

Struck Out!

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 08.18.22

Last year, the federal government enacted legislation (American Rescue Plan Act) to help state and local governments recover from the cost of the COVID-19 virus. It was noted recently in a regional newspaper that Brunswick County received \$28 million of federal funds. The legislation allows governments to use up to \$10 million to recoup “losses” incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite how their budgets were affected.

The Board of Commissioners had to make a budget “switcheroo” when they designated most of these latter funds in a questionable manner: purchase of public safety radio upgrades, mobile command vehicle, and rapid response vehicle. The board “struck out” when it failed to give these special funds to the Board of Education to address at least one of several school problems. Did the two boards have a serious discussion about this matter?

Funds were not used to: Strike 1) Address the teacher shortage by significantly increasing the local salary supplement, strategy used by an adjoining county; Strike 2) Purchase technological items for students as a strategy to close the wide “achievement gap” among four groups of students, 26-74% range of proficiency for K-12 state exams in 2021, and/or Strike 3) Increase the number of counselors and social workers to deal with student health and safety issues (bullying, depression, absenteeism, homelessness, and hunger).

Commissioners are lucky that we are not following the baseball rule: Three strikes and you’re out!

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