



**DAVID L. ETHREDGE
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14TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

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Superintendent Allyson Dewey
2465 Rodeo Dr.
Mountain Home, Ar. 72653

Dear Superintendent Dewey,

In 2023-2024, the Baxter County Sheriff's Office initiated an investigation of former Mountain Home School District Superintendent Jake Long based upon information regarding potential violation(s) of the provisions of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Law.

The Baxter County Sheriff's Office has completed this investigation and sent the investigative file to my office for review. From the investigation, it is clear that Superintendent Jake Long engaged in a course of conduct that was designed to circumvent and frustrate the explicit intent of the ARFOIA. Superintendent Long created the non-public text communication to avoid open public meetings on matters that were of great public interest. While initiated by Long, the actions also involved the then existing school board.

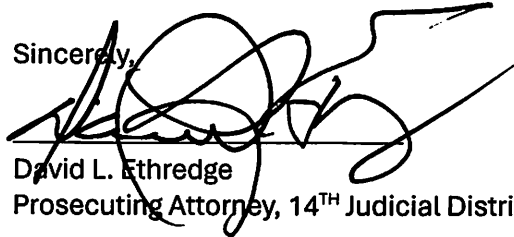
The present law does not allow for prosecution of Long's actions. The criminal provisions of the ARFOIA only apply to elected officials. Since District Superintendents are employees hired by the district, Long's actions are not in violation of any criminal provision of the ARFOIA. It is unfortunate that there is not a course of action to penalize this individual as his actions directly caused an impairment in the relationship of the school and the school board.

This letter shall serve as an Official Warning that all meetings of the Mountain Home School Board should be fully open to the public. All meetings should occur after proper notice and not involve any electronic communication between individual school board members. Failure to comply with the provisions of the ARFOIA will result in further action for subsequent violations. It is abundantly clear that there is a need to promote and restore public confidence in the Mountain Home School Board and its critical mission for this community. It would be appropriate to provide a training session through the Mountain Home School District Attorney's Office for the present school board and relevant school personnel on all ARFOIA Law.

This office is appreciative of the work of the Baxter County Sheriff's Office in their review of this matter. Without the actions of Melissa Klinger, the Mountain Home Observer, KTLO and other concerned citizens, these violations would have remained hidden, and the community would have been denied their role as a vital participant in the operation of the Mountain Home Public Schools.

I appreciate the efforts that you have taken to address this problem and your desire to make the actions of the school open to the public. If you have questions, please do not hesitate in letting me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David L. Ethredge', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

David L. Ethredge
Prosecuting Attorney, 14TH Judicial District