



# Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

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

August 2011

## College Deans of Top Georgia Schools Offer Turnaround Plan for Atlanta Public Schools September 10th, 10am-12pm



# Turning Around the Atlanta Public Schools

For Atlanta taxpayers, the largest portion of property taxes goes towards Atlanta Public Schools (APS). It is therefore reasonable and justifiable that the Taxpayers Foundation take the lead in dealing with the development of a professional Turn-around Plan for APS.

Sadly, the recent State Investigation report clearly shows that these huge tax revenues have been misspent over the last ten years. In addition, the National Center for Education Statistics indicates that APS, after adjusting for the cheating, is in the lowest 10 percentile of urban school districts; less than 10% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders are proficient in the 2010 NAEP math test; 49% of students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade fail to graduate from Atlanta high schools; of those who do graduate and attend local universities, 58% need remediation in Math, Reading & Science; many of the teachers, principals and staff are demoralized.

Unless this assessment is turned around, the Atlanta taxpayers will continue to have their tax dollars wasted, businesses will by-pass Atlanta, and 79% of the children will continue to live in poverty.

To develop a highly professional Turn-around Plan, the Taxpayers Foundation has conceived of an innovative approach towards helping APS: the Foundation has been in close contact with the Deans and Associate Deans of the leading Colleges of Education in the State. These leading educators have agreed to participate in an Education Forum where each educator would propose a significant component toward a non-binding Turn-Around Plan. **This Education Forum will take place on Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 10AM-Noon, at the Loudermilk Center, 40 Courtland Street, centrally located near the bus stop on Auburn Avenue, the MARTA station at Five-Points, and the Edgewood Exit of I-75. The event is free to the public.**

**The following educators have agreed to participate:**

- **Dr. Gwendolyn Benson, Associate Dean, College of Education, Georgia State University**
- **Dr. Allison Gilmore, Associate Dean, Tift College of Education, Mercer University**
- **Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia**
- **Dr. Sean Warner, Dean, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University**

In meeting with the Deans and Associate Deans on several occasions, I am pleased at their confidence in crafting a highly professional Turn-around Plan to help APS meet its many challenges. Here is a preliminary look at the progress to date:

**Evaluation of All Students:** In view of the State Investigation Report that massive test cheating had been taking place as far back as 2001, it is clear to all the Deans and Associate Deans that large numbers of APS students have been promoted under false pretense to grades where they are simply unqualified to pass. The Deans and Associate Deans feel that all APS students should be professionally evaluated and, based on evaluations, placed in their rightful grade.

**“Every Child Can Learn”:** Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia will address the fact that “Every Child Can Learn” provided the child has qualified teachers with expertise in the subject being taught. Dr. Horne states that “APS has many dedicated teachers, but many are teaching outside their range of expertise, especially in the area of Math and Science. Given the shortage of teachers who have degrees in Math and Science, many urban school districts have been hiring university graduates who have actually majored in Math or Science, put them through a short ‘boot camp’ like Teach for America, and use their content expertise to drive learning.”

**Quality Leadership:** This will be addressed by Dr. Allison Gilmore, Associate Dean, Tift College of Education, Mercer University. Dr. Gilmore feels that those in APS central leadership positions must raise the expectations of acceptable performance for themselves, for local school leaders, and for classroom teachers. **Teachers in low-performing schools need quality leadership within their schools, consistent support and genuine commitment from the community, and appropriate resources from the system in order to raise the level of student achievement. No system improves if sub-standard performance is allowed to masquerade as acceptable because of low expectations.** Students who graduate from APS must be qualified to succeed in high quality colleges and universities, rather than needing to enroll in remedial classes. **Current data indicates that 58% of incoming freshman who have graduated from APS must enroll in remedial classes in Math, Reading, Science and Writing. That is simply not acceptable.** Local universities can help by providing content expertise, academic support, and professional development for teachers and leaders within APS schools. Lastly, according to Dr. Gilmore, “We need to remember that this is actually all about the children who depend on APS for a quality education. These children need to know that the adults in their schools and in the community are serious about improving their academic performance in order to prepare them for lives as productive and educated citizens.”

**Community Engagement:** This will be addressed by Dr. Gwendolyn Benson, Associate Dean, College of Education, Georgia State University. APS has a very high percentage of students – 72% - living in single-parent households. Without after-school supervision, many of these youngsters watch TV, roam the streets, or worse. Dr. Benson states that **each of these single-parent children needs a “study coach”**, someone who can be a role model to a single-parent child day-after-day, week-after-week, year-after-year. To prevent the single-parent child from watching TV, roaming the streets, or worse, Dr. Benson feels that **APS should assume the role of surrogate parent from 3PM until 6PM when the mothers return home from work.** The supervised activities should include at least one-hour homework, followed by supervised sports, hobby clubs, etc. To recruit thousands of “study coaches”, Dr. Benson speaks of engaging the private sector, university students, retirees, churches, and home-bound elderly. In addition, Dr. Benson feels that the private sector has a vested interest in improving APS. **After all, the private sector is the primary employer, and the deficiencies of the education process become the liability of the employer.**

**Overcoming Chronic Dropouts:** This will be addressed by Dr. Sean Warner, Dean, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University. Dr. Warner states that “overcoming the 49% dropouts requires emulating the highly successful program of teaching market-demand skills in the junior and senior high school years as has been done by Louisville-Jefferson County School District.” This program was started in 1979 and today includes such market-demand skills as Automation in Manufacturing, Automobile Technology, Construction Technologies, Culinary Arts, Innovating New Business, Health Care Technology (Bio Med, Dental Hygienists, MRI, Lab Technicians, Nurses, Therapy, etc.), and Paralegal, etc. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the students (together with parents) interested in learning a market-demand skill, attend a display of each skill offered, and select one that is of interest. The curriculum is adjusted to half-day classes and half-day skill-learning. This program reduced the dropout rate in the Louisville Public Schools System from 37% in 1979 to 6% today. Dr. Warner feels that such a **skills-learning program would not only reduce the chronic dropout rate in the Atlanta Public Schools System, but would also give the APS youngsters the skills needed for good paying jobs in the Atlanta market.**

**Other components for a Turn-around Plan will be addressed by the Deans and Associate Deans on September 10th, and, as a public service, the Taxpayers Foundation will publish a bound book for presentation to the Interim Superintendent Erroll Davis and the members of the Atlanta Board of Education.**

The parents, teachers, and administrators of APS students are cordially invited to attend on Saturday morning, 10AM-Noon, September 10<sup>th</sup>, at the Loudermilk Center, 40 Courtland Street. The Loudermilk Center is centrally located near the Auburn Avenue bus stop, close to the Courtland Street Metro station, and a short distance from the Edgewood Avenue I-75 exit.

**To register call (404) 923-9995, or the internet [www.fctf.org/Events.php](http://www.fctf.org/Events.php).**

John S. Sherman



President, Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

# Officers

**President:**  
John S. Sherman  
**Vice President:**  
Bob Irvin  
**Secretary:**  
Barbara Payne  
**Treasurer:**  
William E. Lane

**Board Chairman:**  
Joseph L. Kelly, Esquire

# Board of Directors

James Honkisz  
Former Senior Counsel  
Coca Cola Company

Ron Bell  
Bell Capital Management

Harold J. (Jay) Bowen, III  
President  
Bowen Hanes & Company

Bob Irvin  
Bridge Strategy Group

Marc Kanne, CPA  
Habif, Arogeti & Wynne LLP

Phil Kent  
Phil Kent Consulting

Joseph L. Kelly, Esquire  
Schulten, Ward & Turner

William E. Lane,  
President  
Welht Financial Systems, Inc.

John S. Sherman,  
Fmr. Mayor  
Bal Harbour, FL

# Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

309 E. Paces Ferry Rd NE,  
Suite 607

Atlanta, GA 30305

Phone: (404) 869-6066  
Hotline: (404) 923-9995  
Fax: (404) 869-6101

E mail: [fctf1@bellsouth.net](mailto:fctf1@bellsouth.net)  
[fctfmembership@yahoo.com](mailto:fctfmembership@yahoo.com)  
[propappeal@yahoo.com](mailto:propappeal@yahoo.com)

[www.fctf.org](http://www.fctf.org)

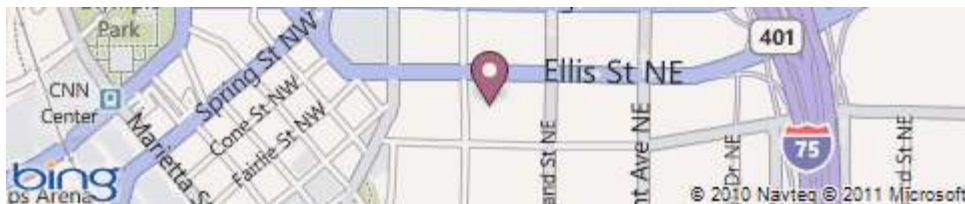
**Join US!**

**FREE TO THE PUBLIC!**

**September 10th, 10am-12pm**

**Loudermilk Regional Center**

**40 Courtland Street NE**



**Atlanta Public Schools is facing the greatest challenge in its history. Our children deserve a quality education. Parents want answers! Come listen to our distinguished panel of Leading Educators share their ideas and answer your questions on the future of APS.**

## Confirmed Panel of Leading Educators Include:

- Dr. Gwendolyn Benson, Associate Dean, College of Education, GSU
- Dr. Allison Gilmore, Associate Dean, Tift College of Education, Mercer U
- Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia
- Dr. Sean Warner, Dean, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University

**Audience members will have the chance to interact with the panelists. Food and drinks will be provided. Community organizations are welcome to table.**

**REGISTER TODAY!**

**404-923-9995 or**

**[www.fctf.org/Events.php](http://www.fctf.org/Events.php)**

***We fight for Fair Market Value!  
Let us help you reduce your property taxes!***

I need to **renew or join!** \$25 Senior \_\_\_ \$50 Family \_\_\_ \$100 Patron \_\_\_  
\$200 Corporate Sponsor \_\_\_ \$500 Corporate Sponsor \_\_\_ \$1000 Corporate Cham-  
pion \_\_\_ \$5000 Foundation Sponsor \_\_\_ \$10,000 Foundation Stakeholder \_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization