



Fayette County Government

Rhea Taylor / County Mayor

May 29, 2008

Ms. Kym Davis Rogers
U.S. Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. - Patrick Henry Building
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Ms. Rogers,

The Board of County Commissioners of Fayette County only recently became aware that the county's school system was not in compliance with the court-ordered desegregation plan. A few weeks ago we further learned that you had requested a corrective plan be submitted to you by May 15.

We now understand that building new schools and changing boundary lines and grade assignments should not have been undertaken without first consulting the Department of Justice and/or the court.

It has also come to our attention that Somerville Elementary was ordered to be closed in 1975. While that course of action may have been indicated at the time, it may no longer be appropriate. Several years ago, the principal and staff developed a plan to improve the school. As a result of their efforts, Somerville Elementary is now our most outstanding elementary school.

The county has experienced quite a bit of growth in recent years. Although this has not resulted in a significant increase in school attendance thus far, the demographics of the county have changed.

Rather than make hasty adjustments to our school system based on a plan that is now 33 years old, we would like to suggest that a new plan be developed to address racial balance and other educational needs for the county as it is today.

Over the course of the last few months, the County Commission and the Board of Education have agreed to purchase and implement bus routing software from Edulog, Inc. Utilizing this software should enable us to provide more efficient transportation for our students. In addition, we will be getting the boundary planning module so that fact-based analyses of school configurations, boundary adjustments and future school sites can be performed.

It was our original intent to have the software implemented by the end of this summer. Due to an unanticipated delay in the approval process, the schedule has been shifted to the fall. At that time, all student information should be on-line and available for use by the boundary planning module.

We have also contacted Dr. Larry Winecoff, the court-appointed educational consultant who developed the previous plans. Dr. Winecoff is now retired and is willing to assist Fayette County in developing a new plan. It is our belief that Dr. Winecoff's expertise coupled with a state-of-the-art analytical tool will provide Fayette County with a comprehensive, forward-looking plan that will set our school system on a positive course for the future.

As the legislative body for the county, we are committed to providing the funds needed to implement the software and to secure Dr. Winecoff's services. We would greatly appreciate your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,


Rhea Taylor, Chairman and County Mayor


Ronnie Harris, Vice Chairman and Budget Chairman