

Milwaukee and National Leaders Convene to Discuss Solutions to Diversifying the Teaching Profession

Inaugural Leading Men Fellowship Summit focused on education-to-career pathways for young men of color

MILWAUKEE, WIS., UNITED STATES, May 9, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Local and national leaders convened Thursday, May 4, for an inaugural summit hosted by [The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship](#) (LMF) to discuss solutions to diversifying the teaching profession.

Moderated by WTMJ news anchor Shannon Sims and featuring the voices of Ivan Douglas, The Literacy Lab's Leading Men Fellowship national director, and Johnathon Hines, 2019-20 Georgia pre-K teacher of the year and first-ever Leading Men Fellowship national education ambassador, the

inaugural "Stand Up and Lead, A Summit for Young Men of Color: Career Pathways to Education" event created space for crucial conversations about how to engage young men of color to take their places at the front of the classroom.

Held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the summit also featured Milwaukee leaders Michael Harris, senior director of talent management for Milwaukee Public Schools; Tamara Johnson, executive director of Malaika Early Learning Center; LaNelle Ramey, executive director of Mentor Greater Milwaukee; and David Tate, Leading Men Fellowship alumnus and pre-kindergarten teacher at Next Door Capitol. Attendees enjoyed a day of networking and had the opportunity to hear from the 2022-23 Milwaukee cohort of Leading Men Fellows.

"The atmosphere at our inaugural Stand Up and Lead Summit was electric," said Douglas. "We assembled a powerful lineup of speakers whose insights and passion for education and



Ivan Douglas (far right), National Director for the Leading Men Fellowship, and Jonathon Hines (middle), the Leading Men Fellowship's first-ever National Education Ambassador, on stage with WTMJ news anchor Shannon Simms at the May 4 LMF Summit.

engagement helped lay the foundation for a successful day.”

Said Bernard Rahming II, LMF Milwaukee director: “I’m passionate about education-to-career pathways, and the summit allowed us to convene leading voices to discuss the strategies to enhance those pathways for young men of color. As the son of two Milwaukee Public School educators, I know how important it is for student success when young people see themselves represented as classroom leaders.”

During the keynote, Douglas shared data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) saying that Black male teachers made up 1.3% of all teachers in K-12 grades during the 2020-21 school year. This is in contrast to the fact that Black students make up about 15% of the public school population. Hines said that the students he teaches at Barack H. Obama Elementary Magnet School of Technology in Atlanta consider him a “hero” and that he centers his work in serving as a positive male role model, something that not all students have present in their lives.

In his capacity as leading talent acquisition for Milwaukee Public Schools, Harris reminded the audience that the state’s largest school district employs more than 8,000 people and includes career opportunities in engineering, information technology, maintenance, information technology and more. At Malaika Early Learning Center, Johnson employs Leading Men Fellow alumni and says their presence as leaders is transformational.

“We are doing something entirely different. When our families see men of color, it reminds them that the traditional model of only having women educators can be shifted. This is beneficial for everybody,” she said.

Ramey underscored the need to enhance mentorship opportunities for Black and Latino men, and Tate said the mentorship he experienced as part of the Leading Men Fellowship is the reason he is thriving as a young Black educator.

“I didn’t see a future for myself in the way that others did, and it’s because of the encouragement I received during the Leading Men Fellowship program that I have the opportunity to shape the future for the kids I teach every day. ‘Once a Fellow, always a Fellow,’” he said.

The Leading Men Fellowship empowers and equips young men of color, ages 18-24, with opportunities in the field of education by serving as paid pre-K literacy tutors to help close the literacy gap in underserved and marginalized communities. The Fellowship currently has programming in seven regions throughout the country, including: Atlanta, Ga., Baltimore, Md., Cincinnati, Ohio, Milwaukee, Wis., Phoenix, Ariz., Portsmouth and Richmond, Va., and Washington, D.C.

For more information about the Literacy Lab’s Leading Men Fellowship, visit theliteracylab.org/leading-men or email lmf@theliteracylab.org.

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Lernard Freeman
The Literacy Lab
+1 908-271-8554
[email us here](#)

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