

# TECA

TENNESSEE EDUCATORS of COLOR ALLIANCE

# Fellowship Impact Report State-wide



20  
22



2021-2022

# Fellows



Bianca King



Bria Sibley



Brigget Davis



Emily  
Rodriquez



Dr. Erika  
Henderson



Faith  
Ambrose



Heather  
Davis



Hope Bakari



Jonathan  
Brown



Dr. LaDonna  
Williams



Madison  
Leathers



Patricia Pryor



Sharon Clark



Tatiyana  
Webb



Tony Raye



Will French



# OUR Vision

The Tennessee Educators of Color Fellowship is a year-long experience designed to inform and empower local professionals. The Fellowship provides new skills, networking opportunities, growth experiences, and community with other teachers of color through six-months of hands-on curriculum and four additional months of independent, guided study.

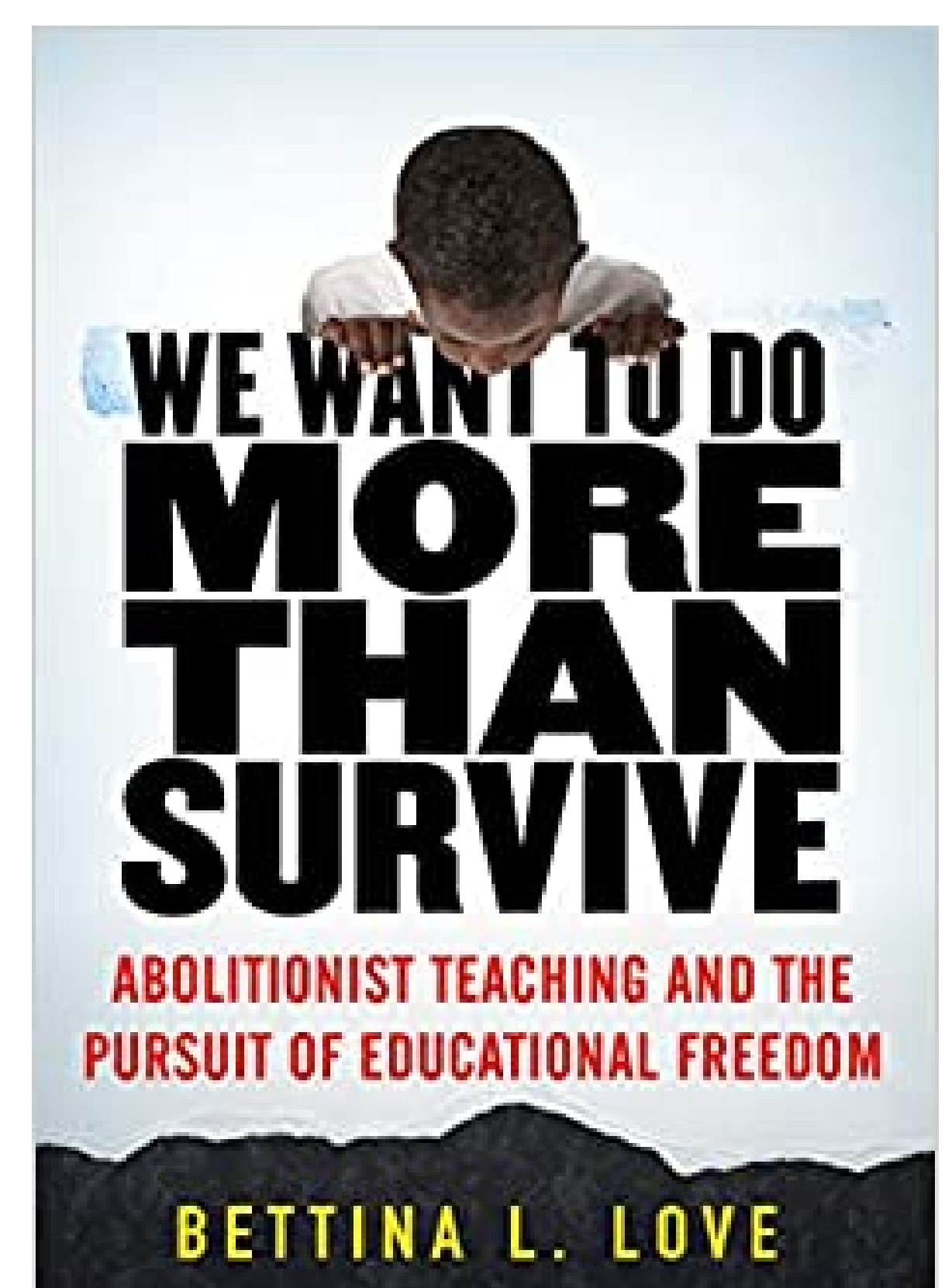
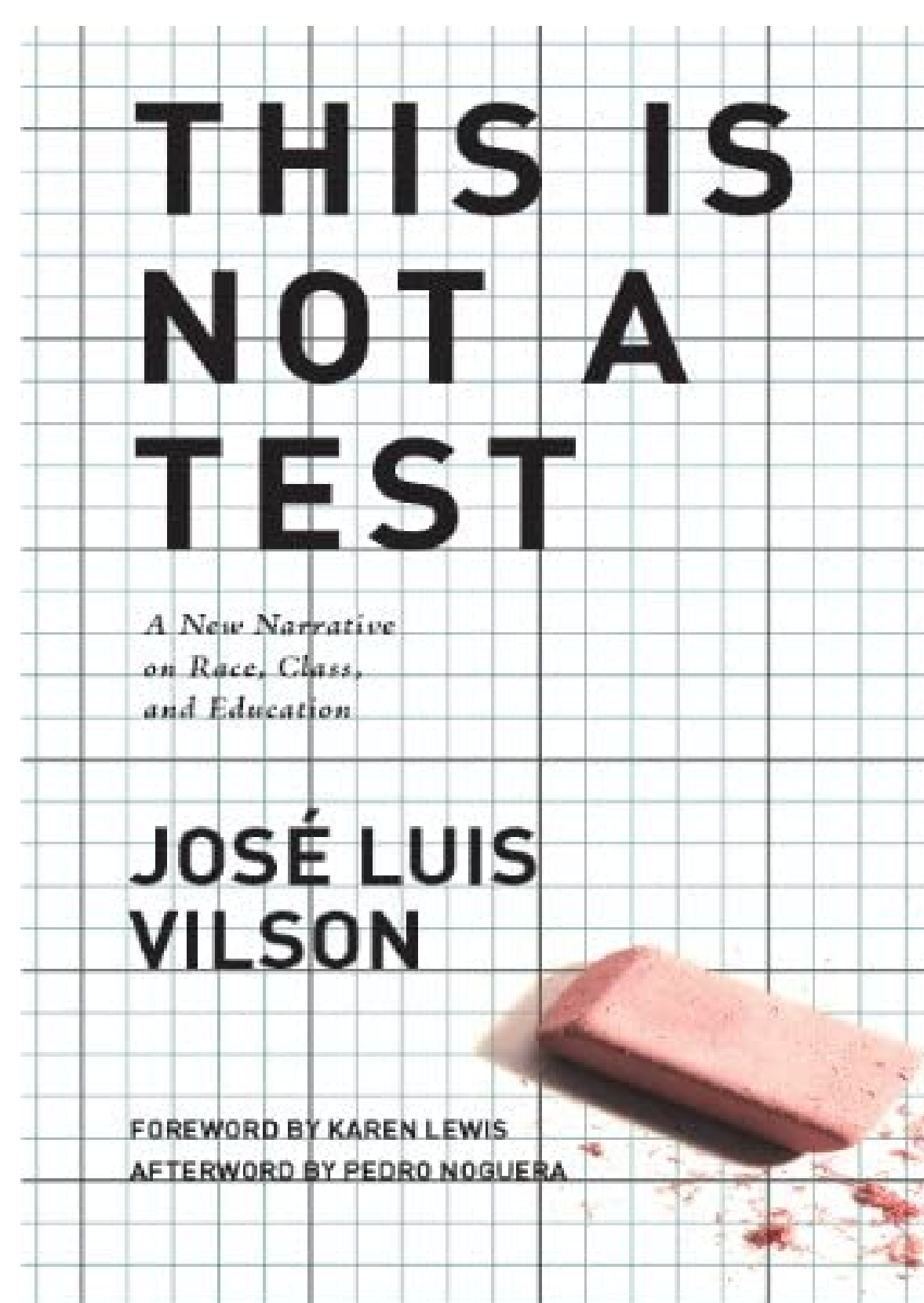
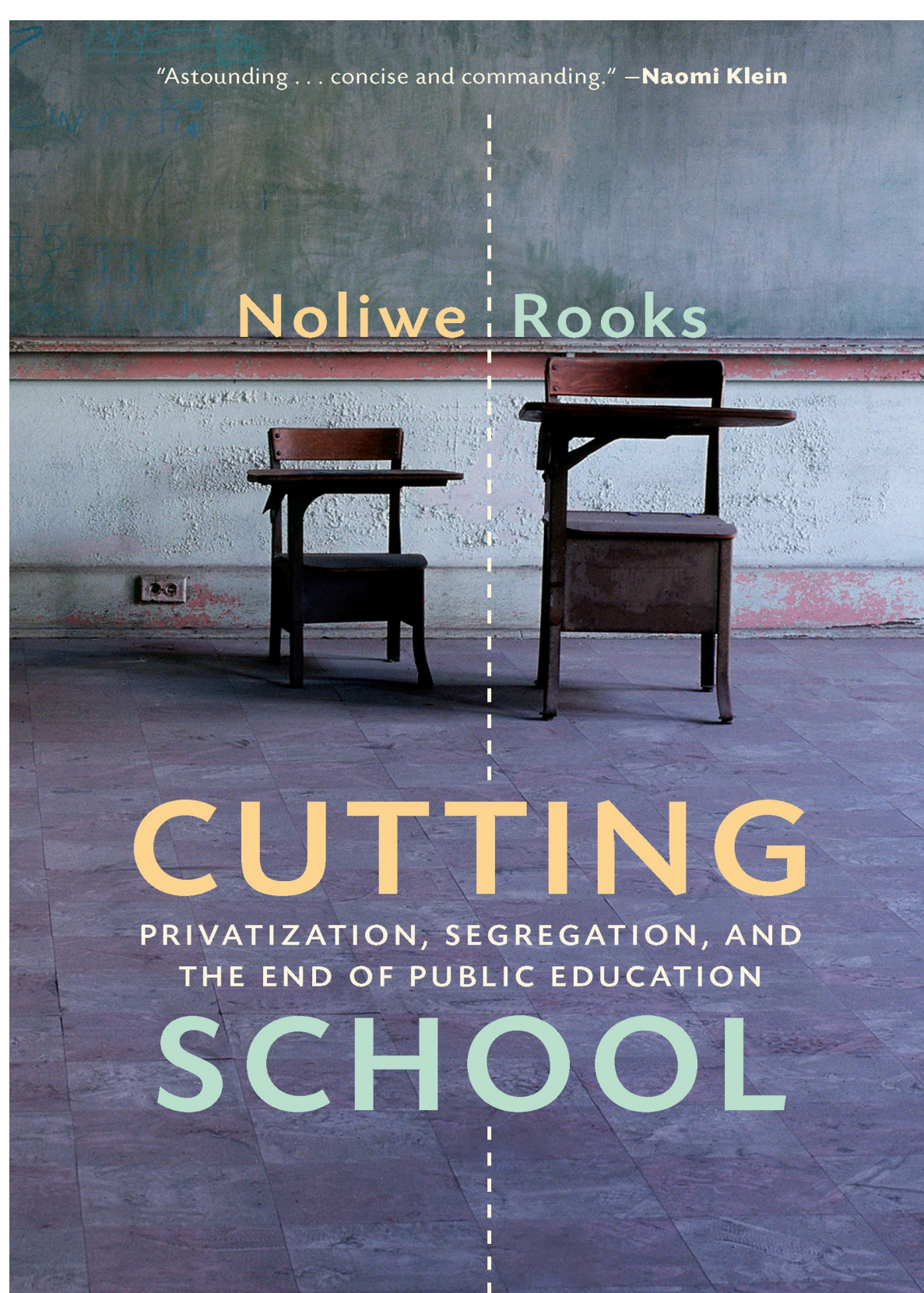
## 2021-2022 Statewide Curriculum:

- Session 1: Leadership and Personal Development and Historical Underpinnings of Education Policy and Education Policy 101
- Session 2: The Intersection of Policy and Advocacy and School Board 101
- Session 3: Connecting to the Community and Positive Racial Identity Development
- Session 4: Data Workshopping and Understanding Data, Policy Implementation & its Impacts for Public Education
- Session 5: Parent & Family Engagement and Inclusive Communication
- Session 6: Leadership Part II Thru the Equity and Inclusion Lens and Logic Models

## Additional Activities:

- Book Discussions (Three)
- Case Study and Logic Model
- School Board Reflections (Two)

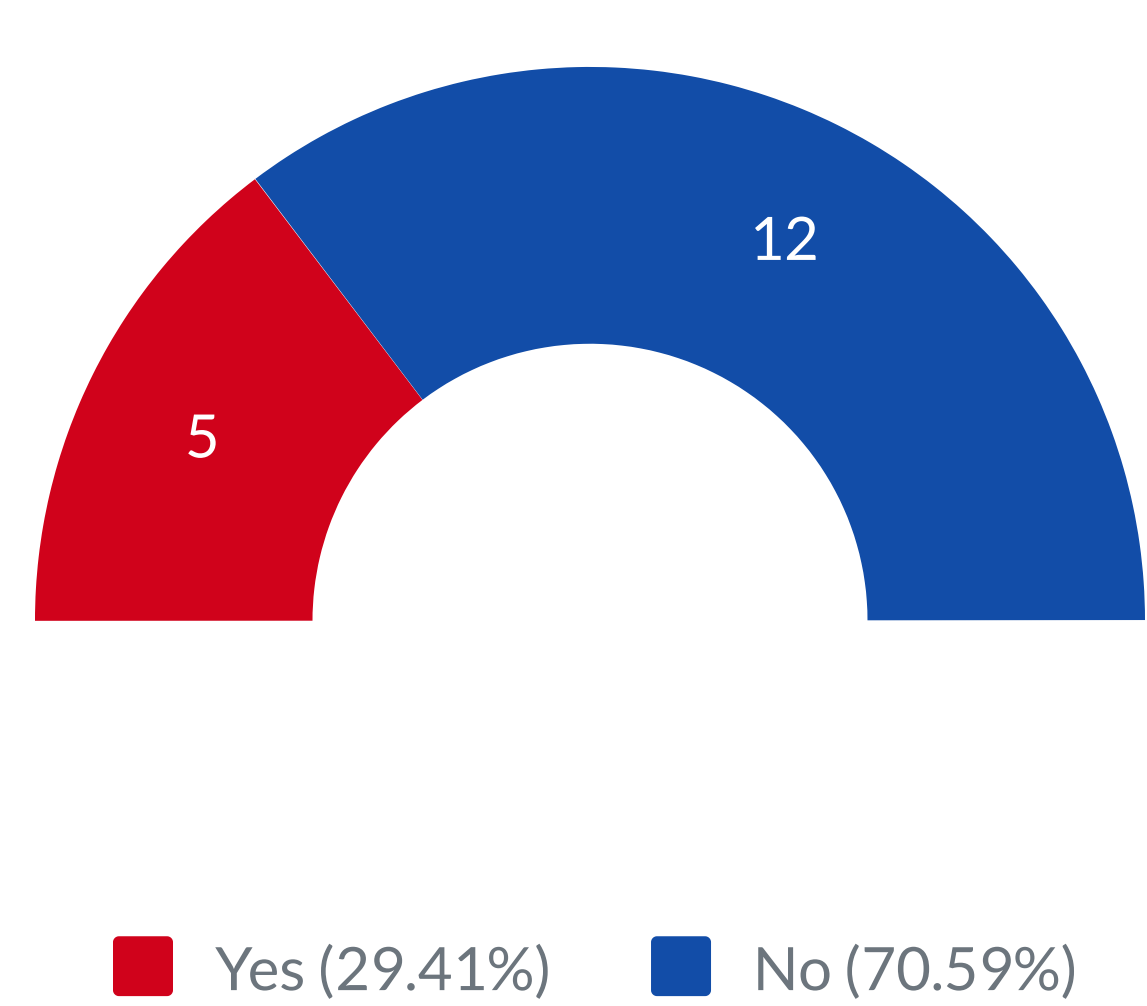
## WHAT WE READ:





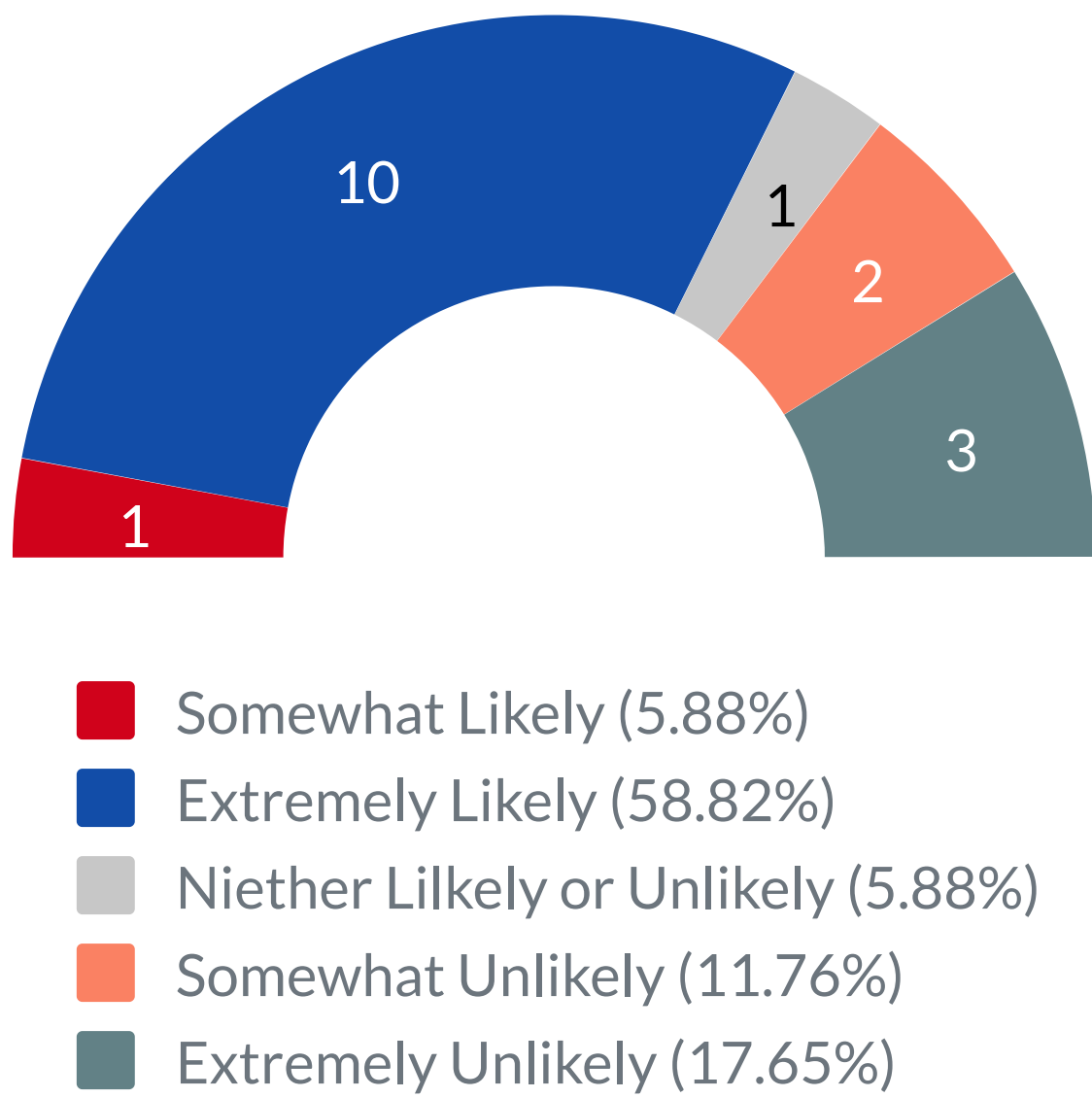
# We're trying to have an impact on Educator Retention:

Before the Fellowship, were you considering leaving your job or the profession of teaching?



- Why?**
- Pursue better hours
  - Mental health
  - Better wages
  - Pursue alternative field/profession
  - Desire to relocate
  - Other including:
  - Not feeling empowered to make change

Since participating in the TECA Fellowship, how likely are you to return to the profession next year?\*

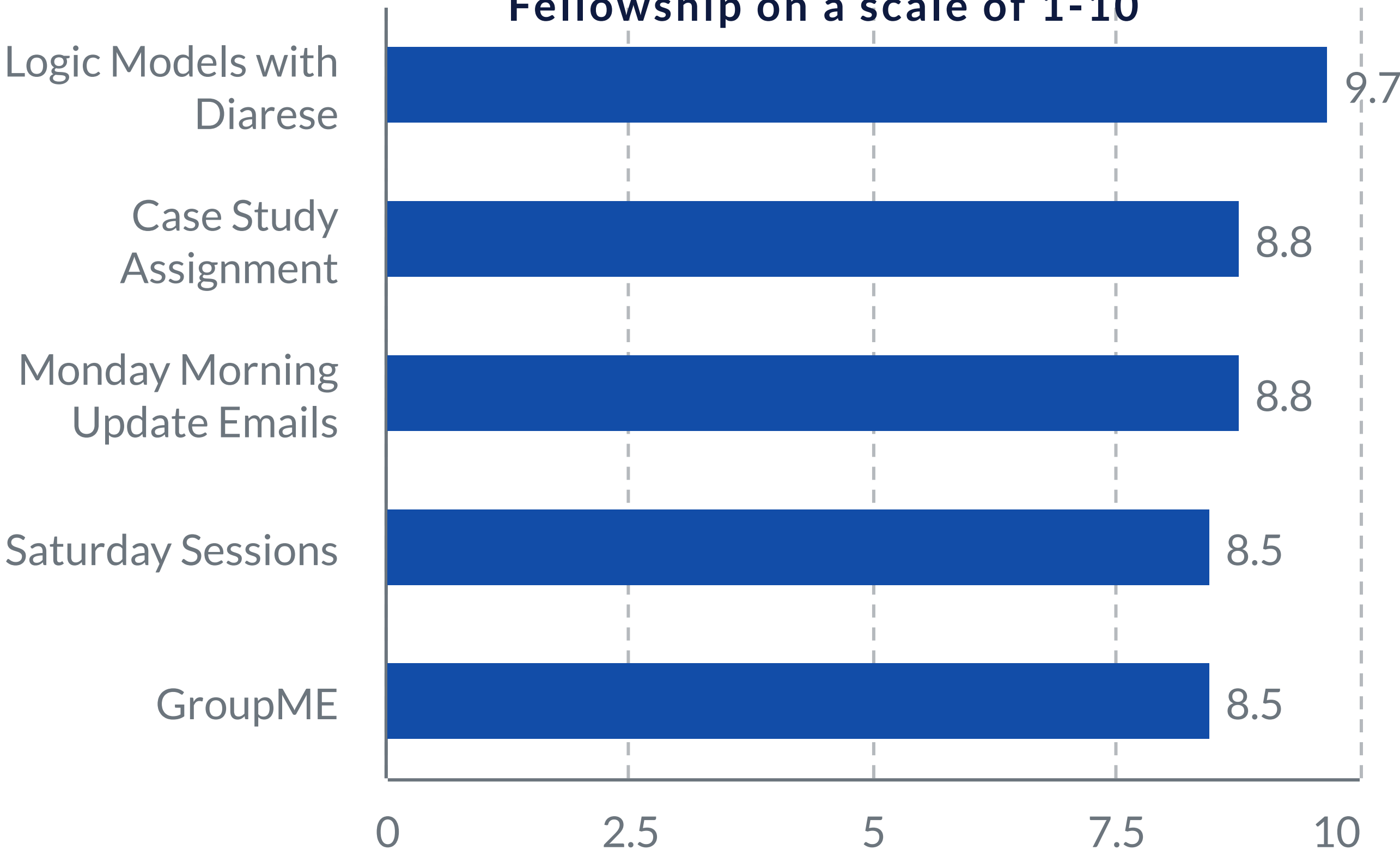


\*Final retention data will be collected in Summer 2022

# We aim to provide valuable experiences to local educators:

“Many of the speakers helped to make me feel empowered and able to continue this journey as an educator.”

We asked Fellows to value components of the Fellowship on a scale of 1-10



# We pair each Fellow with a Mentor based on their interests:

9 or more Fellows strongly agree their mentor:

- Provided timely feedback and communicated effectively
- Connected them to others in their network and shared relevant materials
- Shared data or provided relevant data points
- Provided valuable personal and professional expertise

\*16 Fellows matriculated through the program; 17 Fellows completed the mid-year Survey



# What Fellows had to say:



**Will French**

The January session felt the most timely and inspiring session for sure. It might have also helped that it was in person, at least for me. I also really appreciated the data session.



**Sharon Clark**

Shortly after I joined the fellowship, I was promoted to Instructional Facilitator. I graduated from Lipscomb in the Transformational Leadership Cohort just before Covid. I was also a part of SCORE and WESTTEACH so I was already working on a leadership/advocacy path. I'm now just in a better position to do more of what I desired to do. I really love to advocate for STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math]. I serve as the regional lead for West Tn through the Tennessee STEM Innovative Network, and TECA is helping me be more equipped, informed, and empowered about how I approach educational issues. What I am really beginning to truly understand is that my voice does matter and I have the power to empower others



**Tatiyana Webb**

I really appreciated the time and extra support from my mentor. She provided me with great resources.

## In the future Fellows plan to:

- Write proposals to Leadership
- Speak to their school board/ higher leadership members
- Present at conferences, write articles, etc.



# Their Impact

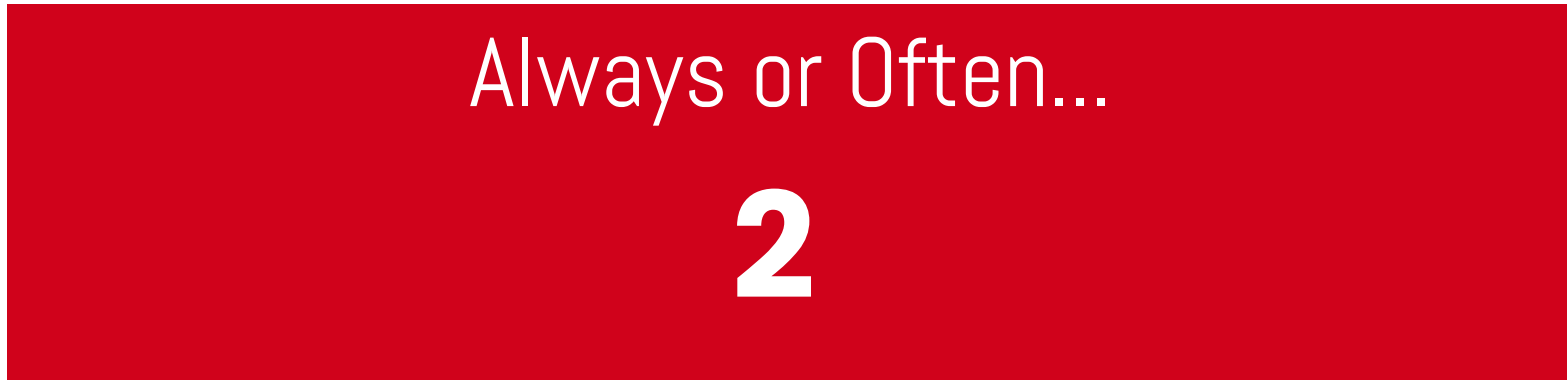
We asked Fellows to self-select mastery of several key areas.

Fellows were asked to rank their feelings and experiences BEFORE the Fellowship on a scale from Never to Always. They were then asked if SINCE joining the Fellowship they felt more or less prepared in those same thirteen key areas. We'll ask additional questions in May.

## Before the Fellowship...

## Since Joining...

Understand how education policy was made in your district?



Start or join any initiatives designed to create equitable outcomes in education?



Feel prepared to engage in advocacy to inform education policy?



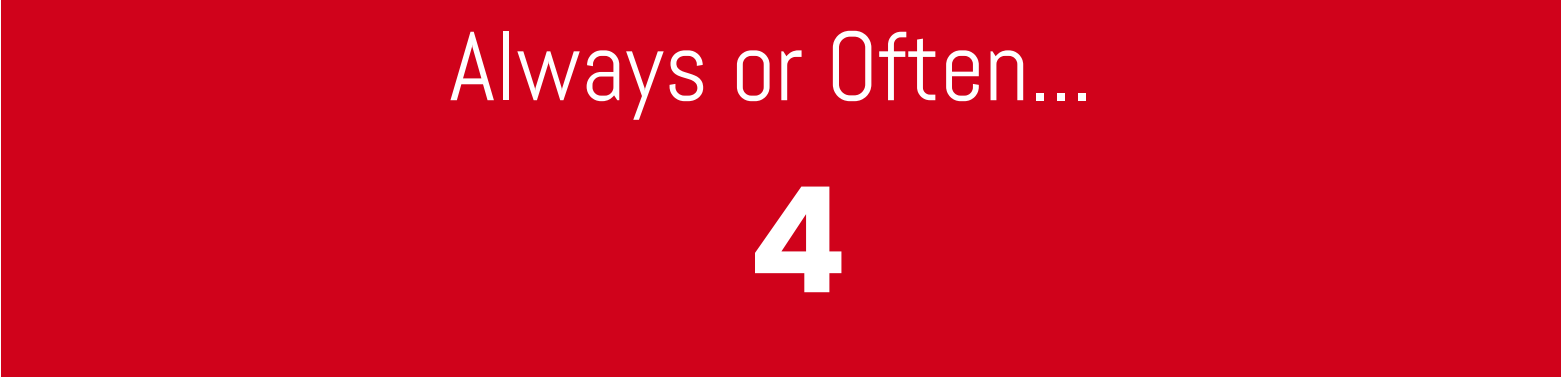
Written or plan to write a piece focused on an educational issue you care about?



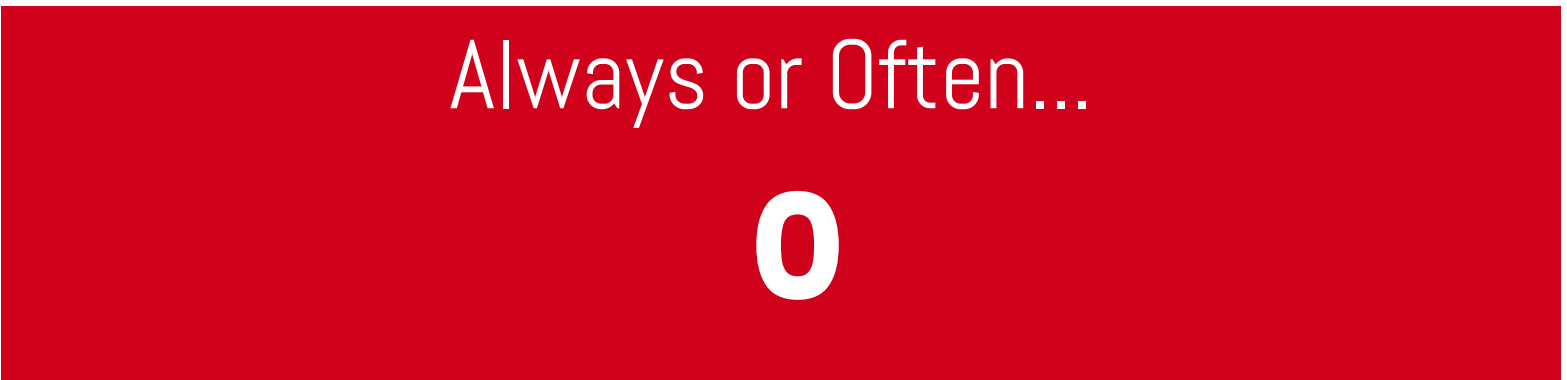
Identify as an education leader?



Receive invitations to speak to or join decision-making groups?



Attend a school board meeting?



67

% increase in Fellow comfort in accessing and using data and research to support and guide advocacy work and education priorities

42

% increase in Fellows using data and research to support and guide their advocacy work and education priorities



**We had one in-person meeting on January 22, 2021.**



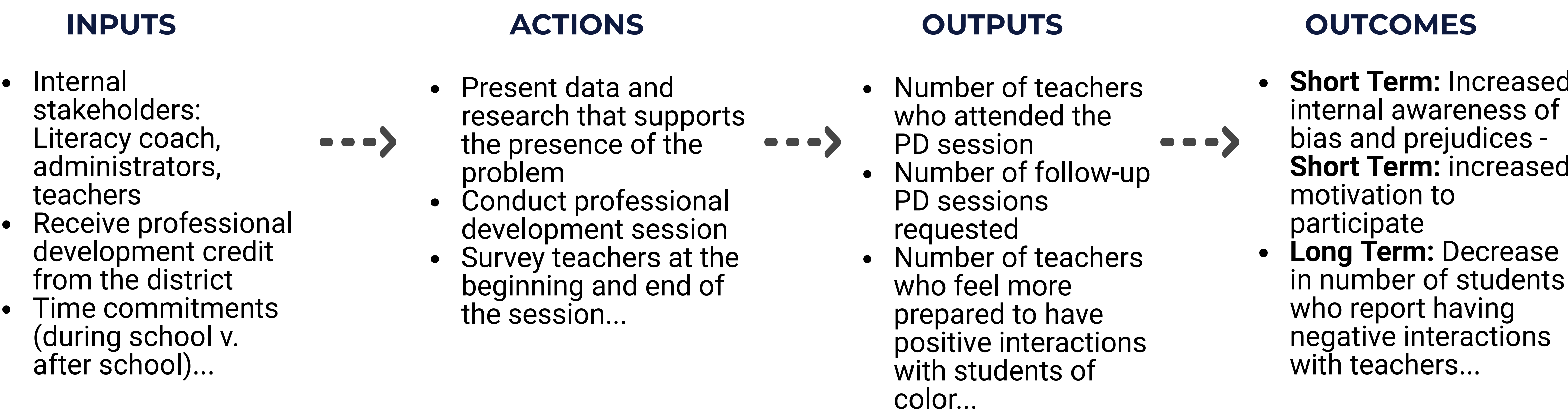
**Fellows report that in-person meetings help develop community and deepen relationships.**



# Their Work

The Case Study is the cornerstone of the Fellowship experience. Fellows identify an issue of focus, mine for data to support or contest their observations, and design a program or project to make an impact. We walk each of them through developing a logic model to visualize and make concrete their work.

EXCERPTS FROM A TECA FELLOW LOGIC MODEL:	
Project Topic: Providing professional development for effective communication practices for teachers who engage with students of color to increase emotional intelligence	
1	<p><b>Problem of Practice:</b></p> <p><i>Despite the good intentions that may have underlaid requiring a student to wait until a specific time to ask a question, this practice begs the question: what is the impact when students of color are reprimanded for speaking out and/or asked to hold their thoughts and their tongues? I wonder if we need to provide professional development that will assist teachers in responding to students of color in a way that does not invalidate their voice and halt their learning process.</i></p>
2	<p><b>Causes:</b></p> <p>1: Teachers often interact with students of color from spaces of prejudice and unconscious bias and do not possess the requisite emotional intelligence.</p> <p>2: Teachers often do not understand cultural differences while interacting with students of color.</p> <p>3: Teachers often feel entitled to enforce their ideals of social norms upon students of color with little regard to the negative impact on the students’ psyche.</p>
3	<p><b>Theory of Action:</b></p> <p><i>I believe that if teachers are provided with professional development opportunities about cultural differences and are trained to recognize their unconscious bias and prejudice, then they will be able to engage in positive interactions with students of color, which will have a collective impact on the self-concept and achievement of all students.</i></p>



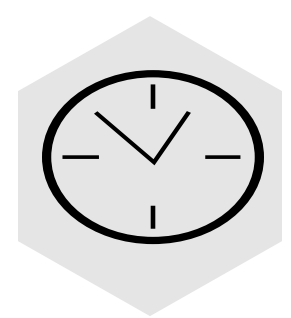


# OUR Future

**We're in year two - and we've been gathering information to inform how we refine and improve our programming for the future.**

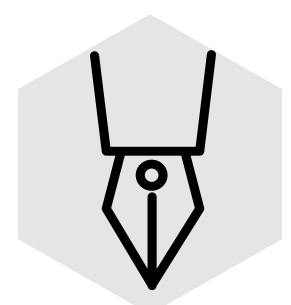
**Our Mentor Match is a keystone of our programming. Mentors are matched to Fellows based on the alignment of their personal or professional knowledge to Fellow Case Study topics. We know this works because our Fellows have reported positive impacts for the past two years.**

## **We're creating:**



### **More Intentional Connections**

Frequency matters and our Fellows want more of it. We're implementing a Mentor + Mentee community space six times a year, where Fellows and their Mentors can build lasting professional relationships.

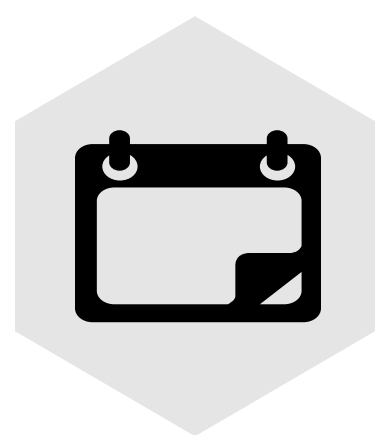


### **Thematic Prompts**

We've tried conversation starters, but we're switching to a model where we provide Fellows and their Mentors with a different discussion topic each month.

**We've always done a session on Logic Models to help Fellows visualize and realize their Case Study. This year Fellows reported they want this tool earlier in the program, with additional workshopping opportunities throughout the year.**

## **We're Creating:**

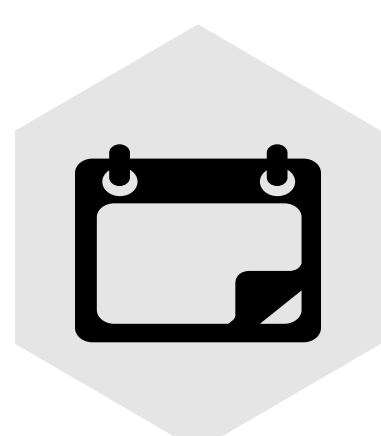


### **Small Groups**

We plan to introduce Logic Models earlier in our programming and thread in opportunities for small workshopping groups throughout the year.

**Due to COVID-19 the majority of educators in Cohort 1 completed the school year virtually - teaching and working from home. With Vaccines and masking - educators in Cohort II have been hands-on in classrooms for a full academic year.**

## **We're Creating:**



### **Small Groups**

Instead of our regular once-a-month Saturday sessions, we'll alternate full-day Saturday sessions with weeknight half-sessions to give our educators their weekend back.



# What Fellows are working on:

Fellows are asked to identify an issue of focus, called their Case Study, and work on this project for the duration of their experience.

## Recruitment and Retention

- Exploring the lack of, and creating new school leadership opportunities for educators of color
- Difficulties in hiring and retaining high-quality, culturally responsive, and trauma informed educators
- Professional development on equity, cultural competence, and biases
- Improving intentionality in hiring, support, and retention of Black teachers and using research and data to understand the experiences of Educators of Color
- Re-imagining the emerging educator - refining ed preparation to attract culturally responsible, anti-racist educators

## Early Childhood Education

- Access to high-quality early childhood education for Black and Brown children
- Creating equity in access to resources in early childhood education among immigrant families

## Addressing Achievement Gaps

- Declining enrollment of minority students in magnet programs and at magnet schools
- Equality of investments in resources, thought-partnerships, support of all teachers across schools
- Closing the achievement gap by building strong relationships and creating safe environments
- Access to high-quality resources for all students
- Connecting ESL students to STEAM opportunities



**Looking Ahead, a message from Director of Leadership  
Development, René Dillard**

We open applications for cohort III in Spring 2022. As we set to begin a new Fellowship, we are excited to implement improved practices and continue to collect valuable feedback. Our top priority is to ensure Fellows gain new knowledge and implement that knowledge into their classrooms and school communities. We are excited to watch the things they - and those that come after them - will accomplish.

