



**David A. Clarke Jr.**  
Sheriff

## Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office

# ***NEWS RELEASE***

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**2013 Sheriff of the Year**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Thornton's Departure Announced, Sheriff Calls for Barrett to Take Control of MPS**

**Milwaukee, WI** – Statement from Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. on the announcement of the departure of MPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Thornton from Milwaukee to Baltimore:

Upon hearing that Dr. Thornton will be leaving Milwaukee for Baltimore, it left me with bittersweet thoughts. On the sweet side, I say good for him. On the bitter side, we're losing a guy who knows what is needed here but who found himself up against a bureaucracy at MPS that avoids change like the plague, and one that refuses to adopt reforms that will close the black/white student achievement gap by drastically improving reading and math scores. Dr. Thornton was fighting uphill in an environment where learning has taken a back seat to the political interests of the teaching establishment.

I have gotten to know Dr. Thornton personally. I found him to be extremely competent. My personal impression is that he did not get the kind of support from the Mayor or anyone else at city hall that would have provided the political support to effect fundamental change in an archaic, status-quo, teaching establishment culture.

Dr. Thornton's departure provides Mayor Barrett with yet another opportunity to get deeply involved in an issue more important and urgent than a choo-choo trolley or fighting to keep city employees from their choice of where to live. That issue is the education of predominantly black and Hispanic students at MPS. It is time for Mayor Barrett to demonstrate leadership and take over control of MPS by seeking legislative changes in Madison and actively seeking public approval from parents and other stakeholders for this fundamental change.

That is a lot of heavy lifting, but it is what strong mayors in Chicago, New York, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere have done. We're mass producing illiteracy and ignorance with our K-12 public education in Milwaukee and spending \$1.2 billion a year to do it.

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This is a perfect opportunity for Mayor Barrett to go to the legislature and get mayoral control of the schools and select his own superintendent who reports to him. Barrett will have to move fast or the MPS School Board will fast-track a replacement. Is Mayor Barrett up to the task? Will Tom be bold and aggressive in leading here, or will we get the usual lamb-like "let's all play nice in the sandbox" behavior that has come to define his tenure as chief executive of Milwaukee?

***I have a vested interest in improving education at MPS. Education failure here is a critical risk factor for crime and violence. Kids who grow up uneducated or undereducated are at risk for being involved in crime and violence. This is a quality of life issue and a civil rights issue. We owe these kids a chance at life by reaching their God-given potential.***

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