

I NEVER had a teacher of color until I attended a historically black college, Florida A&M University. I was bullied - which was watched and endorsed by my white teachers throughout my K-12 experience. I never felt like I belonged, or that adults saw or celebrated my potential. In fact, white teachers believed I was not college material, though I am now about to receive my doctoral degree from the University of Oregon. That is why I am working exclusively with empowering Black students because decades later, they're experiencing some of the same issues I experience 30-40 years ago. Black teachers are necessary to help shift the sense of belonging that is needed at the root of Black achievement. At the same time, I left my job as a public high school teacher because I was mistreated and undermined by the white administration. So the environment needs to change for Black students AND Black teachers.