

CHARTER LEADERS OF COLOR **MATTER.**



Tori Jackson Hines

Founder and Executive Director,
Resurgence Hall Charter School

I remember distinctly the transition from my neighborhood elementary school to prep school in the sixth grade. In elementary school I had been a straight-A student, with academic honors. In prep school, when the time came for math, I remember watching many of my middle-school peers walk over to the high school for geometry or algebra classes. I was in regular sixth-grade math, struggling. I had thought I was an advanced student, and these kids were light-years ahead, in all aspects. Now as an educator, I am obsessive about setting high bars so that our students will have the opportunity to rise to them.

I was pre-med as a college student. After watching my sister teach in Miami with Teach for America, and after hearing about her work with students at under-resourced schools, I decided to join Teach for America myself. I immediately fell in love with teachers and students and what they're capable of doing.

My first exposure to a charter school was in New York. At Uncommon Schools, the house was on fire if one child was not proficient. We were all there working arm-in-arm, side by side, committed to 100% of children. This is a memory and way of working that I carried with me in founding Resurgence Hall Charter School in Atlanta, GA. There are so many children with incredible potential that is not being unleashed.

SETTING THE BAR HIGH

Resurgence Hall is located in East Point, in Atlanta south, in what the government calls a "distressed zone." Our community hasn't received the same type of investment that others have. In spite of this, we were named a Distinguished School by the Georgia Department of Education, a distinction reserved for the top 5% of Title 1 schools in the state. We are in the top 3% of Georgia public schools overall, and we are the only A-rated school south of highway I-20.

At Resurgence Hall, the bar is high! For instance, according to the STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) Literacy Assessment, Level 6 is the reading goal for the end of first grade, and Level 4 is the reading goal for the end of kindergarten. But at Resurgence Hall, our goal for the end of kindergarten is Level 6. Why wouldn't we aim higher? For the national math assessment NWEA map, we aim for the 90th percentile. Our children rise to these levels!

Raising the bar begins with our youngest students. Resurgence Hall is the first school in Georgia to have a computer science curriculum that starts in kindergarten. In today's world, kids need to understand computer science and design thinking, or else they'll lose access to half of the opportunities available to them as adults.

I understand that my students will be held to a higher bar, unjustly so, than their white counterparts. How are my decisions preparing them for the future we know exists? To help

address this, we offer high-school counseling (similar to college counseling), where we educate seventh-grade students and their parents about their school choice in Atlanta. Atlanta has some nationally recognized independent schools, in different fields and specialties. We build awareness of these, telling parents they should consider these just as much as magnet schools. And we support our families through the entire process, helping them to submit applications, offering interview practice, tutoring students for entry exams and state tests, and more.

SHARED EXPERIENCE OFFERS OPPORTUNITY

When I see my girl students, I see me. When I see my boy students, they're not like other people's children. They're like my boys. Our kids are charged with building up the legacy of our shared ancestors, our shared communities.

Having a shared experience with the community I serve also impacts my small decisions in a way that adds up. For example, as a black woman, I know the power and stories behind black hair. I am respectful of that. I would not put in a restrictive policy on how students express themselves with hair.

There are challenges awaiting our children that only adults from similar backgrounds can help them navigate. There is innate value, innate shared experience, when you and your children are the same.

Resurgence Hall Charter School

Location	Atlanta, GA
Year Opened	2016
Student enrollment	275
Grades served	K-8
Website	www.resurgencehall.org



Student Demographics

Black/African-American	98%
Hispanic/Latino	3%
Two or More Races	1%
Homeless Youth	2%
FRL	79%
Special Education	3%
ESL Students	1%



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