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U.S. DISTRICT COURT APPROVES SETTLEMENT IN *COALITION FOR EDUCATION REFORM, ET AL V. INDIAN RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT*

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The U.S. District Court for the District of Delaware recently approved a settlement agreement, consent order, and appointment of a special master in *Coalition for Education Reform, et al v. Indian River School District*. The case alleged race and disabilities discrimination by the school district, among other claims.

Tom McDonald, a partner in the Vorys Washington, D.C. office and former U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe, served pro bono as lead counsel for all of the plaintiffs the Coalition for Education Reform since the start of this matter. Martha Motley, a partner in the Columbus office, and Tom Whaling, an associate in the Columbus office, assisted McDonald in this case.

The case, which is a civil rights case of national consequence, centered around the district's George Washington Carver Academy, a public school located in Frankfort, Delaware. The lawsuit alleged that this academy has been operated by the Indian River School District as a segregated dumping ground for African-American males ages 3 to 18 in the same school building. According to our research, over 1,000 African-American male students had been forced through this segregated public school over the last 20 years. Under the consent order the Carver Academy program will cease to exist at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. In addition, an agreed upon special master has been appointed to make sure that the Indian River SD follows through with the remedies outlined in the consent order (full order is available here) and doesn't return to this discriminatory conduct/policies.

Media Coverage Related to the Matter:

- "Indian River reaches agreement in civil rights lawsuit, must close Carver" *Salisbury Daily Times*
- "School intended for special education. Instead black students not ready for learning, life" *Salisbury Daily Times* (subscription required)
- "Indian River School District Will Discontinue Special Needs Program" *WBOC.com*
- "Lawsuit alleges unlawful discrimination in Indian River School District" *WMDT.com*
- "Indian River School District reaches agreement in civil rights suit" *WMDT.com*
- "'Dumping ground' for black students to close; parents say damage is done" *Delaware Online* (subscription required)
- Council of American Ambassadors