

ADE DAILY NEWS CLIPS

April 12, 2013

Van Buren Police Arrest Four In Connection With School Threats (Southwest Times Record, Fort Smith)

Van Buren police have made four arrests out of seven unfounded bomb-threat incidents that have occurred at city schools since March.

Four suspects, all juveniles, have been arrested on suspicion of felony communicating a false alarm. The arrests stemmed from unfounded threats made March 14 at Van Buren High School, March 25 at Northridge Middle School, Monday at Parkview Elementary School and Wednesday at Van Buren Freshman Academy, according to a news release from detective Jonathan Wear of the Van Buren Police Department.

Police have not arrested any suspects in connection with a threat made March 13 at Van Buren High School, a March 25 threat at Northridge Middle School or a March 27 threat at the high school, according to the release.

Communicating a false alarm is a felony and can be upgraded if injuries occur as a result of the threat, the release states.

An adult convicted on the charge can face as many as six years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. A minor can be sentenced to immediate incarceration at a juvenile detention center for as many as 90 days, be placed on probation for two years, face community service, electronic monitoring, home detention, mental health assessments, fines, counseling, intensive supervision and tracking, boot camp, restitution for emergency response time and costs, according to the release.

The Van Buren Police Department and school district are taking the threats very seriously and have at least three years to make arrests in the unsolved cases according to Arkansas statutes, the release states.

The FBI is also monitoring and tracking all threats that have been made within the school district, according to the release.

Wear and deputy superintendent Kerry Schneider held a news conference at 3 p.m. Thursday at the Van Buren Police Department to answer questions regarding the unfounded school bomb threats.

“This is a serious thing. This is not a joke; it never has been, it never will be,” Wear said. “It taxes our resources. It costs a lot of money to do this, so it’s something that we really want to stress is not a joke.”

It's a felony any way that you look at it and when we find the people responsible for it, we will hold them accountable."

Wear said each time a school receives a bomb threat, the department is forced to pull officers from the street, where they might otherwise be needed.

Unfounded bomb threats also drain the resources of school staff and prevent students from accomplishing what is required of them during a school day, Schneider said.

"After you're in the process of doing something and you are abruptly stopped and removed from your environment for a period of time, it just creates an undue hardship on the students," Schneider said. "We'd like to maintain an environment where they have every opportunity to do as well as they can do."

Schneider said if a testing session is interrupted, the district must notify the Arkansas Department of Education, and that it's conceivable the school year will have to be lengthened if the threats persist.

Each of the suspects arrested in connection with the unfounded bomb threat incidents will be processed as a juvenile and could face juvenile court, Wear said. The department anticipates making arrests in the remaining unsolved cases.

"So far, out of all seven of these, we've learned something new about each one," Wear said. "It is kind of helping us to understand the nature of what's going on here and help us solve these."

Administrators met with students March 28 to address the seriousness and danger of the threats. Principal Eddie Tipton, along with Cpl. Rick Patterson, the school's resource officer, stressed possible measures the school could take if the students responsible for the threats are not identified, including restricting bathroom access, taking away student privileges or extending the school year.

Cedarville High School and Middle School were both evacuated April 2 because of an unfounded bomb threat. Similar incidents also occurred at Alma High School on March 14 in which 18-year-old student Kevin Ray Newton was arrested and on March 15 at Westwood Elementary School in Greenwood. A 10-year-old student was arrested in that incident.

Southside High School in Fort Smith was also briefly evacuated today because of an unfounded bomb threat.

School closures hit a community (Editorial, Pine Bluff Commercial)

Alzheimer-Martin Elementary School will be recommended for closure on June 30 because of a falling enrollment. It is the third public school in Jefferson County set to close at the end of the current school year.

Like residents of Alzheimer, patrons of the Redfield Middle School have taken their proposed closing seriously. Simply put, a school closure impacts any community.

The former Altheimer district included students from Altheimer, Wabaseka, Sherrill, Tucker, Pastoria, Wright and the Plum Bayou communities. Readers of a certain age will recall how these names changed and disappeared over the years as one after another small southeast Arkansas community lost population, was unable to support a school district and was then consolidated into another district.

Consequently, the recommendation of Dollarway School District Superintendent Frank Anthony to close the Altheimer school should not come as a surprise. Closure was mentioned numerous times by the former Dollarway School Board before the state took over the district and dismissed the board for its failure to operate the district in an acceptable manner.

The subject was also raised reluctantly by the former Altheimer School Board before the district's merger with Dollarway. The high school and junior high at Altheimer have been closed for a number of years.

Anthony met with a large group of school staff, parents, students and supporters Tuesday during an open forum held at the school. The subject was the district's deteriorating financial condition. Anthony will make his recommendation that the school be closed to state education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell.

As superintendent in the Pine Bluff School District, Anthony oversaw the closure of eight schools. "It was not pleasant but it had to be done to keep the district solvent," he explained to the audience.

He was blunt, but candid. That's his style.

"We are looking at economies of scale here," Anthony told Altheimer residents. "Money is what drives all of our actions, and the loss of enrollment is the driver in this situation. The loss of students should mean a reduction in staff but that has been put off and has led us to where we are today."

Economy of scale was also ignored when the Dollarway board continued to operate two bus mechanic shops — one in Pine Bluff and a smaller one at Altheimer — after the districts merged. The latter was responsible for four school buses that come out of Altheimer each school day to transport Altheimer area students to and from campuses in Pine Bluff.

Then Dollarway director Gene Stewart questioned if that was the best use of district resources to maintain duplicate facilities. However, Board President George Stepps replied it made sense to keep things unchanged.

In the 2009-10 school year, the Dollarway district spent \$818,770 more than it took in. In the 2010-11 school year the amount was \$355,840. Last year the district spent \$1.2 million more than it took in.

If the current rate of spending continues, the district will be insolvent at the end of the 2013-14 school year.

Each enrolled child represents \$6,267 in state revenue to the school district. Two years ago Altheimer-Martin had 119 students and as of April 5 it had 78 students. The math is simple: \$488,826 in revenue with projected expenses for the upcoming school year for the school of \$1.2 million.

Altheimer-Martin, Dollarway High School and Robert Morehead Middle School are among three priority schools in the Dollarway district that are among the 50 lowest performing Arkansas schools.

“What can be done for the staff here?” former Dollarway School Board member Efrem Elliott asked Anthony. The reduction-in-force policy will be driven by tenure and number of subject certifications district-wide, was the response.

Schools are a focus point of a community and often one of the larger employees in a town. No one wants to put their children on a yellow bus for a long ride each morning and afternoon that involves crossing the Arkansas River.

The decision, although unavoidable, is not an easy one.

Senate gives final approval to school choice bill (Pine Bluff Commercial)

LITTLE ROCK — The state Senate on Thursday gave final approval to legislation rewriting the state school choice law.

The House passed two bills seeking to overhaul the state Medicaid program.

Senate Bill 65 by Johnny Key, R-Mountain Home, was approved 32-1 after the Senate concurred on four House amendments. The bill now goes to the governor.

Passage of the measure comes as the state awaits a federal appeals court ruling on a challenge to a district judge’s decision last year that struck down Arkansas’ 25-year-old school choice law.

When approved by the Senate last month, SB 65 would have removed race as a factor in school transfers. Key, however, had the measure amended in the House to cap school transfers at 3 percent annually and include a July 1, 2015, expiration date to allow lawmakers to review the legislation in light of the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals’ eventual ruling.

Other amendments added in the House included requiring the Department of Education to collect transfer data and to report to the education committees; restrict transfers from districts currently under desegregation orders; and specify that all transfers approved prior to enactment of the proposed new law would be exempt from it.

“Passing legislation of this magnitude takes a lot of compromise,” Key said later. “In the end, it’s positive for parents and students.”

Earlier this week, the Senate passed House Bill 1294 by Rep. Kim Hammer, R-Benton, under which a student approved for transfer to a non-resident district under a provision of law that is later struck

down or repealed would be allowed to finish school in the new district, and any present or future sibling could transfer to the district as well.

That bill is now waiting for the House to consider concurrence in a Senate amendment.

Last year, U.S. District Judge Robert Dawson struck down Arkansas' school choice law, ruling that a race-based provision in the 1989 law violated the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees equal protection under the law.

Dawson sided with parents living in the Malvern School District who challenged the school choice law after the Malvern district cited its desegregation provision in warning them to return their children who had enrolled in mostly white surrounding districts.

The ruling was appealed to the 8th Circuit, which heard oral arguments in January at St. Louis.

Also Thursday, the Senate passed SB 794 by Sen. Linda Chesterfield, D-Little Rock, which would require legislative review of any administrative annexation or consolidation of school districts by the state Board of Education.

Under the bill, which passed 33-0, within 10 days of the state taking over a troubled school district, the state education commissioner would be required to explain to the House and Senate education committees why the takeover was needed and what the district must do to regain its independence. Also, every three months the education committees would have to be updated on the progress of all schools that have been taken over by the state.

The bill also requires that if a district fails to show improvement after two years of a takeover, the education commissioner must conduct a review to determine whether the person appointed by the state to be interim superintendent of the district is doing a good job. That review would have to be presented to lawmakers.

The House voted 68-9 to approve SB 914 by Sen. David Sanders, R-Little Rock, which would establish the Office of Medicaid Inspector General within the governor's office for the purpose of rooting out waste, fraud and abuse in Medicaid.

"This is a significant change that will allow us to shine transparency into the Department of Human Services," Rep. Bruce Westerman, R-Hot Springs, said while presenting the bill in the House.

Rep. Bruce Wilkins, D-Bono, pointed out that the bill would create two new government positions, an inspector general and a deputy inspector general, at annual salaries of \$150,000 each. He asked how he could justify that expense to his constituents.

"I believe that the money that they save will greatly outweigh the cost of the director and the deputy director," Westerman said.

Rep. Darrin Williams, D-Little Rock, asked Westerman if the office would duplicate work already being done by the attorney general's office. Westerman said he believed the new office would enhance

the work being done by the division of the AG's office that investigates Medicaid fraud, which he said now recovers about \$7 million a year.

Williams also asked if passing SB 914 and other Medicaid reforms bills was politically necessary in order to pass the private option for expanding health care coverage under the federal Affordable Care Act.

Westerman answered that "if we fail to reform the existing system, it will certainly cast doubt on people's ability to vote to expand the existing system."

Speaking in support of the bill, Rep. Randy Alexander, R-Fayetteville, said that in his mind the issues of Medicaid reform and health care expansion are tied together and that if SB 914 did not pass, "this is a deal breaker for me."

The bill goes to the Senate for concurrence in a House amendment.

The House also passed another Medicaid reform bill, SB 1019 by Sen. Jonathan Dismang, R-Beebe, which would require the state to track the reported incomes of people applying for Medicaid and determine whether they match the federal government's records of their incomes. The bill passed 75-1 and goes to the governor.

In a 72-6 vote, the House approved SB 874 by Sen. Jason Rapert, R-Conway, which would allow a person to be charged with negligent homicide if the person causes a fatal accident while driving after being awake for 24 hours or more. The bill goes to the governor.

The House voted 83-0 to pass SB 1011 by Sen. Missy Irvin, R-Mountain View, which would establish a specific violation of the code of ethics for an educator suspected of being involved in an inappropriate relationship with a student. The bill goes to the Senate for concurrence in a House amendment.

Elsewhere Thursday, the House Public Health, Welfare and Labor committee endorsed SB 1010 by Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson, R-Little Rock, which would require all mattresses sold in the state to bear a label stating whether they are all new or contain previously used materials. Selling a used mattress as new would be a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

The bill goes to the House.

Star City students win awards at art exhibit (Pine Bluff Commercial)

Cassidy Zuspan, a fifth-grader at Jimmy Brown Elementary School and Colton Rudder, a junior at Star City High School, each won first place for the region in their grade division at the 2013 Southeast Arkansas K-12 Student Art Exhibit, now on display at the Spencer Gallery at the Fine Arts Center at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, sponsored by the Arkansas Art Educators Association.

The artwork has been on display since March 18 and will continue to be shown until Sunday. A reception and awards ceremony will be held Sunday at 2 pm. The public is invited to attend.

The artwork created by Zuspan and Rudder will be included in the state Arkansas Art Educators art exhibit in Little Rock from May 10 through July 27 at the Arkansas Studies Institute in the Butler Center Main Gallery, located in the River Market District at 401 President Clinton Avenue in Little Rock.

The exhibit includes artwork from students in kindergarten through 12th grade in schools in Jefferson, Cleveland, Lincoln, Desha, Calhoun, Drew, Bradley, Union, Ashley, and Chicot counties.

The exhibit also includes original works of art created by 30 Star City School District students from Jimmy Brown Elementary School, Star City Middle School, and Star City High School.

Other Jimmy Brown Elementary School winners include: Cash Tollison, kindergarten – third place; Kaeton Kirk, first grade – third place; Dillon McBryde, second grade – third place; and Anna Blasengame, third grade – second place.

Other Jimmy Brown Elementary School students with artwork included in the exhibit are: Jace Hall, second grade; Ryan Allbright, first grade; Jerrod Villareal, fourth grade; Gage Johnson, fourth grade; and Jackson Burnett, fifth grade.

The Jimmy Brown Elementary School students are under the instruction of art teacher Suzi Davis.

Star City Middle School students with artwork included in the exhibit are: Kaylin Parker, seventh grade; Kahleah Bohlman, seventh grade; Marco Hernandez, seventh grade; Deyanae Robinson, seventh grade; Jeff Patton, eighth grade; Amira Ford, eighth grade; Samantha Minton, eighth grade; Morgan Newton, eighth grade; Caleb Walker, eighth grade; and Natalie Stephens eighth grade.

The Star City Middle School students are under the instruction of art teacher Jill Moore.

Star City High School winners at the exhibit include: Robert Davis ninth grade, second place; Haley Bishop, 11th grade, second place; and Aubrey Gill, 11th grade, Honorable Mention.

Other Star City High School students with artwork included in the exhibit are: Megan Edwards, tenth grade; Allison Kiernan, 10th grade; Allie Sirois, 11th grade; Morgan Taylor, 11th grade; Antonio Magana, 12th grade; and Tyler Courson, 12th grade.

The Star City High School students are under the instruction of art teacher Roger Darren High.

Dollarway District Losing Funds for Pre-School Program (KARK, Channel 4)

Pine Bluff, AR - The threat of losing their child's pre-school has parents in the Dollarway School District worried they'll have no place to send their children.

The Superintendent of the Dollarway School District, Frank Anthony, reports not meeting required standards has left them without necessary funding. Now the school district has to compete for a grant. If they don't get the grant, the Dollarway ABC Pre-school will be no more.

"We could potentially lose the program if the grant is not awarded," Anthony said. "However we have identified and the state has identified for us the problematic areas."

Thursday (4/11), the school district hosted a public forum to inform parents on why the pre-school is in this position.

Lack of proper documentation in child eligibility, licensing of teachers and professional development led to the actions against the program.

They now have to apply for a competitive grant against more than two dozen other districts in the state.

The superintendent expressed confidence in their ability to beat out the other school districts.

Despite high praise for the school though, parents weren't so sure.

"Basically if they lose this it's like I'm losing my pride, my life," said Taronda Logan who has one child in the program now and planned on sending another next year.

Many of the parents say they can only continue to work now because they have a place to take their three and four year old's during the day.

The district plans on still having registration dates either way. Those will be April 28 and 29.

Staff of the pre-school, which serves both James Matthews and Altheimer-Martin Elementary Schools, will also be affected.

Because of the potential lack of funds, the district is forced to non-renew staff that are associated with the program.

If they are awarded the grant, staff could have their jobs back in June.

State funding boost for education advances (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

The House Education Committee on Thursday endorsed a proposal to boost minimum state funding for an adequate education for all K-12 students by 2 percent in each of the next two years.

House Bill 1774 by Rep. James McLean, D-Batesville, also contains provisions for a 1.8 percent increase in separate funding categories for English-language programs, alternative-learning environments and professional development.

The bill was amended to keep flat a separate category of money that targets school districts with larger numbers of economically disadvantaged students. It also directed the House and Senate education committees to come up with a more effective way to distribute this additional money - approximately

\$200 million - because research had found the way it is distributed now had no discernible impact on student achievement.

The amendment marked the official end of an effort to markedly change the formula in this session that was found in Senate Bill 811 by Sen. Johnny Key, R-Mountain Home.

Key's model would have provided more money to districts for students receiving free lunches than for students receiving reduced-price lunches, a distinction not found in law now.

The existing formula has three categories of funding. Districts with less than 70 percent economically disadvantaged students received \$517 per student and districts with 90 percent or more low-income students receive \$1,549 per pupil. Districts in the middle receive \$1,033 for each student.

Under HB1774, those levels of funding would remain the same.

But the bill also leaves in place funding disparities researchers found last year, particularly for schools that were within a percentage point of another funding level. For instance, the difference between a district with 69 percent of its students identified as economically disadvantaged and one with 70 percent amounted to \$516 per student.

The formula found in SB811 lost support when lawmakers learned the effect it would have on their constituents. Some school districts would have seen funding for their disadvantaged students rise, but what caught legislators' attention was the dozens of school districts that would have lost millions of dollars if SB811 had been enacted. The Little Rock, Bentonville, Cabot and Fayetteville school districts would have lost more than \$1 million each under the proposed formula. Districts in Bryant, Conway and Hamburg would have lost just less than \$1 million.

"The impact on school districts was just too great," Tom Kimbrell, the commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education, told the committee.

"There wasn't enough time" in this regular legislative session to change the formula and perhaps approach it differently, Kimbrell said, adding "We found we maybe put the cart before the horse."

The minimum funding for an adequate education for all K-12 students in Arkansas is called foundation funding. It is now set at \$6,267 per student.

The 2 percent increase in HB1774 in funding falls within the range of 1.8 percent to 2.5 percent the Senate and House education committees recommended last fall, based on projections provided by the Bureau of Legislative Research.

Under HB1774, foundation funding would rise to \$6,393 per student in fiscal 2014, which begins July 1, and to \$6,521 per student in fiscal 2015.

Also Thursday, the committee failed to endorse separate bills that would have required at least some of the members of the state Board of Education to be elected.

House Bill 2290 by Jim Dotson, R-Bentonville, would have required all nine board members to be elected. Under state law now, the governor appoints them to seven-year terms. Dotson amended the bill to include state Rep. John Walker, D-Little Rock, as a co-sponsor.

“I don’t know that the appointment system has worked all that well,” Walker said, noting that the “quality of education for 60 percent of Arkansas students has not improved for 30 years.”

House Bill 1738 by Rep. Justin Harris, R-West Fork, would have let the governor appoint one member. Two others would have been appointed by the Senate president pro tempore and two by the speaker of the House of Representatives. The remaining four would have been elected.

Education Department officials as well as educators spoke against both bills. They failed on voice votes.

School-choice bill sent to governor (Arkansas Democrat-Gazette)

The Arkansas Senate Thursday sent a bill to rewrite the state’s school choice law to Gov. Mike Beebe.

The Senate also approved legislation exempting the names of minors in motor-vehicle-accident reports from public disclosure, but balked at legislation requiring the Little Rock Technology Park Authority to provide certain relocation assistance in eminent domain proceedings.

On the 88th day of the 2013 session, a House committee endorsed a bill stiffening the penalties for knowingly selling used bedding after claiming it is new, and another House committee recommended approval of legislation to codify charitable immunity for churches and eliminate liability when a person is injured or killed by a handgun on the church’s property.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

The Senate voted 33-0 to send Senate Bill 65 by Sen. Johnny Key, R-Mountain Home, to the governor.

The school-choice bill, allowing students to transfer out of districts, would expire in 2015.

Key has maintained that the Legislature should not wait for a pending federal appeals court ruling before changing the state’s school choice mechanism.

The 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis has not yet issued an opinion in a case filed by the parents of white children who attempted to transfer from the 60-percent white Malvern School District to the 95-percent white Magnet Cove School District. Their request was denied so they sued. A lower court found the state’s school-choice law unconstitutional because of its racial restrictions but the appeals court stayed the judgment until it issued an opinion.

Key’s bill would limit transfers to no more than 3 percent of a district’s enrollment each year, exempt districts with court-ordered desegregation responsibilities and require the Department of Education to collect transfer data and report it to the Legislature.

FOI EXEMPTION

The Senate sent to the governor a bill exempting the name and address of a person under 18 in a motor-vehicle-accident report from disclosure to the public under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act.

Under SB 225 by Sen. Eddie Joe Williams, R-Cabot, the name and address of minors in a motor-vehicle-accident report would be available to the minor's parent, legal guardian or legal custodian or a representative of an insurance company that insures a person involved in the accident. According to Williams, he proposed the bill because of an incident in Cabot about two years ago. A school bus with about 20 students on board was in a minor accident and parents received solicitations from chiropractors, he said.

BOND ISSUES FOR LOCAL ROADS

The Senate sent to the governor a bill allowing cities and counties to ask voters to approve bond issues for surface-transportation projects. The money would be paid back with their share of the half-percent sales-tax increase for roads that voters approved in November.

The ordinance wouldn't be effective unless the bond issue is approved by the voters. Cities and counties each receive 15 percent of the collections from the sales tax increase for roads. The bonds would have to have a final maturity date not later than July 1, 2023.

The legislation, SB541, is sponsored by Sen. Bruce Maloch, D-Magnolia.

NEGLIGENT HOMICIDE THROUGH FATIGUE

The House voted 72-6 in favor of a bill that would add negligently operating a vehicle "while fatigued" and causing the death of another person to the state's existing negligent homicide statute.

Senate Bill 874, Sen. Jason Rapert, R-Bigelow, would specify that a person who goes without sleep for 24 hours or who falls asleep after being awake for 24 hours would be considered "fatigued."

Rep. Bob Ballinger, R-Hindsville, said there have been recent cases in the state where a person has bragged about staying up all night and was then involved in a fatal crash. He said the bill would provide a clear avenue for prosecutors to press charges in those cases.

UNLAWFUL BEDDING SALES

The House Public Health, Welfare and Labor Committee passed a bill that would increase the penalties for knowingly selling used bedding as a new product.

SB 1010 by Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson, R-Little Rock, would make it a Class A misdemeanor to sell fabric, filling, or an article of bedding that has been used with labels reserved for new bedding.

Hutchinson said he decided to propose the bill after hearing from constituents, who said furniture stores were selling used products as if they were new. Hutchinson, who is an attorney, said he sent the stores cease and desist letters, but decided to not file lawsuits.

Robert Brech, chief financial officer for the Department of Health, said the department regulates the sale of bedding and sellers can be fined under the current law, which was put in place in 1927. Under the current regulations, a violation could result in fines of up to \$250 and as many as 90 days in prison, based on the will of the court.

A Class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

GUNS IN CHURCHES

The House Judiciary Committee approved a bill that would codify charitable immunity for churches and eliminate liability when a person is injured or killed by a handgun on the church's property.

Rep. Darrin Williams, D-Little Rock, said House Bill 1284 was in response to SB71 that allows churches to decide whether to allow people to carry concealed weapons on their property.

Williams said the bill would ensure that churches are immune from lawsuits.

RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

A bill requiring eminent domain proceedings to comply with the federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970 failed to clear the Senate by three votes. The Senate voted 15-13 in favor of SB878 by Sen. Joyce Elliott, D-Little Rock. It needed backing from 18 of Arkansas' 35 senators to pass. The Senate expunged the vote to clear the way for another vote.

Elliott said her bill is aimed at making it more difficult for a person's property to be taken by requiring the person to be reimbursed for actual reasonable expenses.

The bill says it wouldn't apply to the state highway department; a county or city for the purpose of constructing, repairing, maintaining or improving a road, street or right-of-way; a privately-owned utility; an electric cooperative, a publicly-owned utility; a utility-owned by an improvement district, a railroad or a video service provider.

Afterwards, Elliott said she intends her bill to apply to the Little Rock Technology Park Authority, which has been searching for a site for its technology park.

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF STATE TAKEOVER OF A DISTRICT

In a 33-0 vote, the Senate approved SB794 by Sen. Linda Chesterfield, D-Little Rock, requiring the state's education commissioner to provide a clear statement to the House and Senate Education Committees on the reasons a school district has been placed under state authority within 10 days after the state's education commissioner or board of education takes control.

The bill would also require the commissioner to provide a clear statement of the steps needed for the district to remove itself from the authority of the board or himself.

After a district has been under the authority of the state board or commissioner for two consecutive years, the commissioner would be required to conduct a review of each person appointed to operate the district, determine whether satisfactory progress has been made, and decide whether the person should continue to operate the district or be replaced.