

Education

School Annexation and Consolidation in Arkansas: Examining Equity Issues Involved in the Processes

Friday 11:00 am; Panel 2

Linda Blake

Abstract: The presentation examines the impact of Act 60, the School District Reorganization Act, on two rural and impoverished school districts in Arkansas with student populations nearing 350 students. Act 60 legislation required that school districts with less than 350 students annex or consolidate with nearby school districts in order to survive. The two schools selected for this study annexed the 2004-2005 academic year in order to adhere to the new law and to meet the “magic” 350 student count number. The districts were in close proximity to each other and both faced the immediate threat of annexation or consolidation or that threat in the near future. The purpose of the study was to explore the impact that school consolidation/annexation legislation had on two predominantly rural African American school districts and communities and to examine some of the lessons learned from the experience. Another purpose was to provide some recommendations on how the annexation process could be improved in the future.