

# ACS Media Talking Points

February 2021

## **Are you planning to end the desegregation order?**

As part of our ongoing process to ensure Black and Brown students have great education options, we are looking into many different approaches to how we support students of color.

The desegregation order was put in place in 1991 and our community has changed a lot in 30 years. Many of the requirements are antiquated and unfairly limit elementary school options for families of color.

ACS has announced a community engagement effort to hear from the diverse voices that make up our city so that together we can brainstorm options and pinpoint real solutions that address our very real challenges. This will be one of many strategies that we will discuss with the community, and may be a possible tool in a greater equity toolkit for creating positive change.

## **Why has no one been involved in the decision to end the order?**

We have just started a community engagement effort, as announced on DATE, to gather to hear from the diverse voices that make up our city. This effort is still in its early stages. This will be one of many strategies that we will discuss with the community.

## **Why are you doing this while we're still trying to reopen schools?**

The achievement gap for students of color is already stark. With the pandemic predicted to only widen existing achievement gaps across the country, now is the time to act.

## **Are you attempting to make it so the district is able to have white-only and Black-only schools?**

No. We want all of our families to be able to choose the right school for their child. Families of color have unfairly limited elementary school options for their children because the district is mandated to maintain antiquated racial quotas that were put into place 30 years ago.

## **How much are you paying for the “communications services” contract?**

The contract doesn't guarantee an amount to be paid to our communications firm, who is only paid for the work we ask them to do. There is a Not to Exceed total amount of \$89,400.

## **Why have you engaged Forthright Advising? (from February 16 statement)**

[The Board and our superintendent have been concerned about the existing and widening inequities in our district for our Black children, especially during the pandemic.]

Forthright Advising is a North Carolina based public relations firm that works with public school districts. We've engaged them in a contract to add capacity to our team and help our district with community outreach and engagement while the Board considers how we continue to strive for equity for all kids in our district.

We are working with the communications firm to ensure we honor the diverse voices of our community in our ongoing process to build equity in our district.

Questions to be workshopped:

**How much will ending the desegregation order cost the taxpayers?**