

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Petition to the Arkansas State Board of Education for the Closure of Grades 7-12 to Onsite Learning at the St. Joe Campus, in the Ozark Mountain School District, Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602

Petitioner, Ozark Mountain School District (“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 partially close the St. Joe campus (grades 7-12), hereby submit this petition pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602:

1. The District is located in Newton County, Marion County and Searcy County and serves students on three campuses—the St. Joe Campus, the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, and Western Grove Campus, all serving grades K-12.

2. The St. Joe School is located at 250 South Highway 65, St. Joe, AR 72675. St. Joe and its local education agency number is 6505015. The St. Joe Campus is approximately 13 miles from the Western Grove Campus. The Western Grove Campus is located at 300 School Street, Western Grove, AR 72685.

3. On December 15, 2022, the District Board of Directors voted 4-3 to partially close the St. Joe Campus to grades 7-12, relocating those students to onsite learning at the Western Grove Campus. Grades K-6 will remain at the St. Joe campus.

4. The closure of grades 7-12 at the St. Joe Campus is necessary to adequately provide an appropriate education for the students of the District.

5. The cost of operating the St. Joe Campus is \$1,841,524.00 annually. This is approximately \$9,488.97 per pupil, well over the per pupil state allotment.

6. Enrollment has declined every year at the St. Joe Campus, from 71 in 2021-2022 to 47 for the recent 2022-2023 school year. Enrollment is projected to decrease again for the 2023-2024 school year, meaning the cost per pupil will increase significantly.

7. In addition to the high cost of maintaining the St. Joe Campus, the small enrollment greatly limits educational opportunities. All 7-12 students at St. Joe Campus must receive some virtual instruction to obtain required credits, as it is not feasible to have onsite teachers. There is limited live instruction for 7-12 grade students. As noted, many of the credits necessary to graduate must be obtained through a virtual platform. Moving Students to Western Grove would decrease the number of classes that must currently be taken virtually.

8. Of the 47 St. Joe Students in grades 7-12 this past year, as many as nineteen (19) traveled to the Western Grove Campus at some point in the day for a live class or an extracurricular activity.

9. The St. Joe Campus has no extracurricular athletic activities. All St. Joe students who want to participate are transported to the Western Grove Campus. It is very common for St. Joe students who begin attending Western Grove for extracurricular activities to ultimately transition to the campus fulltime, where more classes and learning options are available.

10. It is difficult to maintain teachers at the St. Joe Campus because teachers are required to teach numerous courses.

11. Though the St. Joe High School (grades 7-12) has performed well in the past, the District fears it would likely become a struggling school, both academically and financially, if this closure is not executed. St. Joe School (K-12) received the following letter grades for recent school years:

2017-2018 A

2018-2019 B

No Grade for 2019-2021 because of Covid-19.

2021-2022 B

12. The St. Joe Campus continues to decrease in enrollment. Many students in the St. Joe zone school-choice to neighboring school districts. There are only three seniors and 6 juniors at St. Joe High School. The trend is clear; St. Joe is losing enrollment and educational services cannot be adequately delivered at the St. Joe Campus.

13. Western Grove Campus has sufficient space to hold all St. Joe Campus 7th-12th grade students. Transporting St. Joe students will be done in a way to minimize inconvenience for the approximately fifteen minute drive between the campuses. The District will provide transportation to allow St. Joe students to fully participate in all academic and extracurricular programs at the Western Grove campus. Two separate bus routes will be provided for St. Joe students to provide transportation from door-to-door as much as possible.

14. The District Petitioner 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.

15. The District Petitioner submits that for the stated reasons herein the closure of the St. Joe Campus 7-12 grades 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 St. Joe Campus to onsite learning for 7-12 grades, that those impacted students be transferred to the Western Grove campus within the Ozark Mountain School District for the 2023-24 school


year. 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 6th day of January, 2023.

Sincerely,

Ozark Mountain School District

By: 
Jeff Lewis, Superintendent

By: 
Travis Freeman, Board President

Teddy Stewart
Cody Kees
BEQUETTE, BILLINGSLEY & KEES, P.A.
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*Attorneys for Ozark Mountain School
District*

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Petition to the Arkansas State Board of Education for the Closure of Grades 7-12 to Onsite Learning at the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, in the Ozark Mountain School District, Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602

Petitioner, Ozark Mountain School District (“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 partially close the Bruno-Pyatt campus (grades 7-12), hereby submit this petition pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602:

1. The District is located in Newton County, Marion County and Searcy County and serves students on three campuses—the St. Joe Campus, the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, and Western Grove Campus, all serving grades K-12.

2. The Bruno-Pyatt School is located at 4754 Highway 125 South, Everton, AR 72633. Bruno-Pyatt and its local education agency number is 6505017. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus is approximately 12 miles from the Western Grove Campus. The Western Grove Campus is located at 300 School Street, Western Grove, AR 72685.

3. On December 15, 2022, the District Board of Directors voted 4-3 to partially close the Bruno-Pyatt Campus to grades 7-12, relocating those students to onsite learning at the Western Grove Campus. Grades K-6 will remain at the Bruno-Pyatt campus.

4. The closure of grades 7-12 at the Bruno-Pyatt Campus is necessary to adequately provide an appropriate education for the students of the District.

5. The cost of operating the Bruno-Pyatt Campus is \$1,546,898.00, annually. This is approximately \$9,837.81 per pupil, well over the per pupil state allotment.

6. Enrollment has declined every year at the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, from 79 in 2021-2022 to 76 for the recent 2022-2023 school year. Enrollment is projected to decrease again for the 2023-2024 school year, meaning the cost per pupil will increase significantly.

7. In addition to the high cost of maintaining the Bruno-Pyatt Campus, the small enrollment greatly limits educational opportunities. All 7-12 students at Bruno-Pyatt Campus must receive some virtual instruction to obtain required credits, as it is not feasible to have onsite teachers. There is limited live instruction for 7-12 grade students. As noted, many of the credits necessary to graduate must be obtained through a virtual platform. Moving Students to Western Grove would decrease the number of classes that must currently be taken virtually.

8. Of the 76 Bruno-Pyatt Students in grades 7-12 this past year, as many as twenty-nine (29) traveled to the Western Grove Campus at some point in the day for a live class or an extracurricular activity.

9. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus maintains the District's Baseball field. All other Bruno-Pyatt students who want to participate in additional sports must be transported to the Western Grove Campus. It is very common for Bruno-Pyatt students who begin attending Western Grove for extracurricular activities to ultimately transition to the campus fulltime, where more classes and learning options are available.

10. It is difficult to maintain teachers at the Bruno-Pyatt Campus because teachers are required to teach numerous courses.

11. Though Bruno-Pyatt High School (grades 7-12) has performed well in the past, the District fears it would likely become a struggling school, both academically and financially, if this closure is not executed. Bruno-Pyatt School (K-12) received the following letter grades for recent school years:

2017-2018 B

2018-2019 B

No Grade for 2019-2021 because of Covid-19.

2021-2022 C

12. The Bruno-Pyatt Campus continues to decrease in enrollment. Many students in the Bruno-Pyatt zone school-choice to neighboring school districts. The trend is clear; Bruno-Pyatt is losing enrollment and educational services cannot be adequately delivered at the Bruno-Pyatt Campus.

13. Western Grove Campus has sufficient space to hold all Bruno-Pyatt Campus 7th-12th grade students. Transporting Bruno-Pyatt students will be done in a way to minimize inconvenience for the approximately fifteen minute drive between the campuses. The District will provide transportation to allow Bruno-Pyatt students to fully participate in all academic and extracurricular programs at the Western Grove campus. Two separate bus routes will be provided for Bruno-Pyatt students to provide transportation from door-to-door as much as possible.

14. The Petitioner 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.

15. The Petitioner submits that for the stated reasons herein the closure of the Bruno-Pyatt Campus 7-12 grades 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 to onsite learning for 7-12 grades, that those impacted students be transferred to the Western Grove campus with the Ozark Mountain School District for the 2023-


24 school year. 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 Marion County.

Dated this 6th day of January, 2023.

Sincerely,

Ozark Mountain School District

By: 
Jeff Ridditt

By: 
Travis Freeman, Board President

Teddy Stewart
Cody Kees
BEQUETTE, BILLINGSLEY & KEES, P.A.
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*Attorneys for Ozark Mountain School
District*

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE OZARK MOUNTAIN
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADOPTED AT THE BOARD'S REGULAR
MEETING OF DECEMBER 15, 2022**

WHEREAS, the Board of Education ("Board") of Ozark Mountain School District ("District") met in regular session on December 15, 2022 at 6 p.m. in Western Grove, Arkansas; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Ozark Mountain School District, having consolidated previously under the Public Education Reorganization Act, is subject to the law under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602, any isolated school within a receiving district must remain open unless the Board of the resulting or receiving District adopts a motion to close the isolated school or parts thereof; and

WHEREAS, St. Joe is an isolated school district, or part thereof, that consolidated with this District in 2004, and therefore, Ozark Mountain, as the receiving District must so move for closure of the St. Joe campus, or parts thereof; and

WHEREAS, on this day, the Board entertains a motion for closure of the St. Joe High School campus; and

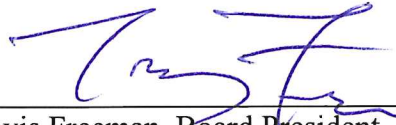
WHEREAS, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602(b)(2), if the District does not approve the closure of St. Joe High School by unanimous vote, the District must petition the State Board of Education for approval of the closure; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602(b)(2)(B), the District's Board will request a hearing before the State Board of Education no less than thirty (30) days before a regularly scheduled state Board meeting and file a petition to have the motion reviewed, if this motion fails to carry unanimously.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of Ozark Mountain School District, carrying by a vote of 4 to 3, hereby authorizes the District to close the St. Joe High School campus, grades 7-12, for the 2023-2024 school year, and file a petition with the State Board of Education, to have its motion to close the St. Joe High School campus reviewed and requests the approval of the State Board of Education, so that its students may have improved opportunities.

The Superintendent is directed to immediately provide this resolution to the Arkansas Department of Education.

Dated this 15th day of December, 2022.



Travis Freeman, Board President

CERTIFICATION

I, Donald Morris, Secretary of the Board of Education of Ozark Mountain School District, hereby certify that the above and foregoing resolution was considered and adopted by said board at a regular session on December 15, 2022.



Donald Morris, Board Secretary

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE OZARK MOUNTAIN
SCHOOL DISTRICT ADOPTED AT THE BOARD'S REGULAR
MEETING OF DECEMBER 15, 2022**

WHEREAS, the Board of Education ("Board") of Ozark Mountain School District ("District") met in regular session on December 15, 2022 at 6 p.m. in Western Grove, Arkansas; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Ozark Mountain School District, having consolidated previously under the Public Education Reorganization Act, is subject to the law under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602, any isolated school within a receiving district must remain open unless the Board of the resulting or receiving District adopts a motion to close the isolated school or parts thereof; and

WHEREAS, Bruno-Pyatt is an isolated school district, or part thereof, that consolidated with this District in 2004, and therefore, Ozark Mountain, as the receiving District must so move for closure of the Bruno-Pyatt campus, or parts thereof; and

WHEREAS, on this day, the Board entertains a motion for closure of the Bruno-Pyatt High School campus; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602(b)(2), if the District does not approve the closure of Bruno-Pyatt High School by unanimous vote, the District must petition the State Board of Education for approval of the closure; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602(b)(2)(B), the District's Board will request a hearing before the State Board of Education no less than thirty (30) days before a regularly scheduled state Board meeting and file a petition to have the motion reviewed, if this motion fails to carry unanimously.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of Ozark Mountain School District, carrying by a vote of 4 to 3, hereby authorizes the District to close the Bruno-Pyatt High School campus, grades 7-12, for the 2023-2024 school year, and file a petition with the State Board of Education, to have its motion to close the Bruno-Pyatt High School campus reviewed and requests the approval of the State Board of Education, so that its students may have improved opportunities.

The Superintendent is directed to immediately provide this resolution to the Arkansas Department of Education.

Dated this 15th day of December, 2022.



Travis Freeman, Board President

CERTIFICATION

I, Donald Morris, Secretary of the Board of Education of Ozark Mountain School District, hereby certify that the above and foregoing resolution was considered and adopted by said board at a regular session on December 15, 2022.



Donald Morris, Board Secretary