

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA

YVONNE MARIE BOYD, ET AL.

CIVIL ACTION

VERSUS

NO. 65-3164-JJB

POINTE COUPEE PARISH SCHOOL  
BOARD

**RULING ON MOTION**

This matter is before the court on a motion (doc. 385) by the Pointe Coupee Parish School Board for authorization to implement a S.T.E.M. Academy at the former Pointe Coupee Central High School site. The matter was submitted following an evidentiary hearing held this date.

As previously noted, the undersigned is very concerned that plans relative to this facility actually work to promote desegregation, particularly in view of the recent failure of the Recovery School District in this regard. The testimony and exhibits presented at the hearing paint an optimistic picture of a racially diverse campus offering a specialized learning program, which will better prepare students entering the S.T.E.M. workforce or advancing to a post-secondary institution. This plan has obviously been given much thought by the School Board; and, it is supported with detailed information and guidelines as to its objectives and how it will be implemented and funded.

Students will be selected for the program on 50% black/50% non-black basis. Each student must have an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher from the previous year for admission and must maintain an overall GPA of 2.75 or higher to remain in the program. A notable

feature of this plan is that it does not call for the establishment of a separate school but simply provides an “academy” under the auspices of Livonia High School. All grades and test scores of students will “revert” to the students’ home schools. Students attending the Academy will be able to participate in extra-curricular activities at their home school. A comprehensive code of conduct setting behavioral requirements to be admitted and to stay at the Academy will be in place to ensure a safe school environment.

The program will be implemented at grade levels 6, 7, 8 and 9 with three sections of twenty-five students each for a total enrollment of 300 students for the 2016-17 school year. The plan provides for expanding the Academy each year by adding one lower grade and one higher grade until it encompasses grades 3-12. The Academy will utilize Project Lead the Way curriculum with some specialized classes (such as computer science, dietetics and Pro-Start) and offer dual enrollment courses in conjunction with Baton Rouge Community College. S.T.E.M. has been noted to be a pathway to better ACT scores.

The court is cautiously optimistic that the S.T.E.M. Academy will offer a different enough curriculum from that of Livonia High School and private institutions in the area that it will draw a sufficient number of non-black students to improve racial diversity. As noted by Superintendent Lemoine, a similar program has been implemented in Iberville Parish with proven success in achieving increased diversity of students and greater enrollment numbers overall. The School Board has had a phone survey conducted which is indicative of strong public support for the S.T.E.M. Academy in both black and non-black households. The School Board has also done community outreach. Superintendent Lemoine testified that the School Board is committed to funding the Academy.

Accordingly, the motion (doc. 385) for authorization of the S.T.E.M. Academy is hereby GRANTED and defendant Pointe Coupee Parish School Board is authorized to open and operate the S.T.E.M. Academy of Pointe Coupee effective with the 2016-17 school year.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, November 5, 2015.



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JAMES J. BRADY, JUDGE  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA