

# Black Men Read: FORWARD The Launch Module

March 28-April 25



## About The Program

Artists from the Contemporary American Theater Festival and Shepherd University's Contemporary Theatre Studies Department enthusiastically offer a new grant-funded program created by artists, educators, and parents. This unique and groundbreaking endeavor will provide supplemental literary education for fourth-grade students and focus on culturally responsive stories read by Black men.

Black Men Read is a collaboration with the following partners: Jefferson County Schools Cultural Unity and Equity Department, The Black Teachers Association of Jefferson County, Shepherd University's Contemporary Theatre Studies faculty and students and the Contemporary American Theater Festival theater artists.

## The program centers on the following goals:

- To provide Black male role models in the fourth-grade classrooms
- To expand student access to culturally responsive stories
- To inspire greater cultural competency within our school system
- To provide scholastic encouragement
- To validate and affirm the strengths and competencies of students of color
- To provide representation that celebrates the achievements of students of color
- To encourage more young men of color to return to the field of teaching

The program is designed as a stand-alone activity and does not require any additional planning or staffing time from teachers or administrators. Teachers and students will obtain qualitative data to assess the program's impact.

The Black Men Read program is made possible by a two-year grant. The Rural Arts Collaborative, partially funded by The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation of Pittsburgh, PA, through the Fayette County Cultural Trust, supports the program. For more information about RAC, visit <https://www.ruralartscollaborative.org>.

## Readers will be:

- Community members or professional actors/storytellers
- Coached by professional artists/storytellers
- In class every other week
- Scheduled in every fourth-grade classroom in all Jefferson County Schools

## Reading material will be:

- Curated by the partners and a professional dramaturg – theatrical literary researcher  
What's a dramaturg? Read more [Dramaturgy 101 - Illuminating the world of the play \(schooltheatre.org\)](#)
- Developed by educators and parents
- Introduced to the teachers before the presentation to students
- Shared with Jefferson County School parents
- Dedicated stories about children, families, and communities

