

**ARKANSAS DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION RULES
GOVERNING CONSOLIDATION AND ANNEXATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable): Julie Duncan

Comments: To the Arkansas Department of Education:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposed rules as a mother of two Mountain View students.

I am encouraged that the Department appears to recognize that parent districts of detaching schools are facing a significant financial burden by this law and its subsequent “special language” changes. The proposed funding provisions are a positive step in helping to make sure students, like mine, are not harmed through this process.

However, I remain concerned that overall it continues to place most of the burden on the existing district while providing limited protections for the students who remain.

The communities of parent districts like Mountain View were never given a vote in the detachment process, despite the significant financial and educational impacts these decisions create for our children. While residents of the detaching communities were allowed to determine their future, the families who remained in the existing district had no voice in a decision that directly affected them.

Independence for one community should not come at the expense of opportunities for the children in another.

I respectfully request that the Department strengthen these rules by clearly guaranteeing that parent districts will be fully protected from financial harm and by ensuring that the interests of students remaining in the existing district receive equal consideration throughout the process.

I realize this request may go outside of the scope of the current public comment and that it may require legislative action to fix the one-sided slant of this legislation, but I hope something can be done before any more districts walk down this road. This is far from the initial law so many of us supported. This process has been a nightmare (and I am sure it has not been easy for ADE either).

The bottomline is that we want Rural Special, Timbo, and the other isolated schools to have a chance to succeed...we just don't feel our own students should suffer in the process.

Again, I appreciate the proposed rule change and the funding it will help us recoup, but please consider ways to help make this a more fair and transparent process for ALL.

Thank you for your consideration

Division Response: Comment considered, no changes made. The policy concerns of this comment are beyond the scope of current rulemaking.

Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable): Lucas Harder, Arkansas School Board Association.

Comments:

6 CAR Part 231:

604(b)(3): “Fiscal distress” is spelled “fiscal destress”.

Division Response: Comment considered, a non-substantive change was made constant with the comment.