This is an open letter to the Mississippi Department of Education.
The bluffing has got to stop.
Yazoo City School District employees, administrators and the citizens of Yazoo City have heard the "stern" warnings so many times from the MDE that it has become nothing more than a stale bluff.
Dr. Laura Jones appeared before the Yazoo City School Board last week and issued yet another imperative that will likely go without action.
I am not for "state-run" schools. I am for community-run schools, but the Yazoo City community has proven that it is not capable of running the district or the individual schools.
The Yazoo City Board of Aldermen consistently selects school board members who have not delivered. The political structure consistently makes life hard on board members who want to make a true difference but cannot because it interferes with a political agenda.
The Board of Trustees have therefore consistently made poor decisions in their hiring and firing practices because it is all politically motivated.
If the community cannot elect aldermen who are qualified and competent enough to appoint qualified and competent school board members, then the community should and will lose its privilege of running its own sovereign school system.
I challenge anyone to find a school district as large as Yazoo City that has a Quality Distribution Index (QDI) score lower. Yazoo's is 92. I challenge anyone to find a school district in this state as large as Yazoo in which every school, including the elementary level, is failing or low-performing.
Most school districts are able to hold on to passing scores at least up until middle school. This is a reflection of poor leadership top to bottom.
If the Mississippi Department of Education does not see a state of emergency in the YCSD then I seriously call into question the qualifications and competencies of those running the MDE.
I don't think the Department of Education wants to take over the district or an individual school in Yazoo City. MDE is constantly walking the halls of YCHS, and they simply do not want any part of the responsibilities that will fall on their shoulders the minute they take the reigns.
If the so-called "accountability" was shifted from the teachers and administrators and put directly into the lap of the state department then that would expose just how inept the MDE really is.
If the MDE does accept this challenge then I strongly encourage some real house cleaning.
Yazoo City does not need to see another round of shifting the power structure.
The state department took over the Oktibbeha County school district last week, and one head

principal was removed from the position and simply made Assistant Principal.
If the MDE does take over the Yazoo City School District, it needs to make its number one focus to destroy and unravel the political strongholds that have held back progress for years in that community.
These are the strongholds that have kept any administrator worth their salt from effectively changing the system in any major way. They are what keep unqualified board members and administrators in power while they all shift the blame to teachers who receive little or no support throughout the school year.
With all due respect Dr. Jones, we have heard the speeches before. Put them to action.
If the MDE wants to prove to Yazoo and the rest of the state that it really is not qualified to effect change in the most drastic of situations, then let YCSD continue, business as usual.
If the MDE wants to prove to Yazoo and the state that it is capable of bringing the worst of our schools back from the ashes, then they will act immediately.
The entire Yazoo community deserves better than it has gotten from its aldermen, school board, superintendent, school administrators and the Mississippi Department of Education.
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