

Date: June 3, 2026

TO:

Arkansas State Board of Education

c/o Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Four Capitol Mall

Little Rock, AR 72201

FROM:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Formal Written Appeal of Provisional Rejection – Foster Child [REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
(White Hall School District)

To the Members of the Arkansas State Board of Education,

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-233(e), I am writing to formally appeal the provisional rejection issued by White Hall School District Superintendent Gary Williams on June 1, 2026, regarding the school choice enrollment application for my grandchild and foster child, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] (as documented in the attached Notice of Provisional Rejection). This appeal is timely submitted within the mandatory 10-day window from the receipt of the district's notice.

#### Timeline and Core Context

May 28, 2026: Due to a sudden and precarious legal situation involving her biological parents, [REDACTED] life was unexpectedly upended. She was emergency-relocated from Garland County (Lake Hamilton School District) to Jefferson County and placed into our home by the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS). My husband, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and I are her registered foster parents and biological grandparents.

Transition to Permanency: While [REDACTED] enters this transition under foster care status, our family is actively in the process of securing formal, legal guardianship of her within the next six months, making this a permanent, lifetime placement.

**Zoning and Rejection:** Our physical residence at [REDACTED] is located within White Hall, but our property line is currently zoned for the Pine Bluff School District (Dollarway area schools). On June 1, 2026, White Hall School District issued a provisional rejection citing a "lack of capacity" in teacher-to-student ratios.

#### Substantive Grounds for Appeal

We respectfully request that the State Board of Education overturn this rejection based on the following specific DESE regulations and statutory protections:

**Violation of DESE 95% Capacity Standard (6 CAR § 30-201(c)):** Under the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education's current Rules Governing Public School Choice, a receiving school district may only claim a lack of capacity if the district has filled ninety-five percent (95%) or more of the seats at the specific grade level to which the student would be assigned. We contest this rejection and request that White Hall School District be required to produce certified data proving they have legitimately breached this strict 95% statutory cap, rather than relying on an outdated 90% benchmark or a generalized local administrative cap.

**Mandatory Educational Stability and Foster Continuity (Ark. Code Ann. § 9-28-113):** Under both state law and federal ESSA mandates enforced by DESE, public school systems are compelled to support the educational stability of children in foster care. [REDACTED] is an excellent, dedicated student who has just experienced severe trauma and relocation. She is highly motivated to attend White Hall schools, where she feels safe, comfortable, and eager to learn. Forcing her into an unfamiliar district outside her immediate town boundaries directly contradicts the "best interest of the child" standard.

**Severe Logistical Hardship & Highway 270 Construction:** As her foster parents, we must personally transport [REDACTED] to school. Our home is a direct 6.1-mile drive (12 minutes) from White Hall Junior High. Conversely, traveling to the assigned Dollarway school site in Pine Bluff is a 9.5-mile commute. Crucially, the ongoing ARDOT Highway 270/Sheridan Road widening construction project causes extreme, daily traffic congestion. Forcing us to navigate this construction corridor "to and fro" every day imposes an exhausting, time-consuming, and entirely impractical transit barrier on a vulnerable student who requires stability.

**Deep-Rooted Generational Legacy:** Our family's ties to White Hall are profound. My husband and I are alumni of the district, and [REDACTED] great-grandmother, [REDACTED] is a retired former teacher who dedicated her career to the White Hall School District. Enrolling [REDACTED] here surrounds her with an established community network uniquely equipped to help her heal, adjust, and thrive.

### Requested Action

Denying a local placement to a high-achieving foster youth on the brink of permanent guardianship by citing a rigid capacity cap violates the protective intent of 6 CAR § 30-201 and Ark. Code Ann. § 9-28-113. We request that the State Board of Education reverse White Hall School District's provisional rejection and order her immediate enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year.

Thank you for your time, empathy, and swift intervention.

Respectfully submitted,



Registered Foster Parent / Biological Grandparent

White Hall School District  
1020 West Holland  
White Hall, Arkansas 71602  
870 247-2002

Dear [REDACTED]

Date: June 1, 2026

I am sorry, but the application you submitted for [REDACTED] has been provisionally rejected due to the White Hall District having a lack of capacity in your student's grade, program, or building by reaching the maximum teacher-to-student ratio in your student's grade, program, or building that is allowed under the Standards of Accreditation; State law and rules; or Federal Law and regulations.

While the White Hall School District may currently have a lack of capacity in your student's grade, program, or building, the district capacity can change over the course of the semester. Any time a student leaves the White Hall School District between January 1 and July 1, the district shall review the school choice applications the district has provisionally rejected for any applications in the relevant grade, program, or building. Any relevant application that was previously rejected shall be converted to an acceptance based on the data and time stamp placed on the application when the district received it. If there is an opening in your student's grade, program, or building that your student becomes eligible for based on the data and time stamp on your student's application, the District shall send you a written notice that your student's application has been changed from provisional rejection to acceptance.

As noted in your original application, you have ten (10) days from receipt of this notice in which to submit a written appeal of this decision to the State Board of Education.

Respectfully,  
Gary Williams  
White Hall Superintendent