

## **BEFORE THE ARKANSAS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

1. On May 9, 2019, during a regular meeting of the Arkansas State Board of Education (State Board), the State Board considered a petition made by the Cleveland County School District (Petitioner) to close the following isolated school:

### **Kingsland Elementary School (Grades K-5)**

2. The petitioner was represented at the hearing by Superintendent Craig Dupuy. The following individuals who opposed the petition appeared at the hearing: Mr. Shane Matthews and Ms. Pat Neal.

3. The State Board conducted the hearing pursuant to the legal authority and jurisdiction vested in it by Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602, and the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Closure of Isolated Schools.

## **FINDINGS OF FACT**

4. On April 8, 2019, by a vote of six (6) in favor and one (1) opposed, the Cleveland County District Board of Directors voted to close the Kingsland Elementary School Campus.

5. On April 8, 2019, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602, the Cleveland County School District petitioned the State Board to close the Kingsland Elementary School Campus.

6. For the 2018-2019 school year, the Kingsland Elementary School serves 71 students in grades Kindergarten through fifth grade.

7. Kingsland Elementary School is approximately 8 miles from the main District campus located in Rison, Arkansas.

8. Kingsland Elementary School employs 6 certified staff and 7 classified staff.

9. It would be cost prohibitive to continue to operate the Kingsland Elementary School due to low enrollment numbers, the cost of transporting students, and the cost of maintaining the buildings, the staff, an operable cafeteria and meal service, and utilities.

10. Closure of the Kingsland Elementary School would serve the best interest of the students by offering access to a full-time counselor, librarian, art teacher, music teacher, and building principal on the Rison Elementary School campus.

11. The district is experiencing declining enrollment and anticipates this trend will continue.

12. Kingsland Elementary School students would have access to Quiz Bowl and other opportunities available at Rison Elementary.

13. If the district does not close the Kingsland Elementary School, the district would need to reduce staff and ask for an increase of 6-8 mills, but the district does not plan to reduce staff if the Kingsland Elementary School is closed.

14. Kingsland Elementary School is a Blue Ribbon School and is home to a Milken award winning teacher; those staff would have the opportunity to be reassigned to Rison Elementary School.

15. There is no desegregation order or other applicable court order that affect the Cleveland County School District or the former Kingsland School District.

### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

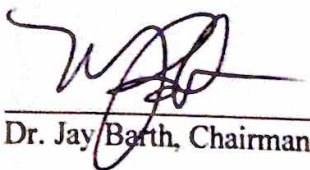
16. Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602(b)(2)(C)(ii), “[t]he state board shall only approve a motion to close isolated schools or parts thereof under [Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-602(b)(2)(A)] if the closure is in the best interest of the students in the school district as a whole.”

17. From the evidence and testimony received by the State Board pertaining to this matter, the State Board finds that the Petition of the Cleveland County School District to close the Kingsland Elementary School is in the best interest of the students in the Cleveland County School District as a whole.

18. The closure of the Kingsland Elementary School Campus will not have any negative impact on desegregation efforts, nor will it violate any valid court order from a court of proper jurisdiction.

19. Accordingly, by a unanimous vote, the petition of the Cleveland County School District to close the Kingsland Elementary School Campus is **GRANTED**.

Signed this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2019



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Dr. Jay Barth, Chairman