

Touring the Impact of Katrina on Education in Louisiana

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An ethnographic look of the impact of disasters on the education system; specifically, the 2005 disasters in the New Orleans and St. Bernard parishes, in Louisiana. The purpose is to: (a) gain insight and awareness into what is currently happening in the county and their educational profession, (b) analysis of proposed reorganization of school system in a bottom-up system, (c) connect to present disaster relief and outreach programs that exist in Florida's educational system.

Of the 68,800 students previously enrolled in New Orleans and St. Bernard's parishes, the heaviest hit districts, only 9,930 have returned. This presentation discusses the implications for rebuilding the school system. As educators it is important to understand the process of a displaced community to be able to better receive students displaced, prepare for similar circumstances in ones own community, and to ask oneself what am I doing to help.

Surveying proposed re-organization of the school system awakens possibilities to new curriculum design/implementation that has never been seen or tried before. The community is nurturing ideas that will reinvent their old methodologies. However, plans and ideas need money and pioneers to clear the path. The presentation looks at both the positives and negatives of the new policies. In an educational community previously known for social and economic injustice, will it actually be possible to reinvent themselves.

Touring the disaster through different perspectives helps to gain a full picture of what one can not gain from merely the media. This informational and pictorial presentation steps inside the disaster affected districts of Louisiana. Teachers perspective is discussed on moving on, returning to the community, and retiring all together. Student's perspectives are also discussed; covering trauma counseling and getting back to normalcy.

This is a proposal for research in which further studies must be done to fully grasp what will take place as the situation progresses. As Floridians it important to be aware of this progression because we are in a Hurricane threatened area. The presentation connects locally to Florida's preparedness.