



Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

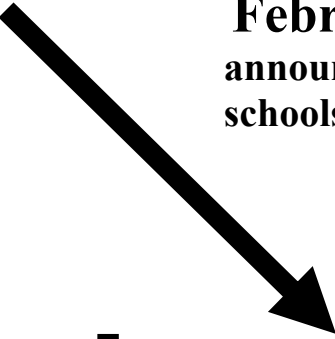
Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton County

November 2010-Special Edition

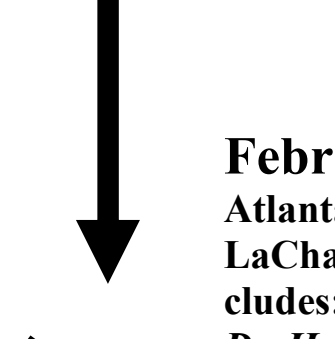
LaChandra Butler-Burks' Removal as Chair of the Atlanta Board of Education was Based on Conduct Unbecoming A Board Chair



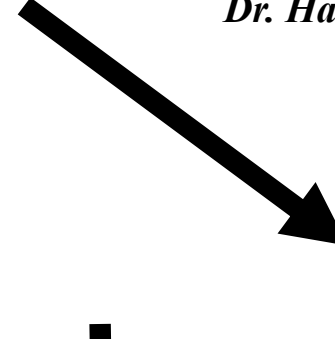
The decision to replace Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks was not made in an arbitrary manner. It was based on conduct unbecoming of the Chair of the Atlanta Board of Education. Here are the facts:



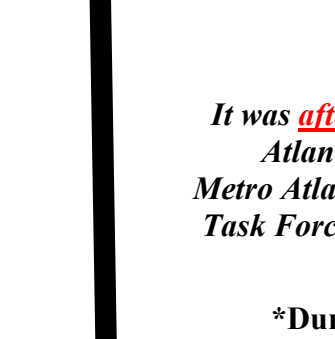
February 10th, 2010, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement announced that 256,779 wrong-to-right erasures occurred in 58 Atlanta schools in the 2009 state achievement tests known as "CRCT."



February 23rd and February 24th, then Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks – without the knowledge or approval of the Atlanta Board Of Education – met privately with Sam Williams, President of the Metro Atlanta Chamber and John Rice, Chairman of the Atlanta Education Fund, to plan and implement a course of action that is solely the function of the Atlanta Board of Education.



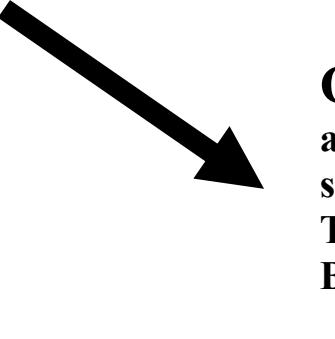
February 25th, In an email from Sam Williams, President of the Metro Atlanta Chamber, published in the AJC on August 18th, Then Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks was mentioned again and again. The email concludes: *"We will let the facts from this investigation guide us in our support of Dr. Hall."*



February 26th, then Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks was appointed by the Metro Atlanta Chamber as a member of the Chamber's Blue Ribbon Task Force formed by the Chamber to investigate the massive cheating. The first meeting of the Blue Ribbon Task Force was on March 3rd, with then Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks attending without the knowledge or approval of the Atlanta Board of Education.

*It was **after** then Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks met with the Metro Atlanta Chamber and the Atlanta Education Fund, **after** then Chairwoman La Chandra Butler-Burks was appointed by the Metro Atlanta Chamber as a member of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, **after** the first two meetings of the Task Force, did then Chairwoman La Chandra Butler-Burks finally inform the Atlanta Board of Education. By that time, it was too late for any input from the Atlanta Board of Education.*

During the investigation by Caveon Testing, the Atlanta Board of Education was not kept informed in any manner. It was only **after the Blue Ribbon report was completed that the members of the Board were informed. **In the words of one of the five-member majority, "In an effort to achieve honesty, transparency and accountability, it was deemed necessary to initiate a leadership change. Decisions were being made without the knowledge of the entire Board."***



On March 3rd, then Chairwoman LaChandra-Butler-Burks, as a member of the Blue Ribbon Task Force, cast her vote to commission the firm of Caveon Testing to investigate the massive cheating. This was done without the knowledge or the approval of the Atlanta Board of Education.

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As a direct result of the duplicitous actions of LaChandra Butler-Burks, the five-member majority of the Atlanta Board of Education – Khaatim El, Yolanda Johnson, Brenda Muhammad, Nancy Meister and Courtney English - voted on September 13th to remove her as Chairwoman, electing Khaatim El in her place, with Yolanda Johnson as Vice-Chairwoman. The reaction of the five-member majority of the Atlanta Board of Education was expressed by **Chairman Khaatim El: "I was shocked and floored to find out about the decision that had been made before this Board had a chance to formulate a plan about how we wanted to move forward."** I interviewed the five-member majority and each one assures me that they were unaware at the time that LaChandra Butler-Burks was meeting with Sam Williams in February and was appointed by Sam Williams to be a member of the Blue Ribbon Task Force.

→ August 20th the Governor rejected the Chamber's Blue Ribbon Task Force (then Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks was a member of this Task Force) report as **"inadequate and incomplete"** and authorized a State investigation of the 256,779 wrong-to-right erasures in 58 Atlanta Schools.

→ On October 7th, the U.S. Department of Justice announced a federal probe.

→ October 25rd, Dr. Mark Elgart, CEO, AdvancED, the parent organization of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the organization through which Atlanta accredits its high schools, issued a letter addressed to Dr. Beverly Hall, Superintendent of Atlanta Schools and, insultingly, to LaChandra Butler-Burks, "Chairperson, Atlanta Board of Education." The letter stated:

"The Board's continued failure to adhere to its policies, as well as state and local laws, clearly supports a determination that the Board of Education of the Atlanta Public Schools is not meeting AdvancED Standard 2 concerning Governance and Leadership. If the Board does not take corrective action to come in full compliance with AdvancED Standard 2 by December 1, 2010, the Accreditation Division of AdvancED will make a recommendation to the AdvancED Georgia Council and the AdvancED Accreditation Commission concerning the accreditation status of the Atlanta Public Schools."

In a lawsuit instituted by LaChandra Butler-Burks and her three colleagues, Cecily Harsch-Kinnane, Emmett Johnson and Reuben McDaniel, Superior Court Judge John J. Goger, at a hearing on October 29th, declined to reinstate LaChandra Butler-Burks as Chairwoman.

November 23rd, the final hearing will take place.

Conclusion

The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation has closely followed this crisis since February 10th when the Governor's Office of Student Compliance announced "256,779 wrong-to-right erasures occurred in 58 Atlanta Schools during the 2009 state achievement (CRCT) tests." The Foundation has consistently called for a State and Federal investigation of the massive cheating.

The Taxpayers Foundation strongly feels that the five-member majority of the Atlanta Board of Education removed Chairwoman LaChandra Butler-Burks for conduct unbecoming a Chair. In the event that Judge Goger confirms his refusal to reinstate LaChandra Butler Burks, Chairman Khaatim El must be recognized as the Chairman of the Atlanta Board of Education, with the authority to sign Board-approved documents and speak on behalf of the Board. If, Judge Goger so rules, **Dr. Mark Elgart, CEO, AdvancED, the parent organization of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools - should publicly apologize for his ill-advised letter of October 25, 2010, threatening the Atlanta Public Schools with de-accreditation.**

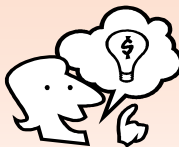
Finally, with the on-going State and Federal investigations into the massive cheating, the Taxpayers Foundation feels that **the Board should select a Search Firm to locate the best-qualified urban school Superintendent to implement the recommendations of the State and Federal investigations, and lead the children of the Atlanta Public Schools in the achievement of higher academic performance.**

John Sherman, President



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