



# Arkansas Department of Education

*Division of Elementary and Secondary Education*

Johnny Key, Secretary

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## **10 Schools, 5 Districts Selected for Sixth Professional Learning Communities at Work® Cohort**

**LITTLE ROCK** — The Arkansas Department of Education’s Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with Solution Tree, a national professional development provider, has selected the sixth cohort of schools for their ongoing program to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities at Work® process across Arkansas.

In addition to the 51 schools and 8 districts chosen since the program began in 2017, 10 schools and 5 districts have been selected to serve as working models for the professional learning community project for the 2022-2023 school year. As part of this project, these schools will receive up to 50 days of training, coaching, and support to build and sustain a strong culture of collaboration that will enhance student learning.

Schools were selected through a rigorous application and evaluation process. A panel of education professionals reviewed applications, and the DESE selected the following schools to receive support from Solution Tree:

- Berryville School District
- Cabot Freshman Academy, Cabot School District
- Carlisle School District
- Chicot Elementary School, Little Rock School District
- Fairview Elementary School, Texarkana School District
- Greenwood High School and Freshman Center, Greenwood School District
- Hamburg Middle School, Hamburg School District
- Hot Springs World Class High School, Hot Springs School District
- Lakeside Junior High School, Springdale School District
- Marion Visual and Performing Arts Magnet, Marion School District
- Marked Tree School District
- Mountainburg Public Schools
- Oakland Heights Elementary School, Russellville School District
- Sonora Middle School, Springdale School District
- Smackover-Norphlet School District

“One of the education highlights in Arkansas the last several years has been the implementation of the PLC program,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. “Not only have we seen an increase in student learning, but teacher collaboration has improved at schools and districts that have implemented the PLC process. This naturally results in an improved culture that promotes learning. Congratulations to this year’s new additions to the program. The rewards of the hard work ahead will greatly benefit all involved.”

“I am excited and pleased to welcome the latest schools and districts to Arkansas’ PLC program,” ADE Secretary Johnny Key said. “I congratulate them for their commitment to education and thank these educators for embracing this critical work. I am confident that their students will benefit from the collaboration and deep learning this process fosters.”

To evaluate the success, researchers at Education Northwest reviewed Arkansas’ program and found four key findings after three years of implementation.

1. Students in Cohort One showed improved academic achievement and higher levels of engagement.
2. All PLC at Work Cohort One schools reported positive changes in instructional practices, which led to improved learning opportunities for students.
3. Educators in PLC at Work Cohort One schools improved their culture of collaboration and collective responsibility for ensuring all students learn at high levels.
4. All PLC at Work Cohort One schools received significant, high-quality support from school leaders and Solution Tree associates and were able to fully implement the program.

These findings are relevant for schools considering or actively using PLCs to improve collaboration, teaching, and learning.

“Education Northwest’s research confirms there is no better way to improve student education,” Solution Tree President Ed Ackerman said. “PLC at Work in Arkansas represents a significant investment for Arkansas to fulfill the state’s mission of leading the nation in student-focused education. We welcome the sixth cohort to the project and look forward to working with DESE to help educators in Arkansas better support high levels of student learning.”

Selected schools are matched with a certified PLC at Work associate from Solution Tree and receive intensive job-embedded training, observation, and coaching. Schools create action plans that focus on increasing student achievement through the aligned curriculum, formative assessments, and proven instructional strategies. During the second year, schools deepen their understanding and focus on implementing a multi-tiered system of supports, followed by strengthening their systems and sustaining the process in year three.

For more information, please visit the DESE website at <https://bit.ly/3KdXJv6>, view the 2021 documentary “A Child’s Best Hope: The Arkansas PLC Story” on the Solution Tree website at <https://bit.ly/3vJFDvQ>, and follow the project on social media using #PLC4AR.

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