



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner

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UPDATE ON PCSSD BUDGET SITUATION

LITTLE ROCK — Given the amount of interest among news media and the community in the budget planning process of the Pulaski County Special School District, the Arkansas Department of Education provides the following update:

Today, the Department informed PCSSD Superintendent Dr. Jerry Guess as well as the leadership of the Pulaski Association of Classroom Teachers (PACT) and the Pulaski Association of Support Staff (PASS) of its recommendations for establishing a reliable and balanced budget for the 2012-2013 school year and beyond.

The Department's recommendations are binding upon districts in fiscal distress, according to Arkansas Code Annotated 6-20-1908.

Faced with declining fund balances, the district must cut \$11 million from its fiscal 2013 budget. This includes \$4 million in benefits provided for in the unions' contracts. Some of these benefits are above what employees in other districts receive and are not required by state law. These cuts must be sustained in subsequent years in order for the PCSSD to remain financially solvent and provide an adequate and equitable education required by the Arkansas Constitution.

The Department has instructed PCSSD to:

- Implement its revised fiscal distress plan
- Withdraw recognition of PACT as the bargaining unit for classroom teachers and PASS as the bargaining unit for support staff
- Terminate the Professional Negotiations Agreement with PACT and PASS. PCSSD will continue to observe the compensation/fringe obligations of individual employee contracts until June 30, 2012
- Implement the District's policies for certified personnel and support staff.

“My goal is to return control of the PCSSD to whom it belongs — the district's patrons and a locally elected school board,” said Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell.

“This will require steady financial belt tightening wherever possible and operational efficiency. The focus must be on providing the best educational opportunities for the students of PCSSD.”

For a copy of the commissioner’s letter to the Pulaski County Special School District regarding the binding recommendations, [click here](#).

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