



**MATH NARRATIVE PROJECT
COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

Building our TRUST in Black Students

FINAL REPORT: JANUARY 9, 2025

PREPARED BY: MATHTRUST

Dionne Aminata, Adrienne Baytops Paul, Deborah Peart Crayton, Dr. Nicole M. Joseph



MathTrust

LET'S TRUST OUR STUDENTS TO DO THE MATH

Funded and supported by:



Gates Foundation

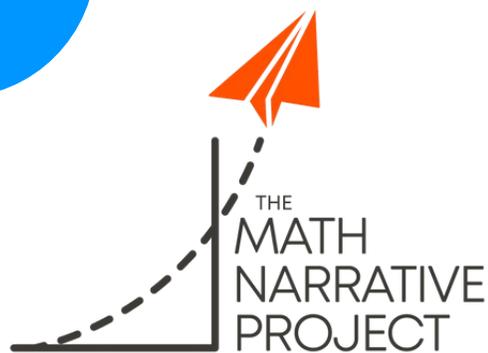


Table of Contents



Organizational Summary & Reporting Information	3
Recommendations and Belief Pathways	4
Project Summary	6
Key Findings & Insights	8
Reflections on Measurement	19
Reflections on Messaging Recommendations	21
Operationalizing the Math Narrative Project	24
Challenges	26
Future Plans	27
Key Learnings	28
Dissemination Recommendations	30
Financial Report	31

Organizational Summary & Reporting Information

MathTrust™ partners with PreK–12 math educators to counter predictable disparate outcomes for Black students by helping teachers recognize Black brilliance and trust students to engage in grade-level mathematics. We provide professional learning, coaching, and strategic advising grounded in our research-informed TRUST Actions framework. Our work equips educators to provide students with consistent and meaningful math instructional experiences, strengthening their mathematical identities and self-efficacy.

Reporting Information		
Organization:	MathTrust LLC	Contact: Dionne Aminata, MathTrust CEO
Award Date:	Apr 14, 2025	
Grant Amount:	\$75,000.00	Grant Purpose: Math Narrative Community of Practice
Fiscal Year End Date:	Dec 31, 2025	
Total Grant Amount Spent To Date:	\$75,000.00	Date Report is Being Submitted: 1/9/2026

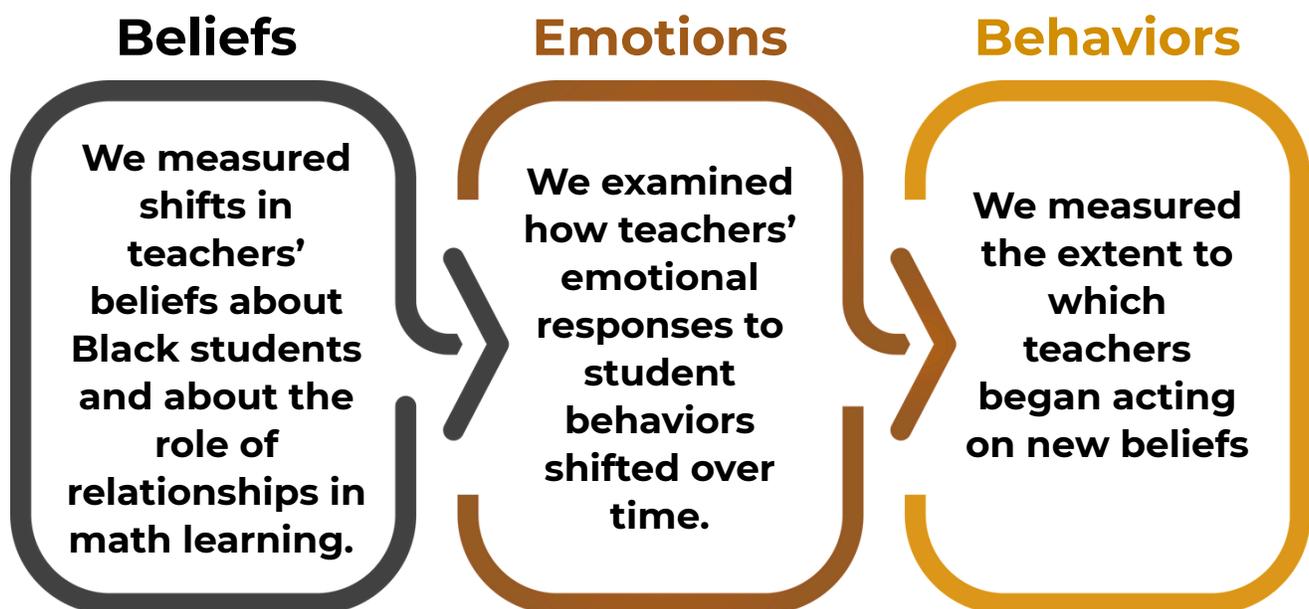
Recommendations & Belief Pathways

Recommendation #8

REASSESS ASSUMPTIONS: Encourage teachers to reexamine their assumptions about what certain student behaviors mean and the impact of students' negative emotions on their math learning experience.

Recommendation #9

PRIORITIZE BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS: Show teachers the impact of their relationships with students on math learning, and support teachers to prioritize building relationships in their classrooms.



Recommendations & Belief Pathways

Beliefs:

We measured shifts in teachers' beliefs about Black students and about the role of relationships in math learning. Specifically, we looked for changes in whether teachers:

- Reassessed or interrogated their assumptions about Black students' behaviors in the math classroom.
- Believed that prioritizing relationships—with or without instructional constraints—is essential to students' mathematical engagement and success.

Emotions:

We examined how teachers' emotional responses to student behaviors shifted over time, including whether they:

- Recognized the impact of students' negative emotions on their math learning experience.
- Developed greater empathy for students' lived experiences and affective needs in the mathematics classroom.

Behaviors:

We measured the extent to which teachers began acting on new beliefs by:

- Mapping out specific plans to adjust their instructional practice.
- Beginning to implement more inclusive, affirming daily routines aligned with the TRUST Actions—such as responding to student thinking, elevating student agency, and affirming students' mathematical identities.
- Shifting classroom practices to position students as competent doers of mathematics and create environments where students feel seen, valued, and safe to make mistakes.

Project Summary

Teacher Professional Learning

MathTrust conducted a field test with a cohort of Grade 5 through 9 mathematics teachers who opted in to participate in the **Teachers in Community Learning Series: Let's Build Our TRUST in Black Students**, offered over a four-month period from August through November 2025. The purpose of the project was to strengthen teachers' capacity to interpret Black students' behaviors through a more empathetic, asset-based lens and to support educators in recognizing the critical role that relationships play in shaping Black students' mathematical learning experiences in California classrooms.

The cohort consisted of eight middle school teachers, three located in the Bay Area and five in South Los Angeles. Their schools were situated across small and large districts and included independent, public charter, and traditional public schools.

The opportunity was marketed directly to teachers through MathTrust's network of California school district leaders and via social media. Each participating teacher had the full support of their school-based leaders.



TEACHERS IN COMMUNITY
LEARNING SERIES

MathTrust

BE THE DIFFERENCE
Let's Build Our TRUST in Black Students

JOIN A DEDICATED COHORT OF CALIFORNIA MIDDLE SCHOOL MATH TEACHERS

- 4 Virtual Learning Sessions, Aug–Nov 2025
- In-Classroom Feedback & Coaching
- Practical, Research-Informed Strategies
- Math Joy and Community
- Resources and Gifts Valued at \$200 (upon full completion)

COHORT FACILITATORS:

 Dionne Aminata

 Adrienne Baytops Paul

 Deborah Peart Crayton

 **LIMITED SEATS. APPLY BY 7/28.**
mathtrusted.com/teachers-in-community

Project Summary

Black Students as Messengers

The messaging intervention centered Black student voices through edited video clips drawn from individual interviews conducted in June 2025. Ten Black students in grades 5 through 8, ages 11 to 14, from Northern and Southern California participated in 45–75 minute semi-structured interviews focused on their mathematical histories, classroom experiences, relationships with teachers, and perspectives on learning mathematics. In alignment with the project’s design, demographic and socioeconomic data were intentionally not collected in order to prioritize students’ mathematical identities and lived experiences over categorical labeling.

Messaging Recommendations Embedded in the Learning

Messaging aligned to Math Narrative Recommendations #8 and #9 was embedded throughout professional learning sessions and supported by structured reflection tools that elevated student agency, normalized mistakes as integral to learning, and surfaced the emotional dimensions of mathematics instruction. The intervention was delivered through virtual cohort sessions, teacher “Aha Moment” journals, embedded polls, and in-person classroom observations.

Data Triangulation and Impact Measurement

To measure impact, MathTrust employed a mixed-methods approach, collecting qualitative and quantitative data through teacher pre- and post-surveys, student pre- and post-surveys, in-session reflections, and low-inference classroom observations. Analysis focused on identifying shifts in teacher beliefs, emotions, and instructional behaviors, specifically whether teachers reassessed assumptions about Black students’ behaviors and began prioritizing relationship-centered practices that affirm Black students’ mathematical thinking and identities.

Key Findings & Insights



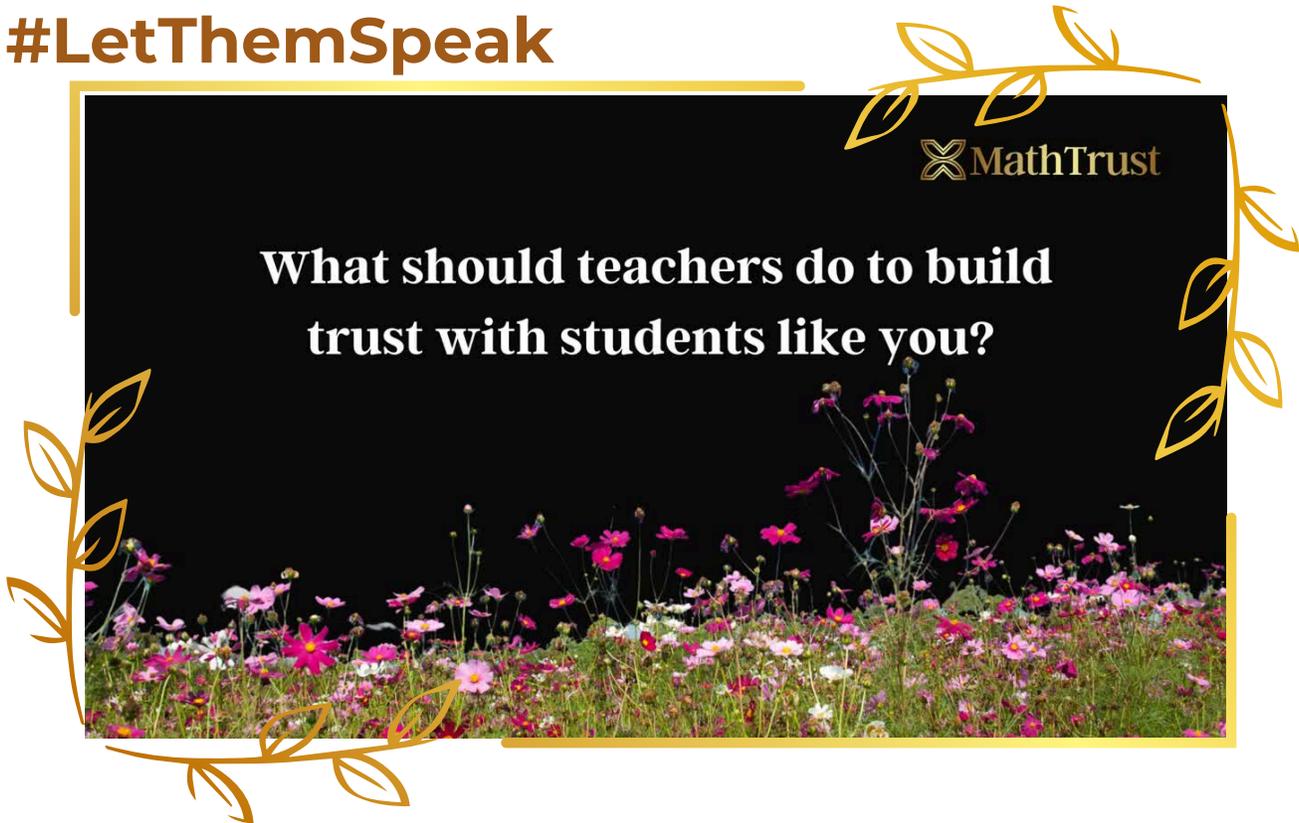
The Positive Effects of the Messaging Recommendations

What was most effective about the messaging that we tested was using students as messengers to influence teachers. The use of video to elevate Black students' agency provided a safe pathway for them to bring their full selves to the space. The students were not shy and brought both their emotions and shared their experiences to their messages. This authentic testimony from students persuaded educators to be reflective and open to new perspectives. These videos were used in the professional learning sessions and served as a powerful way to start conversations, engage in the learning activities, and reflect.

By amplifying students' voices, the videos also afforded teachers an opportunity to really see how important relationships are for Black students. Many of the students stated things like, "I wish she would ask about my life outside of school." In our post student-surveys the data suggests that some of the students' responses reflected a shift. In other words, larger percentages of Black students said that their teachers ask about their lives outside of school all or most of the time.

Key Findings & Insights

#LetThemSpeak



What should teachers do to build trust with students like you?



Key Findings & Insights

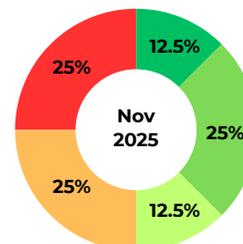
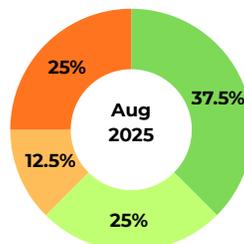
High-Level Outcomes Observed

Across the August to November 2025 survey window, we observed clear shifts in teachers' beliefs, emotions, and instructional behaviors as a result of the messaging intervention. Quantitatively, responses to the statement "Black students' behavior in my math class gets in the way of their math learning" moved away from agreement and toward disagreement. In August, responses were mixed, with several teachers agreeing or somewhat agreeing. By November, the majority of respondents selected strongly disagree or somewhat disagree, indicating a reduced tendency to interpret Black student behaviors as barriers to learning.

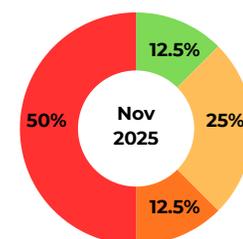
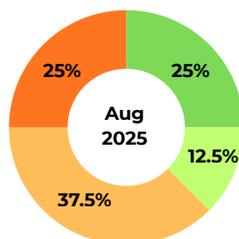
Teacher Pre- and Post-Survey Results

● Strongly Agree
 ● Agree
 ● Somewhat Agree
 ● Somewhat Disagree
 ● Disagree
 ● Strongly Disagree

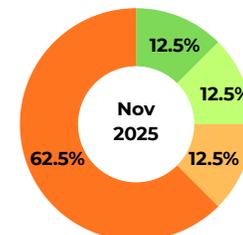
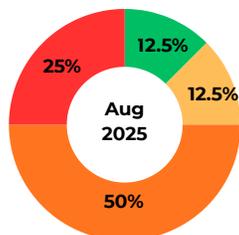
Black students in my math class struggle more than other students.



Black students' behavior in my math class gets in the way of their math learning.



It is difficult to hold high expectations for the Black students in my math class.



Key Findings & Insights

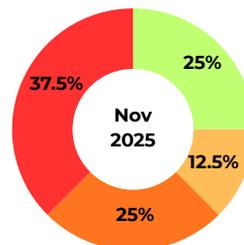
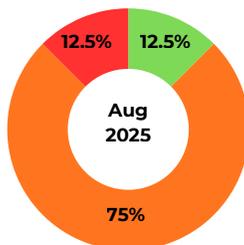
Problematic Beliefs Disrupted

This shift reflects disruption of a deficit-oriented belief that positions Black students' behaviors as impediments to mathematical engagement. Early survey data suggested that some teachers viewed behaviors—such as talking, emotional expression, or disengagement—as obstacles rather than as meaningful signals shaped by classroom context, prior experiences, or unmet relational needs.

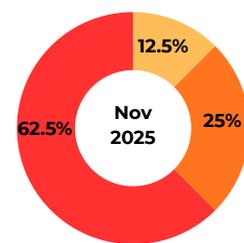
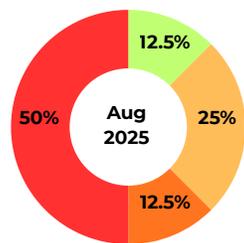
Teacher Pre- and Post-Survey Results

● Strongly Agree ● Agree ● Somewhat Agree ● Somewhat Disagree ● Disagree ● Strongly Disagree

Inviting my Black students to share their mathematical thinking is challenging.



Building strong relationships with Black students in my class is challenging.



November survey responses demonstrate that teachers developed a more relational, asset-based perspective. Teachers consistently described relationship-building with Black students as a regular and rewarding practice, emphasizing listening first, checking in intentionally, repairing trust when harm occurs, and advocating for students when assumptions are made about them. Rather than framing behavior as a problem to manage, teachers articulated an understanding of behavior as communication—and as an entry point for trust, affirmation, and instructional responsiveness.

Key Findings & Insights

Teachers also expressed a strengthened belief that prioritizing relationships is essential even within real instructional constraints. Several acknowledged time pressures and accountability demands, yet still described making deliberate choices to center students' voices, pause instruction to attend to emotional needs, attend students' extracurricular events, and integrate routines (such as self check-ins) that support connection before content. These reflections suggest a shift from seeing relationships as “extra” to viewing them as foundational to effective math teaching.

Emotional Shifts

Emotionally, teachers reported increased empathy and awareness of how Black students' prior schooling experiences, math trauma, and societal messaging shape classroom interactions. Many explicitly rejected the idea that Black students have inherently different needs, instead naming how trust, representation, affirmation, and opportunities to be heard are especially consequential in predominantly white school spaces. Teachers described moments of self-reflection and “change-of-heart” experiences—such as recognizing when judgments were made too quickly and choosing to apologize or advocate for a student—that illustrate growing emotional attunement and humility.

8th Grade Teacher

“One thing I’m really trying to be intentional about is building routines for math discussions that actually center student voices, especially for kids who haven’t always felt like those conversations were meant for them. I want to create space where students explain their thinking regularly, where sentence frames help boost their confidence, and where the problems we explore connect to real-life stuff they care about—their communities, their experiences. More than anything, I want my Black students to see themselves as mathematicians. I want them to know their ideas matter and that their thinking is what moves the learning forward.”

Key Findings & Insights

Behavioral Shifts

These belief and emotional shifts translated into concrete behavioral changes. Teachers described mapping out plans and beginning to adapt instructional practices by:

- Creating structured opportunities for student discourse and positioning students as mathematical experts
- Affirming brilliance in incomplete thinking and valuing mistakes as learning opportunities
- Using strengths-based questioning and culturally connected tasks
- Building routines that center student voice and reflection
- Stepping back from authority roles to facilitate student-led sensemaking

Collectively, these outcomes indicate that the messaging intervention supported teachers in reassessing assumptions, prioritizing relationships, and beginning to cultivate more inclusive, affirming mathematics classrooms where Black students feel seen, trusted, and valued as mathematicians.

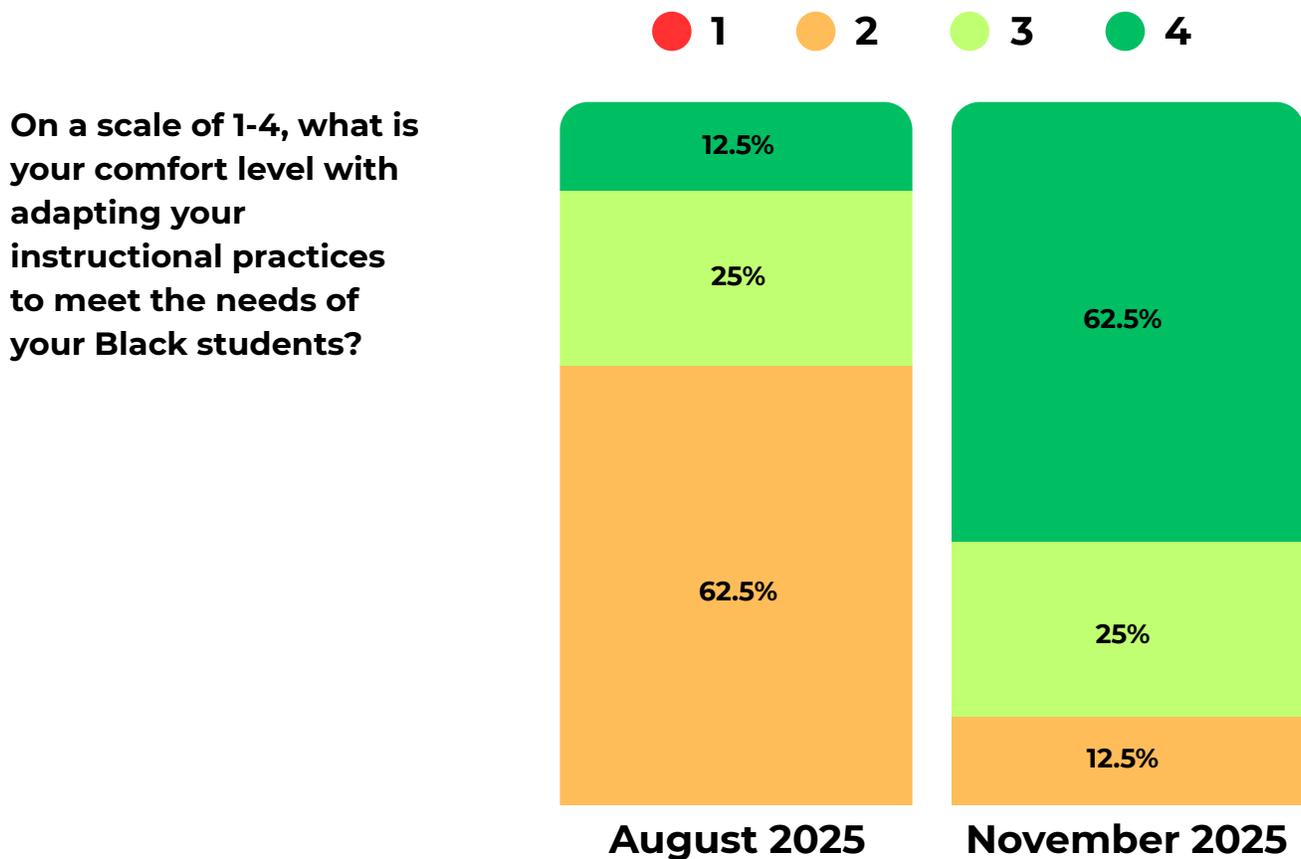
Overall, teachers' beliefs, emotions, and behaviors were impacted by the messaging and the professional learning experience. During professional learning sessions, participants shared "aha" moments and described shifts they had already begun making in their practice. As teachers reflected on the small, intentional changes that yielded meaningful impact for students, emotional responses often surfaced. While some early reflections included expressions of guilt or discomfort, these moments increasingly gave way to joy, affirmation, and renewed purpose as teachers witnessed positive changes in student engagement and trust.

Key Findings & Insights

Evidence of Progress

These shifts were evidenced through teachers' self-reported reflections, journaling, and post-survey responses, which consistently pointed to increased intentionality in how teachers interpreted student behaviors, built relationships, and designed learning experiences. Teachers reported actively seeking out brilliance, trusting students with more cognitively demanding tasks, and responding differently to behaviors they previously might have viewed as obstacles to learning.

Teacher Pre- and Post-Survey Results



Key Findings & Insights

Post-teacher survey responses revealed several consistent indicators of progress toward belief and behavior change:

- Increased intentional invitations for Black students to speak, share, and lead mathematical thinking, positioning them as capable doers of mathematics
- Greater attention to psychological safety and trust, including routines that prioritize listening, repair harm, and affirm student voice
- Expanded use of discourse strategies (e.g., turn-and-talk, student-led discussions) to reduce participation barriers and increase access to sensemaking
- Heightened awareness of students' basic and emotional needs, ensuring students are ready to learn before engaging in mathematical tasks
- Normalization of struggle and incomplete thinking as valuable components of learning mathematics
- Centering Black students' lived experiences and cultural knowledge as instructional assets



Key Findings & Insights

Strength from the Community of Practice



Participation in the Community of Practice meaningfully strengthened our work by pushing us to center student voice as a primary driver of change. Educators are often told what to adjust or improve by administrators, facilitators, or consultants, yet they rarely hear directly from their most important stakeholders:

students themselves. The Community of Practice challenged us to design messaging and professional learning experiences that allow students' perspectives to lead, rather than supplement, the work.

Engaging with research and strategies focused on changing hearts, not just practices, elevated our approach. While improving mathematics instruction remained the explicit goal, we learned that addressing the underlying beliefs and emotional commitments shaping instructional decisions is essential. By naming and engaging this “heartwork” directly, rather than treating it as implicit or secondary, we reduced resistance, deepened educator buy-in, and made belief shifts more durable. As a result, our products and services are now more effective, more human-centered, and better aligned with the conditions required for sustained change in mathematics classrooms.



Key Findings & Insights

Making a Lasting Impact

The consistency of these indicators across surveys, teacher journals, and professional learning spaces provides clear evidence that participants moved beyond reflection and toward concrete action. As teachers shifted their beliefs, emotions, and instructional behaviors in ways that affirm Black students' identities and mathematical competence, our work became more resonant, responsive, and impactful with this audience.

#TeacherTestimonial



What are you committing to doing in the future as a result of your experience in the Cohort?

Key Findings & Insights

Enhancing MathTrust Offerings

These shifts are already influencing the future development of MathTrust’s professional learning experiences. Because teachers demonstrated sustained progress—not just momentary insight—we are refining session design to create more space for reflection-to-action cycles, peer storytelling, and opportunities for teachers to surface and examine their own practice-based evidence of change. The student videos, which were central to the messaging intervention, have now been field tested with varied audiences and consistently elicit similar emotional and cognitive responses, reinforcing their effectiveness as a core tool for belief and behavior change.

Scaling the Initiative

Importantly, these outcomes are also pushing us to expand the narrative change strategy beyond teachers. Just as Black student voices influenced teachers to trust students to do the math, we are now exploring how teacher voices, grounded in documented shifts in practice, can be leveraged to influence administrators. This evolution strengthens the overall impact of our work by aligning beliefs and trust across roles, supporting teachers to teach the math with confidence, and sustaining conditions that make relational, affirming instruction possible at scale.



Reflections on Measurement

Repeated Exposure is Key

Through the process of measuring shifts in emotions, beliefs, and behaviors, we learned that meaningful change requires sustained and repeated exposure to messaging, particularly when the messaging is emotionally resonant. The use of video interviews featuring Black students sharing their perspectives on what it means to learn mathematics in a Black body proved to be especially powerful. Teachers frequently named these videos as moments that “touched them” in deep and lasting ways. Rather than functioning as a one-time catalyst, the videos were intentionally embedded throughout professional learning sessions as anchors for reflection, prompts for discussion, and reminders of the underlying why of the work.

We found that replaying the same student videos at different points along the learning journey led to increasingly nuanced and courageous conversations. As participants’ hearts and mindsets began to shift, teachers engaged with the same content through new lenses, noticing details they had missed before and making stronger connections to their own classroom practices. Over time, participants began to “get to know” the students in the videos and remember their stories, which made the messaging more personal and harder to dismiss. This repeated exposure supported deeper self-reflection, including moments when teachers acknowledged the possibility that they may have unintentionally contributed to experiences similar to those described by the students. Watching the videos multiple times helped participants recognize the importance of approaching students with genuine curiosity: asking questions, listening carefully, and resisting premature judgments.

Reflections on Measurement

A Word of Advice: Grace

If we could offer advice to ourselves at the beginning of the project about measuring emotions, beliefs, or behaviors related to math narratives, it would be to extend ourselves grace and to design measurement with care for the emotional weight of this work. Teacher beliefs are among the most difficult to shift, even in the presence of compelling evidence, particularly within a broader societal context that continually reinforces deficit narratives about Black children and mathematics learning. Many teachers have also been socialized into narrow definitions of what a “good” math student looks like—definitions that often align with white, middle-class norms and marginalize students whose ways of being and knowing fall outside those norms.

We also learned the importance of intentionally creating time and space for emotion. Professional learning is often designed to maximize content delivery, yet this project reinforced that belief change requires room for feeling, reflection, and sensemaking. Measurement tools and learning experiences must therefore be carefully curated to support not only instructional growth, but also the heartwork necessary for lasting narrative change.

ENERGIZING BREATH

This technique increases oxygen flow and stimulates the sympathetic nervous system. It can be used to boost energy, improve focus, and combat fatigue.

THE MATH:

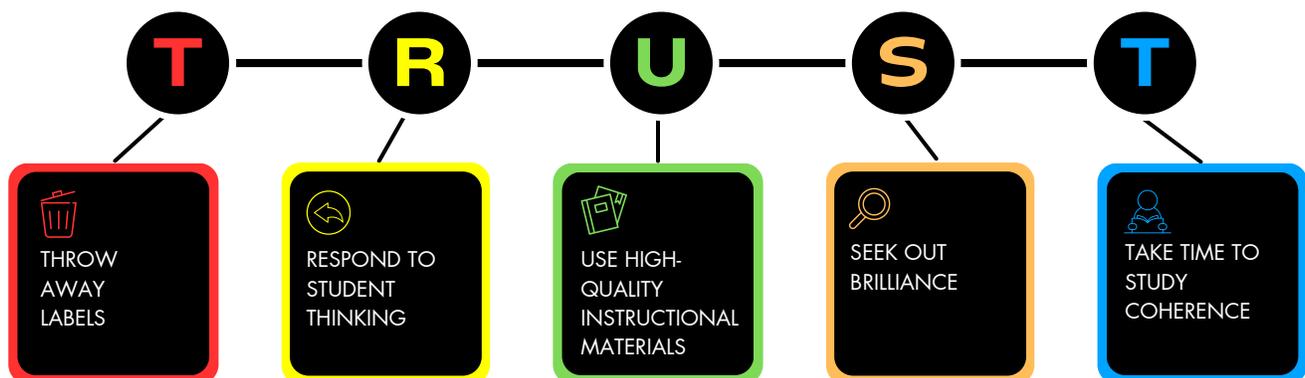
This technique uses halving and doubling. For example, if you inhale for 6 counts, exhale for 3 counts.



Reflections on Messaging Recommendations

TRUST ACTIONS FRAMEWORK:

How to TRUST each and every student with grade-level math:



Trust Students *and* Teachers

Through integrating the Math Narrative messaging recommendations into our work, we learned the importance of clearly defining and leveling expectations around what it means to prioritize building relationships and reassess assumptions when working with teachers of Black math students. Our cohort helped surface that trust is multifaceted: it includes not only trusting students to engage in meaningful mathematics, but also teachers trusting themselves to do the relational work of knowing students beyond their math performance. This distinction is critical and should be made explicit for others in the math learning field engaging with the Math Narrative Project.

Reflections on Messaging Recommendations

We also learned that reassessing assumptions is foundational to building authentic student–teacher relationships. Framing the recommendations through reflective questions such as, *What does it look like to prioritize building relationships?* and *How am I interpreting my Black students’ behaviors in math spaces?* supported teachers in connecting belief shifts to classroom practice. These prompts, paired with analysis of national data, classroom data, experiential reports, and videos of Black students, helped teachers examine their own mindsets and understand how assumptions shape students’ sense of belonging and participation in mathematics.



Have enough courage to trust love one more time and always one more time.

DR. MAYA ANGELOU

Reflections on Messaging Recommendations

Introspection as a Tool for Change

Approaching instructional change through introspection proved especially effective. Creating space for vulnerability allowed teachers to analyze, acknowledge, and shift practices that limited student growth. Based on this learning, we recommend that educators facilitating similar work engage teachers in an identity inventory as they build community and establish norms. Guiding participants in a reflective practice to examine the different aspects of their identity fosters empathy, reflection, and readiness for belief change.

The recommendation to prioritize relationships also helped teachers interrogate specific instructional practices. For example, several participants named discomfort with allowing students to work in groups. Through discussion, teachers recognized how restricting collaborative work reflected a lack of trust and relied on narrow pre-assessments of student behavior. Emphasizing the layered nature of each recommendation—how beliefs, emotions, and behaviors intersect—proved essential for meaningful change and should be highlighted for others implementing this work.

A Narrow Focus

Finally, we learned the value of focus. While we initially worked with four messaging recommendations, we narrowed our emphasis to Recommendations #8 and #9 after the first convening in order to measure impact more effectively. The two recommendations we set aside—#1 Elevate Student Agency and #5 Affirm the Value of Mistakes—remained embedded within our chosen focus areas and did not require separate treatment in the limited timeframe. This refinement strengthened coherence, deepened engagement, and supported more measurable shifts in teacher beliefs and practices.

Operationalizing the Math Narrative Project

**Dionne
Aminata**



CEO & Founder
MathTrust

**Adrienne
Baytops Paul**



CEO & Founder
Solution Spaces

**Deborah
Peart Crayton**



CEO & Founder
My Mathematical Mind

**Dr. Nicole M.
Joseph**



Author & Associate Professor
Vanderbilt University

Drawing on Team Expertise

When assembling a team to engage in this type of integral, specialized research, it is essential to bring together a diversity of interests, backgrounds, and skillsets, along with a shared foundation of knowledge that allows team members to work cohesively. Working with such an extraordinary team reaffirmed our deep appreciation for the value of diversity of thought, ability, and experience.

All levels of mathematics education and instruction, K–16, were represented on our team, and each educator brought specialized expertise that significantly enriched the partnership. Collectively, team members held nearly ten advanced degrees. One member holds a Ph.D., two others are pursuing doctoral degrees, and another serves on a mathematics education graduate school advisory board and holds two master's degrees.

All team members are strong writers, with three being published authors and two having contributed to published mathematics curricula. Three of the four team members are entrepreneurs and consultants who regularly support mathematics educators and school leaders across the country.

Operationalizing the Math Narrative Project

Managing Our Time

Our team engaged in approximately 45 meetings over the course of the project, which began in late April 2025 and concluded in December 2025. Beyond meeting time, there were countless additional hours devoted to developing content and conducting the work, including designing pre-assessments and surveys, preparing and facilitating sessions, drafting communications, analyzing data, traveling, and engaging in individual work time.

Meeting Breakdown (4/28/25–12/15/25):

- 4 cohort meetings (field test programming): 9%
- 13 team meetings (planning, data review, etc.): 29%
- 11 student interviews: 24%
- 5 pre-interview meetings: 11%
- 8 learning walks: 18%
- 3 meetings with our mentor, Robert Perez: 7%
- 1 podcast interview: 2%

We completed a significant research project within the nine-month timeframe. Had we been able to work with teachers and Black math students over the course of an entire school year, the potential impact would have been even greater. This work underscores the urgent and ongoing need for sustained, specialized research that strengthens mathematics teachers' instructional capacity and expands Black students' opportunities to succeed.

Challenges

Changing Positions and Perspectives

There were very few issues that impeded our progress. One of the adjustments we had to make was when one of our cohort members transitioned from a teacher to assistant principal during our field testing. She had surveyed her students at the start of the series, but did not have the same opportunities to interact with those groups of students after her transition. She still attended our sessions and participated in discussions, but we were not able to observe her instruction. Rather than complete a learning walk at her school, she arranged a meeting with one of her former students. Ultimately we were able to interview one of her former Black math students. The student had several comments to make about her time in the assistant principal's classroom from the previous year. Interviewing the student was both advantageous and disadvantageous for us. We were given yet another bit of data about a Black math student's experience in a math class with a teacher who is cognizant of the needs of marginalized students. We were robbed of the opportunity to observe our cohort member's instructional decisions and impact on Black math students in real time.

When it was time to survey the students at the end of the project series, the assistant principal didn't feel it would be fair to survey the students since she no longer taught them. Nonetheless, we insisted that the students be surveyed so we could compare both sets of data. This conclusion to the experience was necessary: a) the data would be informative no matter how it read; b) we did not want to leave this experience as inconclusive c) we wanted to show the assistant principal that we still valued her time in our program and wanted to encourage her to provide this type of demographic awareness to her faculty.

Future Plans

Adopting Narrative Change as a Practice

Participation in the Community of Practice affirmed and sharpened our understanding of the role narrative change plays in mathematics education. The data we collected from Black student videos and surveys, alongside feedback from our teacher cohort, provided compelling evidence that this work must continue. The Community of Practice created the conditions for us to gather a meaningful body of evidence that validated both the urgency and the impact of math narrative messaging, strengthening our confidence in the direction of our work.

While our organizational approach will not fundamentally change, this project reinforced the effectiveness of our existing asset-based, equity-oriented model. Our team came together as a highly cohesive and skilled unit, with shared commitments to teacher learning and deep experience in designing and facilitating professional learning. Having team members with complementary expertise in instructional design, content development, marketing, and video production proved especially valuable and confirmed the importance of assembling multidisciplinary teams to execute this work well and measure its impact.

Engaging Student Voice as a Vehicle

This project also clarified how we will move forward with greater intentionality in product design and professional learning planning. We will continue to integrate student voice, narrative data, and educator reflection into all facets of our work, including professional learning sessions, publications, keynotes, instructional coaching, and consulting. The insights gained through this process strengthen our ability to advocate for pedagogical shifts that center trust, belonging, and affirmation for Black math students, while reinforcing practices that ultimately benefit all learners.

Key Learnings



Black Students' Voices are Powerful

One of our most significant takeaways from participating in this Community of Practice was the power of centering authentic student voice as meaningful data. Hearing directly from Black students about their experiences learning mathematics had a profoundly different impact than engaging solely with statistics or assessment graphs. The videos consistently elicited strong responses from educators and parents across social media, national math organization keynotes, and professional development sessions, demonstrating how deeply people connect when inequities are communicated through the voices of children. This experience reinforced that data has names and faces, and that effective math narrative messaging must engage both intellect and emotion to drive change.

These learnings directly shaped our project by affirming the importance of humanizing mathematics through storytelling. The student videos became a cornerstone of our work, helping viewers connect inequitable practices to real students and compelling educators to reflect more deeply on their instructional choices. By integrating student voice throughout our sessions, we were able to create moments of reflection that moved participants beyond awareness toward accountability and action.

Key Learnings

This Work is Complex and Necessary

From other organizations in the cohort, we learned that this work is both complex and demanding, particularly when engaging educators in belief change and attempting to measure impact. While each organization approached the work from different contexts, there was a shared recognition that progress is incremental and requires persistence, grace, and reflection. These collective insights encouraged us to stay the course, honor the challenges inherent in this work, and recognize that each step forward, no matter how small, contributes to meaningful change for students.

I will trust my Black students, listen to them, and let them speak!

6th Grade Teacher

I will point out the brilliance in incomplete thinking.

7th Grade Teacher

I plan to ask more open-ended, strengths-based questions that encourage deeper reasoning, and to create a learning environment where all students' voices are valued and heard equitably.

9th Grade Teacher

Dissemination Recommendations

Integrating Math Narratives

One of the most important insights from this work is that math narrative messaging is most effective when it is embedded within spaces educators already trust, such as professional learning, conferences, and publications, rather than positioned as a separate or add-on initiative. Integrating Math Narrative Project research into our existing presentations, publications, and professional learning creates deeper relevance and connection for educators, allowing them to engage with current data while considering concrete instructional shifts that better support Black students.

Leveraging Our Networks

Because all four members of our team are well-established voices in the national mathematics education community, sharing this research through our platforms also amplifies its reach and visibility. This approach not only strengthens the impact of our own work but also directs more educators to the Math Narrative Project's resources, encouraging ongoing reflection and application of narrative messaging in classrooms and systems.

Expanding Our Reach

While additional funding would allow for broader expansion, we have identified several effective and accessible dissemination pathways, including launching an additional cohort series, publishing through NCTM and NCSM outlets, leveraging social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Instagram, and TikTok, and sharing findings through professional development sessions, webinars, and podcasts. Together, these channels allow us to reach educators at multiple entry points and sustain engagement with math narrative change over time.

Financial Report

Expenditures (e.g. salaries, rent, supplies)	expended	balance to be spent
Salaries and Consulting Fees	\$64,000	\$0
Travel & Accommodations	\$3,650	\$0
Video Production & Marketing	\$3,000	\$0
Professional Learning Series	\$4,350	\$0
TOTAL	\$75,000	\$0

By submitting this report, you are confirming that funds were used only for purposes stated in the Grant Agreement and that all Terms and Conditions of the grant were met.

The undersigned officer or authorized representative of the organization affirms that all the foregoing information is correct and accurate.

Dionne Aminata	MathTrust CEO
----- Name of Officer or Representative	----- Title
	01/09/2026
----- Signature of Officer or Representative	----- Date



MathTrust

LET'S TRUST OUR STUDENTS TO DO THE MATH

www.mathtrusted.com

© 2026



MathTrust

LET'S TRUST OUR STUDENTS TO DO THE MATH

Funded and supported by:



Gates Foundation

