



A Church Hill: The Birth, Death, Revival But What About the Children?

Guide for Curriculum Unit 18.01.02, published September 2018
by Angela Brown

I teach 7th grade English at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Richmond, VA. There has been a lot of renovation to the Church Hill where my school is located. The problem with the renovation and rejuvenation of Church Hill is that the changes have not affected the students at my school nor their neighborhood. Church Hill's past included trading slaves and harsh punishment towards the slaves. Church Hill's past served as a reminder of Jim Crow laws and racial degradation. However, the area is full of rich black history and culture. Since my school zone has seemingly been forgotten, I want to awaken my students and teach them about self-pride, receiving a solid educational foundation and not accepting the path that their parents and grandparents (who may have had no choice) chose. I want my students to free themselves of the mindset that may be on the road to the prison-pipeline.

I intend to do this by submitting a curriculum unit that will move MLK from being a school for misfits to a school every child wants to attend. I will propose to have time within the school hours to have peace circles, mentoring sessions, and relevant cultural activities. I will propose that the school staff receive training on how to better teach and serve students coming from traumatic homes. I will propose that the school invest in books demonstrating how children can succeed although they have experienced traumatic lifestyles. I will propose we invite positive influential motivator speakers to have open forums for the students to hear words of encouragement.

I will propose that the curriculum involve research of Church Hill's leaders who have fought for civil rights. I will propose MLK invest in having a rich Black History celebration and develop community projects to foster a change in the mindset of the residents in Church Hill. I will propose that the school have Saturday school not just at state testing time, but throughout the school year. I will propose the school have etiquette training and vocational job training classes. I will propose that teachers mentor at least two children within the school to give them experiences beyond the neighborhood. Finally, I will propose that each teacher receive training to foster rigorous learning and activities.

(Developed for English, History, and Math, grade 6; recommended for English, History, and Math, grade 6)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use