



Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation

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

Special APS Edition July 2011

“Suffer the Children” *The Amazing Investigation of Atlanta Public Schools*



The Amazing Investigation of the Atlanta Public Schools

The 813-page State investigation of the Atlanta Public Schools is an amazing investigation of the largest systemic cheating scandal in the history of U.S. public education. On August 26, 2010, Governor Perdue appointed Michael Bowers, former State Attorney General, Richard L. Hyde, Professional Investigator, and Robert E. Wilson, former District Attorney for DeKalb County, to investigate the 256,779 wrong-to-right erasures that had occurred in 56 Atlanta public schools.

With the aid of 112 investigators - 61 from the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, 17 from the Georgia Information Sharing & Analysis Center, 9 from the Georgia State Patrol, 9 from the law firm of Balch & Bingham, 6 from the law firm of Wilson, Morton & Downs, 4 from the Office of State Inspector General, 2 from the District Attorney, Atlanta Judicial Circuit, and 2 from the Solicitor General, DeKalb County - the 813-page State Report proves without a reasonable doubt that “178 teachers and principals in the Atlanta Public Schools System cheated.” **The Taxpayers Foundation is compelled to express the deepest appreciation and gratitude of every Atlanta taxpayer to Michael Bowers, Richard Hyde and Robert Wilson and the 112 investigators for their brilliant Report.**

What Should Follow?

1. **The 178 Teachers and Principals Should Be Indicted:** The 813-page State Report has detailed the involvement of the 178 teachers and principals involved in the largest cheating scandal in the history of public education in America. To his credit, Interim Superintendent Erroll Davis has demanded the resignation or termination of these 178 teachers and principals. That type of leadership is highly commendable and deeply appreciated by every parent. The Taxpayers Foundation strongly urges Paul Howard, Jr., District Attorney of Fulton County and Robert James, Jr., District Attorney of DeKalb County to consider indicting these 178 for altering (256,779 wrong-to-right erasures) evidence, lying to investigators, or obstructing justice. Altering evidence or lying to investigators is a felony with punishment up to 10 years in jail, while obstructing justice is a misdemeanor with punishment up to one-year in prison.
2. **Urging the District Attorneys to Present as a Priority to the Grand Jury the Evidence for indictments of Beverly Hall and her Cabinet:** Every Atlanta taxpayer should urge District Attorney Paul Howard to present, as a priority, to the Grand Jury the evidence, contained in the State Report, for indicting Beverly Hall, former Superintendent, Kathy Augustine former Deputy Superintendent; Millicent Few; Director, Human Resources; Veleter Mazyck, General Counsel; Tamara Cotman, former Area Superintendent; Michael Pitts and Sharon Davis-Williams, former Area Superintendents. According to the State Report, Beverly Hall and her Cabinet “falsified, misrepresented or erroneously reported the evaluation of students to the State Department of Education, failed to investigate allegations of cheating, and provided false information to the investigators.” Again, to the credit of the Interim Superintendent, Erroll Davis, I am very pleased that he has fired the Director of Human Resources, the General Counsel, and the three Area Superintendents.
3. **A Follow-Up Investigation Of The “Cover-Up” Role Of The Metro Atlanta Chamber and the Atlanta Education Fund:** The State Report devoted page 401 and a small portion of page 402 to “The Business Community.” The Taxpayers Foundation feels that the “cover up” tactics of the Metro Atlanta Chamber and the Atlanta Education Fund should be fully revealed. It is for this reason that there must be a follow-up investigation of the role of the business community. Sam Williams, Renay Blumenthal, John Rice, and others should be held accountable for their roles in trying to suppress an accurate investigation of the cheating.

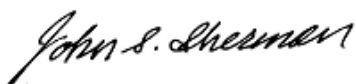
It was Sam Williams, President of the Metro Atlanta Chamber, in his February 26, 2010 email, who orchestrated the sham investigation for the purpose of letting “the facts from this investigation guide us in our support of Dr. Hall.” It was Renay Blumenthal, Executive V.P., Metro Atlanta Chamber, who urged that the Blue Ribbon cover-up report be “finessed to pass Governor Perdue’s approval.” It was John Rice who defended Beverly Hall after the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement announced the massive cheating. The firm selected by the Metro Atlanta Chamber to investigate the massive cheating, Caveon, issued a report that the State Investigation described as “flawed and which understated the potential for cheating.”

4. [Governor Deal Should Dismiss LaChandra Butler-Burks As A Member of the Atlanta Board of Education.](#) LaChandra Butler-Burks collaborated with Sam Williams--without the knowledge or approval of the Atlanta Board of Education - in the white-washing of the CRCT cheating. The State Report, on page 394, states "LaChandra Butler-Burks insisted that she serve on the (Metro Atlanta Chamber's) Blue Ribbon Commission even though several members of the Commission believed this could compromise the public's perception of the independence of this body." The Atlanta Board of Education was not informed of this until three months later when the Blue Ribbon Commission report was issued. This report was rejected by Governor Perdue as "incomplete and lacking in full detail of the extent of the cheating."
5. [Assembling The Educational Leaders of the State To Make Recommendations For The Components Of A Non-Binding-Turnaround Plan for APS:](#) During the past several months, I have met several times with the Deans and Associate Deans of the major Colleges of Education in the State of Georgia. Each has agreed to participate in an Education Forum to recommend critical components of a non-binding Turnaround Plan for the Atlanta Public Schools. Dr. Allison Gilmore, Associate Dean, Tift College of Education would like to address Quality Leadership from the APS Superintendent level to the APS teachers and principals. Dr. Gwendolyn Benson, Associate Dean, Georgia State University, would like to address how APS can best engage the community to provide “study coaches” for the very large number of single-parent students and to provide supervised after-school activities for the single-parent students. Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia, would like to address overcoming the culture of cheating that has been prevalent in APS. Dr. Sean Warner, Dean, School of Education, Clark Atlanta University, would like to suggest proven programs to overcome APS’s very high dropout rate. The Fulton County Taxpayers Foundation has reported all of this to the Interim Superintendent Erroll Davis. The Foundation has suggested holding an Education Forum for these educational leaders to fully express their recommendations.

“Suffer The Children”

The State Report begins with the sentence “Thousands of school children were harmed by widespread cheating in the Atlanta Public Schools, systemic misconduct as far back as 2001.” The cheating occurred in grades 1-8. Many of these youngsters were likely promoted into grades in which they were simply unqualified. The result was frustration and shame, resulting in the highest dropout rate in the State, 51% of those entering 9th grade in the APS never graduated. This drop-out rate prevailed from 2001 to 2010, the years that the State Report proved that massive cheating occurred. **Many of these former APS dropouts are leading lives of poverty, destitution, and crime, attributable to Beverly Hall’s “culture of fear and conspiracy of silence.”**

John Sherman, President



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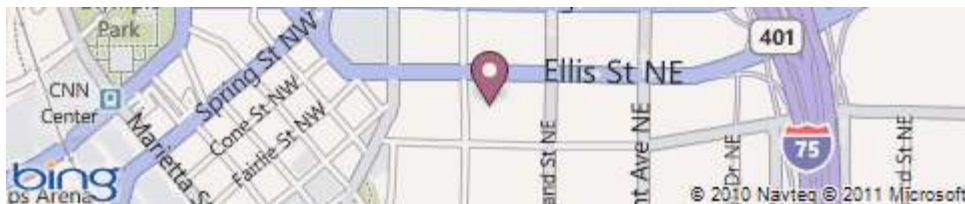
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Join US!

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. Myra Burnett, Acting, Chair, Educational Studies, Spelman College
- Dr. Allison Gilmore, Associate Dean, Tift College of Education, Mercer U
- Dr. Arthur Horne, Dean, College of Education, University of Georgia
- Dr. Robert Jensen, Chair, Educational Studies, Emory University
- Dr. Beth Roberts, Chair, Educational Studies, Oglethorpe University
- 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!

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