
We Are OneLRSD.

Local Control for World-Class Equitable Schools

From your friends at Grassroots Arkansas and OurLRSD

Question: How did the current controversy begin?

Answer:

- Asa Hutchinson became governor of Arkansas on January 13, 2015, and the state took over the LRSD on January 28, 2015. The democratically-elected school board was removed because 6 out of 48 LRSD schools were labeled as “distressed.”
- Gov. Hutchinson appointed Johnny Key as the state commissioner of education. Commissioner Key has never been a teacher, principal, nor a superintendent of schools. He doesn’t have a degree in education.
- In fact, the state law was changed in order to make him eligible to serve as the commissioner of education. Commissioner Key is now paid over \$235,000/year for an important job that he is not qualified for.
- Commissioner Key is now serving as a one-man “school board” for the LRSD. We did not elect him and we cannot fire him. Key is not accountable to the people of Little Rock, particularly the parents, guardians, and LRSD students.

Question: Why should I care?

Answer:

- The Commissioner now plans to close 5 more schools next year: David O. Dodd, Henderson, J.A. Fair, McClellan, and Romine. Baseline, Cloverdale and Meadowcliff will follow at the end of the 2020-21 school year.
- The LRSD was taken over by force, not by necessity. Under state control, our students are suffering more academically, while parent and student concerns and needs are being ignored by the state.
- Even if a school board is elected in November of 2020, the State Board of Education and Johnny Key still have authority over the school board because the LRSD remains officially in academic distress. That means they can override any decisions the school board makes.
- On October 10, the State Board of Education decertified the LREA (LRSD teachers union) effective Nov. 1, 2019. The LREA negotiates contracts, benefits, retirement plans, and other protections on behalf of the teachers while they are focusing their energy and attention on teaching our children. The Board also waived various state laws to ensure that LRSD teachers will not even be able to participate in the formation of their personnel policy committee as required under state law.

Question: Why are schools closing?

Answer:

- The LRSD loses students each year because Commissioner Key and the State Board of Education continue to approve new charter schools in Little Rock.
- The state legislature voted in the 2017 session to give charter schools the first rights to purchase public schools that are underutilized or not being utilized as schools. The Governor passed this bill into law. (ACA 6-13-103)

Question: What can/should I do?

Answer:

- Let your child’s teachers and educators (people who work at/in their schools) know that you appreciate them and support them.
- Volunteer to do informational picketing or pass out flyers at school and community events.
- Call Governor Hutchinson (501-682-2345) and tell him that we want a locally elected school board and we want it NOW, not in November!



OUR KIDS ARE WORTH MORE THAN A COMPROMISE.

WE'RE READY FOR:

1. LOCALLY ELECTED SCHOOL BOARD

We want a democratically elected school board that is truly representative of the LRSD community. A "transition board" with members who are appointed by the city and the state board of education is not true democracy, and would continue to serve as a barrier for progress within LRSD. We request that our formerly elected school board be reinstated until the new election, as said board is representative of local control and CAB, while a state or city board is not.

2. TRUE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

We want true community schools that respect the needs of our students, families, and teachers. A child's relationship with their direct community and their school has proven to be just as important as their relationship with their family and peers. "Community school" is not simply a buzzword to us. True community schools function as a partnership between students, families, educators, and community partners, based on specific needs of the students and families. True community schools require the community to provide support and address school needs and, likewise, an equal commitment from schools to provide support and address community needs. True community schools can only survive with ongoing input directly from those who live, work, and play in the area. True community schools require mutual respect, hard work, regular communication, and healthy engagement from all partners involved. True community schools are grounded in pursuit of equity and holistic wellness of every community member. True community schools offer a personalized curriculum for students, support for families and teachers, and act as a hub for community problem solving.

3. ONE LRSD

We want a single school district that includes every single LRSD student rather than a divided district. We want children in all LRSD schools to truly be part of the LRSD family instead of being consistently ostracized or labeled based on meaningless "school grades."

4. FULLY AND EQUITABLY FUNDED DISTRICT

We want the state to fully release access of the LRSD funds to the LRSD community and elected school board. When our funds are returned to us, we will be able to create the healthiest operational and academic structures that Little Rock children deserve.

5. SUPPORT FOR THE SOUL OF #ONELRSD: OUR STUDENTS, OUR TEACHERS, AND OUR EDUCATORS

Our students deserve world-class schools that are equitably supported by their community, city, state, and federal government. Our students deserve to live without fear that the state will take over their schools, will close their schools, or will withhold resources and funds that significantly harm their educational experience and sabotage their academic success. Our teachers and educators deserve the right to an organized union where their collective bargaining and negotiations are recognized and respected by our state appointed and elected leaders.

To learn more, visit www.OneLRSD.org • www.OurLRSD.org • www.GrassrootsArkansas.org