

July 29, 2020

To The Citizens Of Flint and Genesee County:

I am reading this letter in your hearing because the Flint Community Schools (FCS) are still in dire need of your help. This correspondence is an update to the letter dated January 10, 2020.

Two of the initial concerns as stated in the January 10, 2020 letter were:

(1) The method and the manner that the Genesee Intermediate School District (GISD) devised was a **Blended Student Count Formula** (as detailed in the first letter), to distribute their ACT 18 Millage Funds, which adversely affects the Flint Community Schools (FCS), as the FCS student count has decreased significantly, greatly exacerbated by the Flint Water Crisis.

The FCS has a potential student pool of 15,000, yet only 3,750 children attended FCS as of the 2018-19 school year, because of understandable parental concerns created by the perfect storm of aging facilities, decreasing tax base, safety and health concerns, and lack of stable leadership.

This smaller number of students notwithstanding, depending on the measurement used, between 22 and 28 percent of the 3,750 students have special education needs - again, greatly precipitated by the environmental poisoning induced by the FLINT WATER CRISIS.

Stated again, the inclusion of NON-SPECIAL EDUCATION POPULATION, as rendered by the GISD'S **Blended Student Count Formula**, skews the numbers in favor of schools who have LESS THAN HALF of the Special Education population of the FCS, such as the Grand Blanc Community School District.

NOTE: NO OTHER ISD IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN CURRENTLY DEPLOYS THE ACT 18 MODEL IN THIS DUBIOUS MANNER...

(2) The GISD Special Education Fund and the GISD Special Education Capital Projects Fund. Monies (as detailed in the first letter) are sitting in these funds that can be used to address the dire needs of the children.

Because of these findings, community activists, concerned citizens, and pastors began to frequently attend the GISD meetings that were open to the public, asking salient questions, and raising legitimate concerns. As a result, the local news media began to pay attention. This convergence of events caused other parties to become involved, including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

The ACLU filed suit, which caused the ACT 18 Administrative Hearing - available to the public - to take place on July 13th through the 15th, where additional information came forth regarding the GISD'S unfair implementation of ACT 18 and how the GISD receives monies.

The Administrative Judge, presiding over the hearing, Judge Michael St. John, said on July 15th, as he was speaking with Dr. Lisa Hagel, the Superintendent of the GISD (ALL QUOTES ARE VERBATIM), "...When we add all the numbers together, the (Special Education) FTE (Full-Time Equivalencies) gets dwarfed..."

Judge St. John continued, "...2 percent of your (Special Education) FTE's are getting reimbursed, 11.5 percent of your headcount is getting reimbursed, and 85.5 percent of your **general** is getting reimbursed.."

He said further, "The Act 18 money under this formula is reimbursing the actual education of students in SPECIAL ED classrooms at 2 percent of the money..."

Judge St. John then asked this significant question to the GISD Superintendent: "If the three components ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT, then why is the formula set up 85.5, 11.5, and 2, rather than 33, 33, 33?" The GISD Superintendent's brief answer was, "...that is the way the superintendents want the formula set up."

Shortly thereafter, Judge St. John continued his discourse with Dr. Hagel, "...that formula of 85.5 to 11.5 to 2 percent reimbursement SEEMS UNFAIR. Does that seem unfair to you, as an expert in special education?" Her response: "No, because it's distributed - equally - to every district in the same manner." The GISD Superintendent's pat answer conveniently ignores the present-day realities facing the Flint community.

During her testimony, the GISD Superintendent DID NOT (or would not) acknowledge the Flint Water Crisis as the exponential factor contributing to the increased number of special education students for the FCS. The GISD Superintendent said at least three times, that the FCS was 'JUMPING' and LEAPING' - her words - to place children into the FTE special education programs. The GISD Superintendent seems determined to ignore the long-term effects and ramifications of the Flint Water Crisis upon THE CHILDREN OF FLINT.

Through the discovery process of the PUBLIC administrative hearing (which the GISD superintendent attempted, through her legal representation, to make the hearing A CLOSED SESSION - to keep from the citizens of Genesee County), it was 'discovered' and uncovered- that there are additional monies available in the GISD's coffers - in addition to the funds previously mentioned in the January 10, 2020 letter - to help the children of Flint - RIGHT NOW.

Throughout the course of the public meetings held by the GISD, and the administrative hearings that just took place, the crutch of justification that the GISD has repeatedly leaned on, is the 'legality' of their method and manner of implementation of the ACT 18 policy.

Please note that while a particular law or statute is 'legal', does not mean that the statute is moral, fair, or just. We cite the historic Jim Crow laws as examples. As it relates to ACT 18, as implemented by the GISD, this is the 21st Century FUNDING EQUIVALENT of Jim Crow - affecting our Flint children in need of special education - truly, 'the least of these' - by race AND class. And, if we do not act, we are setting up our Flint children for another 21st Century Jim Crow phenomenon - the SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE.

After the administrative hearing, we are hopeful that the FCS and the GISD will seriously heed Judge St. John's recommendation - to attempt to work out an equitable settlement - without the judge having to render a final decree. And, we're also hopeful that the local news media will continue to shine a bright light on this ongoing GISD - FCS saga, which is paramount for our children, so our children can have a beacon of hope - for the future of Flint. We're asking the local media to provide at least as much coverage as was provided for the violent events of this past weekend. We as a community are tired of the, "if it bleeds, it leads" news reporting syndrome - all-too common pertaining to the city of Flint.

Now to address an 'elephant in the room' - as it relates to the tenuous relationship between the GISD and the FCS - which seems to be one of the major reasons why the GISD feels justified maintaining their rigid stance. Now that we have a new Superintendent for the Flint Community Schools, a home-grown educator who has risen through the ranks to assume the role - hopefully for many years to come - perhaps there can be a healing of the rift between the GISD and the FCS. Because, at this critical juncture for the future of Flint AND Genesee County, we're requesting that the GISD and the FCS set aside their differences and do what's RIGHT for the

children of FLINT - starting with correcting the GISD'S method of implementing the ACT 18 monies - making it a fair and just formula for 'the least of these' - our Flint children.

As stated in the previous letter, this letter is representative of a group of pastors, activists, and concerned citizens, who have decided to put aside their differences to fight for our children and our school system. We are fighting for the viability of our school system, and we are fed up with discriminatory policies and practices - however 'legal' some of them may be - that fuel the demise of our children - OUR FUTURE - and our school system.

January 10, 2020

To Our Honorable Elected Official:

You are receiving this correspondence because the Flint Community Schools is in dire need of your help. As you know numerous schools have closed down in recent years, the FCS has lost significant population, and is currently in financial distress. We believe the Water Crisis is a significant factor in this reality. Therefore, you are receiving this correspondence to serve as an official request/demand that you do everything within your power and the authority the people have given you, including us, to help us overcome these daunting challenges.

There are numerous issues that need to be addressed, but in this document, we will only name a few.

1. The method and manner that GISD and the County Superintendents use to determine dispersement of Act 18 Millage funds for Special Education Students. They currently use a Blended Student Count formula:

$$\begin{aligned}
& \text{Special Education Full-time Equivalency (Need Full Time Teachers)} \\
& + \\
& \text{Special Education Headcount (Those who need full and part time teachers)} \\
& + \\
& \text{Total Full-time Equivalency (The entire student population at the school)} \\
& = \\
& \text{Answer}
\end{aligned}$$

This total number is then divided by three, which determines the Blended Student Count, which determines the amount of funds that go to that particular school for Special Education students. The inclusion of non-Special Education population skews the numbers in favor of schools who have less than half of the Special Education population of Flint Community Schools. For example, Grand Blanc has less than half the Special Education population of Flint, but they receive roughly twice as much funding. No other GISD's in the state currently use this dubious model.

We believe the current method of determining how these funds will be dispersed in unfair, immoral, and unethical, especially in lieu of the Water Crisis. It is a tool to ensure funding is redirected from Flint Community Schools to outlying county schools, while Flint Community Schools continue to be devastated by the Water Crisis, population loss, and unfair policies an practices. We believe dispersement for Special Education students should be based solely on the number of Special Education students each school has, not including the general population. We need your immediate attention to this matter to ensure the Special Education students in Flint are being treated fairly, and the school system has the resources to do so. We need your help in changing this unfair formula!

2. The GISD Special Education Fund and the GISD Special Education Capital Projects fund.

As of June 2018, the Special Education Fund had approximately an \$11,510,391 balance. The Special Education Capital Projects Fund had approximately an \$11,738,845 balance. Our request is, after the formula has been changed to a more fair representation of Special Education population at each school, that funds from these two accounts be dispersed amongst the GISD schools to use for their needs OR an amount to be determined is dispersed to Flint Community Schools only to aid them in overcoming their current hardships.

3. The Flint Community Schools needs assistance with debt relief and legacy debt. We also, need your help in securing additional funds at the local, county, state and federal levels to help Flint Community Schools overcome and alleviate these financial challenges.

We will not sit idly by and watch our Flint Community Schools continue to deteriorate without community intervention. We are determined to fight for the Flint City Schools and our children who are suffering through this process. This correspondence is not from the contact person listed below. This letter is representative of a group of pastors, activist, and citizens who have decided to put aside their differences and fight for our school system. We are fed up with unfair policies and practices that help fuel the demise of our children and our school system. This group would like to meet and discuss the contents of this letter with you as soon as possible. Please contact Dr. Herbert Miller II to set up a meeting.

Sincerely,

Contact Person:  
Dr. Herbert Miller II  
Pastor-Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle  
911 E Myrtle Ave, Flint MI 48505  
336-240-1634  
[drmilleri225@gmail.com](mailto:drmilleri225@gmail.com)