Develop** practice-based learning opportunities to support educators to consistently enact commitments to teaching for justice through the content they teach, relationships they form, and the classroom communities they build.
>
> **Collaborate** with educators and advocates from across the globe who are committed to supporting teachers to foster learning and justice in the classroom through skillful practice. (UM, 2022)

With these goals in mind, the program offers 19 high-leverage practices and 12 practice-based teacher education pedagogies that have been infused into the BETR residency coursework and curriculum.

Inspired by TeachingWorks, the pedagogical strategies implemented within the BETR residency curriculum and instruction create ample opportunities for residents to rehearse, reflect on, and refine their practices. Many of the initial exposures to course materials are facilitated by inquiry-based learning, provoking students to question various facets of working with diverse K–12 students.

With these student generated questions, we utilized observation via the

clinical practice classroom, instructor and mentor teacher modeling, and instructor-selected videos to identify and reinforce important concepts. With this budding foundation of knowledge, students then move toward small-group discussions and working time to develop their own lessons and design pedagogical strategies for lesson implementation in teaching simulations. Teaching simulations have become a staple practice within the residency program, as they provide opportunities for residents to rehearse their curriculum planning in conjunction with a variety of pedagogical strategies.

The benefit of utilizing these teaching simulations with residents is that it allows them to rehearse without potentially causing harm to K–12 students, while also allowing other residents to observe how their peers have internalized and implemented key learnings. Each round of teaching simulations has a particular focus for residents to think through and implement with their peers, creating a scaffolded approach to developing their ideologies and pedagogies.

It is through these teaching simulations that residents are able to refine their practices prior to implementing them in their clinical practice placements. Due to the strong presence of inquiry-based learning and simulated practice opportunities, developing and implementing the BETR curriculum and instructional design provides ample opportunities to allow residents to co-construct curriculum throughout their residency experience.

Pursuit of Intellect

As Muhammad (2020) states, "intelligence isn't just about academics, but also emotional intelligence and self-and social awareness" (p. 105). Recognizing that "the HRL Framework lends benefits and ease of teaching when learning is connected to the human condition or the social and political problems affecting communities" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 111), we have created ample space and opportunities for residents to think deeply and develop their own perspectives about themselves, their position as they enter the teaching profession, their interactions and impacts on students, and the greater world around them.

We acknowledge that instruction should be tied to action and, as a result, have closely aligned the clinical practice component of the residency program with coursework. Using teaching simulations in class as a starting point, residents move toward practicing in their designed lessons in their clinical practice classrooms.

In addition to providing ample space for residents to critically self-reflect and develop their ideologies and pedagogies, we recognize "a history of deficit ways of viewing intellect throughout history as well as a history of Black folks viewing their own intellectual excellence as deficient" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 105) and aim to rectify this harm with our residents and their respective K–12 students.

As a result, an examination and exposure of Black and Brown excellence is at the core of the BETR coursework and overall residency experience. Not only do we aim to rectify prior harms that may have been caused during our residents' K–12 educational experiences but we also intentionally model how to center Black and Brown excellence at the core of curriculum so that residents can in turn do the same for their respective students. As part of this work, a grant was awarded to the BETR program to develop a library of diversity, equity, and inclusion teaching resources.

These resources are available for residents to check out to utilize in completing coursework and designing lessons but also to use in their clinical practice spaces. This has largely assisted in the development of centering Brown and Black excellence within our residents because it has shifted from simply telling to showing and allowing space for them to physically interact and utilize these materials with their students.

We firmly believe that "teachers need to see themselves as intellectual beings before cultivating the same within the students" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 112) and that our duty is to provide the space for these developments to take place and resonate.

As we model our belief that "students can learn and examine social problems and begin to rethink the world in creative ways" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 111), we challenge students to critically examine who is represented and who is not represented within the classroom and school communities in which they are placed and to think about how they can work to be more representative and inclusive of the cultures and histories of all students.

Because Black and Brown excellence is rarely explicitly taught in K–12 classrooms, we have intentionally developed a program and curriculum that challenges this notion and works to center Black and Brown excellence for the betterment of diverse populations of students (Muhammad, 2020).

Pursuit of Criticality

Muhammad (2018) defines *criticality* as the "capacity to read, write, and think in ways of understanding power, privilege, social justice, and oppression, particularly for populations who have been historically marginalized in the world" (p. 120). It is through a cultivation of criticality that we are empowered and equipped to question the world around us for better understanding of truth in history, power, and equity (Muhammad, 2020).

Criticality, then, is what "humanizes instruction and makes it more compassionate" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 117). "Criticality calls for teachers and students to understand the ideologies and perspectives of marginalized communities (especially Black populations all over the world) and their ways of knowing and experiencing the world. Without this knowledge and anti-oppressive beliefs of their own, it becomes impossible to teach criticality in the classroom because it calls for a direct interruption of the things that disturb peace in the world and in communities" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 120).

The goal of the BETR program is to help residents develop a critical lens for their teaching based on interactions with students and the world around them. Recognizing that a cultivation of criticality must deliberately be tied to action, residents are challenged to think about what it means to be human and what humanizing practices look like inside and outside of the classroom (Muhammad, 2020).

Additionally, residents are challenged to think about how they will "engage students' thinking about power, anti-oppression, and equity in the text, in communities, and in society" (Muhammad, 2020, p. 131). Acknowledging that "criticality begins to give students the tools to respond to injustice in and around schools," the BETR program aims not only to cultivate criticality within residents but to model effective strategies and techniques for them to replicate in practice with their K–12 students in their respective clinical practice classrooms.

Residents are regularly challenged to think deeply about how they will engage and challenge their students to think about issues of equity and social

justice and are given ample opportunities to plan and rehearse how they will work to cultivate criticality with their students through their teaching simulations.

The reflective conversations that follow the teaching simulations offer another constructed space for residents to think collectively and deeply about their ideologies and pedagogical practices as they pertain to addressing issues of diversity, equity, and social justice within their K–12 clinical practice classrooms.

Additional Systems of Support

Acknowledging the curricular, systematic, and symbolic violence that many Black youths experience in K–12 educational settings, along with the Eurocentricity embedded within the educational system as a whole, we actively work to dismantle traditional obstacles and barriers by creating systems of support for residents as a means to create access and opportunities for future Black educators (Boutte et al., 2021).

Although the strong Afrocentric curriculum is a large component of this residency program, in an effort to rectify curricular violence residents may have experienced on their educational journeys the BETR program was designed with additional systems of support intended to disrupt obstacles and dismantle barriers for future Black residents, including monthly residency learning community (RLC) meetings, along with multiple mentorship opportunities with mentor teachers, university supervisors, BETR faculty, and BETR mentor buddies.

The RLC and mentor monthly meetings are a critical component of the BETR program. Each month a morning is set aside, to first meet with mentor teachers and then to meet with residents. These meetings are planned in close collaboration with our partner district to ensure that we are not only meeting our university goals for the program, but also including district-specific content and information, because residents are working members of the school district.

Monthly mentor meetings serve as a space to explore key learnings and texts to which residents are exposed during their coursework; discuss residents' progress; and create a sense of community among mentors, university partners, and district partners. RLC monthly meetings occur directly after the mentor monthly meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to engage with residents about coursework, discuss mentor texts and key learnings and concepts for the month, touch base on coursework and clinical practice requirements, and build community.

During these monthly meeting sessions, both faculty and district partner staff come to speak support, and community build with residents and their mentor teachers. These various mentorship relationships are embedded into the residency program intentionally to provide additional layers of support for residents as they go through the credentialing process.

Through the Afrocentric coursework and additional systems of support provided by the BETR program, our hope is that residents demonstrate academic success, cultural competency, and sociopolitical consciousness (Muhammad, 2020). In this way the BETR program is cultivating future Black educators to become change agents in diverse classroom spaces.

Findings and Discussion

The BETR program launched in January 2022 and has graduated its first cohort of residents. The first cohort of the BETR program had a 83.3% completion rate, which includes the passing of credential preparation assessments and requirements, including basic skills, subject matter competency, and CalTPA. Additionally, at the conclusion of the residency program in December 2022, 33.3% of residents were hired as full-time teachers with a January 2023 start date in our partner district, while 66.6% of residents were hired as site substitute teachers for the remainder of the academic year. All program completers were hired by the partner district for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Residents hired as site substitutes will receive priority interviews for any teaching positions that become available in the partner district. In addition to the completion data collected from the first cohort of this residency program, interviews were conducted with residents upon program completion to gain further insights into the effectiveness of the residency program and to capture the voices and experiences of the residents.

While further research on this residency program model is being undertaken, the intent is to continue to make improvements to best serve future residents, preliminary findings as they pertain to residents' experiences, learning outcomes, and the ways in which residents moved toward becoming change agents are discussed.

The BETR program is committed to recruiting, preparing, and retaining Black educators in an effort to assist in the diversification of the educator workforce. The BETR program is designed to rectify potential harms caused during future Black educators' K–12 educational experiences by placing Afrocentrism and Black identity at the core of curriculum and instruction.

Throughout the residency program, residents explore Black identity, Black excellence, and Black ways of being, along with tracing the history of Black educators and the benefits Black educators provide to all students and the educational community at large.

As a starting point to this reflective work, residents were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences with Black educators and the impact those experiences may (or may not) have had on their educational experience. Consistent with research that points to a lack of Black educators, only one resident (Resident A) was able to identify having a Black educator throughout her K–12 educational experience. As mentioned previously, this is too often a missed opportunity for cultural connection and representation for Black youths.

Reflecting on her own K–12 educational experience, Resident A stated that she did not have a Black teacher until she was a junior in high school, stating that he was the only one who recognized her talents and encouraged her to push forward. As she reflected on that experience and the impact it had on her, she recalled a time when he asked her what she would be doing after high school.

She remembered being caught off-guard, stating, "No one had ever asked me that before." When she responded by telling him that she did not know, she recalled that his response was "Just because you live around here doesn't mean you gotta stay here." Resident A recalled that this was a pivotal moment for her and shared how much those words meant to her, even though she was only 16 at the time. She stated,

> Just his presence. . . . He was the only one to take the opportunity to coach me, support me, and tell me that hey there is better; there is more out here. I didn't get that from any of my other teachers.

She went on to state, "My one Black teacher was the only teacher that I felt cared about me and wanted more *for* me. That made me realize that I need to be a teacher like that."

For the class as a whole, this discussion of the presence of Black educators became a pivotal moment throughout our time together. What started as an introductory discussion prompt to point to the void of Black educators in the workforce quickly became much more. The residents not only recognized and acknowledged this missing experience of having a Black educator but also discussed the impact of not having exposure to Black culture, excellence, and ways of being throughout their K–12 educational experiences.

Collectively, there was an acknowledgment of a shared feeling of being an outsider in these spaces because the residents did not see educators who looked like them and/or shared their cultural background and did not see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Despite some of the residents having experiences in schools with high Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and Hispanic populations of students, the result was the same: feelings of exclusion and isolation from teachers and the curriculum.

These sentiments strongly align with research in the field related to the experiences of Black youths. What started as a class discussion to frame our work and future conversations quickly turned into something more powerful—a healing circle. This discussion and its implications became pivotal for residents, forming a working framework for future discussions and learning opportunities as well as catalyzing social justice action.

By acknowledging the scarcity of Black culture, excellence, and ways of being in their own K–12 educational experiences, residents were challenged to think about questions such as who is being represented in their classrooms and curriculum and, more importantly, who is not being represented.

Additionally, as residents became exposed to culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies and high-leverage pedagogical practices, and thereby gained awareness of how best to support students of color, they began constructing lessons centered on students' identities and funds of knowledge. They worked to enact change in the classroom by utilizing high-leverage strategies, fostering safe learning environments, and being inclusive of the social and emotional needs of their students. Since their coursework was closely aligned with their clinical practice, this gave residents ample opportunities to rehearse, practice, and revise their curricular planning and instructional delivery.

At the conclusion of the program, residents were interviewed about their level of preparedness and overall experiences. They felt confident and comfortable working with diverse populations of students and largely cited their time with the partner district in conjunction with their residency coursework as being a contributing factor to their level of comfort and confidence.

One resident not only confirmed her comfort level but also pointed to specific instances when she was able to integrate Black excellence into her clinical practice classroom setting. She stated, "Yes, I'm very comfortable, and I actually had opportunities to incorporate Black excellence [during clinical practice]. . . . It was so great and I felt comfortable doing it too. I felt very passionate about it."

Another resident elaborated that she worked very hard to infuse students' identity and culture into her lessons. She mentioned taking a step further and inviting parents and family members into the classroom to speak. She stated, "I really try to give them a voice." She also went on to give many examples of how she has not only integrated Black excellence into her clinical practice classroom setting but also worked to cultivate criticality through discussions of fairness and equity with her elementary students.

As evidenced from the preliminary data that have been collected from the first cohort of the BETR program, many elements of the program are working to support aspiring Black educators. The systems of support created through coursework alignment, tight integrations between coursework and clinical practice, support from both the university and the partner district, and feelings of connectedness and community emerge in the data.

As we continue to move forward, we hope to continue to collect data on this residency program to continue refining our practices to best support future Black educators.

Conclusion

In an effort to contribute to the diversification of the educator pipeline, one university began to critically examine and refine practices to increase the recruitment, preparation, and retention of Black educators. Through these efforts, the BETR program was founded, launching in January 2022.

The BETR program acknowledges and works to rectify symbolic, systematic, and curricular violence that many BIPOC students encounter in traditional educational spaces. With a specific focus on supporting future Black educators and diverse populations of students the BETR program boasts an Afrocentric curriculum centered on Black identity, excellence, and ways of being.

The BETR program works to provide practice-based coursework that is tightly integrated with residents' clinical practice placement. The residency utilizes RLC monthly meetings as a bridge between coursework and clinical practice to create a cohesive experience for residents.

Through these systems of support, the BETR program works not only to diversify the educator pipeline but also to cultivate highly qualified individuals who are committed to being change agents in educational spaces.

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