

1 State of Arkansas
2 84th General Assembly
3 Second Extraordinary Session, 2003
4

Call Item 4

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1077

5 By: Representative Cleveland
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7

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO APPEAL
10 CERTAIN DECISIONS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
11 TO A CIRCUIT COURT IN PULASKI COUNTY OR THE
12 CIRCUIT COURT IN THE COUNTY WHERE THE SCHOOL
13 DISTRICT MAINTAINS ITS PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATIVE
14 OFFICE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

16 AN ACT TO ALLOW SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO
17 APPEAL CERTAIN DECISIONS OF THE STATE
18 BOARD OF EDUCATION TO A CIRCUIT COURT IN
19 PULASKI COUNTY OR THE COUNTY WHERE THE
20 SCHOOL DISTRICT MAINTAINS ITS PRINCIPAL
21 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE.
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25 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:
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27 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-13-1410 is amended to read as follows:
28 6-13-1410. Appeal and election.

29 (a) The decision of the State Board of Education regarding a
30 consolidation or annexation shall be final with no further right of appeal
31 except that an aggrieved school district may appeal to Pulaski County Circuit
32 Court ~~pursuant to the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et~~
33 ~~seq.~~ or the circuit court having jurisdiction in the location where the
34 school district maintains its principal administrative office as a court of
35 original jurisdiction for a trial de novo.

36 (b) Any appeal shall be filed with the court no later than sixty (60)



1 days following the state board's final decision.

2
3 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-203 is amended to read as follows:

4 6-15-203. Notification of failure to meet standards of accreditation -
5 Appeal.

6 (a) The Department of Education shall annually notify all schools or
7 school districts failing to meet standards for accreditation for elementary
8 and secondary schools not later than May 15 of each year of this
9 determination.

10 (b)(1) In the event that a school district affected by this subchapter
11 believes the department has improperly determined that a school or school
12 district fails to meet the standards for accreditation, the school district
13 shall have a right of appeal thereafter to the State Board of Education.

14 (2) Any appeal shall be held in an open hearing, and the
15 decision of the state board shall be in open session.

16 (3) Appeals must be filed not later than May 30 following the
17 May 15 determination of accreditation status, and the state board hearing
18 must be held prior to August 15 of the same calendar year.

19 (4) The state board may confirm the classification of a local
20 school or school district as determined by the department, or it may sustain
21 the appeal of the district.

22 (5)(A) An aggrieved school district may appeal the ruling of the
23 state board to Pulaski County Circuit Court ~~pursuant to the Arkansas~~
24 ~~Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.~~ or the circuit court having
25 jurisdiction in the location where the school district maintains its
26 principal administrative office as a court of original jurisdiction for a
27 trial de novo.

28 (B) Any appeal shall be filed with the court no later than
29 sixty (60) days following the state board's final ruling.

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31 SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-15-428 is amended to read as follows:

32 6-15-428. Academic distress identification, notification,
33 classification, and appeal.

34 (a) The school board president and superintendent of a school district
35 identified by the Department of Education as being in academic distress shall
36 be notified in writing by the department via certified mail, return receipt

1 requested, and shall have a right of appeal to the State Board of Education.

2 (b) Any school district identified in academic distress may appeal to
 3 the state board by filing a written appeal with the Director of the
 4 Department of Education via certified mail, return receipt requested, within
 5 thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the written notice of academic
 6 distress status from the department.

7 (c)(1) The state board shall hear the appeal of the school district
 8 within sixty (60) days of receipt of the written appeal in the director's
 9 office.

10 (2)(A) The state board's determination shall be final except
 11 that a school district may appeal to Pulaski County Circuit Court ~~under the~~
 12 ~~Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.~~ or the circuit
 13 court having jurisdiction in the location where the school district maintains
 14 its principal administrative office as a court of original jurisdiction for a
 15 trial de novo.

16 (B) Any appeal shall be filed with the court no later than
 17 sixty (60) days following the state board's final determination.

18 (d) Those school districts identified by the department as being in
 19 academic distress shall be classified as school districts in academic
 20 distress upon final determination by the state board.

21
 22 SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-20-1905 is amended to read as follows:
 23 6-20-1905. Notification and appeal.

24 (a) The Department of Education shall provide written notice, via
 25 certified mail, return receipt requested, to the president of the school
 26 board and the superintendent of each school district identified as being in
 27 fiscal distress.

28 (b) Any school district identified in fiscal distress status may
 29 appeal to the State Board of Education by filing a written appeal with the
 30 office of the Director of the Department of Education by certified mail,
 31 return receipt requested, within thirty (30) days of receipt of notice of
 32 identified fiscal distress status from the department.

33 (c) The state board shall hear the appeal within sixty (60) days of
 34 receipt of the written notice of appeal from the school district.

35 (d) The written appeal shall state in clear terms the reason why the
 36 school district should not be classified as in fiscal distress.

1 (e) Notwithstanding any appeal rights in this subchapter, no appeal
2 shall stay the department's authority to take action to protect the fiscal
3 integrity of any school district identified as in fiscal distress.

4 (f)(1) The decision of the state board shall be a final order, and
5 there is no further right of appeal except that the school district may
6 appeal to Pulaski County Circuit Court ~~pursuant to the Arkansas~~
7 ~~Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.~~ or the circuit court having
8 jurisdiction in the location where the school district maintains its
9 principal administrative office as a court of original jurisdiction for a
10 trial de novo.

11 (2) Any appeal shall be filed with the court no later than sixty
12 (60) days following the state board's final decision.

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14 SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-20-1910 is amended to read as follows:

15 6-20-1910. State board actions.

16 (a) After a public hearing, the State Board of Education shall
17 consolidate, annex, or reconstitute the school district in fiscal distress to
18 another school district or school districts upon a majority vote of a quorum
19 of the members of the state board as permitted or required by this
20 subchapter.

21 (b) The state board has exclusive jurisdiction to determine the
22 boundary lines of the receiving or resulting school district and to allocate
23 assets and liabilities of the district.

24 (c)(1) The decision of the state board shall be final with no further
25 right of appeal except that a school district may appeal to Pulaski County
26 Circuit Court ~~pursuant to the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-~~
27 ~~201 et seq.~~ or the circuit court having jurisdiction in the location where
28 the school district maintains its principal administrative office as a court
29 of original jurisdiction for a trial de novo.

30 (2) Any appeal shall be filed with the court no later than
31 sixty (60) days following the state board's final decision.

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33 SECTION 6. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
34 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the Arkansas Supreme Court in
35 Lake View School District No. 25 v. Huckabee, 351 Ark. 31 (2002) declared the
36 current system of education to be unconstitutional because it is both

1 inequitable and inadequate; and the Arkansas Supreme Court set forth the test
2 for a constitutional system to be one in which the state has an “absolute
3 duty” to provide an “equal opportunity to an adequate education”; the
4 Arkansas Supreme Court instructed the General Assembly to undertake actions
5 as necessary to provide an opportunity for an adequate and equitable
6 education for the children of Arkansas; and the provisions of this bill are
7 necessary steps toward accomplishing that goal. Therefore, an emergency is
8 declared to exist and this act being immediately necessary for the
9 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective
10 on:

11 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

12 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
13 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
14 bill; or

15 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
16 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

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