

IN THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**IN RE: COSSATOT RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT
ISOLATED SCHOOL CLOSURE**

**PETITION FOR CLOSURE OF UMPIRE SCHOOL, AN ISOLATED
SCHOOL WITHIN THE COSSATOT RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT AND
REQUEST FOR A HEARING**

Comes now the Board of Directors of the Cossatot River District, by and through counsel Sharon Carden Streett, and for its Petition states:

1. The Cossatot River School District (CRSD) covers 475.6 square miles and is located in Polk, Sevier and Howard Counties.
2. CRSD is made up of several former school Districts: Umpire, Wickes and Van Cove School Districts.
3. July 1, 2004, Umpire School District (USD) consolidated with the Wickes School District (WSD).
4. July 1, 2010, Wickes School District and the Van Cove School District consolidated to become the Cossatot River School District (CRSD).
5. Umpire School provides education services to students in K-12 grade in Umpire, Arkansas. Umpire School has throughout the consolidations been an isolated school as defined by Ark. Code Ann 6-20-601.
6. After 2017, Umpire School began to decline in enrollment.
7. Efforts to bolster enrollment in Umpire School have been unable to stop the enrollment decline. See Presentation slides to see the efforts taken to foster enrollment at Umpire School.

8. As of fiscal year 2023, it cost \$20,070.17 to educate a student in the Umpire School while it costs \$11,119.36 to educate a student in any of the other CRSD schools.

9. The small enrollment at Umpire School limits educational opportunities.

10. Even at the high cost per student, Umpire elementary students attend multi grade classrooms. Most AP courses and concurrent credit courses are taught by distance learning or are zoomed to CRSD high school classrooms.

11. Some classes are so low in number of students, that there are sometimes an insufficient number of students to make a class.

12. While at the same time, the other CRSD campuses must adjust due to class sizes that are too large. In third grade at Cossatot River Elementary School, a waiver must be sought because the number of students exceeds class size limits. In kindergarten, at the Cossatot River Primary School, CRSD has had to assign a para because of high class enrollment, while at the Umpire school campus the average class size is five.

13. Closing Umpire School will allow for a redistribution of students to provide an ideal number for learning to better meet the needs of all students.

14. All students will have access to more in-person classes in improved facilities. Students will have more collaboration with peers in both general classrooms as well as in services such as gifted-and-talented (GT) and English as a second language (ESL).

15. All students will have access to more extracurricular activities.

16. On October 12, 2023, the CRSD Board voted to close Umpire School by a vote of four to two.

17. Under Ark. Code Ann. 6-20-602(b)(2), if a motion to close an isolated school is not

passed by a unanimous vote, the district must petition the State Board of Education for approval of the closure, and

18. Under Ark. Code Ann. 6-20-(b)(2)(B), request a hearing before the State Board of Education no less than thirty days prior to a regularly scheduled meeting to have the motion reviewed.

19. Counsel being advised that the State Board will meet on December 14 and/or 15, 2023, CRSD files this petition with attachments on November 13, 2023.

20. The Board of Directors of the CRSD by and through counsel hereby files said petition for approval of the closure of Umpire School and requests a hearing to review its motion.

21. The Petitioner states affirmatively that this closure will not negatively impact the desegregation of any school district in the state nor violate any valid court order from a court of competent jurisdiction.

22. Attached to this Petition are the following:

- a. Legal Authorities
- b. Power Point Presentation
- c. Approved and Signed Board Minutes which include Motion.
- d. Norman Hill Resume
- e. Norman Hill Financial Summary

WHEREFORE the State Board of Education is asked to approve the closure of Umpire School.

Respectfully submitted,



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Certificate of Service

I, Sharon Carden Streett, certify that I have filed the forgoing Petition and Request for a Hearing with the Arkansas Department of Education by emailing a copy to:

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