A performance analysis of

THE LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT:
Ten years of rising revenues and declining student academic achievement

Summary

Since the implementation of Little Rock’s 1990 desegregation plan and its various revisions over the last decade, almost ten years of rising education revenues have failed to reverse the Little Rock School District’s (LRSD) declining academic performance. In fact, scores in core academics have continued falling each year of the plan in the wake of annually increasing budgets and spending. And the gap between black/white student performance has not closed as promised at the beginning of the plan 10 years ago. With the vote on Little Rock’s latest school tax increase just around the corner, the issue of an ever-widening “spending versus student performance” gap is bound to raise questions among local voters.

...should the community ante up a new round of tax dollars? Or is it possible more money is not the answer, but that it is simply time for wholesale changes in everything from school leadership, governance, teaching methods, and curriculum to management, fiscal practices, and accountability programs? Many local citizens think so—and the facts are with them.

For example, will LRSD ever be capable of orchestrating a long-sought academic turnaround given the legal burdens and other contentious issues it must constantly deal with now? And, should the community ante up a new round of tax dollars? Or is it possible more money is not the answer, but that it is simply time for wholesale changes in everything from school leadership, governance, teaching methods, and curriculum to management, fiscal practices, and accountability programs? Many local citizens think so—and the facts are with them.

Scores will not get better, more legal haggling will be inevitable, divisiveness will endure, and Little Rock and its schools will remain hostage to those who would prosper from more than 40 years of complex legal history. Some even say the city just seems destined to remain trapped in a lingering perception of racism so far removed, in reality, from the terrible prejudices and discrimination of 1957 as to be sadly laughable. Knowing the enduring stigma of racism unfairly shapes the city’s image around the world angers many taxpayers. They feel its time to move on.

To be sure, the ongoing community effort to change racial attitudes in Little Rock has been extraordinary for many years now. Little Rock is no longer a community marked by an ingrained cultural tolerance of racial discrimination. It has worked hard and grown in character to become a modern, forward-looking city committed to freedom and equal opportunity for every citizen. Most of the city’s citizens know that the Little Rock of 2000 is a far cry from the Little Rock of 1957. Anyone who would suggest otherwise is either blind or disingenuous—or both.

Still, growing unrest among taxpayers over these things will lead many of them to withhold what they believe to be a futile infusion of more tax dollars. They view LRSD as a troubled school district mired in unending legal bickering and torn by factional agendas. They see it as lacking leadership and the internal capability to apply resources wisely. They see no collective will among school leaders to abandon failed practices and try new ones. And until new leadership with new insights, new ideas, and the courage to challenge the education status quo in Little Rock emerges, they will save their money.
Foreword

The Little Rock School District (LRSD) is one of America’s most historic yet consistently troubled districts. More than 40 years of litigation and controversy, stemming from the 1957 integration of Central High School, has left LRSD saddled with ineffective programs and facing an increasingly discontented public. It is a history that reveals a long-standing inability by school and community leaders to define and implement reforms that would improve academic quality as well as the overall educational climate of the city.

...the ultimate victims of years of deficient public schools are generations of Little Rock children, black and white. In a city where a people’s struggle for educational opportunity erupted and changed a nation, the underlying irony is heartbreaking.

Here—of all places—schools should work.

The result is an embarrassing legacy of educational decline and local divisiveness which has diminished Little Rock in community spirit and vitality while also retarding economic growth and opportunity for far too many years. It is a long-term toll that hurts the community as a whole. But it is not lost on most Little Rock citizens that the ultimate victims of years of deficient public schools are generations of Little Rock children, black and white. In a city where a people’s struggle for educational opportunity erupted and changed a nation, the underlying irony is heartbreaking. Here—of all places—schools should work.

In recent years, under the current desegregation plan adopted in late 1990, the ongoing decline of academic quality in Little Rock’s schools has continued unabated. The report that follows clearly illustrates this. Little Rock citizens, however, do not need to be told their schools face serious challenges too long unresolved. The disturbing telltale signs are continually visible, eroding confidence in the system as well as the men and women who influence and shape it:

- Worried parents move their children to outlying school districts and private schools, which are flourishing. They are no longer driven to such decisions by some underlying vestige of 1950’s style racism, as those who demagogue the issue would charge, but simply by unacceptably poor academic quality and an understandable natural concern for their children’s educational fate.

- Lawsuits and actions spun out of the original desegregation order and settlement are perpetuated and seem interminable after more than forty years. The toll they have taken on a long-weary community is costly and divisive...not to mention inhibiting to the healing that should have occurred in this city years ago.

- Interest groups, from teacher unions to local businesses to political factions impose their agendas on the district, often veiling their own interests (more members, higher pay, protecting investments, winning votes) in a publicly professed concern for children and parents. And while they feud over conflicting objectives, they remain in philosophical lockstep to protect—even expand—“progressive” education programs that place social engineering, ideological dogma, and political correctness above tough academics, fairly measured results, and honestly reported outcomes.

- And in the often emotionally charged chaos and confusion inevitably brought on by ceaseless political factionalism, unending litigation, court oversight, mounting
economic stress, and public unrest, the overwhelming demands of a district in trouble chew up and spit out superintendents with alarming regularity—eight (two acting) in the last eleven years.

...the most pressing challenge in Little Rock's schools is not physical plant renewal and enhanced computer capability, but simply and finally creating schools that are highly effective in fulfilling their principal mission: the highest possible achievement in core academic courses for all children in the community.

Fresh new classrooms and sparkling new schools filled with the latest computer technology will do little good if children are failing to learn the basics.

It is against this backdrop of turmoil and unresolved academic decline that school and city leaders come yet again to an edgy public, pleading for still more tax dollars—some $115 million in all. Their appeal is tied to a current national initiative calling for the restoration of America's aged and crumbling school buildings, construction of new schools to replace old ones, greater student access to computer technology, and more connectivity of education systems.

The popularity of such initiatives is understandable. One look at a few of Little Rock's older school buildings, coupled with the current digital-age fascination Americans have with the internet, will surely leave some local taxpayers asking, "Why not vote yes? Who, after all, could vote against restoring worn classroom facilities and preparing students for a technology driven world?" These are the themes that feed the media and tug at the hearts and pocketbooks of voters.

Still, many Little Rock voters have a historical perspective that transcends emotional appeals and sound bite politics. Slick tax campaign packaging and more promises will not fool them. They understand that the most pressing challenge in Little Rock's schools is not physical plant renewal and enhanced computer capability, but simply and finally creating schools that are highly effective in fulfilling their principal mission: the highest possible achievement in core academic courses for all children in the community.

Fresh new classrooms and sparkling new schools filled with the latest computer technology will do little good if children are failing to learn. The bad news is the District's own performance numbers indicate this is the case. The Arkansas Policy Foundation is pleased to provide the following facts and analysis.
The Little Rock School District: School Revenues Climb, Student Performance Plummet

Regardless of how proposed tax increases for local schools are packaged (Little Rock’s latest $115 million plea is tied to improving school plant facilities), the fundamental mission of local education is to assure that children successfully learn. As the tax vote approaches, and the usual promises that more tax dollars will generate significant improvements in our schools are sounded yet again, taxpayers may want to know the long-term record of LRSD on dollars poured into the system versus how well students learn.

It’s a story school officials should willingly, openly, and honestly share with a taxing public that deserves to know the truth about the academic results their dollars generate. But because Little Rock’s student performance numbers reveal a long-term trend of failure and decline, they are not generally reported or made easily accessible to the public. Instead they are selectively overlooked in favor of numbers or information conducive to “positive spin”, but often having little or no relation to genuine academic performance.

Having the whole story is paramount to anyone interested in making an informed decision on how to vote on school taxes. The reason is clear: More dollars must not be contributed only to fund a sustained general decline of academic quality. Little Rock cannot—must not—continue pumping more money into its schools without achieving results that show dramatic progress on the academic front for all students.

The Impact of the 1990 Desegregation Plan

This report covers the 1990’s, the time frame during which the LRSD has been operating under a final court approved settlement to a 1982 desegregation lawsuit. The settlement included desegregation plans for all three of Pulaski County’s school districts. All parties involved in the suit agreed to the plans.

Through the years, controversy constantly dogged the evolution of these plans. In many ways, their development became an exercise not only in poor legal rulings, but outright opportunism for factions with agendas. So much so that U.S. District Judge Henry Woods of Little Rock, who oversaw the case for many years and had earlier advocated consolidating the County’s three districts, removed himself just months before the plans were accepted in December of 1990. He viewed solving Little Rock’s morass of complex desegregation issues as “hopeless”, saying a judge with a fresh perspective might do better.
His concern, prophetic in retrospect, extended to the LRSD plan. It put excessive demands on the district and set the stage for outside interests to micromanage and manipulate the process of defining programs, curriculum, teaching methodologies, policies, and practices.

Among the players...Hillary Clinton and local PR guru Skip Rutherford. Their influence may well have accounted for a shift in academic policy that led the District to embrace the so-called progressive education movement, a teaching philosophy that pushes self-esteem, “learning tools” rather than actual learning, and social engineering over academic results based on a core of knowledge. A “higher order learning” summit, orchestrated by both Clintons in 1987, brought these ideas to Arkansas, and since then, educators have generally adhered to them.

Today, however, states are abandoning this once politically correct movement in droves. It simply hasn’t worked. In fact, it has weakened an American education system still lagging many of the world’s industrialized nations in academic subjects. Arkansas lags too. Just last year Education Week, in its Quality Counts 99 Report, reported Arkansas to be “short on results” after 20 years of aggressive reform. The report went on to say, “The poor showings fly in the face of reform efforts in Arkansas dating back to the 1980’s. Under then Governor Clinton, the state poured new money into its schools…”

The lessons of failure are hard-learned in Arkansas. In the meantime, the new movement to restore America’s schools is really just an old familiar one. It simply resurrects the basics—academic rigor and old-style teaching techniques including phonics, rote and memorization, and—of all things—getting the answer right in math! The results are astonishing, especially in classrooms characterized by a preponderance of low-income and minority students.

The latest evidence that basics are back appeared in an April 24th issue of U.S. News and World Report which declared, “After years of jargon-filled battle between traditionalists and progressives over fuzzy math and whole language, the basics are back.” The article cited a recent decision by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to revise its 1989 teaching guidelines (tolerant of soft answers) to once again stress core skills.

The U.S. News report also noted that a new federal research panel just endorsed phonics to teach reading. Brookings Institution scholar Tom Loveless backs these developments saying, “If you ever want to get beyond basics and attain more sophisticated levels of knowledge, the basics are non-negotiable.”

Little Rock’s pitiful scores stand as more evidence of the failure of the progressive influence. But it is unlikely Little Rock will change
quickly and join the rest of the nation in a long-overdue renaissance of tried and proven teaching concepts. The gushy teaching methodologies pushed by the framers of LRSD’s desegregation plan seem solidly entrenched, and school officials seem not only inclined to adhere to them, but defend them at times with an almost rabid devotion.

Moreover, bold departures from the status quo are difficult to accomplish, if not impossible, given that a legally binding desegregation plan is in place and overseen by a court. And of course the various parties who agreed to the plan watch every development with a keen eye. Thus prolonged litigation and court oversight (and the threat of it) may prove to be the ultimate deterrent to innovation and change. No one wants to set off the next round of legal challenges by rocking the boat too much, especially a superintendent looking at the average longevity of his predecessors.

How LRSD has performed under the desegregation plan

In the nine years since the plan’s adoption and its various revisions, public revenues available to LRSD over that period rose by almost 40%, from slightly more than $100 million in 1991 to $167 million in 1999. During the same period student academic performance, as measured by approved standardized tests, consistently fell. As graphs 1-3 show, the downward trend is reflected in grades 5, (down 19.7%) 7 (down 8.5%), and 10 (down 18.3%). These are the three grade levels District officials say they will now use in reporting performance results (indicative of trends for all grades) to the public.

In the graphs (1-4), the performance line represents a single trend (percentage increase or decrease) for combined core academic courses. The subjects comprise the “basic battery”, a reference to measuring only academic achievement. The measure does not include other non-academic factors that school districts sometimes lump in with academic outputs (a practice that can skew results and mislead the public).

The test LRSD uses is the Stanford Achievement Test. This is also the official test used by Little Rock’s Office of Desegregation Monitoring (ODM) to determine the gap between black and white test scores. It was also cited by the University of Arkansas Little Rock (UALR) in its landmark 1996 study of Little Rock schools entitled Plain Talk.

To measure and compare performance ODM uses scale scores, test results scaled for consistent interpretation across the years and through various versions of tests. UALR also made use of scale scores in Plain Talk. Because the precedent for using this method of measurement is commonly accepted, scale scores were used in this paper as well to assess performance for the entire LRSD student population combined, not just the black or white populations.

...it is logical to expect that over the nine years of rising budgets and expenditures at LRSD some student scores somewhere would have shown an upward trend line paralleling the ever-increasing dollars. Somewhere, the gap would have begun to narrow rather than widen. It may not have closed quickly; it may even have remained flat. But few would have expected an across-the-board sustained decline.

These are the kinds of disturbing trends that inevitably make voters begin to wonder. Is more money the answer or is it simply time to try something different with the money currently available?
The accompanying chart (Chart 1), augments the information in the graphs. It illustrates the LRSD performance trends from 1991-1999, again for grades 5, 7, and 10, but broken out for four key subject areas: math, language arts, reading and science. The chart shows that student performance declined in every academic category reported over the last nine years. The three largest performance decreases came in Grade 10 Language Arts (-24.7%), Grade 5 Science (-23.2%), and Grade 7 Language Arts (-20.7%).

It was also during this period that LRSD per pupil costs continued rising (to more than $6000 compared with a state average of $4434) all while student enrollment steadily declined. From 1989-1999 it dropped from 26,543 to 25,006.

For some Little Rock voters these trends clearly refute the commonly advanced idea that more money is all it takes to improve academic performance. If that were the case, it is logical to expect that over the nine years of rising budgets and expenditures at LRSD, some student scores somewhere would have shown an upward trend line paralleling the ever-increasing dollars. Somewhere, the gap would have begun to narrow rather than widen. It may not have closed quickly; it may even have remained flat. But few would have expected an across-the-board sustained downward trend.

These are the kinds of disturbing trends that inevitably make voters begin to wonder. Is more money the answer or is it simply time to try something different with the money currently available? It’s an obvious and important question for taxpayers who invest in public education with the expectation that their dollars should lead to a constantly improving system rather than the opposite.

The result of investing more money to sustain declining academics is illustrated in Graph 4. This graph projects, to the year 2003, the percentage increases and decreases for one of the LRSD report groups, 10th graders, based on the current yearly averages over the nine year period of the current desegregation plan.

Graph 4 shows the money versus performance gap growing wider. The 1999 revenue had risen by 38.8% over the nine years of the current desegregation plan. At its current rate of growth it would increase by 48.2% over a 13 year period (from 1991 to 2003). Growing at the same rate as its nine-year trend, LRSD 10th grade performance for the same 13 year period would decline another 5.4% to a total decline for the period of 23.7%.

In the face of more and higher taxes, two critical questions should consume voters. Will this projection become a reality as the...
patterns of the last nine years strongly suggest? And what assurances can the LRSD offer to convince taxpayers it will not?

**The treatment of Little Rock taxpayers**

Little Rock’s property owning taxpayers, many of them still angry over an unresolved illegal and unconstitutional 1994 property reappraisal, have every right to be concerned about the millage increase and the serious implications in these trends. They have a right to ask tough questions, receive honest answers, and be provided full disclosure information on data such as that presented in this paper.

In fact, the input/output trends shared here should have been prepared by the LRSD itself and brought to the public’s attention. The administrators hired and paid by citizens to manage public schools owe the public, and parents in particular, the benefit of complete honesty in an open and ongoing public dialogue about results.

Moreover this kind of report—input versus output—should be built into the accountability system of every district and the state as a whole. It should be mandated by law, printed and distributed to parents and business leaders, posted on the internet, and required to be published in newspapers. Politicians who have a conscience should demand this. And until it happens, no tax should ever be approved.

Only by examining long-term trends both on resources and performance can those who fund schools—and those who entrust their children to them—truly know whether or not they are excelling or failing.

Consider the plight of Little Rock taxpayers as they provided their hard earned dollars in good faith for good schools. No one with the schools ever bothered to show them the resulting years of academic non-performance as revenues increased. And, as if that were not enough, local taxing property owners endured a deceitful county government’s ploy to illegally collect revenue through a bogus reappraisal now ruled unconstitutional. As of yet there has been no payback of the illegally collected revenues.

School districts that hide academic failure and counties that deceive are problems far beyond those in our children’s classrooms. Ironically, the leaders of these institutions, adding insult to injury, are many of the same people who come forward now as the strongest proponents of the proposed millage increase. And even worse...among them are some of the same prominent people who crafted many of the reforms of the last decade that led to abysmal academic failure in the LRSD academic program.

How much more civic abuse can the people of Little Rock take?
How much more civic abuse can the people of Little Rock take?

The impact of “equity funding”

Lawsuits emanating from desegregation issues are not the only lawsuits the LRSD has endured. Other Arkansas school districts have also sued the LRSD claiming it is unfair for some districts to have more money than others simply because they are property rich and thus bring in more property tax dollars than “property poor districts”. The result was a court order to the state legislature to come up with a more equitable funding formula.

Thus the “equity funding” movement in Arkansas schools resulted in a “Robin Hood” plan wherein property tax dollars from wealthier districts are taken by the state and given to poorer districts. The idea underlying this move is that money makes a difference in learning and thus poor districts will do better academically.

It hasn’t worked that way and it’s likely it never will. If the sought-after effect of “Robin Hood” is to pull poor districts up academically, the risk is that it may simply pull down those districts that lose dollars under the plan. Little Rock leaders may claim that they are a good example.

The greater reality, however, may be that the whole equity funding idea is nothing more than school districts and superintendents squabbling over chunks of money. And the amount of money that changes hands will have little or no impact on reversing poor academic performance common to most Arkansas schools. Again, substantial improvement on the academic front will hinge not on the dollars districts pick up or lose, but on changing their entire approach to teaching/learning.

The fiscal impact of equity funding begins to show in 1998. That year, state equalization dollars totaled $1.2 billion whereas local dollars collected for all districts totaled $642 million. That’s approximately two (2) state dollars for every one (1) local dollar. By contrast LRSD received $42 million in state dollars under the equity plan while generating $79 million in local taxes. That’s almost two (2) dollars in local revenue LRSD comes up with for every one (1) dollar from the state.

Would there be a hue and cry for higher taxes if the LRSD could keep all of its local dollars rather than having some of them sent off to other districts? Very likely. The notion among educators and politicians endures that the only path to reform and improvement is ever-increasing amounts of money, in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

What does all of this mean to Little Rock’s voters? In a best case scenario, it means some of Little Rock dollars now funding academic decline here are redistributed to fund academic decline...in 1998...state equalization dollars totaled $1.2 billion whereas local dollars collected for all districts totaled $642 million. That’s approximately two (2) state dollars for every one (1) local dollar. By contrast LRSD received $42 million in state dollars under the equity plan while generating $79 million in local taxes. That’s almost two (2) dollars in local revenue LRSD comes up with for every one (1) dollar from the state. ...it also means that if the LRSD could keep those dollars and use them for needed renovations, new construction and other needs, the demand for new tax dollars could be less pressing in Little Rock.
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It also raises a question about more lawsuits over equity funding. At what point—as Little Rock continues raising its revenues—will it in invite still more costly and destructive lawsuits from low-tax districts feeling cheated of their share of the tax dollar pie.

**A word about the LRSD’s fiscal performance and excerpts from the District’s own performance study**

Fiscal management is as important as academics in evaluating any school district’s performance. Because the issue is so complex at LRSD, this report will only make a few observations and refer the reader desiring more in-depth information to other sources.

To bolster the case for a tax increase, *The Little Rock Alliance for Our Public Schools* and LRSD, retained *MGT of America*, a Florida-based consulting firm. Its charge was to conduct a comprehensive review of the district.

It’s likely that few Little Rock citizens have seen or reviewed the MGT study commissioned by District leaders. It may be because it offers up nine comprehensive sections covering a daunting 431 pages. But it may also be because the study, meant to provide the documentation and cover for a new tax increase, is also an indictment of the LRSD’s fiscal performance in many ways.

A few excerpts:

- **In general many of the areas reviewed did not have formal procedure manuals, formal performance standards, and defined key indicators for monitoring [fiscal] activities.**

- **In$ite [an accounting/cost distribution reporting system] should be considered by the district...to more accurately reflect how many district-wide costs, as well as other direct and indirect costs, should be spread as a shared cost for all operational units.**

- **Realign available dollars within existing revenue sources to match expenditure obligations [the report cited the District for not making realistic projections]. The LRSD cannot afford to continue to incur expenditures in excess of available revenue. The school district must establish the necessary policy and practice revisions to require a realistic unrestricted fund balance and safeguard its continuity.**

- **Legal fees are a consistent concern and, given the LRSD experiences of frequently being in court, this expenditure should**
regularly be reviewed for the possibility of either bidding legal services or performing a cost-benefit analysis as to whether a staff attorney would be more cost efficient.

- Although staff development is reflected as less than a $400,000 expense, it was difficult to analyze what the Little Rock School District is actually spending, since it is not tracked by a separate object or accounting code, and appears to be the responsibility of each major area of the school district.

- ... the supplemental pay schedule identifies almost 440 employees receiving stipends for educational activities. The actual practice, based on the on-site review, found there is very little control on the number of stipends one person can receive. The practice should be reviewed and capped at no more than five.

- Overtime is the area of most significant increase at a 314 percent increase [from 1993 to 1998]. Internal control on the use of overtime does not appear to be consistent, given the use of overtime is up to each operational unit with little written clarification or specific procedures to follow for accountability.

- Stipends for the LRSD average $1.7 million and represent another area of expenditure control opportunity for the district. From 1995 to 1998, the district increased expenses in this category by almost $500,000.

- The concept of automatic step increases is no longer as popular, given today’s environment of customer-based decision making with accountability for results; high expectations tied to performance-based pay, and other contemporary compensation strategies. Step increases and the corresponding monetary increase need to be part of the ongoing negotiations and considered part of any final settlement as an increase in negotiated compensation.

- Over 200 LRSD employees receive a car allowance in amounts ranging from a low of $185 a year to a high of $1,800. The total cost to the district is approximately $120,000 per year. The initial purpose of the allowance was to prevent multiple travel reimbursement requests. This is an unusual practice for such a large number of employees in relation to other school districts. It is recommended that LRSD curtail this practice, as the LRSD is examining ways to maximize resources and reduce costs.

- Due to the extensive nature of mandatory desegregation reporting, the department has not developed key benchmark indicators that should be utilized for internal monitoring of activities. Examples for key activity indicators would include...
items such as number of checks processed, the number of direct deposit transactions, the number of transactions processed through Finance Services, the number of journal entries processed, the number of telephone calls received, and numerous other activities that should be monitored for employee performance as well as workload analysis and activity trends.

All in all, the MGT report makes 50 major recommendations in the financial section (the longest section at 116 pages) and many more sub recommendations. Historically, the LRSD has failed to act on many of the same recommendations made earlier in its history. Little Rock Voters should require a formal LRSD school Board adoption of virtually every MGT recommendation, and especially the adoption of InSite for fiscal control and reporting, before approving any further tax increases.

Readers seeking more information should request copies of the full MGT report. Or alternatively they may request a condensed version of the 116 page fiscal section from the Arkansas Policy Foundation.

Conclusion

The Arkansas Policy Foundation embraces a simple notion of education: Schools are formed by communities so that children will learn academic subjects and learn them exceptionally well (to the fullest potential of each student). Inherent in this fundamental idea, is also the notion that as schools evolve the process of teaching/learning they get better at it (or at least they should) and thus students learn not only better over time, but more.

Underlying this simple concept of effective schooling is another equally important belief: The color of one’s skin is not nor ever should be considered a factor in one’s ability to learn, excel, and succeed. All children can learn; and differentiating ability—or performance—based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic factors is a frequently used excuse for writing off minorities while veiling the failures of the education system.

By these standards, the Little Rock School District is a failure. The plans and recommendations outlined in the 700 pages of its current desegregation plan, adopted 10 years ago in 1990, have not come close to fulfilling the hopeful promise of academic improvement reflected in them. Countless other reports and studies, ever-changing administrations, lawsuits and litigation, the infusion of more money, and the failed gobbledegook of the liberal education progressives have done little to make our schools work on the one front that counts: academic achievement. All of this energy, time, and money…and still no improvement.

All in all, the MGT report makes 50 major financial recommendations and many more sub recommendations. Historically, the LRSD has failed to act on many of the same recommendations made earlier in its history. Little Rock Voters should require a formal LRSD school Board adoption of virtually every MGT recommendation, and especially the adoption of In$ite for fiscal control and reporting, before approving any further tax increases.

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All of this energy, time, and money…and still no improvement.
For the people of Little Rock who fund the schools one thing is certain. Unless they can be clearly convinced that substantive reform is in motion at the LRSD and honestly measured results are the focus, tax proposals will remain a hard sell.
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**CHART 1**