

BAMN Program to Resolve the Crisis of the Detroit Public Schools

1. On November 2, the people of Detroit voted Proposal E down overwhelmingly despite its being backed by Mayor Kilpatrick, the Chamber of Commerce and a 2 million dollar ad campaign. The voters of Detroit sent the political leadership of the city and of the State a clear message rejecting the current appointed school board and its policies and rejecting any role for the Mayor in running our public schools. Detroit students themselves, and the new civil rights movement they have built rightly played a leading role in this fight for their futures, the future of public education in the city.
2. The overwhelming rejection of proposal E means that full voting rights must be restored to the people of Detroit, starting with the right to have a fully elected, fully empowered school board, fully accountable to the people of Detroit.
3. Takeover dictator (CEO) Burnley must go! The appointed takeover board must go! There must be an end to the entire disastrous, undemocratic, discriminatory and racist takeover regime of the Detroit schools. Full democracy must be restored.
4. In rejecting proposal E the people of Detroit effectively rejected not only the organizational system of the takeover but the policies that the takeover system was introduced in order to impose – undermining the principle of public education in order to replace public schools with charter schools and privatization.
5. Elect a new school board now.
6. As an interim measure, Detroit NAACP head, Wendell Anthony and the recently created Transition Team must take responsibility for resolving the crisis of the Detroit schools. The Transition Team, in so far as it represents the overwhelming majority of the people of Detroit who rejected any form of takeover in the November election, must speak for the people of Detroit in determining the future of the Detroit public schools.
7. The State of Michigan must reimburse the Detroit public schools for the destruction of the Detroit public schools caused by the State takeover so that the people of Detroit can begin undoing the damage done to our schools by unwise and discriminatory State policies.
8. End all State imposed measures and State pressures to create a rival school system (“charter schools”/private schools) to drain more resources from the already impoverished Detroit public schools.
9. Maintain Governor Granholm’s policy of holding off on any school closings or school employee layoffs.
10. Absolutely no reduction in the State funding formula for the Detroit schools as a condition of any deficit reduction plan. We need a non-discriminatory State funding formula for Michigan schools that ends the de facto policy of discrimination against Detroit and other urban school districts and recognizes that State money must go where the need is greatest.
11. The crisis of the Detroit schools is an expression of the crisis of the public schools of Southeast Michigan. We need regional solutions and regional organization in order to solve the crisis of the Detroit schools as a part of the solution to this regional crisis. All the public schools of Southeast Michigan need to join together to fight for more resources for public education throughout the region from both the State and federal levels. Solutions to these regional problems must include magnet schools and other integration measures aimed at providing real equality of educational opportunity for all the children of Southeast Michigan.
12. The students of the Detroit schools who spearheaded the defeat of the takeover must lead the way to solving the crisis caused by the takeover. The students of Detroit have set an example that should be followed by the students of the surrounding school districts in leading the fight for equal, quality education for all.

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