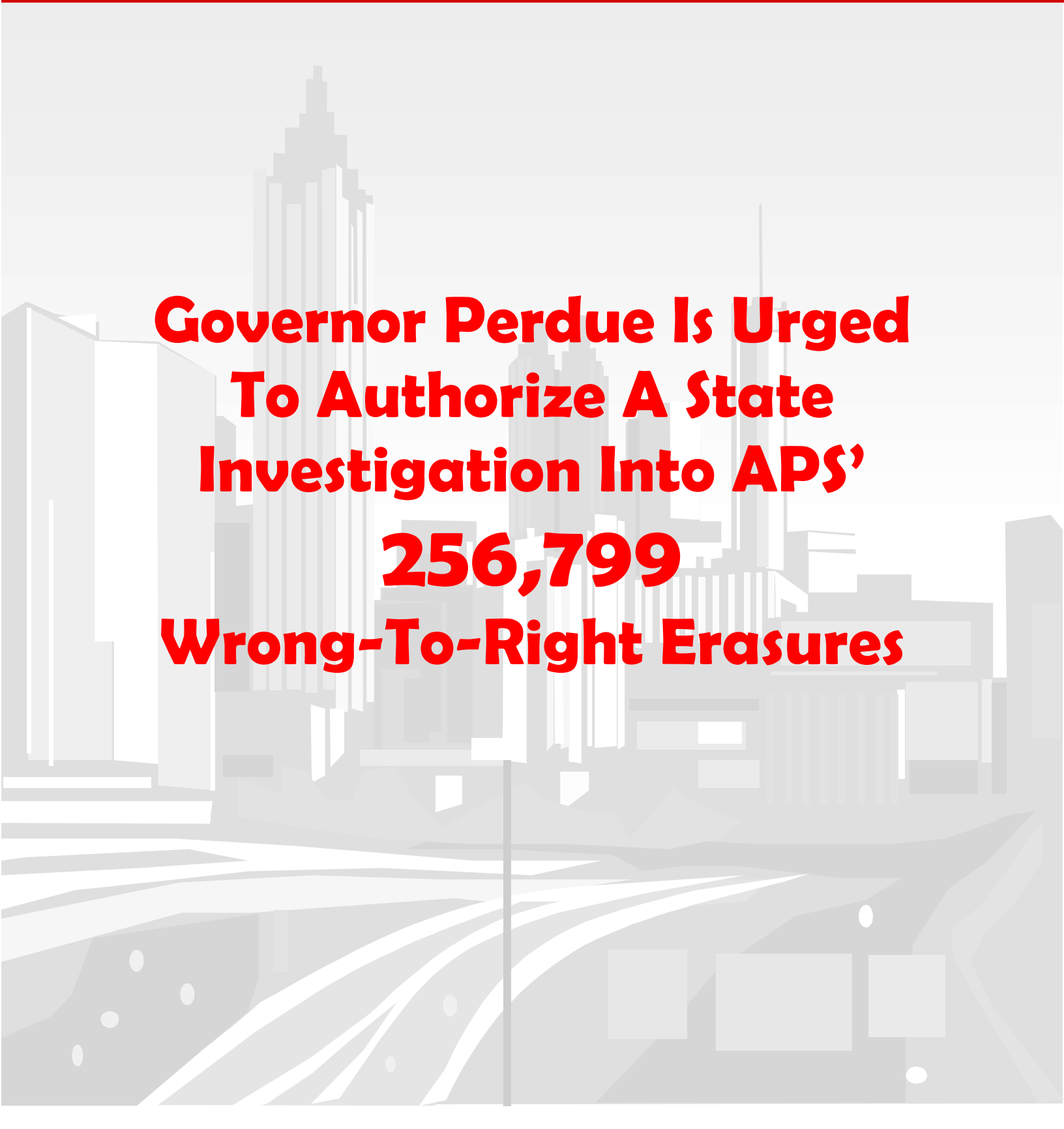




Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

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

APS Series Vol. 5, June 2010

A stylized, grayscale illustration of a city skyline with various skyscrapers and buildings, overlaid on a background of curved lines representing a road or highway. The text is centered over this graphic.

Governor Perdue Is Urged To Authorize A State Investigation Into APS' 256,799 Wrong-To-Right Erasures

Background – 2009 CRCT Scores

On February 10th, 2010, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement reported that 58 of Atlanta’s elementary and middle schools had a total of 256,779 wrong-to-right erasures in the CRCT (state achievement tests) given to Grades 1 -8 in 2009. For Grades 1 and 2, the tests are for Language Arts, Math, and Reading. For Grades 3-8, the tests are for Language Arts, Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies. Of the 58 Atlanta schools cited, 43 were classified as “severe number of erasures.”

Of the 256,779 wrong-to-right erasures, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement reports 15,323 wrong-to-right erasures in the 2009 test results for Math Grade 1 (six year olds); 15,176 wrong-to-right erasures for Math Grade 2 (seven year olds); 17,123 wrong-to-right erasures for Math Grade 3 (eight year olds).

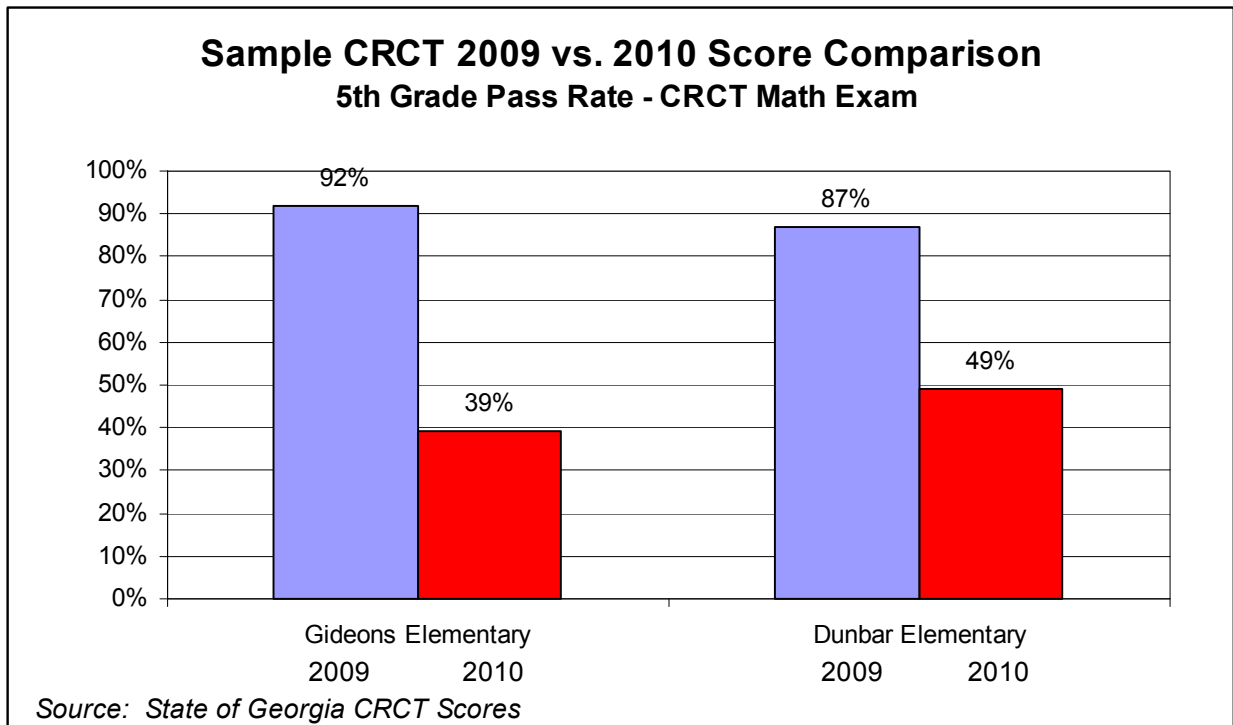
The sheer magnitude of the erasures – 256,779 – clearly indicate to any reasonable person that what occurred was apparently organized cheating on a massive scale.

Over four months later, June 8th, the following article appeared on the front page of the Metro Section of the AJC: “Schools in Crisis: Employees from 12 Atlanta schools will be referred for possible testing violations, according to the chairman of a community panel overseeing an investigation into possible cheating on state tests last year.” **What happened to the remaining 46 schools from the original February 10th report? Why were those schools eliminated from the investigation? This type of deceptive reporting only lends credit to the idea of corruption at APS.**

2010 CRCT Scores

The 2010 CRCT test results indicate a significant change compared to the 2009 scores. The Atlanta Journal Constitution’s analysis found that score drops in the 43 “severe” Atlanta schools drove up the district’s overall failure rate in Math, Reading, and English. The failure rates in these Atlanta schools rose 14 percentage points overall in math, 7 percentage points in reading, and 6 percentage points in English.

A more in-depth analysis comparing two Atlanta Elementary Schools (Gideons Elementary and Dunbar Elementary) is shown in the table below.



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APS in Denial:

Atlanta has been in denial about the poor performance of its public school system for at least a decade. A complacent business and government elite stonewalled all questions about test performances, graduation rates and bloated administrative expenses at the Atlanta Public Schools (APS). EDUPAC, the Metro Atlanta Chamber-linked interest group, insisting that all was well, succeeded in protecting school board incumbents who toed the Superintendent's line. The Board, perhaps more interested in placating the school administration than in delivering quality, cost-effective education, awarded the Superintendent with generous bonuses. The sad reality is finally coming out about the true test results, thanks to the independent review by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. This review appears to expose a pervasive culture of test cheating.

Evidence abounds that not all has been well in APS:

2001: The AJC reported that 30 out of 68 Atlanta elementary schools had gains of 30% or more in the State CRCT achievement tests. At that time, one of the APS Board members, Jean Dodd, teacher over a period of 30 years, expressed doubts. Neither Superintendent Hall nor the APS Board investigated all the facts and not one Principal or Assistant Principal was fired. Instead, Superintendent Hall attributed these unrealistic gains to "impressive leaps on school reform and better classroom strategies."

2005: A scandal concerning the misuse of federal funds for computer equipment was swept under the rug.

2009: What was the evidence that caused the argument between Superintendent Hall and Governor Perdue? The same problem of apparent cheating in the 2008 CRCT tests. Here, again, neither Superintendent Hall nor the APS Board investigated all the facts and not one Principal or Assistant Principal was fired. At that time, Superintendent Hall said she did not believe that "cheating was pervasive in the system." This comment drew a rebuke from Governor Perdue.

2010: Chronic Waste & Mismanagement: A reliable source inside the APS informs the Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation of several instances of waste and mismanagement including:

Hiring Practices: Robert Half International provides temp employees for APS involving hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. APS, in turn, has hired many of these temps as permanent employees. Hiring of temp workers from Robert Half International requires paying Robert Half a conversion fee of up to 20% of the workers' base salary. In the case of an Accounting Manager and Accounting Supervisor who were recently hired as permanent employees, these conversion fees were \$20,000 and \$15,500 respectively. While converting temps to permanent employees can be productive and cost-effective under certain circumstances, it is very expensive and adds to the already bloated APS fixed costs. This is especially troubling during the current recessionary environment when a variable cost structure should be encouraged.

Abnormally Low Spans of Control for Senior Level Managers: Accounting Supervisor and Grants Manager for example supervise either no employees or very few employees.

Absenteeism and Time Sheet Recording: Lack of coding or miscoding absenteeism on Time Sheets as "5" (Official School Business). A review of Time & Attendance records and emails as well as interviewing the APS time-keeper can substantiate attendance cheating. These records are available under the Open Records Request and should be carefully reviewed by an independent oversight committee.

Call to Action!

With the 2010 CRCT test score data results and the gross mismanagement of APS, Governor Perdue should immediately authorize a state investigation into the apparent system-wide cheating in the 256,779 wrong-to-right erasures in the 2009 CRCT tests and the system-wide mismanagement. **It is the right of the taxpayers** given that 52% of total property taxes go to APS. **The taxpayers and parents demand full accountability!**

Contact Governor Perdue's Office TODAY!

Governor Sonny Perdue
State of Georgia
203 State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

There is no direct email for the Governor, so please use this web page address to contact him directly:

http://gov.georgia.gov/00/gov/contact_us/0,2657,78006749_94820188,00.html

John S. Sherman



President

*Unite the Fight To Bring Better Government
to Atlanta and Fulton County!*

I enclose my annual membership of:

\$25 Senior _____ \$50 Family _____ \$100 Patron _____ \$200 Corporate _____ \$1000 Business Leader _____

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