


**FILED**  
U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT ARKANSAS

DEC 23 2013

JAMES W. MCCORMACK, CLERK  
By:  DEP CLERK

December 20, 2013

Re: Objections for the Proposed Settlement Agreement

To: James W. McCormack, Clerk of Court  
United States District Court  
Eastern District of Arkansas  
Richard Sheppard Arnold United States Courthouse  
600 West Capitol Avenue, Room A149  
Little Rock, AR 72201

**FILED**

Attn: Desegregation Case- Proposed Settlement Agreement

With the recent passing of one our most admirable desegregation activist, Nelson Mandela, in the world; the hope for desegregation achievement in our own schools is at the heart of this letter to you. I am writing this letter with great concern, excitement, and a request for this proposed agreement to be reviewed with a meticulous effort. I am not concerned about the state ending the desegregation payments, I believe this is a great fiscal decision, but I do not see how making the changes that are proposed will aid in keeping the unified status of LRSD. I appreciate your time in reading my letter, and my hope is that my ideas can lead to more discussion before a final decision is made. Thank you.

I am a parent of two children that attend Booker Arts Elementary Magnet School, one of the six stipulation Magnet schools in LRSD. We are from the PCSSD. We provide our own transportation. We are a "white" family that has chosen to attend a school outside of our district because of the opportunities available.

I want my children to keep attending a school with their social group, a very important part of a child's success in school, if they will not be able to continue with them throughout their schooling years this would be very concerning and would possible lead to us going back to our district (although the specialties will not be available to us). Some clarification of the Proposed Agreement would be very helpful, as the wording in the settlement is confusing as seen below:

1. The M to M Program will not accept new applications this year, and applications for students living in NLRSD or PCSSD to transfer to the six stipulation Magnet schools in LRSD will no longer be accepted.

-Will the M to M program still exist?

-How will eliminating M to M inter-district transfers aid in desegregation and maintaining unified status(LRSD and NLRSD, and achieving unified status (PCSSD))?

2. Students currently enrolled in the M to M program can continue in this program as long as their parent or guardian chooses (including through high school graduation)

-Does this mean that children who attend elementary and middle schools through the M to M program are aloud to complete their full education(through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) with the magnet schools?

- Are these children being "grandfathered" into the magnet school's if they are already attending one at this time.

- Each time a child switches into a new level (elementary to middle, middle to high school) those children who attend through M to M have to complete an application. Is this proposed settlement stating that they will not have to apply and will just be able to continue through?

- Does this one apply to magnet school attendees?
- I believe this one needs more clarification on who it applies to.

3. Students living in NLRSD or PCSSD now enrolled in one of the six stipulation Magnet schools in the LRSD can continue in their school as long as their parent or guardian chooses (including through the highest grade in the school).

- See Proposed change #2 above
- Why can't the children in the magnet schools attend throughout graduation as proposed in #2 above?
- The children this will leave lingering are those in elementary and middle school.
- What happens to those PCSSD and NLRSD children that are in 5<sup>th</sup> grade (that is the highest grade in elementary) and those that are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (highest grade in middle school). Will they be able to go to the magnet middle or high school next year?
- Has the district looked at how many PCSSD and NLRSD (I have tried getting these numbers and no one was able to tell me) children will be affected by these changes? (Elementary children from PCSSD and NLRSD, and Middle School children from PCSSD and NLRSD). High school children will not be affected.
- If transportation is a concern- what is the number of these PCSSD and NLRSD utilizing transportation.
- If the PCSSD and NLRSD children provided their own transportation, then why couldn't they continue throughout graduation.
- If the districts are wanting to cut out the ability for future PCSSD and NLRSD children to attend the magnet school (unfortunate), but it seems that it would only be fair to let those PCSSD and NLRSD children enrolled to finish their schooling until graduation. Our children should not be penalized for decisions that are decided in the middle of their schooling.
- Why is the wording different in #2 and #3 (ex. Through high school graduation vs through highest grade in the school)

4. The six stipulation Magnet schools will continue to exist. The Proposed Settlement Agreement changes the rules for who can enroll in these schools and the availability of transportation

- Who can enroll? Just LRSD students?
- Will School Choice be an option for PCSSD and NLRSD children to be able to attend the magnet schools?
- I have been told that the PCSSD and NLRSD have discussed that they will allow 30 children per district to attend. How will these children be chosen? How did the number 30 become decided upon?
- How will this help with maintaining desegregation efforts?

Again, Thank you for your time in reading my letter of concern and questions about the Proposed Agreements. I appreciate your position to uphold and encourage fairness for all of our children.

**I would like to participate in the Fairness Hearing on January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.**

Sincerely,

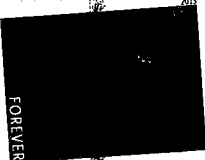
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