

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
NORTHERN DIVISION

KENNETH W. ADAMS, et al.

PLAINTIFFS

V.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 3:67-CV-4156-KHJ-MTP

RANKIN COUNTY SCHOOL
DISTRICT, et al.

DEFENDANTS

NOTICE OF UNITARY STATUS HEARING

The Rankin County School District (the “District”) gives notice that the District has filed a Motion for Declaration of Unitary Status, which may affect you. The District is asking the Court to declare that the District has met the legal requirements to close this school desegregation case. The District seeks to terminate federal court oversight of student, faculty, and staff assignment, as well as extracurricular activities, and to declare that the District has satisfied the requirements for unitary status. The District seeks to dismiss the case and asks the Court to schedule a unitary status hearing at which members of the public may be heard by the Court prior to the Court’s decision as to whether or not it should grant the District’s Motion. The Private Plaintiffs in this case are represented by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (“LDF”). The Private Plaintiffs oppose the District’s Motion for Declaration of Unitary Status and will also make presentations to the Court at this hearing. The United States does not oppose the District’s Motion for Declaration of Unitary Status.

This school desegregation case commenced on August 1, 1967, when Private Plaintiffs Kenneth Adams, et al., then-minor black students, by their parents, initiated this lawsuit against the District, seeking the disestablishment of its *de jure* racially dual school system. On February 26, 1971, this Court allowed the United States Department of Justice to participate in the case as a litigating amicus curiae.

On April 6, 1970, this Court entered its Opinion and Order Providing for Unitary School System in which the Court set out a “Unitary School Plan” addressing the following areas: (1) desegregation of faculty and staff, (2) majority-to-minority transfer policy, (3) student transportation, (4) school construction and site selection, and (5) attendance outside system of residence, and (6) pupil assignment. The Court entered additional Consent Orders on November 29, 1973, August 21, 1978, and November 1, 2012.

On October 30, 2019, this Court entered its Order Granting Unopposed Motion for Declaration of Partial Unitary Status, declaring that the District had achieved unitary status in the areas of student transportation and facilities, withdrawing further Court supervision in those areas, and dismissing all claims related to those areas. This Court maintained its jurisdiction over extracurricular activities, faculty and staff assignment, and student assignment.

On August 2, 2024, the District filed a Motion for Declaration of Unitary Status in the areas of extracurricular activities, faculty and staff assignment, and student assignment, asking the Court to end federal oversight of the District. On

May 5, 2025, the Private Plaintiffs opposed the District's Motion and asked the Court to continue federal court oversight of the District's operations.

The District's complete Motion and accompanying memorandum and the Private Plaintiffs' complete response are available for inspection with the United States District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, in Jackson, Mississippi. In addition, the District's Motion and memorandum are available at the Office of Superintendent, 1220 Apple Park Place, Brandon, Mississippi 39042. The District's documents are also available on the District's website at: <https://www.rcsd.ms/>. The Private Plaintiffs' documents are available on the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund's website at: <https://www.naacpldf.org/>.

The Honorable Kristi H. Johnson, United States District Judge, has scheduled a unitary status hearing starting on **September 16, 2025**, at **9:30 a.m.**, in Courtroom 4B at the Thad Cochran United States Courthouse, 501 E. Court Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. The hearing is open to the public, and interested persons may submit written objections or comments and may appear and address the Court. Only persons who have submitted written objections or comments postmarked by September 2, 2025, may speak at the hearing. If you would like to address the Court at the hearing, you must first send your objections or comments in writing to the Court at 501 E. Court Street, Suite 4.550, Jackson, Mississippi 39201. Your correspondence must be postmarked on or before September 2, 2025. You may obtain copies of an objection or comment form at any school in the District;

at the Office of the District's Superintendent, 1220 Apple Park Place, Brandon, Mississippi 39042; or on the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund's website at: <https://www.naacpldf.org/>.

Written objections or comments must be submitted to the Court at 501 E. Court Street, Suite 4.550, Jackson, Mississippi 39201 and must be postmarked on or before September 2, 2025. You may submit objections or comments to the Court even if you do not wish to appear in person at the unitary status hearing. All written objections or comments will be filed on the Court's Electronic Case Filing (ECF) system, making them available to the public and the media.

If you have questions, you may contact counsel for the District: John Hooks at 601-292-0708; counsel for the United States: Max Meyers at 601-973-2172; or counsel for the Private Plaintiffs, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund: Jennifer Holmes at 347-573-0197 or jholmes@naacpldf.org.