

**BLACK FEMALE TEACHERS:
DIVERSIFYING THE
UNITED STATES' TEACHER
WORKFORCE**

ADVANCES IN RACE AND ETHNICITY IN EDUCATION

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VOLUME 6

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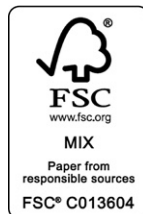
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I dedicate this book to my love, the one who stands next to me and never wavers. James, you calm me in this chaotic world. Thank you for your unconditional love and endless support.

– Abiola Farinde-Wu

My sincerest thanks to my husband Frederick for your unwavering love and support. I will never forget how you encouraged, inspired, and lifted me up throughout this book project, all the while pregnant and giving birth to our son Aiden. I dedicate this book to my son Aiden who was literally with Mommy every step of the way. I love you so much!

– Ayana Allen-Handy

This book is dedicated to my wife, Mechael Lewis, and my two beautiful daughters, Myra and Sydney Lewis, who have all given their time and space for me to complete this monumental project that was in my heart for years. I thank you for being so supportive. I could not do this without you. I love you.

– Chance W. Lewis

FOREWORD

This is an important, timely, and provocative book that places recruitment and retention of Black female teachers at the center. No questions are more important than those that address *who* teaches our children in schools. Authors in the book not only address the recruitment of Black female teachers but also discuss mechanism necessary to retain them. This book not only focuses on recruiting and retaining Black female teachers for the sake of having their racial and ethnic representation in schools; rather, authors consider some of the implicit (and overt) nuances that these teachers experience in schools across the United States. For instance, how do we recruit a more robust Black female teaching force and provide support systems that keep them there? What keeps Black female teachers in the teaching force and what factors cause them to leave? What roles do issues of race and place play in these teachers' decisions to teach and stay?

This is the book that sheds light on some of the aforementioned questions, and authors provide explicit recommendations for how to address some of the most pressing issues in education related to building a more racially diverse teacher workforce. Indeed, we cannot assume that recruiting more Black female teachers will be the panacea to solving pervasive issues in education that place particular groups of people at a disadvantage such as racism, sexism, discrimination, homophobia, and xenophobia. The authors in this book highlight the real issues in education that prevent and propel a more racially diverse teaching force but also point to other issues that too many other supporters of increasing the Black female teaching force do not. For instance, studying recruitment and retention of these teachers requires that we understand structural and systemic challenges that these teachers face that need to be addressed.

We cannot assume that Black female teachers or other teachers of color have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities necessary for meeting the needs of their students. Too many assumptions abide that Black teachers or teachers of color will have the “answer” to teaching students whom the system has poorly served in education. What if these teachers do not have the knowledge or skills to support their students? What price do these teachers pay when they are not successful at navigating an educational system that not only poorly serves students but them (as educators), too? What are we willing to do to support Black female teachers who experience not only racism but also sexism and other forms of discrimination? Is the system willing to provide these teachers with financial incentives, time off to recharge, and other forms of support while

requiring them to take-on additional layers of work that the educational system has designed to ensure that particular groups of students are underserved.

Increased attention has been placed on the historic, landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The *Brown* decision was pivotal to the decline of Black female teachers. The demotion and firing of Black teachers have been cited as a result of desegregation efforts. We need book like this that center, history, policy, politics, and possibility in the current climate of educational injustice.

Grounded in rich data and robust experience, the collection of chapters in this book represents an audacious exemplar of the real issues that must be considered when discussing issues of recruitment and retention of Black female teachers. The authors call into question several issues that we must continue to explore as we develop an educational system designed to meet the needs of all students and all teachers! The book is a must read for any scholar, practitioner, or citizen interested in and concerned about increasing, recruiting, and retaining Black female teachers as well as for those interested in addressing the teacher of color pipeline more generally. The book not only shows us *what* the issues are but what can and should be done to address them. Indeed, the book will leave readers with a reassured sense of hope as we refuse to accept mediocrity for our teachers and students in education. Bravo to Farinde-Wu, Allen-Handy, and Lewis for the production of a major collection of scholarship that will enhance the conversation about the recruitment and retention of Black female teachers.

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