

Keep The Vote/No Takeover Coalition
8335 Indiana Street
Detroit, Michigan 48204
(313) 934-7721
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U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights
Customer Service Team
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington D.C., 20202

To Whom It May Concern:

Since 1999 our students have been subjected to constant changes. These educational experiments that have been forced on them have resulted in budget cuts, closing of schools and a designed plan to dismantle our school system resulting in a disparate impact on our students' ability to receive a quality education in the Detroit Public Schools. For these reasons we are filing this complaint under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against Michigan Governor Snyder, Michigan Legislators, State Board of Education and the Emergency Manager of the Detroit Public Schools. There was no need to take over our school system. Their actions caused irreparable harm to our students.

In 1999 we had a budget surplus of a 93 million dollars. Our test scores were soaring. Enrollment improved every year in the 1990's. We had 1.5 billion dollars of bond money voted and approved by the citizens of Detroit for new schools and technology. Our enrollment was over 180,000 students. We had over 200 schools and a plan to increase achievement that was endorsed by the Superintendent, staff, unions, parents, students and community. It was at that time that we were taken over by an appointed board. The education of our students became secondary and their education declined. Their test scores did not improve steadily. Enrollment plummeted right after the takeover. Our bond money was stolen and misused. Our enrollment has dropped to less than 60,000 students. We now have less than 90 Detroit traditional public schools and we have a deficit. The bonds that were sold in 2005 to decrease the deficit will result in the taxpayers of Detroit to pay this bill until the year 2021, 2033 for the 1994 construction bonds and 2039 for 2009 Proposal S Bonds.

At the present time, Detroit Public Schools has an enrollment of 95% black and Latino students. This is approximately 60% of the student population in the state of Michigan. Recently, under the direction of Roy Roberts, the emergency manager, the school system has been divided into at least 4 divisions which makes it difficult for parents to have meaningful involvement in their child/children's education. These divisions are: traditional schools, charter schools, a state established school system (consisting of Detroit only students who are attending failing schools) known as the Education Achievement Authority. The EAA schools manager is, John Covington, who ran a failing

school district in Kansas and is planning on taking our newly built schools from the citizens of Detroit for this state school system. Additionally, the site based managed schools have their own board of selected persons to oversee approximately 5 public schools. Finally, the EM is also a partner with Excellent Schools Detroit, a private group seeking to dismantle our public school system.

To add to this confusion, special education has just been outscored and Detroit is the only school system in the state that has a paid parent agency. Parent involvement has been given to this agency who is paid over \$1 million dollars to take the place of Detroit parents in school meetings, events and Title I meetings. Many of these parents in the so-called Parent Network do not have children in the Detroit Public Schools.

The students have protested, walked out and pleaded for help when they had no teachers, no books, no classes and overcrowded classrooms. They were met with suspensions, harassment, intimidation and threats of family deportation. These suspensions are still on their record. The present Emergency Manager, Roy Roberts refused to remove those suspensions. These suspensions were unfairly administered. Some students received no suspensions and others received 1-5 day suspensions. Some of their cell phones were confiscated by guards in the schools and their private information was compromised. The suspension record of Detroit is atrocious. At last inquiry it was over 50,000.

Our students and parents have no voice in their education in Detroit. We have an elected board that has been stripped of power by Lansing legislators. The present EM law which we are repealing will go on the ballot in November. In-the-meantime this law gives the emergency manager all the powers of a dictator. It is because of these circumstances that we join in solidarity with other school systems that are predominately black and latino that are having similar problems to eradicate these discriminatory practices that have resulted in an adverse impact on our students educational opportunities.

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 we are demanding that you investigate our complaints even if you must hold a community meeting to gather testimony. To aid you, we have attached just a few of the information items you will need to make a decision in favor of our students as they strive to obtain justice. It is our hope that you will act immediately in investigating our complaint. **TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!**

Yours For A Quality Education For All Children,
Helen Moore, Co-Chair of KTV/NT
Councilwoman, JoAnn Watson
Paul Taylor