

African American Faith Alliance For Educational Advancement
Updated Talking Points - September 2021

The agreement between the School Board and County Commission was well overdue. The real issue was never just about the money but the continued abysmal academic performance of Black and Brown students with no real plan for correction.

We thank the County Commission for listening to the community outcry for better educational outcomes for Black and Brown students. We especially thank Chairman George Dunlap, Commissioner Leake and County Manager Dena Diorio for their steadfast and wise leadership.

We are pleased that the School Board and Superintendent's office recognize the need for a more detailed, coherent and comprehensive strategic plan that is student outcomes focused.

We are pleased for the School Board's recognition that School systems exist for one reason: to improve student outcomes and that School boards exist to represent the vision and values of the community.

The painful reality is that we are a few weeks into a "new" school year but nothing is really different for the Black and Brown students who are in one of the 42 low performing schools in CMS.

The fact remains that if nothing different is implemented immediately, the majority of Black and Brown students will graduate this year not ready for college or the workforce.

The fact remains that if nothing different is implemented immediately, only about 1/3 of the Black and Brown students will meet college and career readiness standards for reading.

The fact remains that during the Pandemic, student academic performance for all students across basically all tested areas as a rule of thumb declined drastically.

The fact remains that the majority of students who needed the CMS summer camp experience did not participate in the program.

The fact remains that approximately 49% of black males in high poverty schools have been out of school since the Pandemic began - for over a year!

The fact remains that we have significant issues to deal with in our Exceptional Children's program throughout the district.

The fact remains that CMS continues to pursue ways to lower standards and expectations for teachers and students.

The fact remains that the CMS school house is still on fire. We have heard, like many times before that help is on the way ... that a new plan may be adopted by the School Board by the end of September 2021. The question remains: how long will it take for the schools to understand the plan and have the skill set to execute it? How will the plan work its way into the the local school improvement plans and be the guide teachers use in the classroom?

The student outcomes governance model seems to be a hopeful long term strategy, but what will be different for the struggling, failing students all over the district, especially those who are in the 42 low performing schools next week, this quarter... this year? We have been asking for change for at least 2 years now and student academic scores for Black and Brown students have been on the decline for at least 4 years. We must do better. We need change now!