

Responsive Education of Arkansas (Premier High Schools)  
Desegregation Analysis

I. Introduction

Responsive Education of Arkansas (RES) is seeking an amendment to, among other things, open two (2) new Premier High School (PHS) campuses within the boundaries of the Jonesboro and Texarkana School Districts. Each of the two (2) new campuses will contain Grades 9-12. The projected maximum enrollment for each campus, as of FY 24, will be eighty-five (85) students. The Jonesboro campus, as an open-enrollment public charter school campus unconfined by district boundaries, expects to obtain most of its students from within the boundaries of the Jonesboro (JSD), Brookland (BSD), Greene County Tech (GCTSD), Nettleton (NSD), Valley View (VVSD) and Westside (WSD) School Districts. The Texarkana campus, also as an open-enrollment public charter school campus unconfined by district boundaries, expects to obtain most of its students from within the boundaries of the Texarkana (TSD), Genoa Central (GCSD), Hope (HSD), and Lafayette County (LCSD) School Districts. This analysis is provided to inform the decision making of the charter authorizer regarding the effect, if any, that the opening of new charter school campuses in Jonesboro and Texarkana would have on the efforts of the JSD, BSD, GCTSD, NSD, VVSD, WSD, TSD, GCSD, HSD and the LCSD to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

II. General Analysis

RES, in this analysis, has carefully reviewed the potential impact that the opening of new charter school campuses in Jonesboro and Texarkana would have upon the efforts of affected school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. In conducting its review, RES has found that neither JSD nor its surrounding school districts listed above (BSD, GCTSD, NSD, VVSD and WSD) are under any court orders concerning their desegregation obligations, and are therefore unitary in all respects of their school operations. As to the Texarkana campus, HSD and LCSD are under federal consent decrees concerning racial discrimination. However, both the HSD and LCSD participate in school choice under the Public School Choice Act of 2015 (Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-1901 et.seq.); neither the TSD nor the GCSD are subject to any federal court orders or consent decrees concerning racial discrimination. Therefore, the opening of new RES charter school campuses in Jonesboro and Texarkana, especially given their small enrollment caps, cannot be said to have a negative impact on the JSD, BSD, GCTSD, NSD, VVSD, WSD, TSD, GCSD, HSD and the LCSDs' ability to comply with their statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

III. PHS Student Information

According to the latest enrollment figures maintained by the DESE Data Center, the PHS Little Rock campus had a student population of one hundred twenty-five (125) students, of whom 80.8 % were Black and 14.1% were White. The PHS North Little Rock campus had a student population of one hundred forty-three (143) students, of whom 71.3% were Black

and 21.7% were White. The PHS Springdale campus had a student population of fifty (50) students, of whom 66% were Black and 30% were White.

IV. Jonesboro Campus Student Information

Concerning the proposed Jonesboro campus, the JSD had a student population of 6,340 students, of whom 46.8% were Black; 33.4 % were White, and 14.4% were Hispanic. The BSD had a student population of 2,818 students, of whom 89.2% were White. The GCTSD had a student population of 3,462 students, of whom 91.6% were White. The NSD had a student population of 3,554 students, of whom 50.3% were Black; 31.5% were White, and 10.7% were Hispanic. The VVSD had a student population of 2,878 students, of whom 83.6% were White; 4.4% were Black, and 4.3% were Hispanic. The WSD had student population of 1,702 students, of whom 92.7% were White. tion of 17,848

V. Texarkana Campus Student Information and Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-106 Responsibilities

Concerning the proposed Texarkana campus, the TSD had a student population of 3,880 students, of whom 54.8% were Black; 34.1% were White, and 5.5% were Hispanic. The GCSD had a student population of 1,208 students, of whom 95.5% were White. The HSD had a student population of 2,201 students, of whom 44.1% were Black; 33.3% were Hispanic, and 19.4% were White. The LCSD had a student population of 520 students, of whom 60.6% were Black, and 32.1% were White. Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 also requires that RES's operation of the charter school campuses will not serve to hamper, delay or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state. RES's careful review of the relevant statutes and orders affecting the JSD, BSD, GCTSD, NSD, VVSD, WSD, TSD, GCSD, HSD and the LCSD, and the student populations of such districts, shows that such negative effect is not present here.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, RES submits that upon the basis of its review, no statutory or other impediments concerning the creation and operation of desegregated public schools prohibit the State's charter school authorizer from granting RES's amendment request to, among other things, open two (2) new PHS open-enrollment public charter school campuses within the boundaries of the Jonesboro and Texarkana School Districts.