

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS
CENTRAL DIVISION

LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT, *et al.*

PLAINTIFFS

No. 4:82-cv-866-DPM

PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT, JACKSONVILLE/NORTH
PULASKI SCHOOL DISTRICT, *et al.*

DEFENDANTS

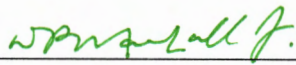
EMILY McCLENDON, TAMARA EACKLES,
VALERIE STALLINGS, TIFFANY ELLIS,
and LINDA MORGAN

INTERVENORS

ORDER

The Court is attaching Ms. Powell's fifth summary report, which covers achievement-related matters at PCSSD. *No 5502 at 2-3*. The Court appreciates her work.

So Ordered.



D.P. Marshall Jr.
United States District Judge



9 December 2019

UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF THE PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL

DISTRICT'S IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN 2000 - ACHIEVEMENT

On July 18, 2019, Chief U.S. District Judge D. Price Marshall, Jr., directed the Court Expert to issue written status reports on the remaining areas of the Pulaski County Special School District's (PCSSD) desegregation plan (Plan 2000) that still remain under Court supervision. (Doc 5502). This report is number five of eight.

ACHIEVEMENT (Plan 2000-Section M)

Note: When reporting racial data, in this case, there are only two categories: black and white. There is no category for "Other"; all non-black individuals are reported as white.

PLAN PROVISION

The PCSSD shall implement the plans designed to improve student achievement, recommended by Dr. Stephen Ross, and shall work with Dr. Ross in their implementation. (M.1, pg 6)

Background

On November 4, 1999, when the PCSSD presented its new desegregation plan, Plan 2000, for court approval, the district inadvertently attached a draft copy of an education plan, which is referred to as the "Ross Plan," The plan was authored by Dr. Steven M. Ross, a consultant from the University of Memphis. *The plan consists of a series of activities and goals the district would have to do in order to reduce disparities in achievement and discipline between black students and white students. All of the goals of the Ross Plan have been imbedded in the Findings Section.

*Discipline related actions are covered in Status Report #2: Update on the Pulaski County Special School District's Implementation of Plan 2000- Discipline (Doc 5531).

Findings

- FEPSI (Formative Evaluation Process for School Improvement), a school improvement plan developed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP), a consulting organization affiliated with the University of Memphis, is one of the tools the PCSSD uses to address achievement and discipline disparities in the district. The FEPSI process uses data collected from multiple sources, which may include a: climate inventory, teacher questionnaire, teacher focus group, and classroom observations. The district ships data to CREP for processing and analysis. CREP then prepares confidential reports of these data for each school to use in school improvement planning.
- AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) is a nonprofit that partners with schools, providing professional development, resources, and on going support in their efforts to improve achievement and to address racial disparities with respect to discipline. A more detailed report on AVID can be found in the above referenced report, Doc 5531.

ELEMENTARY

- Go Math is designed to increase higher order thinking skills.
- Journeys is a resource that supports comprehensive literacy, while continuing to place emphasis on writing across the curriculum.
- RISE and Phonics First are initiatives that are intended to increase the reading ability of all students

SECONDARY

- Science of Reading are initiatives that are intentional in nature to increase the reading ability of all students.
- Project Lead The Way, in each middle school, prepares students for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programming at district high schools.
- The Charles W. Donaldson Scholars Academy is a collaboration with UALR and Philander Smith College to promote college readiness through ACT preparation sessions, mentoring, and providing scholarships to students.
- Driven School of Opportunity is a blended program that provides high school students a personalized learning atmosphere where they can advance in subjects, stay on track, or receive support for the content they need.
- Students have 24/7 online access to American College Test (ACT) preparation through Odysseyware, an online tool that is approved by the Arkansas Department of Education.
- Mills and Maumelle High School were designated as Schools of Innovation at the completion of the 2018-2019 school year, and recognized state-wide at the Education Innovation Summit in September 2019.

ACT Aspire Results/Gap 2016/2019 (Proficiency)

According to PCSSD reports, from the spring of 2016 through the spring of 2019, the achievement gaps between black and white students were as follows:

2016	2019
▶ 3 rd grade English: -10%	3 rd grade English: -10%
▶ 3 rd grade Reading: -26%	3 rd grade Reading: -17%
▶ 3 rd grade Science: -23%	3 rd grade Science: -19%
▶ 3 rd grade Math: -14%	3 rd grade Math: -19%
▶ 4 th grade English: -14%	4 th grade English: -15%
▶ 4 th grade Reading: -18%	4 th grade Reading: -23%
▶ 4 th grade Science: -20%	4 th grade Science: -21%
▶ 4 th grade Math: -19%	4 th grade Math: -25%
▶ 5 th grade English: -12%	5 th grade English: -7%
▶ 5 th grade Reading: -16%	5 th grade Reading: -13%
▶ 5 th grade Science: -24%	5 th grade Science: -21%
▶ 5 th grade Math: -17%	5 th grade Math: -17%

ACT Aspire Results/Gap 2016/2019 (Proficiency) (continued)

▶ 6 th grade English: - 15%	6 th grade English: -18%
▶ 6 th grade Reading: -38%	6 th grade Reading: -23%
▶ 6 th grade Science: -22%	6 th grade Science: -23%
▶ 6 th grade Math: -16%	6 th grade Math: -23%
▶ 7 th grade English: -14%	7 th grade English: -13%
▶ 7 th grade Reading: -20%	7 th grade Reading: -12%
▶ 7 th grade Science: -21%	7 th grade Science: -19%
▶ 7 th grade Math: -20%	7 th grade Math: -15%
▶ 8 th grade English: -17%	8 th grade English: - 18%
▶ 8 th grade Reading: -19%	8 th grade Reading: -23%
▶ 8 th grade Science: -19%	8 th grade Science: -28%
▶ 8 th grade Math: -23%	8 th grade Math: -23%
▶ 9 th grade English: -12%	9 th grade English: -14%
▶ 9 th grade Reading: -15%	9 th grade Reading: -13%
▶ 9 th grade Science: -11%	9 th grade Science: -14%
▶ 9 th grade Math: -9%	9 th grade Math: -15%
▶ 10 th grade English: - 23%	10 th grade English: -22%
▶ 10 th grade Reading: - 29%	10 th grade Reading: 21%
▶ 10 th grade Science: - 20%	10 th grade Science: -18%
▶ 10 th grade Math: -17%	10 th grade Math: -19%

The 2016/2019 ACT gap for the junior class was 2.32/2.85

The 2016/2019 ACT gap for the senior class was 2.70/2.90

COMMENTS

When comparing ACT Aspire results for 2016 and 2019, one can see that the gap in English scores decreased in grades 5, 7, and 10. Grades 4, 6, 8 and 9 had slight increases in the gap in that subject, and grade 3 remained the same. With the exception of the 4th and 8th grades, the gap in reading scores has narrowed at all other grade levels tested. The gap in science scores has decreased for grades 3,5,7 and 10. Except for the 8th grade, which saw a 9% increase, all other grades had modest increases in the science gap. On the other hand, grades 3,4,6,9,and 10, experienced increased gaps in math scores. Two grades (5 and 8) had no change, and 7th graders closed the math gap by 2 points.

The stars of the Aspire tests in the PCSSD were the 5th and 7th grade students. At the 5th grade level, except for math scores, which remained unchanged, the gap narrowed in all areas tested. At the 7th grade level, the achievement gap narrowed in all areas tested. Unfortunately, 4th grade students saw increases in achievement disparities in all subjects tested. The eighth grade had increases in the achievement gap in all areas, except for math scores, which remained unchanged. PCSSD administrators may want to investigate why the scores for 4th and 8th grade students were so out of synch with the other grades, which showed a measure of success in narrowing the achievement gap in several subjects.

As noted at the beginning of this report, the PCSSD has initiated several policies, programs, and practices that target student achievement. With AVID serving as the umbrella for the many interventions the district employs to address the myriad of things that impact student achievement, closing the achievement gap now seems doable. Working together, school personnel can now write "prescriptions" that can: target individual students and provide the assistance they need; help teachers with classroom management techniques; mentor inexperienced teachers and help them to develop their teaching skills. These antidotes can go a long way to helping the PCSSD to achieve the goal of reducing the achievement gap.