

Malika Sanders



Malika Sanders is definitely a champion of resistance. In 1989, she was so upset about her school's racist tracking system that she and some other students united with parents to change it. Her high school in Selma, AL, only placed white students into the top tracking levels, even though the school was 80% black. Most teachers were white and often racist, making it difficult for intelligent black students to be in the highest tracking group. Many students felt this was unfair and a form of segregation. Their school board, those who do the decision making, was not integrated either. There had never been an African American person on the school board.

When Malika was 16 she co-founded the organization Student Movement Against Racial Tracking (SMART). The organization pulled together to take over the school for five days. They wanted to make sure their voice was heard and it was. The tracking system was changed, as well as the school board.

SMART is not the only organization Malika has led. She did not just stop with SMART. After the tracking system was done away with, many students were often illegally kicked out of school. Malika fought for those students. She thought they had a right to an education. For this purpose she co-developed The Learning House to teach these students. She also led outcries during the Rodney King beatings in 1992.

Sanders is currently leading students by directing the Twenty-First Century Youth Leadership. In this program she trains youth to be good leaders. There are many chapters across the southern U.S. and even in Africa. Her motivation and dedication to making a difference is incredible. She truly makes a difference and teaches others about resistance everyday.