

Memorandum

To: Academic Distress Committee, ADE Board
From: Little Rock School Board
Date: January 2, 2015
Re: Statement of Commitment and Intent

We, the members of the Board of Directors of the Little Rock School District, are appreciative of the opportunity provided by the Academic Distress Committee to state the district efforts to improve services to meet the needs of students in our declared academic distress schools and for the LRSD Board to express its commitment to do fulfill our governing role in support of these efforts.

In the Board's view, there is no priority of greater importance than making significant progress to improve the education of students in our academic distress schools. To this end, the Board has been fully supportive of the administration's plan. A copy of that plan has been provided to you by separate cover. It is the Board's expectation that implementation of the plan will result in measureable outcomes in student achievement. Our commitment to this plan is further demonstrated in the following ways:

- [Monthly Board work sessions concerning plans to improve the culture, leadership, curriculum and instruction.
- [Monthly reports and discussion in Board meetings regarding plan implementation results in the academic distress schools.
- [Public expressions of support and expectation for improved performance and accountability regarding progress for academic distress schools at every level from classroom to the Board.
- [Approved the planning process to develop a reconfiguration plan for one of the academic distress schools (Hall High School). This plan will be presented to the Board for consideration for approval and possible implementation for 2016-17.

For the district to make sustainable progress for students in our academic distress schools, we realize that we must meet each of the major governance challenges facing the district at this time. For each challenge, we have a process in place to address the challenge:

- [Academic distress schools: Plan for improving achievement as presented by the administration.
- [Financial concerns with anticipated loss of desegregation funds: Initiated and approved Budget Efficiency Advisory Committee with the expectation of recommendations to the Board beginning in the spring of 2015.
- [Facilities concerns: A district-wide facilities plan has been completed and the Board is in process of developing a priority list of facilities improvements and a corresponding funding plan.

- [Governance concerns: Awareness of both the history and the perception of a lack of stability and effective collaboration among Board members and between the Board and Superintendent. A work session is being planned for early 2015 to focus on improving teamwork at the Board and Board-Superintendent relationship levels.

The conditions leading to the six LRSD schools being declared in academic distress developed, and in some cases, persisted over a period of many years. We believe it is reasonable to note that our present governance team—Board members and Superintendent—is fairly new. Our Superintendent is in his second year. Five of our seven Board members are in their first term, one is in a second term and only one is in a third term. We, however, understand the need for accountability at all levels. Our present governance team would like the opportunity to meet these challenges and show responsible progress in all challenge areas in the coming year.

Clearly, our students and community have waited long enough for significant progress to be made in these schools. We are committed to working with each other and the administration to make the changes needed to meet our obligations to the students in these schools. We believe the needed improvements are possible if we work together at all levels, and we are determined to fulfill our part in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration and we are open to discussion, as requested.