

Desegregation Advisory Committee (DAC) Meeting with Dr. Akin (HCS Superintendent)

Tuesday, May 30, 2017

Annie C. Merts Center

Call to Order: A non-public meeting of the DAC with Superintendent, Dr. Matt Akin, was held at the Annie C. Merts Center on Tuesday, May 30th, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 6:09p.m. by Chair, Keith Poe.

Members in Attendance: Members of the DAC in attendance were Chaundra Jones, Ashley Sparks, Vinny Argentina, Isha Greene, Keith Poe, Kimberly Flint, Laura Lemley, and Preeti Francis. Mr. Drake, HCS Superintendent, and Ms. Christie Finley, HCS Director of Strategy and Innovation, were also present.

A quorum of the DAC was not established at this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was the required bi-annual non-public meeting of the DAC with the superintendent of Huntsville City Schools (HCS). Dr. Akin began by sharing an update about issues related to the consent order. He informed the DAC that the consent order will get us on the path to be a model school system for the nation which is the mission of HCS. There has been a lot of discussion in the school system about possible improvements to the Behavioral Learning Guide. This is a living document that improves with input from all stakeholders. There has been a lot of discussion related to transportation issues as well. Many of the problems related to transportation are related to issues such as traffic and distance that are out of the control of the school system. However, HCS remains committed to find solutions. The alternative school has also been studied closely and the administration is investigating innovative ways to improve the learning experience for students who attend alternative school. Changes are expected to be implemented in the fall of 2017.

The DAC then discussed concerns related to the areas of the Consent Order.

Discipline and Positive School Climate: DAC members shared feedback received from parents, teachers, and administrators and expressed concern for the mental health issues underlying some of the behavioral issues that schools are encountering. There was discussion about whether the Behavioral Learning Guide was being applied consistently across the district. The role of mental health problems in discipline and possible solutions were discussed.

Transportation: Transportation issues were discussed. The district is investigating possible solutions. The DAC provided feedback about these solutions.

Student Assignment: Majority to Minority transfers were discussed. The total numbers are about the same as the previous school year and the majority of the students were able to transfer to the school which was their first choice. Ms. Finley will provide the DAC with the actual numbers.

Equitable Access: Some parents have expressed concern that Advanced Placement (AP) courses are no longer as rigorous as they used to be due to the need to expand enrollment. Ms. Finley assured the DAC that there are several steps in place to ensure the rigor of AP classes and listed those requirements. She will share data about performance and enrollment in AP classes when available so that the DAC can identify trends.

Math Acceleration: