

LIBERTY VILLAGE PROJECT



Liberty Village Project
3901 Maine Ave
Baltimore, MD 21207
410 542-4763

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MEMORANDUM

From: Liberty Village Project

To: Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education - Work Group #4

Subj: **Concentrated Poverty's Impact on Baltimore City Students**

Jun 10, 2008 - The federal Title I public policy purpose: To ensure federal financial aid is spent on top of state and local funds to which all public school children are entitled. Title I was one of five titles in the legislation, which was introduced in Congress on January 12, 1965, and was passed by Congress on April 9, 1965.

Jul 31, 2015 - According to the U.S. Department of Education, the purpose of Title 1 funding, "is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments."

... meeting the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, limited English proficient children, migratory children, children with disabilities, Indian children, neglected or delinquent children, and young children in need of reading assistance;

My challenge to you today is to convince you to ensure the state's new school funding formula includes an element to address the needs of children enduring the effects of concentrated poverty who attend our "highest-poverty schools"; in a city with the highest Opioid addiction and incarceration rates of Blacks.

So what does that mean?

- Baltimore City is home to approximately 82,000 public school students of which greater than 80% live at or below the federal poverty level;
- Over 65% of Baltimore City residents are Black;
- Baltimore City has the oldest school buildings in the state and 70% of these buildings were deemed to be in poor condition;
- Baltimore City has the oldest housing stock in the state and over 16,000 publicly owned units are vacant;
- Baltimore City has the highest concentration of public housing in the eastern half of the country, with over 11,000 units;
- Baltimore City has the highest Black unemployment rate in the state estimated at greater than 13% of its Black residents;
 - The unemployment rate for black households in Baltimore is more than three times the rate for white households which stand at 4.2%;
- In 2017 a published economic report found that:

- One third of households of color in Baltimore have zero net worth;
- About 42 percent of black households own homes, compared to 60 percent of white households;
- 13 percent of black adults have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 51 percent of white adults.
- One in four of Baltimore City residents live in areas identified as food deserts
 - Children are affected disproportionately, with 30 percent living in food deserts;
 - I personally stood up to get a supermarket built in my neighborhood when the construction was being held up by a regional pharmacy chain;
- There is a term I feel is important to include in this discussion – Historically Oppressed Learners (HOL) and like the concept of English Language Learners (ELL), Black students need extra supports to become proficient. Since the first slave ship arrived in America Blacks have been thwarted in our learning opportunities, initially with legally mandated barriers and more recently with political barriers.
 - Generations have had to overcome the barriers with only limited success and this disparity of funding only one of these barriers to student proficiency must be addressed.
- Baltimore City children lack access to safe places like recreation centers during after school and out-of-school time hours;
 - Baltimore City once operated over 120 neighborhood recreation centers
 - In 2010 the city operated only 55 neighborhood recreation centers;
 - Today the city only operates 40 neighborhood recreation centers;
 - I'm proud to say that I successfully advocated to keep open a recreation center the city wanted to privatize in 2012 which is now thriving under a public – private partnership.

I currently manage an endeavor called the Liberty Village Project supporting the students and families of Liberty Elementary School, an approved and funded community school. We believe that it takes a village to raise a child. Our chief objective is to align a village of supporters who share our vision to provide programs and services that off-set the disadvantages of all the students who attend. Sustaining our operations is a key concern. One vital service we provide is a bi-weekly food pantry.

Last week the Principal of Liberty Elementary and I gave a workshop on “How City Schools get Funding” and overwhelmingly the attendees stated that it was clear that the funding is inadequate.

- The workshop included an in-depth look at Liberty Elementary's budget which included over \$800,000.00 in funding/in-kind donations in excess of the funding received from the district.

In conclusion, our school district receives 2% of its revenue from the federal government which includes funding to offset poverty, 65% from the state and 21% from local government, only the federal appropriation provides funding to offset poverty. Thus we need a state equivalent of Title I funding. This situation clearly depicts that we depend on appropriations from the state and adjusting the state formula to address the adverse childhood experiences of our students has to be paramount in achieving your stated purpose.

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Very Sincerely – Kim Trueheart
Director, The Liberty Village Project