



Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton County

Property Tax Appeals

Best Practices

Advocacy and Education

APS Series Vol. 2, April 2010

A stylized, grayscale illustration of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings, overlaid on a background of a road with white lane markings and a street sign.

An Update on Massive Test Cheating in Atlanta Public Schools: Wasting Time, Effort & Money!

The Problem

On February 10, 2010, the Governor's Office Of Student Achievement reported that massive wrong-to-right erasures occurred in 37 of Atlanta's 55 elementary schools (67% of the total elementary schools) on the State Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT), the annual achievement tests in grades one through eight. In 37 elementary schools, "severe levels" of wrong to right erasures were found; six Atlanta middle schools were found to have "severe levels" of wrong-to-right erasures and another 15 Atlanta schools showed a "moderate" level of wrong-to-right erasures.

The Delay, Procrastination & Costs

A month and a half of activity has been consumed by the Atlanta Board of Education to appoint the Atlanta Education Fund, by the Fund appointing the Blue Ribbon Commission, and the Blue Ribbon Commission hiring the commercial firm Caveon Test Security, to investigate the massive cheating proven by "severe levels" of wrong-to-right erasures. Yet, the Blue Ribbon Commission includes such Pro-APS members as LaChandra Butler Burks, Chair of the Atlanta School Board, Curley Dossman, Co-Chair of EduPAC, the political action committee for APS Board Members of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, etc.

Instead of looking at the evidence of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement and confirming the evidence, the Blue Ribbon Commission appointed the commercial firm Caveon Test Security and, in addition, the Chairman of the Blue Ribbon Commission, Gary Price, a partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers, and other Commission members, proposed involving Deloitte or KPMG and a law firm in the investigation. This suggests months and months and millions of dollars of costs, although the Atlanta Education Fund is attempting to privately fund these unnecessary, costly and time-consuming efforts. State officials advise School Districts they would be allowed to see students' actual answer sheets but under severe restrictions, including a viewing deadline of March 31st.

An Alternative Approach That Saves Time, Effort & Money

There are members of the Blue Ribbon Commission who have achieved unusual success in the private sector, men and women who could verify the massive erasure cheating immediately and save time, effort, and huge funding:

Ingrid Saunders Jones, Senior V.P., Coca Cola, John Rice, Vice-Chairman, GE, Dr. Beverly Tatum, President, Spelman College, Milton Jones, retired President of Bank of America, Georgia, etc. After all, the investigative work on the cheating has already been done by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement; what remains is verification of the massive erasure cheating by reputable and ethical professionals, such as Ingrid Saunders Jones, John Rice, Beverly Tatum, Milton Jones, etc.

2010 CRCT Occurs In April (Next Month)!

It is imperative that APS ensure secure conditions for the 2010 CRCT tests which children will take in April. APS should arrange for independent observers at the schools and other means to prevent interference. When the results are in, straightforward comparisons with last year's results will reveal to everyone whether massive cheating occurred in 2009.

What Is Demanded By The Taxpayers

In Fiscal Year 2009, the Atlanta Public Schools received \$460 million from the property taxes; in Fiscal Year 2010, as of March 21st, the Atlanta Public Schools received \$515 million. Additional funding by the State of Georgia is 122,184,406, plus a 1% Special Sales Tax of \$92,000,000. The total revenues of the Atlanta Public Schools, with an enrollment of 49,752 students, is over \$13,000 per student!

The problem of massive cheating is of great concern to the Taxpayers Foundation. The Foundation has interviewed eight Atlanta Public Schools elementary teachers who would talk only on the assurance of anonymity. All eight informed me that the pressure by their Principals and Assistant Principals to increase test scores was "constantly intense on a daily basis." Interestingly, the teachers did not have access to the test papers which were collected by each school's Assistant Principal. Massive cheating through tens of thousands of wrong-to-right erasures could not have been done without the knowledge of each cheating school's Principal and Assistant Principal.

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Massive cheating under intense pressure by a School Administration is extremely damaging and harmful to the students and their parents and the taxpayers who fund the school district. If massive cheating is confirmed by a majority of the Blue Ribbon Commission, the Superintendent, Dr. Beverly Hall, together with her Senior Staff, should resign or be fired by the Atlanta School Board, and the Principals and Assistant Principals of every school where massive cheating has been found and confirmed, should be fired summarily. The Board will then need to recruit a Superintendent from a respected system, someone with the ability to repair the profound damage that has occurred. Atlanta's young people need real educational reform, not the public relations magic that we have endured for the past decade.

John S. Sherman

President, Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation



**Did you receive a healthy
reduction for 2010?**



*Would you like that value to be locked-in
for 3 years?*



**Let the FCTF handle your 2010 Appeal!
Send us your Notice of Reassessment and
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***Unite the Fight To Bring Better Government
to Atlanta and Fulton County!***

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Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton County

***Cordially Invites You
To Our Luncheon at the Cherokee Club,
155 W. Paces Ferry Road at Noon,
April 27th, 2010***



**Representative
David Ralston
Speaker of the House
*Will speak on this year's
legislative session and the
challenges facing Georgians
due to budget cuts***

***Will property taxes increase??
Transportation?? Education??***

Ticket Price: \$50.00. Admission price includes
3-course lunch and valet parking.

Space is limited!

Order tickets online <http://fctf.org>
via phone **404-869-6066**, or send a check payable
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Cherokee Club, Atlanta

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