

Perpetuating Hopelessness

by Earl P. Holt III

There have been several recent news stories exposing the catastrophic condition of public education in large, predominately black urban school systems. In Baltimore, 23 of its public schools had **ZERO** students who were found to be proficient in math for their grade level after taking the ***Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program***. City-wide, only seven percent of 3rd Graders through 8th-Graders were found to be proficient in math for their grade, as well.

Chicago had similar results: According to the ***Illinois State Board of Education***, in 55 of Chicago's 649 public schools, not a single student tested *proficient* for their grade level in both reading and math for the 2022 school year. At 22 schools, **ZERO** were proficient in reading, and in 33 schools, **ZERO** were proficient in math. Not surprisingly, both Baltimore and Chicago teachers are among the very highest paid in the nation.

Most people have no idea of the extent to which federal court-ordered desegregation has subverted public education, even among those whose own county schools experienced this catastrophe. Deseg cases were complex by nature, and made even more so to confuse the public. (Finding their true costs is like finding Hillary's deleted e-mails.) I had no idea how subversive and destructive deseg was until I was elected to the ***St. Louis School Board*** in 1988. By then, deseg had metastasized to just about every large urban school system in America, ultimately costing more than \$200 Billion, nationwide.

One very good reason for this was that the NAACP -- as Plaintiffs in nearly every deseg case -- had a vested financial interest in every one of them, and persisted in filing these cases for decades. That's because the NAACP was awarded "*damages*" every quarter when these monies

were distributed by the courts. This became an important source of revenue to the NAACP after experiencing embezzlement by a number of its presidents in prior years. The NAACP had no intention of ending its litigation until the last white kid was finally driven from our urban public schools, which is now, pretty much the case in St. Louis.

Contrary to one very common misconception, school desegregation involved a whole lot more than just busing black students to force-integrate predominately white public school systems. For instance, in the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS,) there were *ORIGINALLY* four basic elements to our deseg program:

First was the **transportation** of black students to predominately white schools to force-integrate them; Second was a "**Capital Improvements Program**" to renovate dilapidated schools; Third was the establishment of so-called "**magnet schools**" to attract equal numbers of voluntary white and black students to its "*theme*" schools such as *Naval ROTC, Performing Arts, or Math & Science*; And fourth, was an **Affirmative-Action** program to employ more black teachers and administrators.



"We is teachers."

The most pernicious element was that last one, the affirmative-action program whose objective was to essentially hand over the SLPS to the city's black community by dramatically increasing the employment of incompetent black teachers and administrators. Perhaps more than any other factor, that provision has destroyed public education in St. Louis City which, prior to deseg, may well have been the best, large public school system in the nation. After two decades of deseg, by the late 1990s the SLPS were hopelessly lost and St. Louis City was no longer a viable urban center.

Deseg paved the way for the *St. Louis Public Schools* to become dominated by semi-literate blacks with dubious educations, who quickly asserted their tribal instincts and turned the SLPS into their personal fiefdom. (Their *REAL* target was control of nearly \$600 Million in Operating and Desegregation Budgets.) A majority of black hires were graduates of the local black teacher's college, which stubbornly maintained the second lowest academic standards of any "*institution of higher learning*" in Missouri. The overwhelming majority were no more capable of teaching than they were capable of performing brain surgery.

Back in the day when the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT) was "*normed*" between 400 and 1600, the minimum SAT score to enter *Harris-Stowe State Teachers' College* was 690. It should come as little surprise that the average SAT score in the SLPS throughout the 1980s and 1990s was an almost identical score, around 670. Moreover, these were the **BETTER** students, who had aspirations of attending college.

With the blessings of several naive and politicized federal judges, it didn't take long for graft, corruption, nepotism, and the abandonment of academic standards to prevail in the SLPS. In the early 1990s, the white Superintendent of the SLPS candidly announced at a school board meeting that "***half of the students in the St. Louis Public Schools test at***

the 20th percentile or lower on nationally-standardized tests." He neglected to mention that our so-called "Learning Disabled" (LD) students never took standardized tests, which would have made his woeful statistic embarrassingly worse. There is always an army of LD kids in the SLPS.



Black Scholars at Graduation Exercises

That white Superintendent was only in that position because of the efforts of our conservative anti-busing coalition on the board, and he became a marked man for both his candor and his skin color. He was gone soon after our coalition retired from office, partly because he committed the unforgiveable sin of publicly acknowledging how shockingly disastrous academic standards in the SLPS had become.

It was an unspoken rule within the SLPS to pretend that things were just *peachy*, and that the kids were learning at a furious pace. Nearly every

school board meeting featured an awards ceremony, where SLPS students were honored for learning to tie their shoes by the 10th Grade, or High School Seniors were recognized for mastering the *entire* Alphabet.

Not too many years later, the state took over the SLPS and appointed a committee of accountants and businessmen to run it. That didn't last too long because the same people who had destroyed the SLPS wanted the return of those enormous SLPS budgets to black control, which was soon the case.

St. Louis is probably a case study in the disastrous consequences of federal, court-ordered desegregation programs. Deseg destroyed the public schools in every large, urban area in the nation by handing them over to lazy, often corrupt and incompetent blacks, whose IQs might average 80 on a warm day, after a good night's sleep and a strong cup of coffee.

Ask not for whom the school bell tolls, it tolls for public education.