IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS
DELTA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA **PLAINTIFF**

v. **CASE NO. 2:70-CV-00010-BSM**

COTTON PLANT SCHOOL DISTRICT, et al. **DEFENDANTS**

ORDER

Watson Chapel School District's unopposed motion for unitary status [Doc. No. 137] is granted.

The United States sued a number of Arkansas school districts in 1970 for failing to desegregate. In 2012, the United States notified the Watson Chapel School District ("the District") that it had complied with its obligation to desegregate in all aspects except one: student discipline. Doc. No. 138. To address this problem, the United States and District entered into a consent order that required the District to reform its policies and procedures to ensure that black students were not being disciplined and expelled at higher rates than white students. Doc. No. 87. The District claims it has complied with the terms of the consent order and is requesting unitary status. Unitary status is declared when a district eliminates the traces of segregation to the fullest extent possible. The United States does not oppose the District's motion, and no comments or objections were received from the public. Doc. Nos. 130, 137, 138.

Unitary status is appropriate if the District has (1) complied with the desegregation order for a reasonable amount of time; (2) eliminated the traces of discrimination to the

fullest extent possible; and (3) shown "good-faith commitment to the whole of the decree and to those statutes and constitutional provisions that were the predicate for judicial intervention in the first place." *Missouri v. Jenkins*, 515 U.S. 70, 87–89 (1995); *Freeman v. Pitts*, 503 U.S. 467, 491–91, 498 (1992). Student assignment; faculty; staff; transportation; extracurricular activities; and facilities are all considered to determine whether a district has eliminated segregation as much as possible. *Green v. County School Bd. of New Kent County, Va.*, 391 U.S. 430, 435 (1968).

Based on the information and data provided by the District, as well as the facts in the record, the District has substantially complied in good faith with its obligation to avoid disciplining black students more harshly than white students and has otherwise eliminated the traces of discrimination to the fullest extent possible. Accordingly, the District has met the requirements for unitary status, and its motion is granted. All prior injunctions against the District are dissolved, jurisdiction is terminated, and the claims against the District are dismissed with prejudice. The clerk is directed to update the docket to reflect the dismissal of the District as a party.

IT IS SO ORDERED this 13th day of July, 2026.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE