

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA  
NORTHEASTERN DIVISION**

SONNIE WELLINGTON HEREFORD,	)	
IV, <i>et al.</i> ,	)	
	)	
PLAINTIFFS,	)	NO. 5:63-cv-00109-MHH
	)	
and	)	
	)	
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,	)	
	)	
PLAINTIFF-INTERVENOR,	)	
	)	
V.	)	
	)	
HUNTSVILLE BOARD OF	)	
EDUCATION, <i>et al.</i> ,	)	
	)	
DEFENDANTS.	)	

**NOTICE OF FILING DESEGREGATION ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND THE  
SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTARY TO THE REPORT**

COMES NOW, Defendant, Huntsville Board of Education (hereinafter “the Board”) and submits the Desegregation Advisory Committee Annual Report for the School Year 2015-2016, (Exhibit “A”) and the Superintendent’s Commentary to the report (Exhibit “B”). These documents were presented to the Board during its meeting on July 14, 2016, the Board’s first meeting in July. See Consent Order, Document 450, Sec. IX. P., p. 86.

Respectfully submitted this 15 July 2016.

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s/ J. R. Brooks

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**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on July 15, 2016, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of Court using the CM/ECF system which will send notification of such filing to the following counsel for the parties in this case:

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/s/ J. R. Brooks  
J. R. Brooks

# Desegregation Advisory Committee

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## *Annual Report to the Superintendent*

*May 31, 2016*

The Desegregation Advisory Committee (hereinafter "DAC") was created pursuant to Section IX of the Consent Order, dated April 24, 2015, issued by Judge Haikala of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, Northeastern Division, in the case of *Hereford and the United States v. Huntsville Board of Education*, 5:63-cv-00109-MHH (hereinafter "Consent Order"). The parties to this Consent Order are Huntsville City Schools (hereinafter "the District") and the United States (hereinafter "Department of Justice"). Pursuant to Section IX.P of the Consent Order, the DAC will provide an annual report to the Superintendent of the District by June 1 of each year. The Superintendent must then present this annual report, along with his commentary, to the Board of Education no later than the Board's first meeting in July. Promptly thereafter Huntsville City Schools must file the report with the Superintendent's commentary with the Court.

### **I. Introduction**

Pursuant to Section IX of the Consent Order, the parties selected the DAC to "advise the Superintendent and to inform the Court through this process about its assessment of the implementation of the Consent Order." The DAC consists of twelve members as follows:

1. Two parents/guardians of high school students;
2. Two parents/guardians of middle/junior high school students;
3. Two parents/guardians of elementary school students;
4. Two parents/guardians of magnet students;
5. Two parents/guardians of M-to-M students; and
6. Two high school students, at least one of whom represents a high school with a majority Black student enrollment.

These guidelines ensure a broad representation of parents and students across the District in the implementation process. The inaugural DAC members, along with their terms of service, are as follows:

- Nicole Balthazar (1 year term)
- Paige Davis (student member; 1 year term)
- Troy Garner (1 year term)
- Isha Greene (2 year term)
- Talya Hargrove (2 year term)
- Chaundra Jones (2 year term)
- Ann Kvach (1 year term)
- Laura Lemley (1 year term)
- Ashley Lopez-Vargas (student member; 1 year term)
- Natalie Renee Murell (1 year term)
- Keith Poe (1 year term)
- Melissa Thompson (2 year term)

Over the course of this inaugural term, the DAC took a number of actions to organize and to establish policies and procedures to guide its work, including the following:

- Received training from the Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service
- Elected officers
- Made assignments of responsibilities contained within the Consent Order
- Chose “student discipline” as the as the area of concentration for the year
- Developed operating procedures

The DAC also participated in a number of both public and non-public meetings over the course of the term, including the following:

- Monthly non-public meetings beginning in September, to discuss the implementation of the Consent Order (*see* Section IX.N of the Consent Order); the agendas and minutes of these meetings have been made public on the District’s website (*see* Section IX.O of the Consent Order)
- Public meeting, held on October 26, 2015 at Huntsville High School to introduce the members of the DAC, to advise the community of the DAC’s role and responsibilities, and to solicit initial feedback regarding the implementation of the Consent Order (*see* Section IX.L of the Consent Order)
- Non-public meeting with Dr. Casey Wardynski, Superintendent of Huntsville City Schools on January 5, 2016 (*see* Section IX.M of the Consent Order)
- Public meeting, held on April 6, 2016 at Lee High School to solicit feedback on the implementation of the Consent Order (*see* Section IX.L of the Consent Order)
- Public meeting, held on May 3, 2016 at Huntsville High School to solicit feedback on the new Behavioral Learning Guides (*see* Section VII.B.5 of the Consent Order)

Additionally, the DAC worked with the District to conduct a Parent Survey in order to receive feedback from District parents about the impact of the Consent Order on their family. The District engaged a third-party vendor, Panorama, to conduct the survey, and the District marketed the availability of the survey through a variety of media channels. Although there are parents and guardians of over 24,000 students in the District, there were only 817 survey participants. Because of the low response rate, the survey was not deemed statistically valid, and the results cannot be used.

The DAC received feedback from community stakeholders through a number of channels, including statements made at public meetings, written feedback forms received at public meetings, comments made through the District’s website, e-mails received by committee members, and conversations with community members. **The written feedback submitted to date has been aggregated and is incorporated herein as Exhibit A.** Some of this feedback has been summarized and included within the body of this report. To understand the complete context of these comments or the scope of the concern among all feedback provided, please refer to Exhibit A.

## II. Student Assignment

### A. Student Assignment Plan

Pursuant to Section II.A of the Consent Order, the District implemented the new student assignment plan, as detailed in the Consent Order, for the 2015-2016 school year.

### B. School Closings, Openings and Renovations

Since the approval of the Consent Order, the District has taken the following actions:

1. Closed Butler High School (*see* Section II.B.1 of the Consent Order)
2. Continued construction of the new Jemison High School and McNair Junior High School (*see* Section II.B.2 of the Consent Order), which is scheduled to open in August 2016
3. Continued renovation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School to add additional classrooms (*see* Section II.B.3 of the Consent Order)
4. Began construction of a new Morris P-8 (*see* Section II.B.4 of the Consent Order)
5. Continued construction of the new Hereford Elementary School (*see* Section II.B.5 of the Consent Order), which is scheduled to open in August 2016
6. Continued construction of the new Grissom High School (*see* Section II.B.6 of the Consent Order)

### C. Attendance Zones and Feeder Patterns

The District implemented new attendance zones and feeder patterns as required by Section II.C of the Consent Order. The new feeder patterns have been organized by high schools as follows:

1. Columbia High School (grades 9-12)
  - a. Williams Middle School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Williams Elementary School (grades PK-5)
    - ii. Providence Elementary School (grades PK-5)
  - b. Westlawn Middle School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Morris School (grades PK-5)
    - ii. Ridgecrest Elementary School (grades PK-5)
2. Huntsville High School (grades 9-12)
  - a. Hampton Cove Middle School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Hampton Cove Elementary School (grades PK-5)
    - ii. Goldsmith-Schiffman Elementary School (grades PK-5)
  - b. Huntsville Junior High School (grades 7-8)
    - i. Blossomwood Elementary School (grades PK-6)
    - ii. Monte Sano Elementary School (grades PK-6)
    - iii. Jones Valley Elementary School (grades PK-6)

- iv. University Place Elementary School (grade PK-6)
3. Grissom High School (grades 9-12)
  - a. Whitesburg School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Whitesburg School (grades PK-5)
    - ii. Chaffee Elementary School (grades PK-5)
    - iii. McDonnell Elementary School (grades PK-5)
  - b. Challenger Middle School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Farley Elementary School (grades PK-5)
    - ii. Challenger Elementary School (grades PK-5)
  - c. Mountain Gap School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Mountain Gap School (grades PK-8)
    - ii. Weatherly Elementary School (grades PK-5)
4. Johnson High School (grades 9-12)
  - a. McNair Junior High School (grades 7-8)
    - i. Rolling Hills Elementary School (grades PK-6)
    - ii. Lakewood Elementary School (grades PK-6)
    - iii. Dawson Elementary School (grades PK-6)
    - iv. Highlands Elementary School (grades PK-6)
5. Lee High School (grades 9-12)
  - a. Chapman School (grades 6-8)
    - i. Chapman School (grades PK-5)
    - ii. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (grades PK-5)
    - iii. Montview Elementary School (grades PK-5)

The following magnet schools are not subject to the foregoing feeder patterns:

1. Academy for Academics and Arts (“AAA”)
2. Academy for Science and Foreign Languages (“ASFL”)
3. New Century Technology High School

Furthermore, the magnet programs at the following schools are not subject to the foregoing feeder patterns:

1. Williams Middle School Technology Magnet Program
2. Academy for Gifted and Talented (Williams 6-8) [beginning in the 2016-2017 school year]
3. Columbia High School IB Program
4. Lee High School Creative and Performing Arts Magnet
5. Johnson High School Law Academy
6. Jemison High School College Academy [beginning in the 2016-2017 school year]

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have requested information about the changes to student enrollment at individual schools and any resulting capacity concerns as a result of the new student assignment plan.*

***DAC Recommendation: In elementary schools that have seen a significant increase in enrollment as a result of the Consent Order, the District needs to evaluate how to more effectively manage situations in which a large number of students are together at once (i.e. physical education classes, recess, and lunch room). Many of the concerns heard regarding discipline issues at the elementary level seemed to have occurred outside of the regular classroom setting.***

In an effort to ease the transition of the foregoing feeder pattern changes, the parties agreed – and the Court concurred – to allow juniors and seniors in the 2015-2016 school year to attend the schools for which they were zoned in the 2014-2015 school year (except for Butler High School, which was closed pursuant to the Consent Order) (see Section II.C.2 of the Consent Order). Students who were granted Majority-to-Minority transfers prior to the 2014-2015 school year were permitted to remain in their feeder patterns through their completion of 12<sup>th</sup> grade (see Section II.D.1.c of the Consent Order). Students who were granted Majority-to-Minority transfers during the 2014-2015 school year were permitted to attend the highest grade offered by their current school and then would need to apply for a new Majority-to-Minority transfer for the next level of schools (see Section II.D.1.d of the Consent Order).

*Stakeholder Feedback: Some parents have requested additional grandfathering to ease transition for students affected by the new Student Assignment Plan.*

Pursuant to Section II.C.3 of the Consent Order, the District provided guidance counseling and new student orientation services for high school students who changed schools pursuant to the new attendance zones.

#### **D. Majority-to-Minority Transfers**

Pursuant to Section II.D.2 of the Consent Order, the District marketed the availability of the Majority-to-Minority transfers through a variety of school and media channels. The District hosted a web page, accessible from its home page, with key information about the Majority-to-Minority transfer process. In addition, the District made a presentation to the Board of Education on October 15, 2015 about the key dates for the transfer process, the transfer status of all schools in the its system, and other key information. This presentation was posted on its website at the following link:

[http://images.pcmac.org/Uploads/HuntsvilleCitySchools/HuntsvilleCitySchools/Departments/PagesLevel1/Documents/M2M Parent PRESENTATION.pdf](http://images.pcmac.org/Uploads/HuntsvilleCitySchools/HuntsvilleCitySchools/Departments/PagesLevel1/Documents/M2M%20Parent%20PRESENTATION.pdf)

The District held the required Information Meetings in October 2015 (see Section II.D.2.a.4 of the Consent Order).

In Keeping with Our Consent Order, in October We Will Begin Conduct M-to-M Information Meetings for Parents at Each High School Campus

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Parents and students are invited to attend a Parent Information Session to hear about the M-to-M transfer process for Huntsville City Schools. Information about procedures, application, transportation, and the timeline will be provided. The same information will be provided at all meetings. Please attend the meeting of your choice.

Sunday, October 18, 2015  
 2:00 p.m. – Huntsville High School Lecture Hall  
 4:00 p.m. – Grissom High School AV Room

Monday, October 19, 2015  
 5:00 p.m. – Johnson High School Auditorium  
 7:00 p.m. – Columbia High School Auditorium

Tuesday, October 27, 2015  
 5:00 p.m. – Lee/New Century Lecture Hall

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*The DAC did not monitor the facilitation of the lottery process of the Majority-to-Minority transfer process and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements were met in that regard.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have requested additional information about how the Majority-to-Minority transfers apply to special needs students.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Some teachers have expressed frustration concerning the inability to request a transfer of their own children to the school where they teach because of the Consent Order’s priority for assigning open spaces at the District’s schools.*

## E. Magnet Schools/Programs

The District maintained and marketed its magnet programs during the 2015-2016 school year through a number of channels (see Section II.E of the Consent Order). See below for sample content:



The District held a Magnet Fair on October 17, 2015 to provide a forum for students and families to learn more about its magnet programs. See below for marketing content, as well as the Schedule of Events for the Magnet Fair.



**HUNTSVILLE CITY SCHOOLS**  
**MAGNET FAIR**  
**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**  
\*ALL PERFORMANCES WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE LEE HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

	<b>NEW CENTURY TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL</b> 10:00 - 10:30
	<b>ACADEMY FOR SCIENCE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE</b> 10:30 - 11:00
	<b>CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS AT LEE HIGH SCHOOL</b> 11:00 - 11:30
	<b>COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE</b> 11:30 - 12:00
	<b>ACADEMY FOR ACADEMICS AND ARTS</b> 12:00 - 12:30
	<b>WILLIAMS TECHNOLOGY MIDDLE SCHOOL</b> 12:30 - 1:00
	<b>JEMISON COLLEGE ACADEMY</b> 1:00 - 1:30

On February 27, 2016, the District hosted its iRegister event and had representatives from each of the magnet programs on hand to provide information and to answer questions about their offerings.

**HUNTSVILLE CITY SCHOOLS** *iRegister2016*  
**HIGH SCHOOL & MIDDLE SCHOOL REGISTRATION**

*Save The Date*  
**FEBRUARY 27, 2016**  
**@ VBC NORTH HALL**  
**10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**  
**AWESOME OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT...**

**#HCSReachingHigher**

**COURSE OPTIONS AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**  
**ADVANCED PLACEMENT AND HONORS OPPORTUNITIES**  
**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS PROGRAMS**  
**EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES**  
**MULTIPLE COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS**  
**BREAKOUT SESSIONS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

**BUS TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED**  
COLLEGE • GRIFFIN • HUNTSVILLE JOHNSON • LEE • NEW CENTURY

**REACHING HIGHER**

- COLLEGE CHOICES**  
100+ schools of interest!
- AVID**  
(Accelerated Via Individual Determination)  
Register with AVID
- AP / HONORS**  
Someone Like You  
Would Make a Great Athlete's Student
- MAGNET PROGRAMS**  
They're Attractive
- 12TH GRADE**  
Making the Most Out of My Senior Year  
That's My Right Stuff!
- 11TH GRADE**  
Juniors, Don't Be Stressed Out... You've Got This!
- 10TH GRADE**  
Just in Time to Make Your Plans for Your Sophomore Year
- 9TH GRADE**  
Hello, Calling All Freshmen!
- FRESHMAN FIFTEEN**  
Top 15 Success Strategies for Freshman Students & Parents
- CAREER TECH PATHWAY**  
Walk This Way
- NEW CENTURY TECHNOLOGY HIGH**  
Check us Out (for rising 9th graders)
- 8TH GRADE**  
The Fresh Features in 8th Grade
- 7TH GRADE**  
Preparing for the future of the 7th Grade Job
- 6TH GRADE**  
Navigating the 6th Grade Middle School Gateway
- DON'T MISS A GAME!**  
Learn About High School and College Eligibility
- MY VIRTUAL SCHOOL**  
My House
- TOPS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND FRANKS**



*The DAC did not monitor the attendance goals set for each magnet school/program and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements were achieved in that regard.*

The District developed and implemented a common magnet application to be used across the District and supplemented that application for the middle school and high school schools/programs (see Section II.E.4.a of the Consent Order).

*Stakeholder Feedback: There is a concern that the culture within the magnet schools has changed as a result of the new lottery protocol for some of the programs. Some have requested that aptitude and suitability of the student to the particular magnet school in question be restored to the admissions process to ensure the ongoing viability of those programs.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: There needs to be clarification about how students, who have been admitted to the magnet programs, can result in the “loss” of the magnet placement and return of the student to his/her home school.*

***DAC Recommendation: To protect the ongoing viability of the magnet programs, the DAC recommends that the parties and the Court consider expanding the retention provision found in Section II.E.6 of the Consent Order to all magnet students (not just those in grades 6 and up) in order to preserve access and availability to the students who can be best served by the theme integrated in the magnet.***

### III. Equitable Access to Course Offerings and Programs

#### A. Teacher and Administrator Hiring and Professional Development

Pursuant to Section III of the Consent Order, the District provided all teachers, counselors, and administrators with at least seven hours of professional development (with some schools providing significantly more) on culturally-responsive strategies for serving students from all backgrounds. Train-the-trainer training was done prior to the start of the school year and other training continued throughout the year.

*The DAC has not monitored the District's screening process for new applicants to determine awareness of, attitude toward, and knowledge and skills for working with diverse populations (see Section III.A.1 of the Consent Order) and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements were achieved in that regard.*

#### B. Equitable Distribution of Teachers

*The DAC has not monitored the District's process to review the credentials of secondary teachers (see Section III.B.1 of the Consent Order), nor its probationary review process (see Section III.B.2 of the Consent Order), to ensure comparability of departments between schools and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met.*

The District continues to use a centralized hiring and assignment process for teachers to manage comparability of teacher experience across schools (see Section III.B.3 of the Consent Order).

#### C. Pre-Kindergarten Program

The District currently has a pre-kindergarten program at every elementary school in the system (see Section III.C.1 of the Consent Order). *The DAC has not monitored the certification of the teachers within the Pre-K classrooms and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been achieved in that regard (see Section III.C.2 of the Consent Order).*

The District conducted a survey of parents/guardians whose children were eligible to participate in the Pre-K program to determine whether there were transportation barriers to doing so (see Section III.C.3 of the Consent Order). *The DAC did not monitor the resulting transportation plan and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements were met.*

#### D. Elementary Gifted Programs

The District hired Wendy Graham, Gifted Coordinator, to oversee its elementary Gifted and Talented Education program ("GATE") as required by Section III.D.1 of the Consent Order.

*Stakeholder Feedback: Parents at some schools have not been informed about the selection criteria for the GATE program for the 2016-2017 school year, the timeline for qualification, nor of the appeals process if a student is not selected.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to improve transparency and communication regarding the GATE Program to ensure that parents have information they need to understand how their students will be affected. Some suggestions include (a) making the information about the GATE program more prominent on the website, (b) providing clear information about the criteria for qualification, qualification process and timelines, and appeal procedures, and (c) ensuring that all elementary schools are sharing this information with parents in a timely and accurate manner.*

## **E. Special Education Services**

The DAC did not monitor the District's process to ensure the equitable identification and provision of special education services to eligible students of all races (see Section III.E of the Consent Order) and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been achieved.

## **F. Mathematics Acceleration**

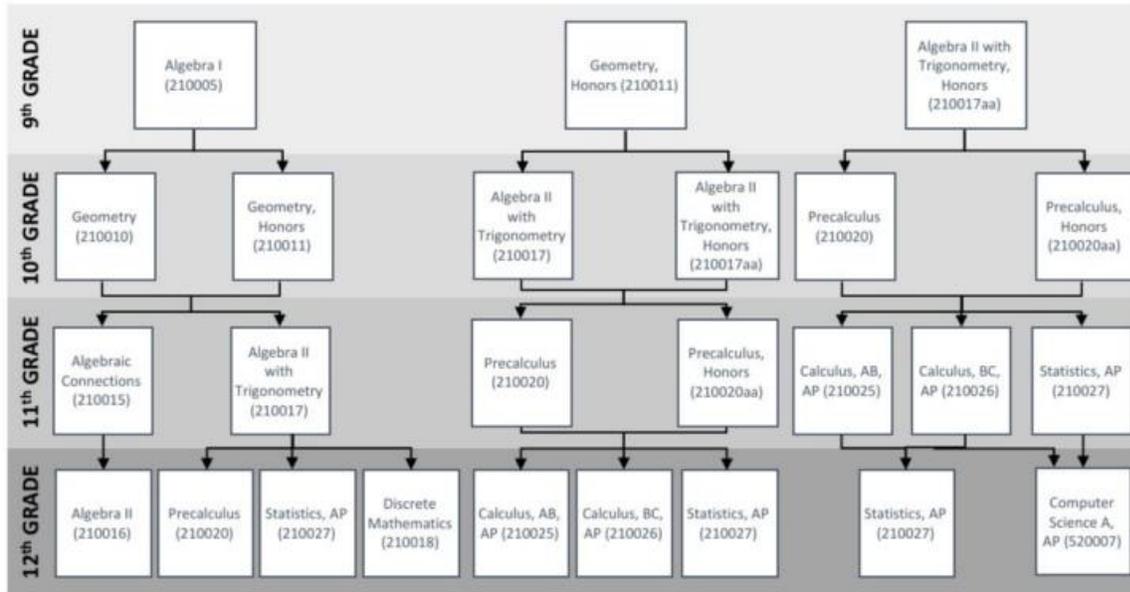
The District implemented an accelerated elementary and middle/junior high school math curriculum to create a pathway that prepares students to participate in Algebra I in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and to pursue AP/IB courses by 12<sup>th</sup> grade (see Section III.F of the Consent Order).

*DAC Recommendation: The Mathematics Acceleration portion of the Consent Order is underway; however, the next step is to ensure more communication to notify parents of these changes and the implications thereof, but also to enable them to make more informed choices for their children.*

*DAC Recommendation: The Math Course Progression, found in the High School Course Description Guide and set forth below, should be updated to reflect the course sequence options beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This information will help parents and students make more informed choices about their course selections that will have implications in high school and beyond.*

**COURSE PROGRESSION**

*NOTE: Other Course Progressions are available. Please see your math teacher or counselor for more information.*



**Source:** Huntsville City Schools Course Description Guide

### G. Support Services for Math and English Language Arts

*The DAC did not monitor the District's support services for math and/or English Language Arts and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met (see Section III.G of the Consent Order).*

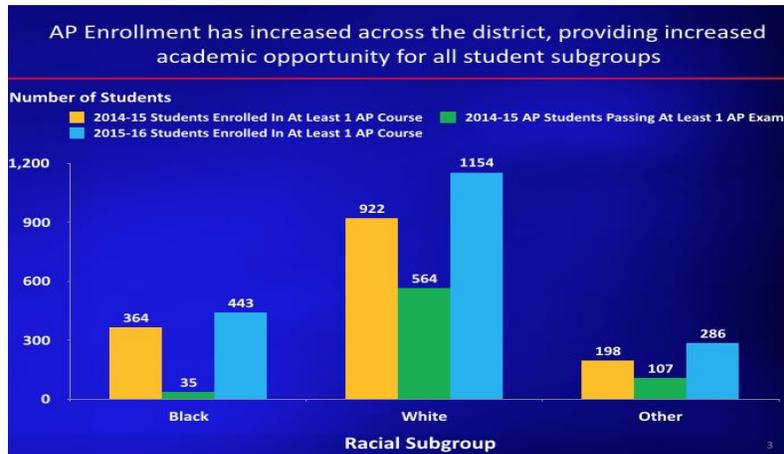
### H. Honors, AP, and IB Courses in Secondary Schools

Each high school within the District had at least one AP or IB class in each of the following subject matter areas: English, Mathematics/Computer Science, Science, and History/Social Science. Furthermore, each high school offered at least twelve AP or IB classes and at least six Honors classes (see Section III.H.1.a of the Consent Order).

The District has worked with teachers and school administrators to identify students who have the potential to succeed in Honors, AP, and IB courses (see Section III.H.2.a of the Consent Order). Furthermore, the District promoted these opportunities as part of its iRegister event prior to registration for the 2016-2017 school year. Participation in AP courses has increased in the 2015-2016 school year.

***Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have expressed concerns that teachers are being pressured to "loosen" the standards to take AP classes to increase enrollment.***

*Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have expressed concerns that the rigor of the AP classes has been sacrificed in an effort to make them more accessible to all students, regardless of qualification.*



The DAC has not monitored whether “bridge support services” have been made available to students who are taking these advanced courses and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met. Furthermore, the DAC has not monitored the District’s “enrollment and performance goals” for its Honors, AP, and IB programs and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been achieved.

*Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have expressed concerns that, as the number of AP classes have increased, the number of Honors classes has decreased, resulting in lost opportunities for students who choose to either limit their AP course load or who otherwise are not capable of that level of rigor.*

***DAC Recommendation: The District needs to ensure that the rigor and coursework required for AP classes is not compromised in an effort to increase AP participation. Adequate supports should be put into place to assist students who may need the extra help to meet the requirements of the AP courses, while maintaining the advanced level of instruction and workload needed to adequately prepare students for the AP tests.***

The District conducted an annual survey of students and their parents/guardians to ascertain perceptions and understandings about Honors, AP, and IB courses (see Section III.H.7 of the Consent Order).

## I. Performing Arts Class Review

The District continues to review performing arts classes to ensure comparability of opportunities and non-duplication of magnet programming (see Section III.I of the Consent Order).

## J. Career Academies

The District provides enrollment opportunities with transportation for career academy courses not offered at a student's home school (see Section III.J of the Consent Order).

## K. Additional Support Programs and Services

*The DAC has not monitored the District's After-School Programs and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met in that regard (see Section III.K.1 of the Consent Order).*

*The DAC has not monitored the District's Guidance Counseling services and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met in that regard (see Section III.K.2 of the Consent Order).*

The District has implemented school-based Problem-Solving Teams to identify students in 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades who are at risk of failure to graduate with their cohort (see Section III.K.3 of the Consent Order).

*The DAC has not monitored the District's Parent/Guardian Workshops and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met in that regard (see Section III.K.4 of the Consent Order).*

The District has undertaken a review of District, school parent, community, and industry support networks to identify differences among schools (see Section III.K.5 of the Consent Order).

The District has waived fees for core courses and magnet courses and has provided financial assistance to students who cannot afford fees for courses, exams, and magnet program activities, where fees would otherwise have been charged. The District has also provided all 11<sup>th</sup> grade students with the opportunity to take the ACT college entrance exam at no cost (see Section III.K.6 of the Consent Order).

## IV. Extracurricular Activities

Each high school within the District provides students with an equal opportunity to participate in the following required programs (see Section IV.A of the Consent Order):

1. National Honor Society
2. Math Team
3. Four additional academic teams or professional clubs, at least two of which are academic teams
4. ROTC
5. Three student leadership organizations
6. Four other clubs

Each middle school/junior high school within the District provides students with an equal opportunity to participate in the following required programs (see Section IV.B of the Consent Order):

1. National Junior Honor Society
2. Math Team
3. Three additional academic clubs or teams
4. One student leadership organization

Each elementary school within the District provides students with an equal opportunity to participate in Math Club and all other clubs or academic teams offered at their school (see Sections IV.C and IV.D of the Consent Order). *The DAC has not monitored the clubs and academic teams available at each school and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the equity requirements of the Consent Order have been met.*

***Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concerns that the distance from their schools creates certain barriers for involvement in extra-curricular activities or school programs.***

***DAC Recommendation: The District needs to evaluate how to make extra-curricular activities accessible to more students by addressing factors like transportation barriers and the need for alternate meeting times.***

## V. Faculty

### A. Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion

*The DAC has not monitored the racial composition of the District's committees involved in recruitment, hiring, assignment, retention, or promotion of administrators, faculty, and certified staff and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met in that regard (see Section V.A.1 of the Consent Order).*

***Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have inquired about the selection criteria of the various committees used to hire and evaluate teachers and administrators and have expressed concerns about whether the selection process is fair and objective and whether all certified staff would have the opportunity to be considered for such an appointment.***

*The DAC has not monitored the District's efforts to ensure the equitable selection of Black principals and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met in that regard (see Section V.A.2 of the Consent Order).*

*The DAC has not monitored the District's demotion, suspension, dismissal/termination, or other discipline of any District employee to ensure that it is based solely on non-racial criteria and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been achieved (see Section V.A.3 of the Consent Order).*

*The DAC has not monitored the District's decisions regarding pay to ensure that they are based solely on non-racial criteria and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been achieved (see Section V.A.4 of the Consent Order).*

## **B. Assignment**

*The DAC has not monitored the District's teacher assignment practices to ensure that the racial breakdown of teachers within each school reflects the District-wide average for the grade levels served by that school within +/- 15 percent and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met (see Section V.B of the Consent Order).*

***Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concern about the frequent movement of teachers and administrators and the resulting impact on school climate and teacher morale. This concern was heightened this year with all of the changes that resulted from the Consent Order.***

***Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concern that the District's teacher assignment policies have resulted in retention problems with seasoned teachers who are leaving the District to teach in private schools or other public systems.***

*The DAC has not monitored the District's assignment of Black principals to ensure equitable distribution and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been met in that regard (see Section V.B.2 of the Consent Order).*

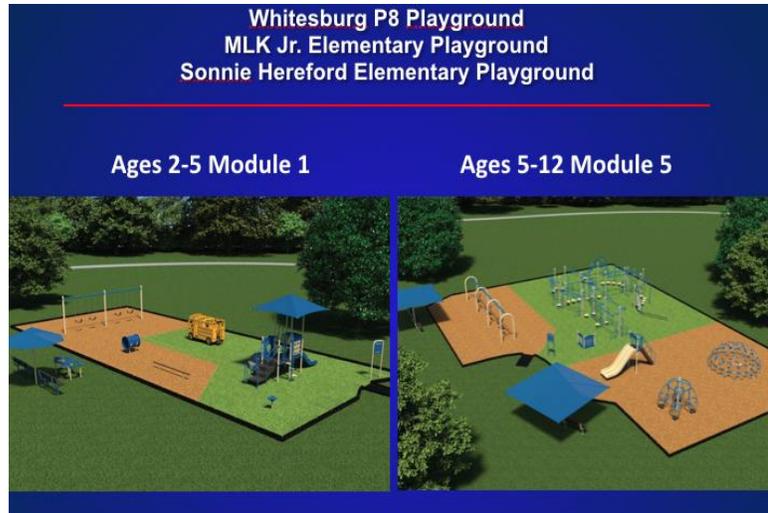
## **C. Records Maintenance**

*The DAC has not monitored the District's records maintenance with regard to its certified staff and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the Consent Order requirements have been achieved (see Section V.C of the Consent Order).*

## **VI. Facilities**

The District has taken a number of steps during the 2015-2016 school year to provide equitable facilities for students (see Section VI.A of the Consent Order).

- The District has continued its plan to construct Jemison High School, McNair Junior High School, Grissom High School, Whitesburg P-8, and Hereford Elementary School.
- The District has implemented its renovation plans for Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School and AAA.
- The District has initiated construction of a new Morris P-8.
- The District has continued efforts to implement its elementary school playground plans.



- The District has retrofitted SMALLabs into existing schools with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and has included SMALLabs in the new construction plans for these schools.



## **VII. Student Discipline, Positive School Climate, and Effective Classroom Management**

### **A. Discipline Consultant**

The District retained a qualified consultant with expertise in school discipline to provide ongoing assistance in ensuring non-discrimination in student discipline and in creating a positive school climate (see Section VII.A of the Consent Order).

### **B. Student Code of Conduct**

The District reviewed and revised its Student Code of Conduct prior to the 2015-2016 school year (see Section VII.B.1 of the Consent Order).

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have suggested that the rush to put together the revised Student Code of Conduct following the entry of the Consent Order in late April 2015 and before the start of the 2015-2016 school year resulted in inadequate time for teacher input into the new policy and thus was problematic from the outset.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: General consensus among stakeholders who provided feedback is that the implementation of the revised Student Code of Conduct has resulted in a loss of overall discipline in our schools and a compromise of the learning environment.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Perception among some stakeholders is that the Consent Order requires teachers to “look the other way” and avoid disciplining students to “soften” the transitions required under the new student assignment plan.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: General consensus is that teachers do not feel “confident” in their authority to address discipline issues in their classrooms under the new Student Code of Conduct and that savvy students have taken advantage of these uncertainties.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concerns that teachers are being asked to deal with issues within their classrooms that really should be referred to an administrator and that there is an overall fear of reprisal for referring a student to an administrator.*

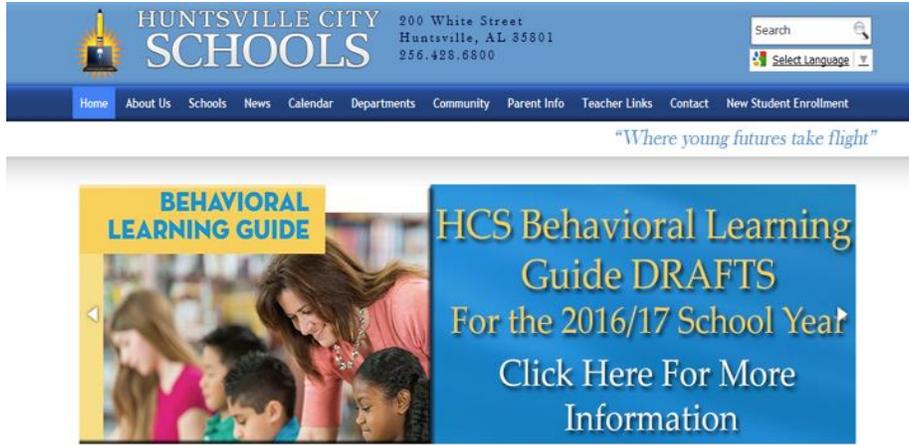
*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to expand the communication regarding use of the Anonymous Tip Line so that students, parents, and teachers can report what is taking place in the schools, such as bullying or harassment in all forms.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to provide more communication to students and parents about resources available to them to address problems they are having in the classroom or in the school.*

The District furthermore drafted the new Behavioral Learning Guides to be instituted during the 2016-2017 school year (see Section VII.B.2 of the Consent Order). ***Many of the problems with the revised Student Code of Conduct were specifically addressed in the new Behavioral Learning Guides and therefore are not addressed by way of recommendation from the DAC.***

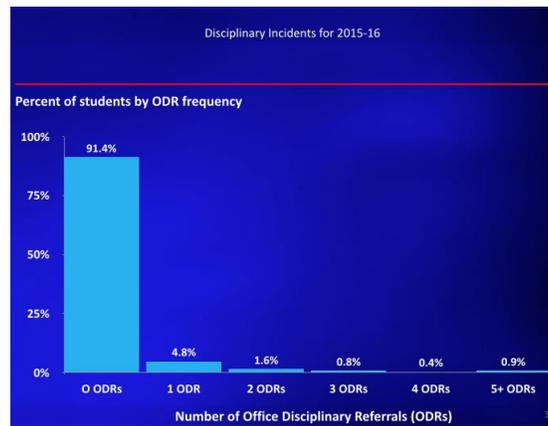
*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to ensure proper time for training of administrators, teachers, staff, and bus drivers on the requirement of the new Behavioral Learning Guides before the 2016-2017 school year begins. To ensure consistency among schools, this training needs to be done directly, to the extent possible, and not through the use of the train-the-trainer approach.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to coordinate informational meetings for parents about the requirements of the Behavioral Learning Guides and about the implementation of the app.*



The District adopted a district-wide dress code policy (see Section VII.B.3 of the Consent Order).

The District instituted a documentation policy for discipline incidents that involved the removal of a student from his or her regularly-assigned classroom (see Section VII.B.4 of the Consent Order). According to the District’s data, over 91% of students have received no office disciplinary referrals, less than 5% have received one office disciplinary referral, and the remaining 3.7% have received more than one disciplinary referral.



*Stakeholder Feedback: There is a perception among stakeholders that teachers have been reluctant – through lack of adequate training or concern of how the referral would reflect on their classroom management – to refer students to the office for discipline problems. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the scope to which this reluctance is reflected in this data.*

On March 15, 2016, the Superintendent provided the DAC an opportunity to review and provide input to the Behavioral Learning Guides following a presentation by District counsel with a representative from the Department of Justice participating by conference call (see Section VII.B.5 of the Consent Order). The DAC also held a public meeting on May 3, 2016 to get community input about the new Behavioral Learning Guides (see Section VII.B.5 of the Consent Order). **The feedback provided about the new Behavioral Learning Guides is set forth on Exhibit B.**

The District is in the process of updating its discipline referral and documentation forms to provide space for teachers and staff to document prior intervention strategies utilized (see Section VII.B.6 of the Consent Order).

Each school within the District implemented the revised Student Code of Conduct (see Section VII.B.8 of the Consent Order).

*The DAC did not monitor the District's oversight of each school's implementation plan to ensure student understanding of the Student Code of Conduct and therefore does not express an opinion of whether the requirements of the Consent Order were achieved in this regard (see Section VII.B.9 of the Consent Order).*

In the fall of 2015, the District held public meetings to inform parents/guardians about its approach to positive school climate and the revised Student Code of Conduct (see Section VII.B.10 of the Consent Order).

The District provided professional development on the revised Student Code of Conduct (see Section VII.B.11 of the Consent Order).

***Stakeholder Feedback: Because of the timing crunch in the creation of the revised Student Code of Conduct, the professional development provided to teachers was not adequate for changes of this magnitude.***

### **C. Positive School Climate**

The District implemented a District-wide program to promote Positive School Climate (see Section VII.C.1, Section VII.C.3, and Section VII.C.4 of the Consent Order).

***Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed a concern that the new focus on positive behavior interventions have resulted in a deteriorated learning environment for students who want to learn because of the time and attention a teacher must give to the students with behavior problems.***

***Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have stated that the revised Student Code of Conduct has not resulted in a Positive School Climate, but rather just the opposite with an increase in the amount of disrespect shown to teachers and peers and an overall disregard for the rules.***

The District has hired a Director of Behavioral Learning to coordinate and supervise the implementation of the Positive School Climate Program (see Section VII.C.2 of the Consent Order).

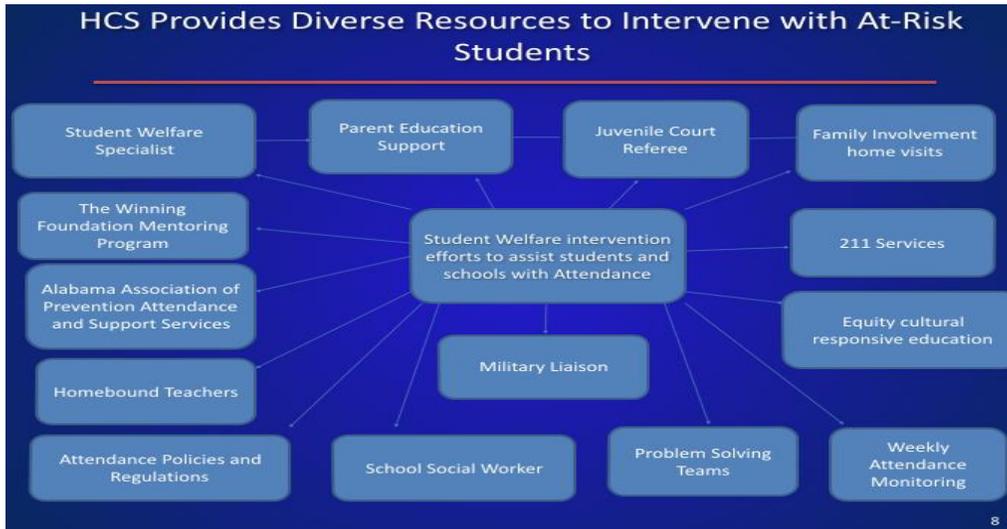
*The DAC did not monitor the District's annual continuous improvement goals for schools regarding discipline referrals, infractions, and consequences and therefore does not express an opinion of whether the requirements of the Consent Order have been met (see Section VII.C.5 of the Consent Order).*

The District is in the process of implementing other evidence-based practices, such as restorative justice strategies; however, *the DAC has not monitored the scope of such programs, whether District-wide or*

otherwise, and therefore does not express an opinion of whether the requirements of the Consent Order have been achieved (see Section VII.C.6 of the Consent Order).

### D. Support for Students

The District has implemented Problem Solving Teams to address a student’s repeated and escalating behavioral issues (see Section VII.D of the Consent Order).



### E. Alternative School Program

The DAC has not monitored the Alternative School Program and therefore does not express an opinion of whether the requirements of the Consent Order have been achieved (see Section VII.E of the Consent Order).

### F. Expulsion Hearings

The DAC has not monitored the District’s expulsion process and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the provisions of the Consent Order have been satisfied (see Section VII.F of the Consent Order).

**Stakeholder Feedback:** Stakeholders have expressed concerns about allowing students to remain at school while awaiting their suspension or expulsion hearings.

**DAC Recommendation:** The District needs to ensure that any hearings required under the Behavioral Learning Guide are expedited to minimize the time that the student can continue to disrupt the learning environment and/or present a safety risk to the other students.

## G. School Resources Officers and Security Officers

*The DAC has not monitored the District's professional development of and policies for security officers and school resource officers and therefore does not express an opinion on whether the provisions of the Consent Order have been met in this regard (see Section VII.G of the Consent Order).*

***DAC Recommendation: The District needs to clarify to teachers, staff, parents, and students the role of SROs in the schools to avoid confusion and/or perception problems about their role and responsibility.***

## VIII. Transportation

It is our understanding that the parties have stipulated that the Transportation *Green* factor has been met. Therefore, the DAC has not addressed this issue.

## IX. Conclusion

As Judge Haikala wrote in her Memorandum Opinion, dated April 21, 2015:

There is, indeed, a role for every member of the Huntsville community in the implementation of the consent order. The consent order is "a transformational document"; it is a game-changer. But as members of the community have pointed out, change is not always easy. Offer the district feedback about the changes that the consent order will generate. . . . [C]ommunity feedback is very important. Please use the website that the district will establish. If the district asks for help with focus groups, if you are able, please participate. Encourage the district's students, teachers, and administrators and express your appreciation to them for their hard work.

. . .

There is a light at the end of the tunnel, and it is bright, much like the future of the district and its public school students. If the district maintains its current energy and enthusiasm and the community remains united in purpose, the Court has little doubt that the Board will be able to demonstrate in the years ahead that it has fully and faithfully implemented the consent order. The Court looks forward to the day when it will be able to declare Huntsville's public school system unitary.

The DAC has embraced Judge Haikala's challenge. We consider it a privilege to be part of this process to evaluate the implementation of the Consent Order and to advise the Superintendent and the Court of our findings. We developed a good working relationship with both the District and the Department of

Justice and believe that the feedback and suggestions we brought to the parties have been taken into account and have been reflected in their decision-making.

Along the way, we have been inspired by our community who continue to look for ways to make the Consent Order work for the benefit of all of the students in the District. This does not mean that this first year of implementation has been problem-free. Indeed, the challenges have been significant. It would be impossible to conceive how changes of this magnitude could be accomplished without considerable challenge.

Some of these challenges were exacerbated by the short timeline from the entry of the Consent Order on April 21, 2015 and the start of the school year on August 4, 2015. During those intervening three months, the Student Code of Conduct had to be revised and the teachers, administrators, and staff had to be trained. School administrators had to reexamine scheduling, teacher assignments, and space constraints based on the new student assignment plan, which resulted in sizable numbers of new students at some schools. Community resources had to be marshaled to ease the transition of students to their new schools. A significant number of students had to be acclimated to new schools after leaving familiar environments and friends. Finally, a substantial amount of infrastructure had to be put into place to provide the reporting required by the Court. Things did not always go smoothly, and there are likely many things that would be done differently if given the chance.

From our perspective, the most significant challenge in the implementation of the Consent Order this first year was the revised Student Code of Conduct. There was simply not enough time on the front end to get adequate input on the Student Code of Conduct from the teachers and administrators who are on the front line day-in and day-out. This created a Code that bred confusion and frustration among the teachers, students, and parents and that resulted in an overall perceived decline in the discipline within the schools. Consequently, a complete overhaul of the Student Code of Conduct was warranted.

The process for creating the new Behavioral Learning Guides was markedly different and has resulted in a much more collaborative document. Not only were teachers and administrators involved in the creation of the Behavioral Learning Guides from the outset, the DAC was invited to provide feedback before the Guides were presented to the public, and the public was also invited to provide feedback before the Guides are to be adopted. The new Behavioral Learning Guides address the deficiencies of the Student Code of Conduct and create a new roadmap for what is expected within District classrooms. Only time will tell if these changes result in an improved discipline plan, but the initial level of buy-in from the teachers, administrators, and parents is encouraging.

Based on all of the foregoing evaluation, the DAC concludes that the District has made progress toward the implementation goals outlined in the Consent Order and that it is making a good-faith effort to address areas of needed growth and improvement along the way. We trust that our community will continue to be a positive part of the solution and that together we can rise to Judge Haikala's challenge to ensure a bright future for all of the students in Huntsville City Schools.

## Exhibit A Community Feedback

**This feedback is organized in the sequence within the Consent Order. Accordingly, some feedback that addressed multiple issues has been divided into the relevant categories contained therein.**

### Student Assignment

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Are all schools – elementary, junior, middle, high school at capacity? Has attendance changed since redistricting?

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/17/2016**

**Feedback:** Lastly, the DESAC needs to help support the blending of students from various schools, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds at the high school level. Much is being done from a programmatic standpoint at the PreK-8th grade level, but students that are blended in high school also need support. Local administration needs additional man power, social workers, and programs that support a compassionate blending of these various fractions in order to ensure the safety and positive learning environment required by the DOJ.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**4/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Both of my children are on IEPs. I am wondering if students with an IEP could transfer to another school [that] has programs in place for them? Also, why is it only Black and White students able to transfer out or in? What about different minorities e.g.. Hispanic and Native American.

**Children's School:** Blossomwood

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Student Assignment - are there any transfers options to families who were rezoned and told children would be "grandfathered" into school zone track - are there any new options available to us to not have children in 2 different high schools?

**Children's School:** Grissom/Whitesburg

## Equitable Access to Course Offerings

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Getting rid of the data collecting and bias information with the common core curriculum.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** The computer exams for the K and first grade computing exams is not making the content known to the teachers who could then coach the students up for the question structure.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How will the majority to the minority affect the special needs children in this system? When will the Superintendent attend functions that these children (special needs children) are involved in?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Please offer equal opportunities in special education for dyslexia children.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Bring back books for equal education opportunities!

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** An equal budget dispersed throughout all the school districts.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Are teachers/schools being pressured to change the entry exams for AP classes to fulfill school demographic requirements regardless of the students scores? In other words are the requirements being lowered to accommodate students who may not be academically qualified to be in the classes?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Discipline should be a component of magnet application process even on the elementary level. And, if a student continues to be a discipline problem, he/she should be sent back to home school.

**Children's School:** AAA

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Culture of magnets has changed. Kids used to seriously apply + have to demonstrate a commitment to the program. The "essay" is pretty silly and doesn't allow for much introspection or reflection. (My son was accepted 2 days after writing it - SERIOUSLY?)

**Children's School:** ASFL

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** AP classes are being pushed, with much fewer Honors classes. (Perhaps could offer more Honors while making sure regular classes are also taught well, with orderly environment.)

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** What is the status of the waiver for HCS's LEA gifted plan?

**Children's Schools:** GSES/HCMS

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** What standards are being used to select students for GATE for next year? Does selection vary between schools? No guidance or information available on what criteria are used nor how to appeal.

**Children's Schools:** GSES/HCMS

## Extracurricular Activities

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/17/2016**

**Feedback:** In addition to the code of conduct, the issue of access for bus dependent students needs to be addressed. Students who would like to participate in before and after school athletics, arts programs, clubs or other activities need adequate access to transportation that facilitates students involvement in all aspects of HHS campus life. Currently bus dependent students are not afforded this luxury, which [leaves] many of them left behind when they left their neighborhood school. This issue falls under both equitable access to program offerings and extracurricular activities.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Distance to + between schools limits involvement!

**Children's Schools:** Providence/Williams/Columbia

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Need to be reasonable distance or need better transport. issues.

## Faculty

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** With all of the current changes resulting from the Desegregation Order Implementation will the HCSB consider putting a freeze on teachers/staff to allow for some stability to occur within the individual schools?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** What can be done to improve retention. Teachers do not leave mid year for the reasons HCS is reporting. These same teachers are now employed at private + county schools.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Faculty - I would like for teachers to have more control over behavior issues without fear of any repercussion. They have not had a raise in years + I'm sure feel under-appreciated. I feel teachers and principals being moved around so often have a negative impact on school climate + morale. There have been too many teacher resignations. We need these good teachers to stay.

**Children's Schools:** Whitesburg/Jones Valley

**Source:** E-mail

**4/7/2016**

**Feedback:** I have a question for the DAC meeting (DOJ). I have a previous engagement and I am unable to attend the DAC Meeting.

My question is regarding 'Faculty recruitment selection and hiring of administration, faculty, and staff' particularly concerning the make-up of the interview committee

Who is in charge or included in choosing the interview committee members and how are the members chosen? What are the criteria for one to be nominated and selected as a member of the Interview Committee which interviews potential administrators, counselors, and teachers?

What is the process and procedure in choosing interview committee members? How fair and equitable is the process? What is the composition of the committee as far as the number of older experienced veteran educators; younger inexperienced people; gender; race?

Please make sure the process is fair and equitable and everyone is given equal consideration for all opportunities to serve on committees for hiring of faculty. Also, please check the accuracy of members lists and information that is reported.

**Children's School:** Grissom

## Facilities

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** What recommendations will be made to reverse the continuation of a “dual system” regarding the name change of J.O. Johnson High School? Remember if Grissom retains its name the North High School should retain its name and legacy as well.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Parents want to see equitable facilities at AAA as well - they need track, better gym.

**Children’s School:** AAA

## Student Discipline

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Who will be involved in the new discipline policy for the upcoming year?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Recently one of my children at [school name redacted] was disciplined for an infraction of the new discipline policy. I found that after the principal's recommendation to school board and a hearing there are no avenues to appeal the PASS program or adjust time in PASS program to parent and child's input more so parents. Please contact me so we can discuss the issue further. Thank you.

**Children's School:** [school name redacted for privacy purposes]

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Positive School Climate – Please justify this statement or definition when students are allowed to be disrespectful to teachers by words, actions, non-actions (disrespectful talk, late to class [every period], and no homework, classwork or active participation).

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Effective Classroom Management: Please justify when teachers are not allowed to discipline who then is the manager of the classroom.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Will the loosening of the code of conduct to "soften" the transition of the minority to majority be stiffened to allow the principals and teachers to enforce order in the schools/class without fear of reproach or report of their failure?

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/17/2016**

**Feedback:** The code of conduct needs to be strengthened considerably. Students and teachers need to have a clearer understanding of consequences and those consequences need to be administered early, not once a serious altercation has occurred. Repeat offenders need to have interventions that go beyond ISS and out of school suspension. Disruptive students cannot be allowed to impede the education of the other students on the HHS campus.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/18/2016**

**Feedback:** We moved to this area for the great schools. We have to pay a lot of money to live here. It's not right or fair for anyone, for some kids to be able to live anywhere in the city and then taxpayers have to pay to have them bused all over the city! You should have to go to the schools that you are assigned

to according to where you live. One positive for the county schools. If you don't like the school your kids go to then you do something about it [or] move like everyone else and move to the school district that you want your kids to be in.

**Children's Schools:** Huntsville High/Hampton Cove Middle

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/18/2016**

**Feedback:** [Students need to know] there is not tolerance for fighting, bullying, and disrespect to teachers. Children are continuing to yell and run up and down the halls. There should be people monitoring the bathroom since there are fights in there [causing fear to use the facilities] It's not healthy to not go to the bathroom all day. All violence should be handled sternly. Reward for good behavior. We no longer want to feel afraid for our children's safety while at school.

**Children's Schools:** Hampton Cove Middle/Huntsville High

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/18/2016**

**Feedback:** The violence at the high school has increased. Feedback from teachers is that they do not have authority to stop disrespectful behavior. Fighting at school and unacceptable behavior take away from the students who want to be at school. Please crack down firmly. Banning videoing is not the answer. Stop the instigators. If you let them get away with cussing at adults, punching others, acting uncontrolled, you are not helping them become responsible adults who can hold a job.

**Children's Schools:** Huntsville High/Hampton Cove Middle

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**3/18/2016**

**Feedback:** Teachers need to be able to hand major disciplinary issues to administrators instead of being forced to handle it in the classroom. There should be no tolerance for fighting, profanity, drugs etc. in the school.

**Children's Schools:** Hampton Cove Elementary/Hampton Cove Middle/Huntsville High

**Source:** E-mail

**3/31/2016**

**Feedback:** I am not going to be able to attend the meeting on April 5th. I would like to express the vast majority of citizens in District 2 are trying hard and the school system is putting forth a good faith effort to make the order work. But in my opinion, it is not working. I believe the judge should be told of the concerns and not just given a lot of public relations spin.

My constituents are concerned about student behavior, feel that the teachers are not confident in managing their classrooms and discouraged that they no longer enjoy a "neighborhood school" in Blossomwood and Jones Valley. I have heard no racist comments – more comments about economic diversity and social problems with children from different backgrounds.

By no means is this view a public mandate. I have only heard from about 20-25 people of the 38,000 I represent. But my instinct tells me we have a problem and that it must be admitted to make the situation better.

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** In the consent order, the goal that is repeatedly stated is a "positive school climate." I am very concerned (to the point of pulling one of our children out of the school system) that reducing infractions to a Class I offense does not create a positive school climate. In our school, the change in discipline expectations has resulted in an atmosphere of disrespect and disorder in many classrooms as well as the hallway and PE. Fighting should always be reported to an administrator. With the new Code of Conduct, short/spontaneous fighting is a class I offense and does not merit automatic referral to an administrator. This sends a message to other students that disorder is acceptable. There has also been defiance, disrespect, and profanity use that seemingly goes undisciplined/or is disciplined very lightly. Teachers and principals are not being given the tools and authority to quickly, effectively and consistently take care of disciplinary problems. There is an urban crime theory called "The Broken Window Theory" [ref cited] The theory states that if smaller infractions are handled effectively, it prevents more serious infractions. We need to take this to heart in our schools. [personal story redacted due to privacy]

**Children's School:** Blossomwood

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** The positive behavior intervention policy is failing to provide a positive school learning environment. It should be completely eliminated or overhauled and replaced with a strategy that protects the learning environment for all students, regardless of race. Excellent teachers and students are leaving currently and plan to leave next year. Substantial changes must be made to change of the direction of the H'ville City Schools so that there can be a truly positive learning environment.

**Children's School:** Blossomwood

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Student Discipline - concerns over lack of control in classrooms, teachers being asked to deal with disruptions in class and as far as being asked to subdue or get in the middle of fights - not their job!

**Children's Schools:** Grissom/Whitesburg

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** I have been disappointed with the low expectations of behavior in the classroom. Students are not held to decent standards of conduct or academic responsibility. Teachers are strongly discouraged from giving a student a failing grade and/or sending a defiant student out of the classroom. Students have figured this out and are taking advantage of these weak policies. We need higher expectations in order to drive students to success.

**Children's Schools:** Whitesburg/Grissom

**Source:** Online Comment Form

**4/1/2016**

**Feedback:** My husband and I removed our 4th grader from Blossomwood during fall break. She was being kicked and cursed at [regularly] and the teachers said they could do nothing. We had to begin homeschooling her. My HHS students is also asking to be homeschooled - he says he hasn't learned anything this year and most days are spent doing work on laptops or worksheets with little instruction. He is in all advanced courses. I will not be enrolling my child in BES next fall. I will most likely not enroll my rising 9th grader into HHS [as I feel it would be detrimental] - he is dyslexic and has been at Greengate for 3 years. I feel that all children need to be taught how to behave with clearly communicated expectations and consequences.

**Children's Schools:** Blossomwood/Huntsville High School

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** [Discipline] needs to be explained to kids + parents at beginning of year.

**Children's School:** AAA

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Teachers need more control of their classrooms. Don't need to spend time dealing with continual classroom disruptions.

**Children's School:** AAA

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** What support are we providing students who have had dramatic changes and expectations while they are acting out during this time of great change?

**Children's School:** Blossomwood

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Hallways are overcrowded again. It is difficult to get through hall without touching other people and if that happens with the wrong person a fight can happen. Children I know personally are frightened to use the bathroom because it is an unsupervised area. Students are running & hollering in halls after bell rings. Teachers tell them to go to class & teachers are told to "f\_\_k off."

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Discipline complaints have increased across the board. Kids perceived teachers as being helpless.

**Children's School:** ASFL

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** I am concerned about lack of discipline in school. My child talks of frequent fights in PE and the hallway. The classrooms are very disruptive. The distractions are affecting his grades. I plan to remove my child from Huntsville City Schools at the end of the year. The teachers should not have to tolerate disrespect. No child should be allowed to continually disrupt classroom.

**Children's School:** Blossomwood

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Who will be responsible for enforcing the Student Code of Conduct? And who will be creating it?

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Who will be monitoring the Positive School Climate implementation? It's imperative that the words that come from the Superintendent are reflective of actual events not from what the change goal is.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Add date and revision log to Student Code of Conduct.

**Children's School:** Grissom

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** School climate has declined. Little is being done about disrespect, cussing out teachers, class disruptions, kids roaming halls, fire alarms being pulled.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Pinnacle in Huntsville High School?? Disaster waiting to happen. Where is the logic with this?

**Children's Schools:** Huntsville Junior High/Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Behavior - I would like for the code of conduct to be enforced + behavior problems need to be removed from the classroom. Too many good families are leaving the system to go to private school due to unsafe environments.

**Children's Schools:** Whitesburg/Jones Valley

## Desegregation Advisory Committee

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** What is the best way to provide feedback to the DOJ on the consent order?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How do you anticipate your results/findings/recommendation impacting each school in the district?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** What you think is the most important issue to address to strengthen Huntsville City Schools as a whole?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Suggestion: It would be nice to have a bulletin board so that all that have questions can post directly to your site. This will allow prompt responses and allow folks to view questions that have already been asked.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How long will DAC meet and continue?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How does this committee plan to see that these suggestions are effective and inclusive?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Can you put lock boxes at each school for parents to send information?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How can the committee collect unbiased information from the public and teachers?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How are students going to be involved in the things and decisions of the DAC? Will the student reps bring information to the meeting from their peers?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** Is it possible to have more than one public DAC meeting? Quarterly maybe?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **10/26/2015**

**Feedback:** How will the magnet programs be represented?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Allow more than 2 minutes to present comments in front of the DAC.

**Children's School:** Grissom

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form **4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Communication and trust are major issues - there is no room for the parent voice, for honest questions & concerns. No trust of the "pat answers" from HCS.

**Source:** Online Comment Form **5/6/2016**

**Feedback:** unhappy with this years EVERYTHING

**Children's Schools:** Grissom/Weatherly/Jones Valley/Mtn. Gap

## Transportation

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Busing length - 90 minutes way too much!!

**Children's Schools:** Providence/Williams/Columbia

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Less time on bus! 30 min. 1-way reasonable

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** In our neighborhood students are at the bus just after 6 am to get to zoned schools. Can this please be looked at as a major challenge? Families with more than 1 child have big problems with driving their kids due to large distance between our zoned schools. I am speaking of Providence, Williams + Columbia! Let me introduce to our kids' obstacles + our neighborhood community-building efforts.

**Children's Schools:** Providence/Williams/Columbia

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**4/5/2016**

**Feedback:** Transportation - Has this committee thought about or addressed the fact that some students and certain buses have longer routes with extra stops? These buses need to have bus monitoring and the budget needs to allow for this.

**Children's School:** AAA

## Exhibit B

### Feedback about New Behavioral Learning Guides

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Teacher reporting via the app

1. Will the app be ready by 2016-17? Document states it will be implemented in 2017-18. If not app, then what?
2. How much access will parents have to information recorded on the app?
3. Nothing in document about victims of profanity, violence. Can we address child who has been hurt? What is available for them?
4. How does this document address verbal threats (student to student)?

**Children's School:** Goldsmith Schiffman

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** App

1. Will teachers be punished for reporting offenses? Will teachers feel scared to report and fear retribution?  
Punishment
2. We need to NOT do whole class punishment (ex: taking away privileges). This is not a way to handle the children that are actually there to learn.

**Children's Schools:** Jones Valley/Whitesburg

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Intro: It is stated that 8 teacher & 8 administrators worked on the BLG. Were ALL teachers given a way to provide input? If not, then there is not a true representation of how teachers feel system-wide.

pg. 3: "This document is designed to reflect our mission to inspire, develop, and engage all students in becoming career and college ready; creative problem-solvers; active citizens; and life-long learners in a globally connected society." What about guiding kids to become good, kind people who respect themselves and others - especially authority?

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** I believe that each child has a goodness & strength to be found & each child will perform & rise to clear expectations. Student behavior is often reflective of home behavior & tolerance of actions. Parents must actively participate in the behavior modification process. We are doing our children a disservice if they are learning physical aggression is tolerated & accepted. However if parents are

accepting this at home we cannot effectively change a behavior they do not experience as being disruptive!

**Children's School:** Blossomwood

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Disruptive & Uncooperative Behavior (pg. 26 Elementary)

Recommended Teacher Responses - Loss of Privilege

Questions/Comments:

1. Loss of privilege - will teachers be given instruction/guidance as to examples and execution of the "loss of privilege"? I worry this is a broad term and needs to be further defined.
2. Will the entire elementary class be punished for the actions of a few disruptive students (i.e. loss of recess for the entire class)?

**Children's School:** Jones Valley

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Offenses

Does a student get 3 offenses per teacher (or class) or 3 offenses total?

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** What makes this plan better than the plan we started the school year with. This should be specified for comparison. There has to be consistency by the principals for any discipline plan to work. There has to be consequences for any action. Positive for positive actions but also negative consequences for negative actions.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** With the shoddy implementation of the hastily put together (2015-2016) CSC, HCS has taken so many steps backward and has lost a lot of my good faith and their credibility is damaged. It is going to take HCS really toeing the line and accurately reporting of all infractions. Due to these terrible policies we have lost so many good first line teachers and replaced with people who are not seasoned so our overall pool is of poorer quality. We need a new superintendent who the public trusts and is a trained educator who began with boots on the ground as a teacher before he/she rose to administration. It is terrible to see how quickly W has damaged our system. He would have been a

great finance guy only, if he hadn't messed with all the educational aspects. Our teachers & principals need W to go in order to begin building trust again.

\*What about a guide for students to read/refer about their behavior expectations.

**Children's School:** AAA

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Fighting & Assault - have 2 different level offense

How many fights = assault?

Check new hire social media

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Crimes like stealing, possession of illegal drugs and alcohol are more than just school offenses. There are laws in place, yet this year, HCS has allowed our schools to become places where laws are ignored. We have SRO's and they have been told not to get involved. Why would we tolerate any amount (personal use?) of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in any of our schools? No high school, junior high student is of drinking age and if there are laws re: illegal drugs, how can HCS declare possession for personal use is an in-school offense? I do not agree.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** If you are needing to regain control, you might consider that most students and/or parents will not read and quite possibly not understand all the behavioral terms in this extensive plan of reporting requirements and the behaviors and consequences are not as clearly linked in a way that non-educators can comprehend.

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Positive School Climate/Positive Intervention/Supports/Behavior Code of Conduct

Strategies, consequences and interventions, these seem as if the student will be disciplined or scolded 3X for one behavior. This would be the understanding of some students with disabilities. The positive school climate needs to be better defined. For instance coming from out of town into a school system that does not provide more support and zero tolerance for racist remarks. I feel the school administrators and teachers are not providing a positive intervention or support but just scare tactics. I haven't seen anything addressed about teachers not practicing the training given to them and not following the protocol or guide that will be implemented.

What about students that are constantly teased and picked on and it evolves into a fight? How can you discipline both students?

**Children's Schools:** Hampton Cove Middle/Goldsmith Schiffman

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** 1. We still need a "Student Code of Conduct," something that puts the onus on the STUDENT to follow the set rules. "Behavioral Learning Guide" does not sound so concrete, and seems like something teachers and admin will handle. We need to ensure students realize that, ultimately, it is THEIR responsibility to follow school rules.

2. A lot of the responses to behavior seem beyond what a teacher in the classroom has time for. In other words, it is more for counselors and social workers to address. Will we be getting full-time counselors at every elementary/middle/high school? Currently, some elementary schools have a counselor only every other week. Will we have social-worker-type people at the schools who know what home-life situations are affecting a student?

3. Students in all grades change classes, i.e., spend time with teachers other than their homeroom teacher (in elementary school kids go to PE, music, art, etc.). If a child is cited for a behavior by the homeroom teacher and repeats the behavior in art, will that count toward how the school responds to that behavior? Will the teacher who first tries to correct the problem need to send a list with kids' names and their transgressions so the next teacher can deal properly with the behavior?

4. The biggest problems we have are repeated minor offenses that cause classroom disruptions, at all grade levels. They are even more prevalent in the middle school and high school non-honors/AP classes. Day after day teachers and conscientious students deal with a handful of kids who reduce the educational experience for everyone in the room. The kids are rude to the teacher and their fellow students. No amount of explanation will prompt them to change when they just don't care. These behaviors should not be tolerated more than a few times per kid before the kid is removed from the classroom. Unfortunately, teachers are hesitant to call administrators or write-up the students as it might reflect poorly on the teacher's classroom management.

5. Because we live in a time when many parents do not back up the school's discipline procedures, it is very important that our principals back our teachers for behavior infractions. Parents need to be encouraged to follow the chain of command when they have questions or concerns and schools need to make clear to parents that schools have rules and all kids should follow them. I know of a case where a parent-in-denial was rude to the staff over punishment of her child until she saw the actual video of his transgression (with a gun!). Cameras cannot be everywhere, so we have to trust our teachers and back them up.

6. TAB out. Is this really fair to teachers and well-behaved students? If a teacher is teaching a class or utilizing his/her planning period, is it really fair to saddle them with a student who needs to calm down? Moving a kid to another classroom now disrupts the education of the original class AND the class he/she is sent to. So much for protecting "instruction time." Our SROs, counselors and ILC people should be involved in this, not another teacher.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Current year and preparation of the BLGs

I have more questions than comments -

1. Which teachers and principals served on the committee and how were they chosen? 2. We learned that this year's Code of Student Conduct was put together quickly; however, our teachers had little to no guidance and our students quickly learned all year that they could do as they pleased. How are our teachers supposed to regain the control they've lost? (2 examples - greatly increased use of profanity and no enforcement of dress code)

**Children's School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Punishment Time Line

My son was assaulted last week. I have been told by [school name redacted] principal and head of Huntsville magnet program that since this week is state testing, the student who attacked my son cannot be punished until state testing is over. I hope that the 2016/2017 behavior policy will address this. No reason that punishment should be delayed when a child is attacked from behind.

**Children's School:** [school name redacted for privacy purposes]

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** First let me start by saying, I know about Positive Behavior Models. Special Education has used this intervention for at least the past 19 years. I know for a fact there are principals and general ed teachers in our district already utilizing positive reinforcement with success. Although not really a new concept, it is hopeful to see Huntsville City Schools move away from punishment-based strategies. I am also reassured that many of the expected behaviors our school district has noted in past code of conduct manuals, are being addressed in this draft. It is a great improvement over what I saw at the two community briefs I attended in the Fall. I know first-hand some children need to be taught behavior. Like many children on the autism spectrum, my son is wired differently. He did not pick up social cues to learn appropriate behavior. He also create inappropriate "bad" behaviors to avoid uncomfortable situations, as a first line of defense coping mechanism. I would imagine for most of the students in Huntsville, this is not the case. Most know right from wrong and behave appropriately. However, by introducing this comprehensive plan, I can only assume there are enough students in the general population needing a more intense approach to appropriate behavior. One thing I know for sure about positive behavior interventions, regardless of the model, is how meticulous and consistent you must be in data collection. It is very time consuming, regardless of how streamlined you make the data collection process.

First I would like to point out, I have not seen any evidence that any professional in our special education department was consulted, or asked to be on the committee. Please correct me if I am mistaken. The majority of special education students are inclusive in the general ed population, and need a voice, as these response strategies are finalized. And regardless of special ed vs general ed, the theory is the same, so why not use our district experts?

Now, looking at the details of this plan, the specific level of response I am concerned about most, is inappropriate Physical contact and aggression, including light pushing, shoving etc. I understand keeping the level to the lightest response, but I feel in this case, the victims' rights, and their emotional well-being, should also be strongly considered. Once the aggression has escalated past words, and become any type of physical contact, it should be considered a huge red flag on how quickly it can intensify. I feel any level of inappropriate physical contact and aggression should be an immediate level 2 for secondary students.

And finally I would like to know specific plans for monitoring implementation fidelity (from PBIS website). Please listen to me when I say, no matter how many hours were put into creating this document, no matter how many training sessions you hold, this plan will fail if you do not put into place a quality assurance plan. If you do not have a way of checking accuracy of your data, this plan will be no different than the inconsistent implementation and reporting that has happened in past years with our district. I suggest a non-biased third party of professionals to observe classrooms, document occurrences and then compare with what the teacher is documenting. Give teachers the support of true professionals, on-site, during the initial implementation. Not only does this help the teachers know if they are documenting appropriately, they can also receive feedback on responses. These objective observations would also be instrumental in identifying possible behavior causes, before it becomes a level 3 requiring the Multi-Disciplinary Team intervention. Please don't rely on train the trainer and off site consulting. Until there is a way of ensuring all schools are implementing equally, at same levels of response, consistently, you can't say you have an equitable code of conduct.

“One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.” Milton Friedman, economist

**Children’s School:** Huntsville High

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Positive Behavior Intervention

Bus policy enforcement - How will issues that occur on school bus transportation (Durham) be applied to the new policy/guide to be consistent with the recommendations made by the various committees - especially when the students are to/from various schools - i.e. ASFL/AAA bus

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** 1. As a parent, what can I do when discipline occurrences and other cases are not reported? They are being brushed under the rug.

2. If elementary children can't get expelled, what about the child that is being hurt by the violator?

-She was sexually harassed by the violator.

-She is bullied by the violator + his parents

-He has stolen from her (laptop, lunch) - this made her unable to prepare for a test

-He threatened and scared her w/ a knife and a bullet on 5 separate occasions.

There are other things he has done that we can discuss.

Your interventions are NOT working!

**Children's School:** [school name redacted for privacy purposes]

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** Intervention across all grades

How does intervention apply to learning in the classroom for children who are there for that? Over + over "intervention" only incapacitates the students who are there to learn. Liaisons reporting to this board or any other administrative board member will not report clear + accurate information when they do not have any information to report. Teachers who have had years to be disciplinary figures are leaving or have given up. Younger teachers are scared to report - How do you expect to get information from a paralyzed faculty. I have spoken with our administration who impose no authority in our school + even they feel their hands are tied.

Parents feel like there are no repercussions for kids who are a disruption + our kids the ones that suffer.

We test now more than ever + my kids sit more than ever. My child sat yesterday not able to touch anything because of testing.

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** 1. We need classroom management skills to be taught (to the young 24 year old teachers especially) so teachers without experience know what to do.

2. We need to fix the substitute teacher problem. You cannot have good behavior when classes are left unsupervised - frequently.

3. Children who are well behaved and there to learn should not be held hostage by the behavior issues that are drug out throughout the school year.

**Children's Schools:** Whitesburg/Grissom

**Source:** Public Meeting Feedback Form

**5/3/2016**

**Feedback:** p. 4 - "We will evaluate this tool annually and make adjustments based on feedback received from our teachers." I would hope that changes could be made during the school year if things are not working.

p. 9 - "This process ensures that a teacher's responses to inappropriate behavior are as much a part of the learning environment as teaching academic subjects." What?!?! I hope they don't mean that teachers should spend as much time dealing with behavior issues as they do teaching.

p. 12 - How many times does a students have to repeat an behavior to merit elevating the response to the next level? For instance, with profanity or general disruptive behavior? This still seems very vague to me.

p. 14 - District-wide tool: Multi-Disciplinary Teams - Who are the team members? Are they HCS employees or consultants hired by HCS?

p. 17 - Loss of privileges - use of laptop is included in this list, but isn't the whole point to keep the students in the educational environment that now requires use of the laptops?

p. 23 - Use of restraint is listed under levels 2, 3, and 4 as a response strategy. I thought staff members weren't supposed to touch the students?

p. 44-45 - Expulsion - It is not specified if students who are expelled are permitted to return to the same school or a different HCS school at all, after a certain time period, or after a certain other session at an alternative school, etc.

**Source:** E-mail

**5/4/2016**

**Feedback:** Thank you for the open forum held Tuesday night and for giving the community so many opportunities to respond to the proposed BLG.

Briefly my comments are:

1) Please clarify in final BLG how the data that is collected will and will not be used. Will it only be used to track students or will it also be used to track and evaluate teachers and schools? What is going to be the end use of this data?

2) Both documents are very comprehensive, however they seem to be written solely from the perspective of the student who perpetrates the bad behavior. I haven't read anything regarding the students(s) or teacher(s) who, in some instances, will be the victims of bad behavior. How is a parent to handle cases under the new BLG when their child has been the victim? Where can a parent go with immediate safety concerns if the teacher or principal do not respond to their concerns or say they cannot do more because of the BLG requirements?

Thank you for listening to our comments.

**Children's School:** Jones Valley

## Superintendent's Commentary as to the Desegregation Advisory Committee's Annual Report

### I. Introduction

On June 1, 2016, I received the Desegregation Advisory Committee's ("DAC") first Annual Report. This report is the culmination of the service rendered by the inaugural DAC members. I am grateful for the input, recommendations, and guidance that the DAC provided me during the first year of implementation of the Consent Order. During the 2015-16 school year, the DAC served as one of the District's many avenues for obtaining stakeholder feedback, and I want to thank the DAC members for the hard work it took to combine that feedback into a single document. I feel confident in saying that the DAC met its obligation under the Consent Order "to advise the Superintendent . . . about the [District's] assessment of the implementation of the terms of the Consent Order."

As per the Consent Order, this document contains my comments and responses to the issues and recommendations that the DAC raised in its Annual Report. I shared these comments during the Huntsville City Board of Education meeting held on July 14, 2016. This document contains all of the stakeholder feedback, DAC recommendations, and my comments organized in the same manner as the Annual Report. In some instances, one of my comments responds to multiple feedback and recommendation items. For clarity: the stakeholder feedback received by the DAC is in blue; the DAC's recommendations are in red; and my comments are in green.

### II. Student Assignment

#### C. Attendance Zones and Feeder Patterns

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have requested information about the changes to student enrollment at individual schools and any resulting capacity concerns as a result of the new student assignment plan.*

*DAC Recommendation: In elementary schools that have seen a significant increase in enrollment as a result of the Consent Order, the District needs to evaluate how to more effectively manage situations in which a large number of students are together at once (i.e. physical education classes, recess, and lunch room). Many of the concerns heard regarding discipline issues at the elementary level seemed to have occurred outside of the regular classroom setting.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** Administrative staff will review the location of disciplinary incidents, the extent to which disciplinary incidents take place outside of the traditional classroom setting, and if a

determination is made that incidents are more likely to occur outside of the classroom, determine the measures that can be taken to alleviate the issue.

*Stakeholder Feedback: Some parents have requested additional grandfathering to ease transition for students affected by the new Student Assignment Plan.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** I am sympathetic to parent concerns about grandfathering. However, the joint Consent Order provides sufficient grandfathering to address immediate concerns regarding 2015-16 zone line changes. Students have made the school transitions during the previous school year. I do not recommend additional changes that would impact student assignment zones, such as additional grandfathering.

#### **D. Majority-to-Minority Transfers**

*Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have requested additional information about how the Majority-to-Minority transfers apply to special needs students.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** The District will update the FAQ on the Consent Order implementation page to address applications for Majority-to-Minority transfers for special needs students. We will ensure this information is available at community meetings that are conducted regarding the M-to-M application process.

*Stakeholder Feedback: Some teachers have expressed frustration concerning the inability to request a transfer of their own children to the school where they teach because of the Consent Order's priority for assigning open spaces at the District's schools.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** I completely agree that teachers should be allowed transfers of their children to the school where they teach when space is available. However, I also believe it is important to comply with the provisions of the Consent Order to provide priority to Majority-to-Minority transfers, which at times does not allow for additional space for other transfers.

#### **E. Magnet Schools/Programs**

*Stakeholder Feedback: There is a concern that the culture within the magnet schools has changed as a result of the new lottery protocol for some of the programs. Some have requested that aptitude and suitability of the student to the particular magnet school in question be restored to the admissions process to ensure the ongoing viability of those programs.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: There needs to be clarification about how students, who have been admitted to the magnet programs, can result in the "loss" of the magnet placement and return of the student to his/her home school.*

**DAC Recommendation: To protect the ongoing viability of the magnet programs, the DAC recommends that the parties and the Court consider expanding the retention**

*provision found in Section II.E.6 of the Consent Order to all magnet students (not just those in grades 6 and up) in order to preserve access and availability to the students who can be best served by the theme integrated in the magnet.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** Accessible magnet themes and programs are important to me and to the District. In any action we take, we want to be careful not to diminish the accessibility of our magnet programs because such programs provide unique opportunities for students to excel in areas of their personal interests. However, I will see that the District discusses the DAC recommendation with the Department of Justice. The District will need to gather information and data from local schools and stakeholders before making concrete recommendations.

### III. Equitable Access to Course Offerings and Programs

#### D. Elementary Gifted Programs

*Stakeholder Feedback: Parents at some schools have not been informed about the selection criteria for the GATE program for the 2016-2017 school year, the timeline for qualification, nor of the appeals process if a student is not selected.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to improve transparency and communication regarding the GATE Program to ensure that parents have information they need to understand how their students will be affected. Some suggestions include (a) making the information about the GATE program more prominent on the website, (b) providing clear information about the criteria for qualification, qualification process and timelines, and appeal procedures, and (c) ensuring that all elementary schools are sharing this information with parents in a timely and accurate manner.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** The Gifted identification process has been updated to reflect the requirements of the Consent Order. The Gifted Coordinator held local parent meetings as described below:

Date	Location	Approx. # in Attendance
8/11/2015	AAA P-8	26
8/12/2015	Morris Elementary	11
8/13/2015	Williams Elementary	24
8/17/2015	Mt. Gap P-8	15
8/18/2015	Weatherly Elementary	24
8/20/2015	Monte Sano Elementary	21
8/24/2015	Challenger Elementary	55
8/24/2015	Highlands Elementary	2
8/25/2015	ASFL P-8	20
8/27/2015	Chapman P-8	15
8/31/2015	Goldsmith Schiffman Elementary	31
9/1/2015	Chaffee Elementary	9
9/2/2015	Blossomwood Elementary	28
9/3/2015	Farley Elementary	40
9/8/2015	Lakewood Elementary	4
9/9/2015	Dawson Elementary	2
9/10/2015	Jones Valley Elementary	29
9/14/2015	McDonnell Elementary	7
9/15/2015	MLK Elementary	6
9/16/2015	Rolling Hills Elementary	2
9/22/2015	Montview Elementary	2
9/23/2015	Providence Elementary	25
9/28/2015	Hampton Cove Elementary	17

In addition, the process was publicly reviewed at the June 4, 2015 HCS Board meeting. The gifted identification process is explained at the Gifted and Talented webpage on the District's website. We will continue to determine ways to communicate with parents about the gifted program and student identification.

## F. Mathematics Acceleration

***DAC Recommendation: The Mathematics Acceleration portion of the Consent Order is underway; however, the next step is to ensure more communication to notify parents of these changes and the implications thereof, but also to enable them to make more informed choices for their children.***

***DAC Recommendation: The Math Course Progression, found in the High School Course Description Guide and set forth below, should be updated to reflect the course sequence options beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This information will help parents and students make more informed choices about their course selections that will have implications in high school and beyond.***

**Superintendent's Commentary:** I believe it is important to increase opportunities for parents to learn about math acceleration to enable them to make more informed choices for their children. District leaders will take measures to communicate a flow chart for math progression for grades five through eight that aligns with the high school math flow chart. Additional communication measures regarding math acceleration in elementary and middle grades will be implemented by District leaders.

## **H. Honors, AP, and IB Courses in Secondary Schools**

***Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have expressed concerns that teachers are being pressured to "loosen" the standards to take AP classes to increase enrollment.***

***Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have expressed concerns that the rigor of the AP classes has been sacrificed in an effort to make them more accessible to all students, regardless of qualification.***

***Stakeholder Feedback: Parents have expressed concerns that, as the number of AP classes have increased, the number of Honors classes has decreased, resulting in lost opportunities for students who choose to either limit their AP course load or who otherwise are not capable of that level of rigor.***

***DAC Recommendation: The District needs to ensure that the rigor and coursework required for AP classes is not compromised in an effort to increase AP participation. Adequate supports should be put into place to assist students who may need the extra help to meet the requirements of the AP courses, while maintaining the advanced level of instruction and workload needed to adequately prepare students for the AP tests.***

**Superintendent's Commentary:** Participation in AP and honors courses has increased. This results from our efforts to identify students who have potential to succeed and to provide bridge supports to our students as necessary. The College Board sets the rigor requirements for AP courses, and the District is bound by those requirements. This gives us confidence that the courses are rigorous regardless of enrollment. Teachers must submit the course syllabus for approval by the College Board for a course to have the AP designation. District instructional leaders will ensure all AP course syllabi have been approved by the College Board annually.

## IV. Extracurricular Activities

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concerns that the distance from their schools creates certain barriers for involvement in extra-curricular activities or school programs.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to evaluate how to make extra-curricular activities accessible to more students by addressing factors like transportation barriers and the need for alternate meeting times.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** Given all of the costs associated with programmatic and other improvements, the District simply cannot expand the transportation budget for extracurricular activities. Those improvements total approximately \$5,000,000, and approximately \$1,000,000 of that stems from new transportation costs. However, the District can and will explore alternate meeting times.

## V. Faculty

### A. Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have inquired about the selection criteria of the various committees used to hire and evaluate teachers and administrators and have expressed concerns about whether the selection process is fair and objective and whether all certified staff would have the opportunity to be considered for such an appointment.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** I do not understand the nature of the concerns because they are not stated in the feedback. I have no basis for suggesting that the selection process is not fair. Typically, principals recommend employees for consideration for various committees. Employees may, and on occasion have, request a recommendation from their principal. The development of committees includes consideration to ensure committees are racially diverse. Other factors may include subject matter expertise, when appropriate, and representation from various schools. A presentation was made at the June 14, 2016 HCS Board meeting to outline these procedures. The procedures are aligned to ensure we have highly effective teachers on all committees.

### B. Assignment

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concern about the frequent movement of teachers and administrators and the resulting impact on school climate and teacher morale. This concern was heightened this year with all of the changes that resulted from the Consent Order.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concern that the District's teacher assignment policies have resulted in retention problems with seasoned teachers who are leaving the District to teach in private schools or other public systems.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** When I began as Huntsville's Superintendent, many schools had struggling principals and racially identifiable staffs, and, to correct this problem, I developed a system of teacher and administrator assignment that ensured the demographics of school staff was representative of the District average. The objectives of this process were twofold: 1) make sure that schools had diverse and effective leaders and teaching staff and 2) ensure these populations meet the District's academic goals for students. These goals have been achieved: all of our schools have a diverse adult population and the graduation rate for each high school now exceeds the state graduation rate.

In recent years, administrator and teacher placement decisions have been made to match experience and expertise with school needs. District leaders continually evaluate teaching and leadership needs within schools to make recommendations regarding school placement of employees. As school needs evolve, administrator placement may also need to evolve. We consider Consent Order requirements when placing administrators. Developing and promoting employees is part of advancement and career development. Principals move toward more complex schools as their skills develop.

Nationally, recruiting and retaining teachers continues to be an area of concern for K-12 schools. The District is focused on efforts to retain an effective staff in all areas. I have implemented initiatives to encourage teachers to work in areas that are sometimes considered "hard to fill." For example, it is difficult to recruit and retain teachers in certain subject areas such as math and science. Therefore, the Board and I implemented stipends and additional training opportunities for math and science teachers to encourage excellent teachers in these areas to stay in the profession. In addition, stipends have been added to support retaining outstanding teachers in Title I schools. I have and will continue to lead the District in creating multiple opportunities for teachers to grow professionally, seek leadership positions, and receive stipends for extra assignment to encourage excellent teachers to stay in Huntsville City Schools.

## **VI. Student Discipline, Positive School Climate, and Effective Classroom Management**

### **B. Student Code of Conduct**

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have suggested that the rush to put together the revised Student Code of Conduct following the entry of the Consent Order in late April 2015 and before the start of the 2015-2016 school year resulted in inadequate time for teacher input into the new policy and thus was problematic from the outset.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: General consensus among stakeholders who provided feedback is that the implementation of the revised Student Code of Conduct has resulted in a loss of overall discipline in our schools and a compromise of the learning environment.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Perception among some stakeholders is that the Consent Order requires teachers to "look the other way" and avoid disciplining students to "soften" the transitions required under the new student assignment plan.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: General consensus is that teachers do not feel “confident” in their authority to address discipline issues in their classrooms under the new Student Code of Conduct and that savvy students have taken advantage of these uncertainties.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concerns that teachers are being asked to deal with issues within their classrooms that really should be referred to an administrator and that there is an overall fear of reprisal for referring a student to an administrator.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to expand the communication regarding use of the Anonymous Tip Line so that students, parents, and teachers can report what is taking place in the schools, such as bullying or harassment in all forms.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to provide more communication to students and parents about resources available to them to address problems they are having in the classroom or in the school.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to ensure proper time for training of administrators, teachers, staff, and bus drivers on the requirement of the new Behavioral Learning Guides before the 2016-2017 school year begins. To ensure consistency among schools, this training needs to be done directly, to the extent possible, and not through the use of the train-the-trainer approach.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to coordinate informational meetings for parents about the requirements of the Behavioral Learning Guides and about the implementation of the app.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: There is a perception among stakeholders that teachers have been reluctant – through lack of adequate training or concern of how the referral would reflect on their classroom management – to refer students to the office for discipline problems. Therefore, it is difficult to determine the scope to which this reluctance is reflected in this data.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Because of the timing crunch in the creation of the revised Student Code of Conduct, the professional development provided to teachers was not adequate for changes of this magnitude.*

## **C. Positive School Climate**

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed a concern that the new focus on positive behavior interventions have resulted in a deteriorated learning environment for students who want to learn because of the time and attention a teacher must give to the students with behavior problems.*

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have stated that the revised Student Code of Conduct has not resulted in a Positive School Climate, but rather just the opposite with*

*an increase in the amount of disrespect shown to teachers and peers and an overall disregard for the rules.*

**Superintendent's Commentary:** During the 2015-16 school year, I received feedback about the District's implementation of the student discipline provisions of the Consent Order that was similar to the feedback contained in the DAC Annual Report. In order to address these issues, to support our teachers, and to ensure good faith implementation of the Consent Order, I developed a plan to improve our disciplinary procedures for the 2016-17 school year. First, I commissioned a team of teachers and principals to draft a document to replace the Code of Student Conduct. The team created the Behavioral Learning Guide ("BLG"). The BLG provides guidance and support to teachers and principals. It sets clear expectations for school staff in their handling of student discipline.

Second, I created a new District-level support system for schools called the Behavioral Learning Network. This network will coordinate additional interventions to assist schools in supporting the students with the most significant behavioral needs.

Third, I established Behavioral Learning Liaisons at each school. These classroom teachers will meet with the Director of Behavioral Learning each month. At these meetings, the Liaisons can share strategies for and concerns about the implementation of the BLG at their schools. The District will use this information to support its schools during 2016-17 school year. For their efforts, the District is providing them a stipend.

Fourth, my team has planned extensive professional development for principals and teachers. This PD will include training on the BLG prior to and throughout the school year. The District will also work with the Behavioral Learning Liaisons to provide continuing support to schools. The District has planned informational presentations for students and parents during July and August. Along with these presentations, the District is developing communications that will provide families information about changes to the student discipline procedures and new supports for students.

Finally, we created new, user-friendly software to support teachers and principals in maintaining student discipline information. As part of its professional development, the District will train teachers and principals on the use of this new software.

These measures will support teachers in managing their classrooms, will set clear behavioral expectations for students, and, when needed, will provide school staff with the tools to correct disruptive student behaviors. This will create a positive school climate in all of our schools.

## **F. Expulsion Hearings**

*Stakeholder Feedback: Stakeholders have expressed concerns about allowing students to remain at school while awaiting their suspension or expulsion hearings.*

*DAC Recommendation: The District needs to ensure that any hearings required under the Behavioral Learning Guide are expedited to minimize the time that the student can*

***continue to disrupt the learning environment and/or present a safety risk to the other students.***

**Superintendent's Commentary:** The Consent Order and the Due Process Clause of the Constitution of the United States of America require that we comply with specific requirements prior to removing a student from school, including an opportunity to tell his or her side of the story. During the 2016-17 school year, the average number of school days between a student's inappropriate behavior and his or her expulsion hearing was approximately 8.5. In order to minimize the disruption to the school's learning environment and the student's education during this time, school principals often place students in an In-House Learning Center while awaiting their disciplinary hearings. However, if a student presents a safety risk, it is the District's practice to place the student on out-of-school suspension prior to the hearing. These measures are in place to address the concern that the DAC has raised. To address the DAC's concern, I will work with my administration to ensure that all school leaders are aware of these procedures.

#### **G. School Resources Officers and Security Officers**

***DAC Recommendation: The District needs to clarify to teachers, staff, parents, and students the role of SROs in the schools to avoid confusion and/or perception problems about their role and responsibility.***

**Superintendent's Commentary:** The Consent Order requires "The District [to] ensure that SROs . . . are focused on maintaining the safety of the District's students and personnel and that SRO involvement is not requested [by the District] in response to any situation that can be safely and appropriately handled by the District through its internal disciplinary procedures."

The District, the City of Huntsville, and the United States Department of Justice are working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the District and the City that will clarify the role of School Resource Officers consistent with the Consent Order. When this document is finalized, the District will communicate with students, parents, teachers, and staff about the role of the SROs as outlined in the MOU. Additionally, the training regarding the BLG will include classroom management procedures for teachers and staff and information about the roles of SROs in maintaining school safety.