

Milwaukee is Dying the Death of a Thousand Cuts: Is There a Doctor in the House?

As the signs of impending doom for the city of Milwaukee's black students continued to drip, drip, drip like a leaky faucet, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett went Christmas tree shopping on Friday. He was quoted as saying, "It's fun when you hear the saw starting to go, when they pick up the tree and then when they lay it carefully and correctly and nothing bad happens. This has been a really fun way to start the season." Oh brother, are we in trouble.

On November 8, the newspaper ran this headline, *Wisconsin ranks at bottom of U.S. in black students' reading, math scores*. In August, a newspaper story read, "*Only 2% of Milwaukee students of color (read "black") in the class of 2012 met all four benchmark ACT scores in math, reading, science and English.*" Let that sink in for a minute. Only two, t-w-o percent are capable of meeting minimum standards for being able to handle college level work.

In another newspaper story it was pointed out that ... *Milwaukee's MPS fourth-graders in math and reading on average outperformed their peers in only three other cities, DETROIT (yah, Detroit), Cleveland and Fresno, while MPS eighth-graders outperformed only Detroit, for the second lowest average math score among the participating districts*. If this wasn't enough, it was reported that the education gap between black and white students in Milwaukee continues to widen as well. The race to the bottom continues.

Sure, Tom Barrett, nothing to see here, move along.

Milwaukee spends about \$1.3 billion annually (that's billion with a "B") on K-12 public education, and this is the best they can do? If they spent only half that much the scores wouldn't be much worse. I already know what we'll hear from the Left, the liberal architects of this shipwreck. They will drag out the same tired excuses. We'll hear about how Act 10, poverty, discrimination, racism, Scott Walker and the Republican-controlled legislature are to blame for school failure in Milwaukee. Maybe these liberals will drag out George Bush or find a way to blame David Clarke for this public education abomination. They won't, however, remind us that for 8 of the last 11 years, Jim Doyle was the governor, the Democrats controlled the legislature and Democrats have always controlled the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Milwaukee School Board.

The irony is that the MPS School Board, in their best rendition of Alabama Governor George Wallace's standing in the way of equal education opportunities for blacks, is now standing in the way of St. Marcus School's expansion plans. St. Marcus School is attempting to purchase a vacant MPS building to give even more parents and kids an escape route from poverty. The work being done by St. Marcus Superintendent Henry Tyson and his staff of dedicated teachers is the equivalent of Harriet Tubman's underground railroad because they provide a getaway from the bondage

of MPS. But MPS is so determined to keep poor black parents and their kids shackled to its plantation and to lead them to slaughter via lives of crime and violence, that MPS will resort to whatever means necessary to block St. Marcus.

School failure is a precursor to crime. Forbes magazine recently released its survey of the most violent cities in America, and it shouldn't be surprising that Milwaukee cracked the top ten of most dangerous cities. No amount of data manipulation can change this grim fact.

We didn't hear from MPS School Board President Michael Bonds or Mayor Barrett, and we won't either. Sentinel Journal finds it more interesting to waste space writing about why I speak to conservative and Republican groups. I speak to those groups because they "get it" when it comes to the issue of school achievement.

Detroit, move over. Make room for Milwaukee.

David A. Clarke Jr.
Milwaukee County Sheriff

2011	4 th Graders	8 th Graders
Reading	Outperformed: Detroit, Cleveland, Fresno Makes them 4 th from bottom	Tied w/ Fresno, ahead of Detroit & Washington Makes MPS tied w/ Fresno as 3 rd from bottom
Math	Outperformed Detroit, Cleveland & Fresno Makes them 4 th from bottom	Outperformed Detroit only Makes MPS 2 nd from bottom