



AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY THROUGH THE ORAL TRADITION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Ellicott City, Maryland



Howard County Public School System

PROFILE

2017-18

Our System

77 Schools

42 elementary schools

20 middle schools

12 high schools

3 education centers

Total Enrollment: 56,799*

Pre-K: 1,314

Elementary (K-5): 24,978

Middle (6-8): 13,180

High (9-12): 17,233

Special School: 94

**Official count (9/30/17)*

Our Students

Race/Ethnicity FY18

American Indian/Alaskan 0.2%

Asian 21.9%

Black/African American 23.6%

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.1%

Hispanic/Latino 10.7%

White 37.3%

Two or more races 6.2%

Students Receiving Special Services FY17

Free/Reduced-price Lunch 22.1%

Ltd. English Proficient 5.1%

Special Education 8.8%



**HOW WERE WE TEACHING
AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORY IN MIDDLE
SCHOOL?**

African American History in Middle School

- Embedded into curriculum in Social Studies
 - 6th grade regional Geography and Cultures Unit on Africa
 - 8th grade US History colonies to 1877.
- ELA curriculum
- Black Saga Competition

Black Saga

Quiz/Trivia based competition to memorize facts about African American history.

William Tucker



1st African American born in the colonies, The first African-American man born in the Americas, he was a free man. In 1660, slavery was first recognized by Virginia law.



THE BALTIMORE SUN

New Goals

Create a more in-depth experience of African American history for middle school students that reflected our district's priorities of:

- Empowering students
- Student centered learning
- Constructivist learning
- Inquiry learning
- Reading and writing from authentic sources
- A community interest in moving from Black Saga competition to the Frederick Douglass oratory competition.
- Reflecting research on the best practices for teaching African American history.



WHAT DID WE DO?

We worked with community groups, teachers, and students, to create a course that we think is unique.

African American History Based on the Oral Tradition.

- Introduction: African Heritage and the Slave Trade (not a full unit)
- Unit 1: The Slave Community
- Unit 2: War, Reconstruction, Reaction, and Reform
- Unit 3: “The New Negro”
- Unit 4: The Depression, World War II, and the Cold War
- Unit 5: The Civil Rights Movement and Black Power Movements
- Unit 6: Contemporary African American Thought

Each unit is structured around:

- Essential Questions
- Background Information (very basic)
- Selection of speeches
- Socratic seminar
- Oratorical practice
- Oratorical final project



**WE'D RATHER
SHOW YOU THAN
TELL YOU...**



Groups of 5

As a group of 5
you will be
speed racing
through a unit
in our
curriculum.
From start to
finish (sort of).

Unit 6: Contemporary African American Thought

Essential Questions:

- How has the expansion of African American wealth impacted African American culture and experience?
- What is the driving force behind the Black Lives Matter movement? How does this connect to patriotism? To white privilege?
- How has mass incarceration impacted the African American experience in the United States?

1st we provide some context for students, below is an example.

Contemporary African American Thought • About the Time Period
Affirmative Action
The Reagan Administration
The 1980's and 1990's
Million Man March
Hurricane Katrina
The Obama Administration
Black Lives Matter & Social Justice

◦ Black America
Since MLK: And
Still I Rise



Directions

- On each table is a folder with speeches.
- Each person should choose a speech, read the speech, and feel free to highlight and annotate the speech with any important information or words you find inspirational.
- If you have time, do some background research on the author, the occasion the speech was given, or the time period your speech was delivered.
- You have about 20 minutes.

Think About

- How has the expansion of African American wealth impacted African American culture and experience?
- What is the driving force behind the Black Lives Matter movement? How does this connect to patriotism? To white privilege?
- How has mass incarceration impacted the African American experience in the United States?

As a table talk about each of the following questions, try to use as much textual evidence to support your answers as possible.

- How has the expansion of African American wealth impacted African American culture and experience?
- What is the driving force behind the Black Lives Matter movement? How does this connect to patriotism? To white privilege?
- How has mass incarceration impacted the African American experience in the United States?



CHALLENGES AND KEYS TO MAKING THIS WORK

Our Staff FY17

- 4,675 classroom teachers, 74% of whom hold a master's degree or above
- Total staff: 8,435

(10/16–10/17)

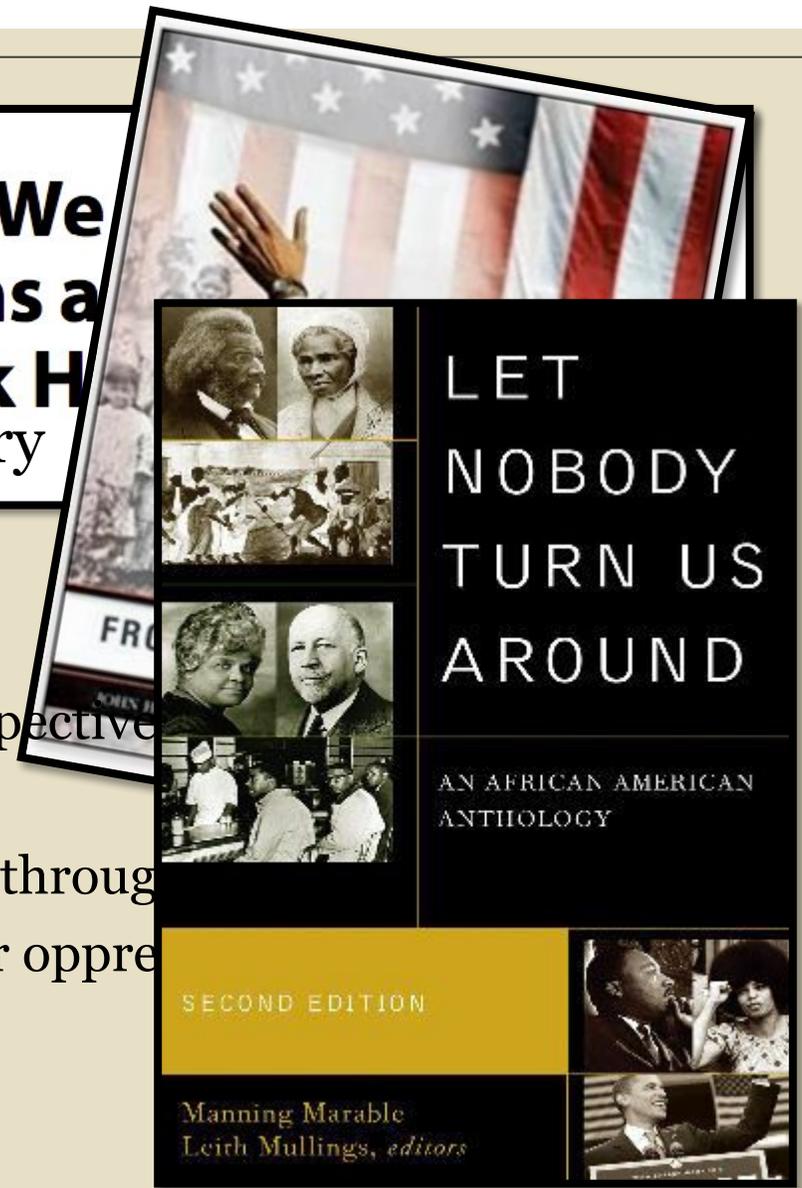
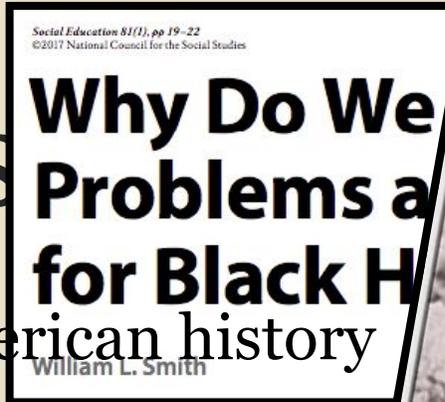
Staff Race/Ethnicity[†] FY18

Asian	4.1%
Black/African American	16.8%
Hispanic/Latino	3.0%
White	74.9%
Other	1.3%

†Total is >100% due to rounding.

Training Teachers

- Best practices for teaching African American history
- Providing background knowledge
- Discussing themes
 - African Americans do not have a single experience or perspective
 - There is both personal and systemic racism.
 - There has always been a civil rights movement, it changes through time
 - African American leaders have formed alliances with other oppressed groups to work for civil and human rights.
 - Intersectionality
 - Patriotism is an integral part of African American history.





Results and Course Preview

<https://tinyurl.com/hcpssafram>





JUST FOR FUN...

Practice Oratory:

- Pick a section of the speech you read today that particularly spoke to you.
- Spend a few minutes determining how you would give this speech.

If you're always
trying to be **normal**
you will **never know**
how **amazing** you can be.

- *Maya Angelou*



Any bold
volunteers?