

State of Arkansas
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As Engrossed: S4/7/25 H4/14/25

A Bill

SENATE BILL 619

By: Senator Irvin

By: Representative Walker

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT CONCERNING THE FORMATION OF AN ISOLATED SCHOOL DISTRICT; TO ESTABLISH THE MEMBERSHIP OF AN ISOLATED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS; TO CREATE A FUNDING MECHANISM FOR A NEWLY FORMED ISOLATED SCHOOL DISTRICT; TO DIRECT OWNERSHIP OF FACILITIES AND PROPERTY OF ISOLATED SCHOOLS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

CONCERNING THE FORMATION OF AN ISOLATED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 13, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 18 – Isolated School Districts

6-13-1801. Isolated school district – Formation.

(a)(1) An isolated school may detach from a resulting or receiving district if the isolated school submits a petition to the resulting or receiving school district board of directors that states the intent to reestablish the original isolated school and that contains the signatures of:

(A) No less than three hundred fifty (350) registered voters who reside within the boundaries of the isolated school; or

(B) No less than fifty-one percent (51%) of the registered voters who reside within the boundaries of the isolated school.

(2)(A) The resulting or receiving school district board of



directors shall request the county clerk of the county in which the resulting or receiving school district is located to verify the signatures submitted in a petition under subdivision (a)(1) of this section within five (5) business days of receipt of a petition under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

(B) Upon request, a county clerk of the county in which the resulting or receiving school district is located shall verify the signatures within five (5) days of receipt of a request from the resulting or receiving school district board of directors under subdivision (a)(2)(A) of this section.

(3) The resulting or receiving school district board of directors shall review a petition submitted under subdivision (a)(1) of this section and call an election to be held for the voters who reside within the school district boundaries of the isolated school before it consolidated with the resulting or receiving district on the issue of an isolated school detaching from a resulting or receiving district at the next annual school election.

(b)(1) An isolated school district may be formed from an isolated school within a resulting or receiving district that was annexed or consolidated with another school district under the Public Education Reorganization Act, § 6-13-1601 et seq., following the submission and approval of a petition under subsection (a) of this section., following the submission and approval of a petition under subsection (a) of this section.

(2) In order to qualify as an isolated school district, the isolated school within a resulting or receiving district that was annexed or consolidated with another school district under the Public Education Reorganization Act, § 6-13-1601 et seq., shall have been in operation for kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) within two (2) years of the date on which the isolated school applies under this subchapter.

(b) The minimum school enrollment to establish a new public school district shall not apply when forming an isolated school district under this subchapter.

6-13-1802. Isolated school district board of directors.

(a) An isolated school district shall be governed by a board of directors that consists of five (5) members who live within the boundaries of the isolated school district.

(b) The members of an isolated school district board of directors shall be elected by eligible voters residing within the boundaries of the isolated school district.

(c) Each member of an isolated school district board of directors shall initially draw lots for two-year or four-year terms in isolated school districts with four-year terms or two-year, four-year, or six-year terms in isolated school districts with six-year terms so that, as nearly as possible, an equal number of positions are filled in each subsequent election for an isolated school board no longer than:

(1) Two (2) isolated school board elections for those with four-year terms; or

(2) Three (3) isolated school board elections for those with six-year terms.

6-13-1803. Funding.

(a) An election within the boundaries of an isolated school district shall be held to establish the millage rate for the isolated school district as required under § 26-80-111.

(b) For purposes of funding calculations that utilize prior-year average daily membership, state funding aid for the first year of operation of an isolated school district shall be based on the:

(1) Prior-year first three-quarters average daily membership of the public school now proposed to operate as an isolated school district; or

(2) The average daily membership from two (2) years prior if the public school proposed to operate as an isolated school district ceases operations two (2) years before the isolated school district is formed.

(c) If an isolated school district begins operations at the beginning of the following school year after *detaching* from a local public school under which the proposed isolated school district currently operates, the prior-year average daily membership of the isolated school shall be subtracted from the prior-year average daily membership of the public school district under which the isolated school previously operated.

(d) An isolated school district shall be eligible for funding awarded under § 6-20-601 et seq. and any additional funds based on a school district's isolated status.

(e) An isolated school district shall be eligible for any current state funding available for public school districts and open-enrollment

public charter schools.

6-13-1804. Facilities and property.

(a)(1) A local public school district under which a proposed isolated school district currently operates shall agree to release ownership of the isolated school's facilities and any accompanying debt on the facilities to the isolated school district.

(2) The written release form required under subdivision (a)(1) of this section shall be signed by the president of the school district board of directors of the local public school district under which the proposed isolated school district currently operates and shall be included in the application submitted by the proposed isolated school district.

(b) Ownership of a school bus acquired with isolated school funds in the previous two (2) school years shall be transferred to the resulting isolated school district.

(c) Isolated school funds received by the local public school district under which the proposed isolated school district currently operates within four (4) months of the end of the public school district's fiscal year on June 30 shall be transferred to the resulting isolated school district.

(d) Ownership of all furnishings, equipment, textbooks, computers, technology, phone systems, audio-video systems, athletic equipment, and machinery at an isolated school currently operating within a local school district shall be transferred to the resulting isolated school district.

6-13-1805. Management.

An isolated school district shall be managed by:

- (1) A director hired by the isolated school district;
- (2) A director appointed by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to oversee operations of all isolated school districts in the state; or
- (3) Any other director or superintendent the division appoints to the isolated school district.

/s/ Irvin

APPROVED: 4/21/25