

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Petition to the Arkansas State Board of Education for the Closure of the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, in the Ozark Mountain School District, Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602

Petitioner, Ozark Mountain School District of Newton and Searcy Counties (“District”), acting by and through the Superintendent and the President of the District’s Board of Directors, duly authorized as indicated by their signatures below, and for its petition to the State Board of Education to close the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, hereby submit this petition pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602:

1. The District is located in Searcy, Marion and Newton counties and serves students on three campuses—the St. Joe Campus, the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, and Western Grove Campus.
2. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus is located at 4754 Highway 125 South, Everton, AR 72633. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus is approximately 12 miles from the Western Grove Campus, which is located at 300 School Street, Western Grove, AR 72685. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus is approximately 17 miles from the St. Joe Campus, which is located at 250 US-65, St. Joe, Arkansas.
3. The District was previously created in 2004 by order of the State Board of Education, as part of a voluntary administrative consolidation under the Public Education Reorganization Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 16-13-1601.
4. The District was not created as part of a voluntary administrative annexation under Ark. Code Ann. § 16-13-1601, and is therefore not subject to the requirements of Ark. Code Ann. § 16-13-1416 ((h)(1), related to the notice requirements for closure of a school campus within the District, and the consolidation took place in excess of twenty years ago. Moreover, the consolidation of the District was more than twenty years ago.
5. For the current school year, there are only 14 students attending the Bruno-Pyatt Campus in grades first through fourth, down from 17 students anticipated to start the school year. There are only two certified teachers.
6. On August 6, 2025, the District Board of Directors voted 6-1 to close the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, relocating those students to the Western Grove and St. Joe Campuses. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus currently remains open pending State Board action.
7. The closure of the Bruno-Pyatt Campus is necessary to adequately provide an appropriate education for the students of the District. High school students in Bruno-Pyatt already attend grades 7-12 at either the Western Grove or St. Joe campus.

8. The cost of operating the Bruno-Pyatt Campus is projected to be \$630,378.26 for the current school year. This is approximately \$45,027.02 per pupil, well over the per pupil state allotment. Norman Hill, a well-respected financial adviser to school districts, prepared a financial analysis based on 17 students enrolled in the District, that shows substantial financial loss for this current school year.

9. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus continues to decrease in enrollment. The trend is clear; Bruno-Pyatt is losing enrollment and educational services cannot be adequately delivered at the Bruno-Pyatt Campus.

10. The District has a plan in place for the closure of the Bruno-Pyatt Campus. Of the 14 current students at the campus, ten will go to St. Joe Elementary 17 miles away, and four will go to the Western Grove campus 12 miles away. The District will ensure siblings remains together if requested. The two current certified teachers will be transferred to another campus. The District has a transportation plan for the impacted students.

11. The District submits that closure will not negatively impact the desegregation of any school district in the state, nor any valid court order from a court of proper jurisdiction.

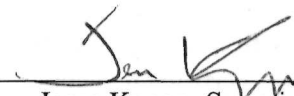
12. The District submits that for the stated reasons herein the closure of the Bruno-Pyatt Campus will be in the best interest of the students of the Ozark Mountain School District.

The District requests a hearing before the State Board of Education on this Petition and that following a hearing on this matter, the State Board of Education approve the closure of the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, that those impacted students be transferred to the Western Grove and St. Joe campuses. The Petitioner requests the State Board of Education issue an Order to do so and that this Order be filed with the County Clerks of Newton County and Searcy County.

Dated this ____ day of September 2025.

Sincerely,

Ozark Mountain School District

By: 
Jesse Knapp, Superintendent

By: 
Travis Freeman, Board President

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