



Prior to founding the Center, Sharif El-Mekki served as a nationally recognized principal and U.S. Department of Education Principal Ambassador Fellow. His school, Mastery Charter Shoemaker, was recognized by President Obama and Oprah Winfrey, and was awarded the prestigious EPIC award for three consecutive years as being amongst the top three schools in the country for accelerating students' achievement levels. The Shoemaker Campus was also recognized as one of the top ten middle schools and top ten high schools in the state of Pennsylvania for accelerating the achievement levels of African-American students. In 2014, El-Mekki founded The Fellowship – Black Male Educators for Social Justice, an organization dedicated to recruiting, retaining, and developing Black male teachers. El-Mekki blogs on Philly's 7th Ward, is a member of the 8 Black Hands podcast and serves on several boards and committees focused on educational and racial justice.