BCPSS BUDGET DEFICIT AND THE STATE’S BROKEN PROMISE

MARYLAND’S HISTORICAL FAILURE TO FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATION TO ADEQUATELY AND EQUITABLY FUND PUBLIC EDUCATION

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• What brought you here tonight?
• Be ready to share a partner’s name and reason for coming.
IN UNDER 3 SECONDS, ESTIMATE THIS PRODUCT

\[ 1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5 \times 6 \times 7 \times 8 = ? \]
IN UNDER 3 SECONDS, ESTIMATE THIS PRODUCT

\[ 8 \times 7 \times 6 \times 5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = ? \]
anchoring effect

Anchoring is a cognitive bias that describes the common human tendency to rely too heavily on the first piece of information offered (the "anchor") when making decisions. During decision making, anchoring occurs when individuals use an initial piece of information to make subsequent judgments. Once an anchor is set, other judgments are made by adjusting away from that anchor, and there is a bias toward interpreting other information around the anchor. For example, the initial price offered for a used car sets the standard for the rest of the negotiations, so that prices lower than the initial price seem more reasonable even if they are still higher than what the car is really worth.
TURN AND TALK

• What do you understand were the reasons or drivers behind the 130 million dollar City Schools deficit?
HOW CITY SCHOOLS BUDGET CRISIS WAS FRAMED BY THE MEDIA AND CEO

- Decreased enrollment
- Rising teacher salary/benefit costs
- Mandated 21st century building costs
- Pre-K funding
THE “DEFICIT CRISIS” NARRATIVE OBSCURES THE FACTS

1. BCPSS has NEVER been funded adequately by the state, even by the state’s own standards.

2. The Maryland State Constitution required Baltimore and other poor districts to receive billions more than they actually received.
SNAPSHOT OF EDUCATIONAL HISTORY IN THE UNITED STATES

- 1619-1865: Education is forbidden for slaves.
- 1865-1955: Separate and unequal education by law
- 1955: Separate schooling for Black and White outlawed
- 1968: Black students experience universal secondary schooling for the first time
MARYLAND STATE CONSTITUTION: ARTICLE VIII
EDUCATION

• "The General Assembly, at its First Session after
  the adoption of this Constitution, shall by Law
  establish throughout the State a thorough and
  efficient System of Free Public Schools; and
  shall provide by taxation, or otherwise, for
  their maintenance."
BRADFORD VS. MD STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

• 1996 court case resulted in a Consent Decree
• State agreed to ”provide a meaningful and timely remedy…to meet the best interests of the school children of Baltimore City”
• The short-term funding fix agreed to (among other reforms) an infusion of funding for the following 4 years, and an opportunity to ask for further funding in 1999.
1999: METIS CONSULTANT REPORT AFFIRMS NEED FOR GREATER FUNDING

$260 Million MORE per year confirmed by Judge Kaplan and a consultant as “adequate”
2002: THORNTON COMMISSION--NEW FORMULA BECOMES LAW

- Legislature adopts the Thornton Commission formula as law
- Formula did not have a dedicated funding stream
DR. THORNTON’S STORY
2004: STATE DRAGS ITS FEET IN FULFILLING THORNTON FORMULA

- The court delivered a memorandum opinion stating that the “constitutional violation” was still in effect.
Between 2004-2008, funding was increased to meet adequacy requirements *gradually* rather than *immediately*.
2009-2016

- In some years the state allowed no inflation increase
- State did not fund the Geographic Cost of Index Element
BY 2015 WE WERE $290 MILLION SHORT OF “ADEQUACY” FOR THAT YEAR ALONE.

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CASINO REVENUE IN EDUCATION TRUST FUND DIDN’T GET FULLY ADDED TO THE BUDGET, AS INTENDED.

- Though casino revenue did go to schools, the state legislature reallocated money that used to go to schools for other purposes.
ADDING UP THE EDUCATION DEBT FROM 1996-2016

- **1996-2000** = $1,300,000,000 (Less than the Metis firm per pupil number)$^3$
- **2001-2004** = $834,000,000 (Less than what the Thornton formula required)$^4$
- **2004-2008** = Unknown (Gap from gradual rise instead of jumping right to adequacy)$^5$
- **2009-2016** = $1,000,000,000 (Gap from not fully funding the Thornton formula)$^6$
- **2010-2017** = Unknown (Casino revenue not added on top of current funding sources)$^7$

- **TOTAL: 3.2 BILLION**
WHAT IS THE REAL DEFICIT DRIVER

- Increasing Benefits: 24
- Increasing Salaries: 12
- Fewer Vacancies: 10
- 21st Century: 35
- Decreasing Revenue: 25
- Transportation: 8
- Other: 15
- Fully Funded Thornton Formula: 290
• Given this new framework, how would you describe the deficit to someone in another county?
WE MUST AVOID OUR OPPONENTS FRAMING AND PUSH OUR OWN!

- Cognitive research shows that when you respond to an opponent's framing of an issue, even if your argument is sound and your supporting data flawless, you actually strengthen the framing you're responding to in their mind.
WHAT IS OUR MESSAGE, WHAT DO WE AVOID?

Our children deserve an excellent and equitable education. The state has not met its constitutional obligation to provide the resources necessary for an adequate and equitable education over the past 20 years. By the state’s own definition of adequacy, Baltimore City has a 290 million dollar gap.

Disproving the misleading statements by the governor about record funding for public education.
Tangents about parent choice, charter vs. traditional funding, North Ave. incompetence, teacher salary/benefits as the driver, union contract issues, blaming Republicans alone…
TAKING ACTION: LAWSUITS, MORAL ARGUMENTS AND COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ARE INSUFFICIENT.