

Monitoring Plan

The Settlement Agreement and Release (“Agreement”) between the Black Parents Workshop (“Workshop”) and the South Orange Maplewood School District (“District”) approved by the District on July 13, 2020, requires the Monitor to develop a monitoring plan (“Plan”). Although the Agreement provided for the development of the Plan within ninety (90) days of the execution of the Agreement, the parties agreed that development of the Plan should await the recommendations of the District’s consultant, Dr. Edward Fergus, regarding how the District should remediate the effects of tracking and leveling on Black and other disproportionately affected groups of students.

Specifically, Dr. Fergus is required to make recommendations to the District on improvement of a comprehensive equity plan intended to detail the following:

1. How Black elementary and middle school students will be assisted in preparing for advanced-level study at Columbia High.
2. How current Black Columbia High students enrolled in advance-level courses will be supported through tutoring and enrichment, and programs that will address issues or proficiency, student trauma and effective study habits.
3. How current Black Columbia High School students not enrolled in advanced-level courses will be supported and encouraged to enroll in these courses, and what programs and services will be offered this student population.
4. How elementary schools will be integrated, specifically: the manner in which the student population will be redistributed, the method of redistribution, the racial balance the District seeks to achieve across elementary schools, and the timeline for achieving full and complete integration (the “Fergus Plan”).

The Monitor is required to monitor the implementation of the Fergus Plan as well as the District’s written integration plan (the “Integration Plan”).

For various reasons, including the pandemic of 2020, the preparation of the Fergus Plan was delayed. In or about April 2022, Dr. Fergus presented the South Orange Maplewood Schools Equity Report: Availability of Opportunity in Secondary schools (the “Equity Report”). The recommendations in the Equity Report primarily addressed issues related to math, but did not address all of the requirements in the Agreement.

Within thirty (30) days of the submission of the Fergus Plan, the Monitor shall undertake the following:

1. Meet with counsel for the parties to determine a reasonable time-table to institute the Fergus Recommendations and the Integration Plan.
2. Request the documentation and data necessary to determine achievement of the goals and compliance with the timetables in the Fergus Plan and the Integration Plan.
3. With the assistance of the District agree upon the intervals to determine achievement of the goals and compliance with the timetable in the Fergus Plan and the Integration Plan.
4. Beginning in September, the Monitor shall meet at least quarterly with Superintendent Dr. Ronald Taylor, Dr. Fergus, and a representative of the Workshop to review the progress of each of the recommendations in the Fergus Plan and the Integration Plan. Both Superintendent Taylor and Dr. Fergus may designate representatives to attend these meetings, which may be by Zoom or in person.

Respectfully,

John E. Wallace, Jr.
Monitor