

Desegregation Advisory Committee (DAC) Public Meeting

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

Columbia High School

Call to Order: A public meeting of the DAC was held at the Columbia High School Auditorium on Tuesday, May 16th, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Co-Chair, Isha Greene.

Members in Attendance: Members of the DAC in attendance were Laura Lemley, Chaundra Jones, Milie Steber, Isha Greene, Keith Poe, Vinny Argentina, Celena Anderson, Hudson Honeywell, Ashley Sparks, and Preeti Francis. Members of the community and representatives from Huntsville City Schools were also present.

A quorum of the DAC was established at this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was the required public meeting of the DAC during the second semester of the school year. Ms. Greene welcomed those in attendance. DAC members introduced themselves. A brief presentation of the history of the consent order was shared and a request for DAC volunteers was made. DAC contact information was shared and it was reiterated that the school district does not have access to this information.

Mr. Poe then oversaw the process of taking questions from the audience. This was done by areas of oversight as described in the Joint Consent Order.

Student Assignment – One audience member wondered whether Majority to Minority transfers were awarded evenly across schools. The DAC clarified that these transfers are assigned based on available space and parent choice.

Equitable Access – No questions.

Extracurricular Activities – No questions.

Faculty – One audience member expressed concern about teacher retention. There is speculation that teachers are leaving due to the stress and pressure of the classroom. Another audience member recommended that teachers be included in the DAC. Mr. Poe clarified that they were not included due to concerns about conflict of interest. This audience member also shared a newspaper article about the highlights of the Consent Order. Mr. Poe provided clarification about each item.

Transportation and Facilities – There was a question about whether all schools have access to the equipment needed to maintain their soccer fields.

Student Discipline – A member of the audience requested that future public meetings include information about how issues raised at prior public meetings were resolved. She also expressed concern that students are leaving public schools due to discipline problems and shared that there is a perception among teachers and administration that they cannot discipline students. She would like to see students

who are zoned out of school environments that are familiar to them have access to an outlet/advocate who will advocate for them.

One member of the audience expressed disappointment in the lack of participation in this meeting. She expressed the need for more parental engagement. Another audience member had a question about continuity within the DAC. Mr. Poe explained that the terms of DAC member are staggered to ensure continuity.

Those in attendance were encouraged to submit their questions in writing as well.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Preeti Francis

DAC Secretary