ARKANSAS
ESEA Flexibility
Request

July 27, 2015

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

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COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester: Arkansas Department of Education	Requester's Mailing Address: Four Capitol Mall Little Rock, AR 72201
State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request Name: M. Annette Barnes Position and Office: Assistant Commissioner, Division of Public School Accountability Contact's Mailing Address: Four Capitol Mall, Room 205-B Little Rock, AR 72201 Telephone: 501 682-5891 Fax: 501 682-7966 Email address: annette.m.barnes@arkansas.gov	
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Mr. Johnny Key	Telephone: 501 682-4203
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X _Johnny Key_	Date: 7/27/2015
The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.	

WAIVERS

By submitting this updated ESEA flexibility request, the SEA renews its request for flexibility through waivers of the nine ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements, as well as any optional waivers the SEA has chosen to request under ESEA flexibility, by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested.

☒ 1. The requirements in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(E)-(H) that prescribe how an SEA must establish annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for determining adequate yearly progress (AYP) to ensure that all students meet or exceed the State's proficient level of academic achievement on the State's assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics no later than the end of the 2013–2014 school year. The SEA requests this waiver to develop new ambitious but achievable AMOs in reading/language arts and mathematics in order to provide meaningful goals that are used to guide support and improvement efforts for the State, LEAs, schools, and student subgroups.

☒ 2. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(b) for an LEA to identify for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring, as appropriate, a Title I school that fails, for two consecutive years or more, to make AYP, and for a school so identified and its LEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA and its Title I schools need not comply with these requirements.

☒ 3. The requirements in ESEA section 1116(c) for an SEA to identify for improvement or corrective action, as appropriate, an LEA that, for two consecutive years or more, fails to make AYP, and for an LEA so identified and its SEA to take certain improvement actions. The SEA requests this waiver so that it need not comply with these requirements with respect to its LEAs.

☒ 4. The requirements in ESEA sections 6213(b) and 6224(e) that limit participation in, and use of funds under the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) and Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS) programs based on whether an LEA has made AYP and is complying with the requirements in ESEA section 1116. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA that receives SRSA or RLIS funds may use those funds for any authorized purpose regardless of whether the LEA makes AYP.

☒ 5. The requirement in ESEA section 1114(a)(1) that a school have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more in order to operate a school-wide program. The SEA requests this waiver so that an LEA may implement interventions consistent with the turnaround principles or interventions that are based on the needs of the students in the school and designed to enhance the entire educational program in a school in any of its priority and focus schools that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*, as appropriate, even if those schools do not have a poverty percentage of 40 percent or more.

☒ 6. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its

LEAs in order to serve any of the State's priority and focus school that meet the definitions of "priority schools" and "focus schools," respectively, set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 7. The provision in ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) that authorizes an SEA to reserve Title I, Part A funds to reward a Title I school that (1) significantly closed the achievement gap between subgroups in the school; or (2) has exceeded AYP for two or more consecutive years. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may use funds reserved under ESEA section 1117(c)(2)(A) for any of the State's reward schools that meet the definition of "reward schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

☒ 8. The requirements in ESEA section 2141(a), (b), and (c) for an LEA and SEA to comply with certain requirements for improvement plans regarding highly qualified teachers. The SEA requests this waiver to allow the SEA and its LEAs to focus on developing and implementing more meaningful evaluation and support systems.

☒ 9. The limitations in ESEA section 6123 that limit the amount of funds an SEA or LEA may transfer from certain ESEA programs to other ESEA programs. The SEA requests this waiver so that it and its LEAs may transfer up to 100 percent of the funds it receives under the authorized programs among those programs and into Title I, Part A.

Optional Flexibilities:

If an SEA chooses to request waivers of any of the following requirements, it should check the corresponding box(es) below:

☐ 10. The requirements in ESEA sections 4201(b)(1)(A) and 4204(b)(2)(A) that restrict the activities provided by a community learning center under the Twenty-First Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program to activities provided only during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session (*i.e.*, before and after school or during summer recess). The SEA requests this waiver so that 21st CCLC funds may be used to support expanded learning time during the school day in addition to activities during non-school hours or periods when school is not in session.

☒ 11. The requirements in ESEA sections 1116(a)(1)(A)-(B) and 1116(c)(1)(A) that require LEAs and SEAs to make determinations of adequate yearly progress (AYP) for schools and LEAs, respectively. The SEA requests this waiver because continuing to determine whether an LEA and its schools make AYP is inconsistent with the SEA's State-developed differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system included in its ESEA flexibility request. The SEA and its LEAs must report on their report cards performance against the AMOs for all subgroups identified in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v), and use performance against the AMOs to support continuous improvement in Title I schools.

☒ 12. The requirements in ESEA section 1113(a)(3)-(4) and (c)(1) that require an LEA to serve eligible schools under Title I in rank order of poverty and to allocate Title I, Part A funds based on that rank ordering. The SEA requests this waiver in order to permit its LEAs to serve a Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate below 60 percent that the SEA has identified as a priority

school even if that school does not otherwise rank sufficiently high to be served under ESEA section 1113.

☐ 13. The requirement in ESEA section 1003(a) for an SEA to distribute funds reserved under that section only to LEAs with schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. The SEA requests this waiver in addition to waiver #6 so that, when it has remaining section 1003(a) funds after ensuring that all priority and focus schools have sufficient funds to carry out interventions, it may allocate section 1003(a) funds to its LEAs to provide interventions and supports for low-achieving students in other Title I schools when one or more subgroups miss either AMOs or graduation rate targets or both over a number of years.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #13, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request that it has a process to ensure, on an annual basis, that all of its priority and focus schools will have sufficient funding to implement their required interventions prior to distributing ESEA section 1003(a) funds to other Title I schools.

> Click here to enter page numbers where edits have been made and where new attachments have been added. Do not insert new text here – insert new text in redline into the revised request.

☒ 14. The requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(1)(B) and 1111(b)(3)(C)(i) that, respectively, require the SEA to apply the same academic content and academic achievement standards to all public schools and public school children in the State and to administer the same academic assessments to measure the achievement of all students. The SEA requests this waiver so that it is not required to double test a student who is not yet enrolled in high school but who takes advanced, high school level, mathematics coursework. The SEA would assess such a student with the corresponding advanced, high school level assessment in place of the mathematics assessment the SEA would otherwise administer to the student for the grade in which the student is enrolled. For Federal accountability purposes, the SEA will use the results of the advanced, high school level, mathematics assessment in the year in which the assessment is administered and will administer one or more additional advanced, high school level, mathematics assessments to such students in high school, consistent with the State's mathematics content standards, and use the results in high school accountability determinations.

If the SEA is requesting waiver #14, the SEA must demonstrate in its renewal request how it will ensure that every student in the State has the opportunity to be prepared for and take courses at an advanced level prior to high school.

ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the SEA assures that:

☒ 1. It requests waivers of the above-referenced requirements based on its agreement to meet Principles 1 through 4 of ESEA flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It has adopted English language proficiency (ELP) standards that correspond to the State's college- and career-ready standards, consistent with the requirement in ESEA section 3113(b)(2), and that reflect the academic language skills necessary to access and meet the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will administer no later than the 2014–2015 school year alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2) and are aligned with the State's college- and career-ready standards. (Principle 1)

☒ 4. It will develop and administer ELP assessments aligned with the State's ELP standards, consistent with the requirements in ESEA sections 1111(b)(7), 3113(b)(2), and 3122(a)(3)(A)(ii) no later than the 2015–2016 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 5. It will report annually to the public on college-going and college credit-accumulation rates for all students and subgroups of students in each LEA and each public high school in the State. (Principle 1)

☒ 6. If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and uses achievement on those assessments to identify priority and focus schools, it has technical documentation, which can be made available to the Department upon request, demonstrating that the assessments are administered statewide; include all students, including by providing appropriate accommodations for English Learners and students with disabilities, as well as alternate assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards or alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.6(a)(2); and are valid and reliable for use in the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system. (Principle 2)

☒ 7. It will annually make public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools prior to the start of the school year as well as publicly recognize its reward schools, and will update its lists of priority and focus schools at least every three years. (Principle 2)

If the SEA is not submitting with its renewal request its updated list of priority and focus schools, based on the most recent available data, for implementation beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, it must also assure that:

☒ 8. It will provide to the Department, no later than January 31, 2016, an updated list of priority

and focus schools, identified based on school year 2014–2015 data, for implementation beginning in the 2016–2017 school year.

☒ 9. It will evaluate and, based on that evaluation, revise its own administrative requirements to reduce duplication and unnecessary burden on LEAs and schools. (Principle 4)

☒ 10. It has consulted with its Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in its ESEA flexibility request.

☒ 11. Prior to submitting this request, it provided all LEAs with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment on the request and has attached a copy of that notice (Attachment 1) as well as copies of any comments it received from LEAs. (Attachment 2)

☒ 12. Prior to submitting this request, it provided notice and information regarding the request to the public in the manner in which the SEA customarily provides such notice and information to the public (*e.g.*, by publishing a notice in the newspaper; by posting information on its website) and has attached a copy of, or link to, that notice. (Attachment 2)

☒ 13. It will provide to the Department, in a timely manner, all required reports, data, and evidence regarding its progress in implementing the plans contained throughout its ESEA flexibility request, and will ensure that all such reports, data, and evidence are accurate, reliable, and complete or, if it is aware of issues related to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of its reports, data, or evidence, it will disclose those issues.

☒ 14. It will report annually on its State report card and will ensure that its LEAs annually report on their local report cards, for the "all students" group, each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II), and for any combined subgroup (as applicable): information on student achievement at each proficiency level; data comparing actual achievement levels to the State's annual measurable objectives; the percentage of students not tested; performance on the other academic indicator for elementary and middle schools; and graduation rates for high schools. In addition, it will annually report, and will ensure that its LEAs annually report, all other information and data required by ESEA section 1111(h)(1)(C) and 1111(h)(2)(B), respectively. It will ensure that all reporting is consistent with *State and Local Report Cards Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as Amended Non-Regulatory Guidance* (February 8, 2013).

Principle 3 Assurances

Each SEA must select the appropriate option and, in doing so, assures that:

Option A	Option B	Option C
☐ 15.a. The SEA is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on State assessments into educator ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals.	If an SEA that is administering new State assessments during the 2014–2015 school year is requesting one additional year to incorporate student growth based on these assessments, it will: ☐ 15.b.i. Continue to ensure that its LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation systems using multiple measures, and that the SEA or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals; and ☐ 15.b.ii. Ensure that each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014–2015 school year.	If the SEA is requesting modifications to its teacher and principal evaluation and support system guidelines or implementation timeline other than those described in Option B, which require additional flexibility from the guidance in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility* as well as the documents related to the additional flexibility offered by the Assistant Secretary in a letter dated August 2, 2013, it will: ☒ 15.c. Provide a narrative response in its redlined ESEA flexibility request as described in Section II of the ESEA flexibility renewal guidance.

CONSULTATION

An SEA must meaningfully engage and solicit input from diverse stakeholders and communities in the development of its request. To demonstrate that an SEA has done so, the SEA must provide an assurance that it has consulted with the State's Committee of Practitioners regarding the information set forth in the request and provide the following:

1. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from teachers and their representatives.
2. A description of how the SEA meaningfully engaged and solicited input on its request from other diverse communities, such as students, parents, community-based organizations, civil rights organizations, organizations representing students with disabilities and English Learners, business organizations, and Indian tribes.

Consultation

Since the announcement of the opportunity to seek ESEA Flexibility, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has been busy gathering thoughts from teachers, school leaders, parents and the general public on measuring school and teacher effectiveness, rewarding school success and helping schools improve.

ADE took an aggressive approach to engage and obtain input from educators including teachers and their representatives, parents and the general public to inform the development of this application. The Department hosted five rounds (two meetings each day) of public open forums across the state to solicit feedback from educators and interested community members from November-December, 2011. These face-to-face meetings afforded opportunities to share information about proposed accountability redesign concepts and engage in meaningful dialogue with constituents.

Teachers and administrators participating in these meetings provided valuable input that was incorporated into the state's ESEA's flexibility request. They were primarily concerned about the training required to support teachers and administrators in the new Teacher Evaluation and Support System. Attendance at the ten meetings included the following:

98 students
22 parents
102 teachers
300 administrators
83 community members

At each meeting, ADE staff gave an overview of the Principles contained within the waiver request—college and career ready expectations for all students; state-developed systems for differentiated recognition, accountability and support; and support for effective instruction and leadership, including new legislation for teacher evaluation and support systems. Links to the ESEA Flexibility documents were shared at each meeting.

Notice of the meetings was provided in a commissioner's memo and posted on the ADE website (Attachment 1). In addition, a statewide press release notified media outlets of the dates, times and locations of the public forums (Attachment 2). Professional organizations—Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), Arkansas School Boards Associations (ASBA) and the Arkansas Education Association (AEA)—disseminated the notice among their members. Input was solicited from Native American leaders, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, special education community action groups, as well as schools and districts with high student populations of English Learners (ELs).

The ADE provided a public comment email address (ade.eseacomments@arkansas.gov) to seek ongoing input from all teachers, school administrators, parents and community members. In addition, all stakeholders had opportunity to submit comments through a statewide survey posted on the ADE website http://adesharepoint2.arkansas.gov/memos/Lists/Approved%20Memos/DispForm2.aspx?ID=515&Source=http%3A%2F%2Fadesharepoint2%2Earkansas%2Egov%2Fmemos%2Fdefault%2Easpx. The survey yielded more than 200 respondents.

Arkansas also engaged stakeholders through a comprehensive approach that included a number of strategies to seek input and shape the creation of a next generation accountability system that fosters college and career readiness for all students. These included the core-working group, the stakeholder committee representing critical groups—civil rights, parents, business, educators and partner educational agencies—and the state's Committee of Practitioners. Students were also given an opportunity to weigh in during meetings at local high schools. A listing of the meetings and those in attendance is provided in Attachment 2.

The ADE's stakeholder engagement went beyond efforts mentioned above to include meetings with focus groups—Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators, an advisory group of Arkansas school superintendents, the state's commission for closing the achievement gap (Attachment 23), civil rights groups and adult English language learners (Attachment 24). Additional information was presented at statewide meetings—Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, Arkansas School Boards Association and Arkansas Education Association (Attachment 20). These presentations were disseminated with each professional organization's statewide membership. The public was afforded an opportunity for feedback through a statewide survey and a designated email address for the ESEA flexibility request.

The Commissioner's Superintendent Advisory Council was convened to share and discuss the draft plan. The conversation generated concerns about how to ensure students with disabilities (SWD) and ELs master the Common Core State Standards. ADE affirmed its commitment to working with key entities and organizations to ensure educators have the skills necessary to support learner-centered instruction for college and career readiness.

In addition, the State Board of Education conducted a weekend work session focused on the ESEA Flexibility application.

Some comments from stakeholders during our public meetings were:

"I appreciate the geographic locations of the hearings."

"I think a lot of these schools have languished…we can do a lot of things with consequences but until we set appropriate realistic goals for students and teachers to achieve…we are going to stay constantly frustrated by the results we get."   *Brenda Gullett, Former State Board Member*

And, one we have tried to adhere to as this application was written:

"Be thoughtful as you work on this Flexibility request, especially in the areas of (a) communication to school employees and the public and (b) smoothness of transitional implementation."

ADE will continue its stakeholder engagement subsequent to approval of its ESEA Flexibility request. Staff will tour the state to educate schools and members of the public on changes being made to the state's accountability system. ADE will also produce online tutorials and videos to explain aspects of the new system. This effort will be aimed at teachers, principals, parents and members of the public with the goal of ensuring the legitimacy of the state's plan.

Of great importance will be the ongoing collaboration between Arkansas's current Commissioner of Education Johnny Key and the State Board of Education to continue the momentum the state is experiencing with the implementation of the Common Core State Standards defining the path to readiness for college, careers and informed citizenship.

Arkansas has continued its work through stakeholder engagement. The additional components in this renewal request have been ongoing since the initial approval of Arkansas's request. Feedback from numerous forums with the Superintendent's Advisory Council, Education Cooperative Directors, Committee of Practitioners, ACSIP Pilot Advisory Committee members and other stakeholders has been thoughtfully integrated into this requested renewal. Additionally, during the development of its Equitable Access to Excellence Educators Plan the ADE partnered with the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at the University of Oklahoma and the Region VI Equity Assistance Center, the Intercultural Development and Research Association, and the South Central Collaborative for Equity (IDRA SCCE) to facilitate the Civil Rights Stakeholders Group meetings. Opening dialogue has occurred with Disability Rights Arkansas, Inc. and the ADE has been in consultation with SC3 to expand the work of engaging stakeholders to be more inclusive of civil rights organizations as well as those representing students with disabilities, English Learners, businesses, institutions of higher education and Indian tribes. The ADE will continue to receive input from these stakeholders as the transitions in assessment and accountability systems are taking shape under the guidance of the current leadership. (Attachment 19)
The flexibility requested in this application will help ensure improvement in this area.

EVALUATION

The Department encourages an SEA that receives approval to implement the flexibility to collaborate with the Department to evaluate at least one program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs implement under principle 1, 2, or 3. Upon receipt of approval of the flexibility, an interested SEA will need to nominate for evaluation a program, practice, or strategy the SEA or its LEAs will implement under principles 1, 2, or 3. The Department will work with the SEA to determine the feasibility and design of the evaluation and, if it is determined to be feasible and

appropriate, will fund and conduct the evaluation in partnership with the SEA, ensuring that the implementation of the chosen program, practice, or strategy is consistent with the evaluation design.

☒   Check here if you are interested in collaborating with the Department in this evaluation, if your request for the flexibility is approved.

OVERVIEW OF SEA'S REQUEST FOR THE ESEA FLEXIBILITY

Provide an overview (about 500 words) of the SEA's request for the flexibility that:

1. explains the SEA's comprehensive approach to implement the waivers and principles and describes the SEA's strategy to ensure this approach is coherent within and across the principles; and

2. describes how the implementation of the waivers and principles will enhance the SEA's and its LEAs' ability to increase the quality of instruction for students and improve student achievement.

Overview

The vision of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is to provide an innovative, comprehensive education system focused on outcomes that ensure every student in Arkansas is prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and careers. To assist in achieving this vision, the adoption and implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and membership in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has played an integral role.

Arkansas defines college and career ready as, "The acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to be successful in all future endeavors including credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution (such as a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school) or to embark successfully on a chosen career." The foundation that CCSS will provide clearly demonstrates the move toward having students master rigorous content at deeper levels through the use of problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Former Commissioner of Education Dr. Tom Kimbrell led in the development of goals to move the state toward having all students ready for college and career. Ambitious goals were required to guide the work and provide the road map to high achieving learning communities. Most are closely tied to the requirements of the flexibility application and are as follows:

Goal 1: Learning Standards, Next Generation Assessments and Accountability
Provide resources, tools and services to districts and schools that support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards and a common assessment system.

- Analyze and share openly how districts spend money efficiently and effectively on strategies that ensure high levels of teaching and learning and result in enhanced and sustained student success.
- Create an accountability system that will integrate academic and operational performance

measures to yield data for determining how resources should be targeted, distributed and managed for increased and sustained student success.

Goal 2: Supporting Persistently Struggling Schools
Strengthen strategic initiatives that address graduation rates, achievement gaps and persistently struggling schools.

- Identify and promote effective early childhood, elementary, middle school and high school policies, practices and tools targeted to dropout prevention and recovery.
- Promote out-of-school learning opportunities for students who need additional time to learn and be successful.
- Identify alternative organizational structures to meet the needs of students left unmet by traditional school programs, structures and time frames.
- Identify persistently struggling schools and present districts with a focused number of options to be implemented for reform and innovation and develop a comprehensive monitoring system to support schools in their transformation work.
- Keep students engaged and on-track to graduation by increasing personalized support; ensuring multiple pathways are available to help students to stay on track academically and accelerate learning when appropriate; and using data to better identify and respond to those at-risk of failure in a more timely and effective manner.
- Assess and focus on the teaching of essential career skills for all students, such as knowing workplace expectations, coming to work on time and having a customer service orientation.
- Promote a culture of college and career readiness in Arkansas through rigorous and relevant course requirements.

Goal 3: Improving Educator Effectiveness
Enhance state, district and school leadership capacity and support for aligning Arkansas's education systems for early learners, K-12 students and postsecondary learners.

- Develop customizable tools that help leaders at the local level make well-informed decisions.
- Assist districts with technology integration that results in increased use and analysis of data that will inform and improve instruction.
- Identify, develop and disseminate exemplary recruitment, preparation, licensure, mentoring, supervision and evaluation practices.

Goal 4: Strengthening Stakeholder Partnerships
Deepen essential partnerships with stakeholders through ongoing communication that will result in enhanced educational opportunities for Arkansas students.

- Leverage partnerships to provide input, support and resources for key strategic initiatives of this plan.
- Cultivate relationships with child-serving agencies to maximize scarce resources, reduce duplication of efforts and provide a coherent set of services to children and families.
- Pursue grants to support the mission, vision and strategies of this plan.

By setting goals such as these, the state of Arkansas has made great progress in education over the past 20 years, moving from near the bottom of state comparisons to being ranked fifth in the nation this year according to *Education Week's Quality Counts* rankings (Attachment 3). However, we realize there is room for improvement, particularly in the area of student achievement. Analysis of statewide data and review of policy has revealed there are elements of accountability

present, but our desire is to ensure a more inclusive and consistent system of accountability for our state and its schools.

Arkansas has been known historically as a small state, burdened with high levels of poverty in its mainly rural population. The state has instituted many reforms, including the legislated consolidation of many small schools and districts over the past ten years. The majority of the schools in the state, however, still remain small and rural. Due to the size of these rural communities, many schools do not have a large student population, and thus many of their subpopulations do not meet the minimum number (N) that are examined and used for student achievement accountability for the current No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements. Our proposal would address those students currently not being identified as part of an at-risk group and ensure they become part of the subpopulation used for accountability purposes.

We believe all of the Principles contained in this Flexibility application will move us toward greater success in closing the achievement gap. For too long, segments of our student population have struggled to achieve at desired levels. Implementation of the CCSS is the vehicle to re-energize our focus on classroom instruction and this flexibility is a timely opportunity to move from a compliance mindset to a focus on long-term, continuous improvement. Work has begun to assist educators in this endeavor. Extensive statewide professional development and outreach for teachers, administrators and parents began in July 2011. A successful system of professional development delivery exists in our state through regional educational cooperatives, educational television network, live streaming and regional institutes. All components of this system are being employed for two-way communication as we implement these new standards.

The theory of action underlying this change process is pictured in Figure 1below. In the development of each of the Flexibility Principles, the steps of the hourglass were followed from bottom to top in order to provide a clear and cohesive plan based upon core values and beliefs.
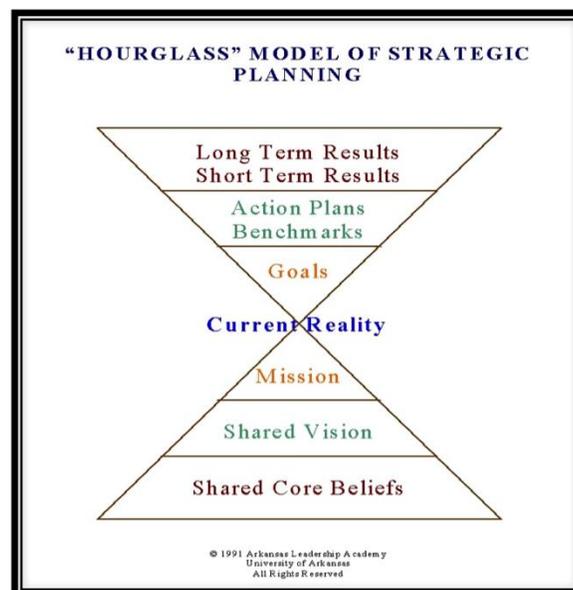
Figure 1. Theory of action for change.

Public regional meetings around the state indicated the majority of respondents believed the disaggregation of data under NCLB by subgroups has been positive, shedding new light on the issue of achievement gaps for historically underachieving groups. One gap that is clearly growing smaller is that of our Hispanic/EL subpopulation. Other subpopulations have increased in their achievement, but not at rates enabling the gap to close. According to assessment data, the current accountability system has enabled large achievement gaps to persist in our student population. For example, only 16 percent of schools meet the minimum number of special education students for accountability, when 96 percent of our schools have a subpopulation of special education students attending their school. This reveals a gap of 80 percent of our schools that are not being held accountable for the achievement of this subpopulation. This Flexibility request proposes to require schools to be accountable for all low-achieving students by examining all students as well as a targeted group based on their membership in historically underperforming subpopulations, thus requiring accountability for all students in their care. While each subpopulation would continue to be reported separately and still be used to trigger interventions and support, all would be included for accountability purposes and expected to meet proficiency and growth targets.

Significant advances in Arkansas's longitudinal data system and expanded interagency partnerships have enabled cross-agency data sharing and enriched Arkansas's available research and information for decision making across public preschool through postsecondary education systems. Arkansas was among the first states to meet 10 of the 10 essential elements of statewide longitudinal data systems outlined by the Data Quality Campaign. Further, Arkansas meets nine of the 10 actions to support effective data use and is on track to meet all 10 actions in the immediate future. Arkansas established the Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT) among the ADE, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) in 2009 to enable cross-agency data sharing and support research connecting P-20 leading indicators with postsecondary and career outcomes. The AEETT Initiative allows creation of detailed High School Feedback reports to inform Arkansas high schools regarding their students' preparation for successful postsecondary education and/or the workforce outcomes.

Additional projects enabled significant advances in Arkansas's longitudinal data system that enhanced the Teacher Student Data Link (TSDL) to promote effective use of data for local decision making. The Expand Enterprise Data Warehouse with Local Assessment Data and Teacher Student Link to Feed Data Visualization project, the Enterprise Architecture project, the Daily Roster Verification Pilot project, and Educator Data Integration project have expanded the longitudinal data system's architecture and capabilities necessary to support expanded district, school and classroom level data visualization and reporting tools. Pilot projects integrate classroom level assessment scores with summative and interim assessment scores for use with Arkansas's data visualization and reporting tools. This will enhance local and state-wide data-informed decision making as described throughout this ESEA Flexibility proposal. These advances in the P-20 longitudinal data system, coupled with changes to educator evaluation policy, position Arkansas to meet 10 of 10 *State Actions* recommended by the Data Quality Campaign as essential to linking data use to improved student achievement (Data Quality Campaign (DQC), 2011 *Ten State Actions to Ensure Effective Data Use.* Retrieved from http://www.dataqualitycampaign.org/build/actions). These state actions enable leaders at the state and local levels to connect professional development and credentialing decisions to leading

and outcome indicators including student growth and achievement outcomes.

Improvement of instructional leadership at all levels from classroom to boardroom is a primary focus in our state and is imperative with the move to CCSS. Extensive work by educators and other stakeholders under the direction of Charlotte Danielson and Doug Reeves resulted in establishing congruent and consistent teacher and administrator evaluations that are aligned with interventions and support. Educators around the state have already realized that implementation of CCSS, next-generation assessments, the development of tiered support systems, differentiation and their ability to have students ready for college and career will all reflect on their professional evaluations. Legislation in 2011 strengthened this effort and provided statutes to hold individuals, schools, and districts accountable for improvement of instructional practices, and ties student achievement results to evaluation outcomes (Attachment 5).

The interventions planned for Priority and Focus schools will also address improvement of instructional leadership and effective instructional practices. Our nationally recognized longitudinal data system has been utilized to identify schools that have been persistently low achieving. There is legislation already in place to address systemic leadership development and school support systems that will be instituted in Priority and Focus schools (Attachment 6). For all other schools, an extensive multi-tiered system of differentiated intervention and support exists to meet improvement needs. This is funded through a state grant and includes positive behavioral supports and strategies targeted toward closing the achievement gap. Streamlined digital access of support resources will be developed by the ADE and be online by Spring of 2013 for school and public access.

The combination of CCSS, next generation assessments, a focus on persistently low achieving schools and new professional evaluation systems will create a sense of urgency in the area of improving classroom instruction. Accountability for all of our state's student population will underscore the rationale for effective and efficient methods of ensuring both students and adults are continuous and high achieving learners. The simplified reporting system outlined in this Flexibility application combined with our longitudinal data system will enable educators and stakeholders to share in the ownership of improved student and adult learning, resulting in greater numbers of our children prepared for college and careers.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is committed to the vision of providing an innovative, comprehensive education system that insures all Arkansas students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in attaining college and career readiness (CCR) with the goal of entering the workforce prepared for productive citizenry. ESEA Flexibility has enabled the ADE to pursue this vision with a high degree of commitment coupled with responsiveness to state-specific issues that have impacted and continue to impact state and local learning systems.

Public schools in Arkansas have experienced unprecedented change in the past two decades as population has increased, demographics have shifted, and communities have grown or declined in response to rapidly changing policy and economic conditions. Arkansas's ESEA Flexibility Renewal Application provides the ADE with an opportunity to share evidence of successes and continued challenges as the ADE strives to be a responsive, integrated learning system designed to support continuous improvement for all of Arkansas's students.

Principle 1: College and Career Ready Expectations for All Students
In its 2012 ESEA Flexibility Proposal, ADE asserted its commitment to rigorous CCR standards and aligned, next-generation assessments by outlining a plan for transition to full implementation of the standards by the 2014-2015 school year.

Successes, Learning and Continued Challenges in Principle 1
Success

- Arkansas's public schools have transitioned instruction to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) beginning with Grades K through 2 in 2011-2012, Grades 3 through 8 in 2012-2013, and Grades 9 through 12 in 2013-2014.

- By March 31st, the day this renewal is due, Arkansas schools will be half-way through the test administration window for the performance-based component of Arkansas's next-generation assessment. For the first time since the adoption of CCR aligned Standards in 2010 Arkansas's public school students are completing assessments fully aligned to the content standards for which they are receiving instruction.

- Over 5,000 Arkansas teachers and leaders were surveyed over the summer of 2013 regarding implementation of CCSS and changing instructional practice.

  - Ninety-one percent of principals and 74 percent of teachers indicated they believed the standards were more rigorous and raised expectations for student learning.
  - Ninety-one percent of teachers and 95 percent of leaders had participated in professional development on the CCSS to include incorporating instructional shifts into lesson planning, classroom instruction and assessment, and design of curriculum units.
  - Eighty-five percent of teachers felt completely or somewhat prepared to align instruction with the new standards. Forty-seven percent of teachers surveyed felt they had received adequate support for the transition in standards and instruction and 38 percent felt they had received comprehensive support. Eighty-nine percent of teachers indicated moderate to high confidence in their ability to align lesson plans and instruction to CCSS, and 81 percent indicated moderate to high confidence in aligning assessment and curriculum design with CCSS expectations.
  - Ninety-five percent of principals felt somewhat or completely prepared to support their teachers in aligning instruction. Fifty percent of principals felt their district leaders had adequately supported them to transition their schools and 40 percent felt they had comprehensive support from their district leaders.
  - Eighty percent of teachers surveyed indicated they had been observed and received feedback on how to more fully incorporate the new standards into instructional practice with some 52 percent receiving feedback four or more times during the year and 39 percent receiving feedback 2 to 3 times during the year.
  - Forty percent of principals surveyed indicated K-8 teachers' practices were somewhat aligned with CCSS. Twenty-eight percent of principals indicated their K-8 teachers were fully aligned with CCSS.
  - Eighty-seven to ninety-one percent of teachers surveyed correctly identified model instructional practices aligned with CCSS in literacy. Sixty-seven to ninety-three

percent of teachers surveyed correctly identified model instructional practices aligned with the CCSS shifts in mathematics.

- o Eighty-five percent of principals indicated they were creating more opportunities for teacher collaboration focused on CCSS implementation. Also, 75 percent indicated they were using classroom observations as opportunities to give feedback to teachers that reflects expectations under CCSS, 75 percent were ensuring curricular materials were aligned with new expectations, 75 percent were sharing resources and providing professional development opportunities to support teachers' implementation of new standards.
- o Eighty-one percent of leaders and 64 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that new standards, next generation assessments, and the Teacher Excellence and Support System could be implemented as integrated components to continuously improve the instructional system in their schools.

- Equitable opportunity and access to rigorous CCR courses and instruction have been expanded and enhanced through the offering of online content through Virtual Arkansas http://virtualarkansas.org/ Virtual Arkansas is a partnership between the ADE and Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives to provide twenty-four hour a day, seven day a week access to high quality, rigorous instruction for a variety of courses. These courses are available to communities challenged with geographic isolation and challenged with scarce availability of qualified teachers for required courses.

The increased rigor of the standards and the enhanced characteristics of assessment items on the next generation assessments represent a new foundation from which Arkansas's LEAs will evaluate the progress of their continuous improvement efforts.

Learning
This ESEA Renewal opportunity presents itself at a critical time in this transition. Student level assessment results from 2015 will reflect students' readiness on CCR constructs rather than constructs assessed in previous assessments—Arkansas's Benchmark and End of Course Exams. These differences in the constructs assessed limit the comparability of students' prior state assessment scores to their performance on the next-generation assessments (PARCC in 2014-15). Thus, results from 2015 assessments will function as a baseline for LEAs and the ADE to evaluate the transition from Arkansas's state standards to more broadly comparable CCR standards.

The results of Arkansas students' Benchmark and End of Course Exams demonstrated an interesting trend over six years (three years prior to ESEA Flexibility and three years of ESEA Flexibility). In general, student performance on grade level standards steadily improved from 2009 through 2012 (Figure 2). The improvements in literacy and mathematics dipped in 2013 and 2014 concurrent with the implementation of new CCR standards in the tested grades.

- Literacy performance improved significantly in 2012 compared to prior years, and although schools demonstrated a dip in literacy, results are higher in 2014 than in 2011, the baseline for ESEA Flexibility.
- Students' mathematics scores show a larger drop in 2013 and 2014 which may represent specific and significant construct differences between CCR standards and Arkansas's prior standards in mathematics at particular grade levels.

Three Year Achievement Trend for All Students

◆ Literacy   ■ Math

Percent of Students Proficient/Advanced

Year	Literacy	Math
2009	67.5	73.1
2010	72.3	76
2011	74.6	77.7
2012	80.56	78.93
2013	78.66	75.81
2014	77.43	73.79
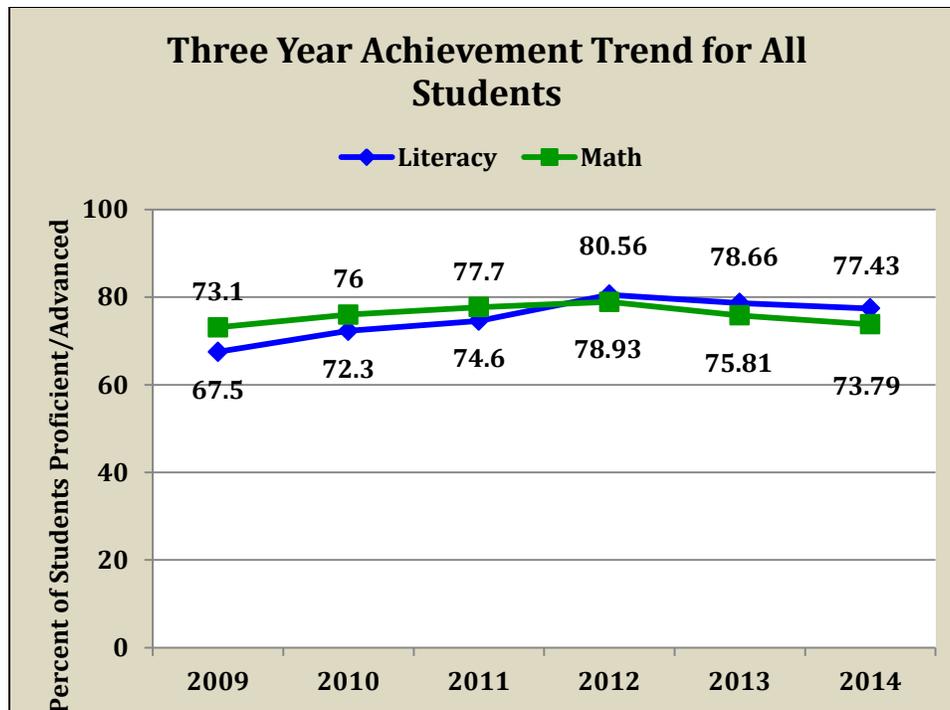
Figure 2. Three-year math and literacy achievement trends.

The ADE encouraged LEAs to examine the fidelity of their implementation of CCR standards, as well as the trends in their assessment results to inform their continuous improvement planning during this significant instructional and assessment transition.

Challenges
The transition to CCR standards and next-generation assessments has not been without challenges.
- Challenges were noted from the teacher and leader survey on CCSS implementation:
  - Overwhelmingly, teachers (72 percent) and leaders (69 percent) selected time constraints and their own limitations as the major obstacles to their efforts to consistently and successfully implement the new standards. Sixty-nine percent of principals indicated they felt their teachers' biggest obstacle to successful implementation was time.
  - Forty-nine percent of teachers and 43 percent of principals indicated students' prior knowledge was an obstacle to consistent and successful implementation of the new standards.
  - Almost half of all teachers and leaders surveyed indicated better and/or more aligned instructional and assessment resources were needed to support more successful implementation of the new standards.
- The timing of implementation of new standards three years in advance of assessments aligned to the standards has been a challenge for teachers and leaders trying to inform the effectiveness of their transition using student assessment data, particularly in mathematics where the shifts in grade level content create the greatest disparity in expectations between what is being taught and what is still tested. In some cases, teachers have felt compelled to align instruction to the new standards and still include units of instruction on the old

standards out of concern for how students' performance on the Benchmark and End of Course Exams may impact schools' accountability ratings as well as students' possible remediation/intervention plans.

- Ensuring students with special learning needs, English language learners (ELs), economically disadvantaged, and low achieving students access rigorous CCR expectations is an ever-present challenge that is made easier with appropriate tiered response systems. To expand educators' tool boxes of strategies for ensuring all students access rigorous CCR expectations the ADE is expanding its professional development in Response to Intervention to all schools in Arkansas starting in 2016 through 2020 (page 36).

Although Arkansas has encountered challenges in the implementation of CCR aligned standards and assessments, transition continues as the ADE, teachers, and leaders strive to meet the challenges.

Principle 2- Differentiated Accountability, Recognition, and Tiered Support System

In Arkansas's initial application for ESEA Flexibility, the ADE responded to stakeholder input by simplifying the accountability and reporting system with the goal of streamlining disparate state and federal accountability systems. ESEA Renewal will allow Arkansas to come closer to realizing the goal of a unitary, focused system of accountability, recognition, and tiered support informed by enhanced information systems and feedback loops (Figure 3).
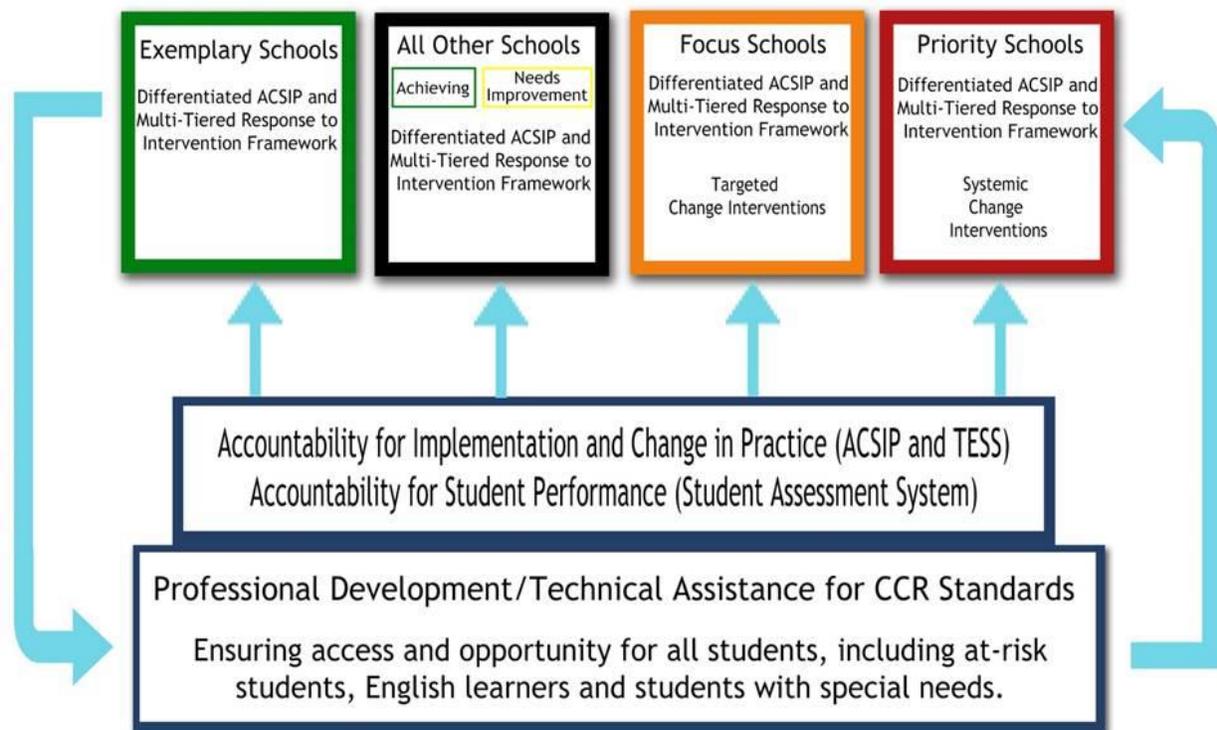
Figure 3. Differentiated Accountability and Feedback Loop

Successes, Learning and Continued Challenges in Principle 2

Success
Several notable accomplishments have resulted from the implementation of the Differentiated Accountability, Recognition, and Tiered Support System (DARTSS) since its approval in 2012. These include deeper integration of research and technology to support informed decision-making, increased coherence of the learning, assessment and accountability systems that support student learning and teacher effectiveness, and implementation of a letter grade school rating system that further differentiates schools strengths and challenges for parents and community stakeholders.

Arkansas's statewide longitudinal data systems have grown and matured into information systems that literally inform the day-to-day work of educators in Arkansas's schools, while supporting short- and long-term strategic learning and improvement. The Data Quality Campaign identified Arkansas as a leading state in its Data for Action 2014 report along with Kentucky and Delaware (http://dqc-staging.snapshotdev.com/your-states-progress/by-state/overview/).

- All schools in Arkansas have access to the Student GPS system which provides a secure dashboard that integrates local data with statewide information system data for informed decision-making https://adedata.arkansas.gov/sgps/. The Student GPS system facilitates day-to-day decision-making for leadership and instruction by providing leaders and teachers with relevant information on factors most related to actions for improving student learning.

- The ADE's data center (https://adedata.arkansas.gov/) provides a single location for all of the ADE's data systems, data tools, and reports for educators, policy makers, teachers, parents, school districts and others interested in official data. From this single location schools can access secure, private data as well as public reports across financial, instructional, and organizational areas to inform continuous improvement.

- These tools are also available to ADE leaders to inform their work with LEAs allowing ADE leaders to support continuous improvement functions as well as compliance and reporting functions.

With the enhancements to data access and reporting provided by its Research and Technology Division, the ADE is poised to elevate its role in supporting local learning systems and providing differentiated supports and interventions to LEAs by accelerating the pace of its organizational learning and its ability to inform continuous improvement and differentiate supports and interventions.

A comprehensive and coherent system results from intentional efforts to integrate across functional areas of an organization. For the ADE this translates to increased communication and collaboration among the Divisions of Learning Services (curriculum/instruction/assessment/professional development), Public School Accountability, and Educator Effectiveness and Licensure, as well as Research and Technology to achieve the vision of providing an innovative, comprehensive education system that insures all Arkansas students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in attaining college and career readiness (CCR) with the goal of entering the workforce prepared for productive citizenry.

- The ADE leadership team meets weekly to strategically plan and carryout actions within and across divisions to coordinate efforts to support the elements of Principles 1-3, and deal

with issues that intersect across divisions. Units within each division meet to cross-collaborate as they implement the work.

- Representatives from each of the divisions regularly attend the Teacher Evaluation Advisor Committee meetings and other advisory committee meetings to inform and receive feedback from stakeholders on issues at the intersection of student assessment, accountability, teacher/leader effectiveness, and the statewide system of support.
- The use of web-based collaboration software allows ADE leaders and staff to collaborate across distances, removing some of the barriers of travel time associated with supporting schools at geographic distances.

Arkansas's Differentiated Accountability, Recognition, and Tiered Support System (DARTSS) has matured since the 2012 proposal through data- and stakeholder-informed amendments. Through Flex Renewal the ADE proposes to refine the system further. These refinements are anchored in data and responsive to lessons learned by the ADE in early implementation of DARTSS, stakeholder feedback on DARTSS, and state statute.

- The creation of the Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) and the lowering of the minimum N to 25 students increased the percentage of schools accountable for and attending to the needs of students at risk for achieving CCR. Ninety-eight percent of Arkansas's schools have a TAGG that meets the minimum N for accountability.
- Publication of ESEA School and District Performance Reports ensured the performance of ESEA subgroups was not masked by use of the TAGG and that the needs of the students in these groups are identified and addressed through schools' continuous improvement plans (Figures 10 and 11 on pages 71-72).
- TAGG performance has improved relative to NonTAGG students, and ESEA subgroups have improved in performance, for the most part, relative to the 2011 baseline for ESEA subgroups (Figures 4-7).
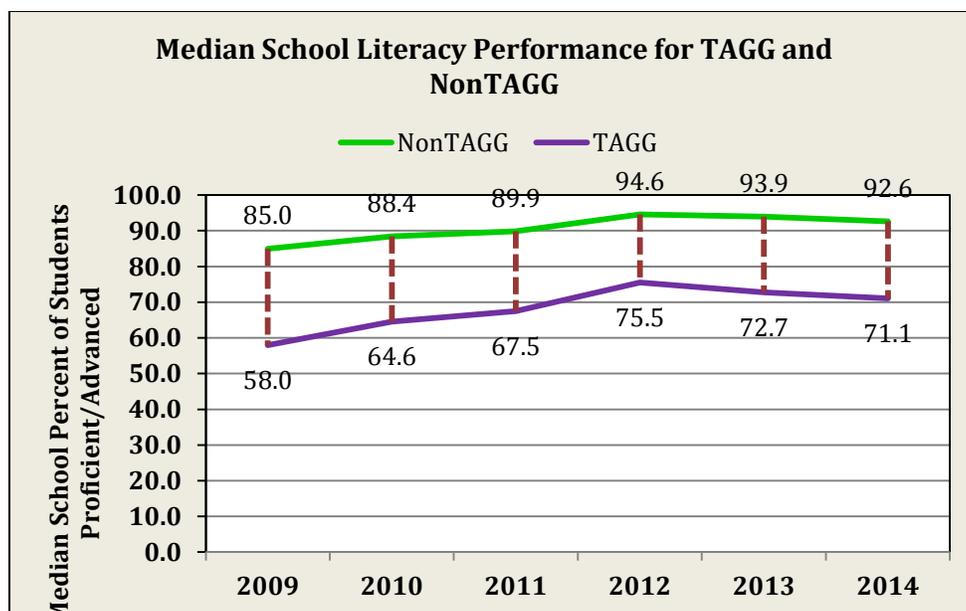
Figure 4. Literacy performance trend of NonTAGG and TAGG students.

Median School Math Performance for TAGG and NonTAGG
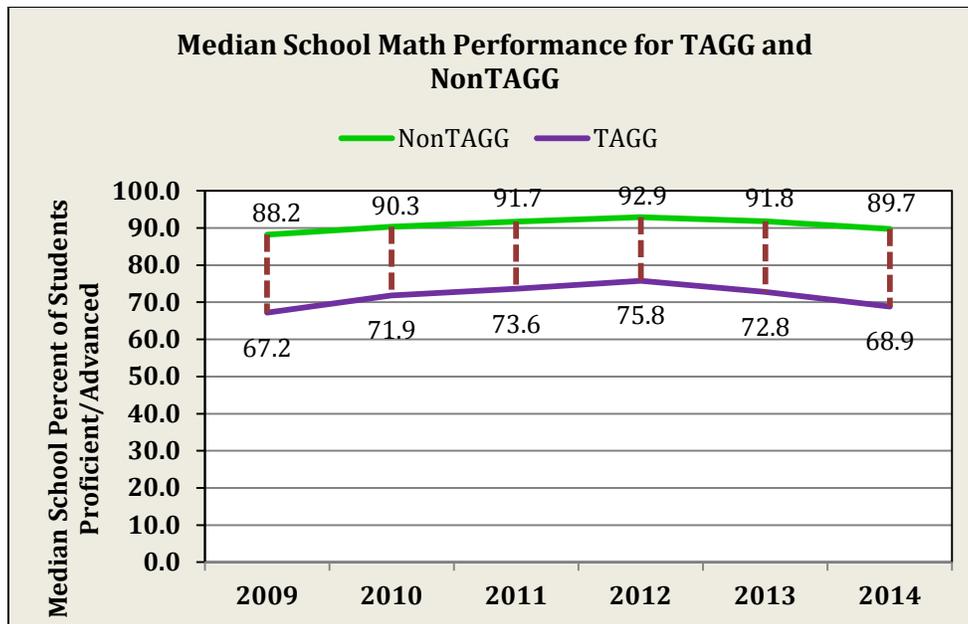
Figure 5. Math performance trend for NonTAGG and TAGG students.

Arkansas Six Year Literacy Trend in

Legend:
- All Students
- TAGG
- African American
- Hispanic
- White
- Economically Disadvantaged
- English Learners
- Students with Disabilities

Y-axis: Percent of Students Proficient/Advanced (0–100)

X-axis: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014
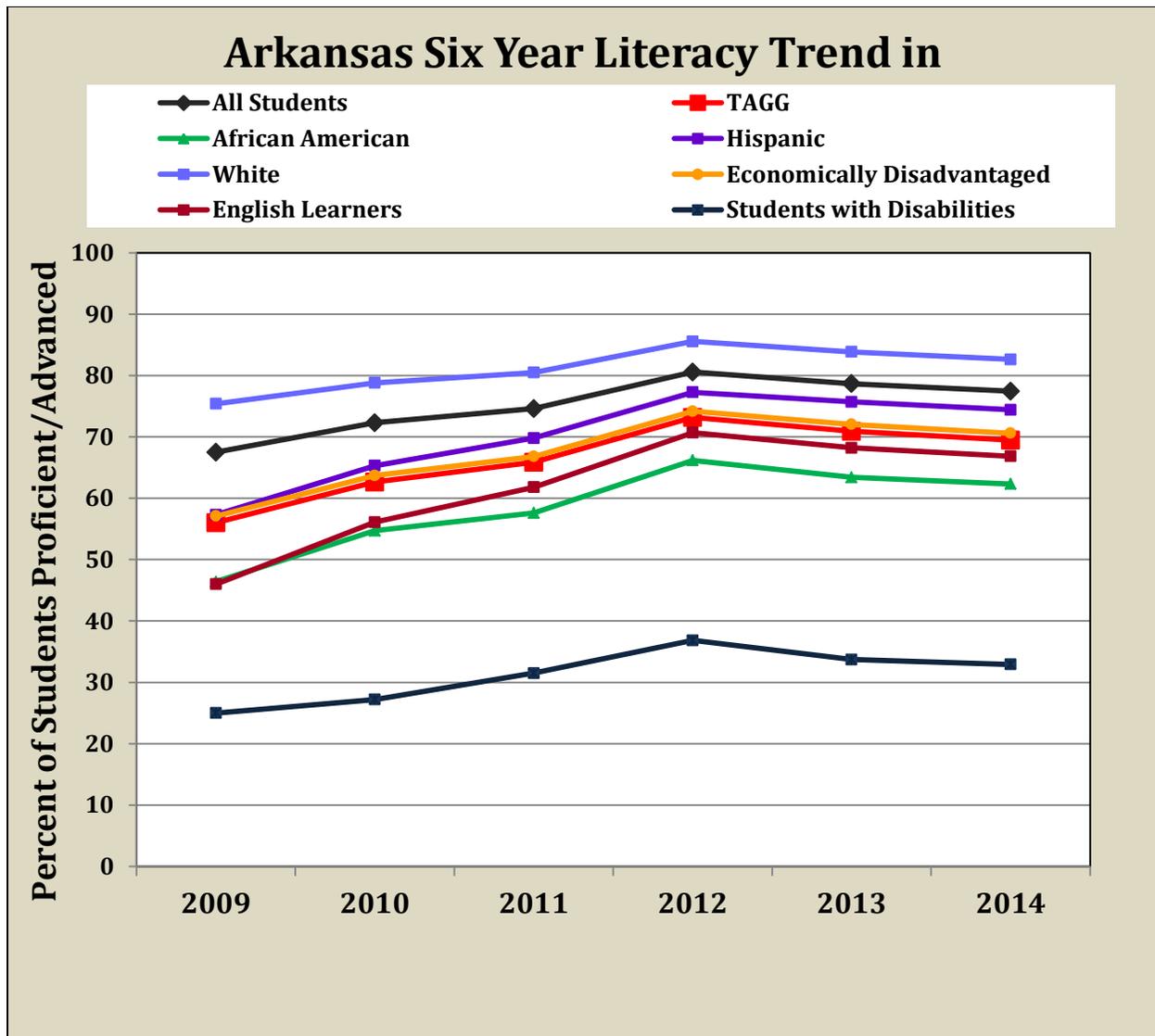
Figure 6. Literacy performance trends for students in ESEA subgroups, TAGG, and All Students.

- Note the literacy achievement gaps for ESEA subgroups demonstrate a trend of closing relative to the 2009, and even 2011 at the start of ESEA Flexibility, despite the transition challenges noted earlier. ELs and students with disabilities show the most narrowing of the gap.
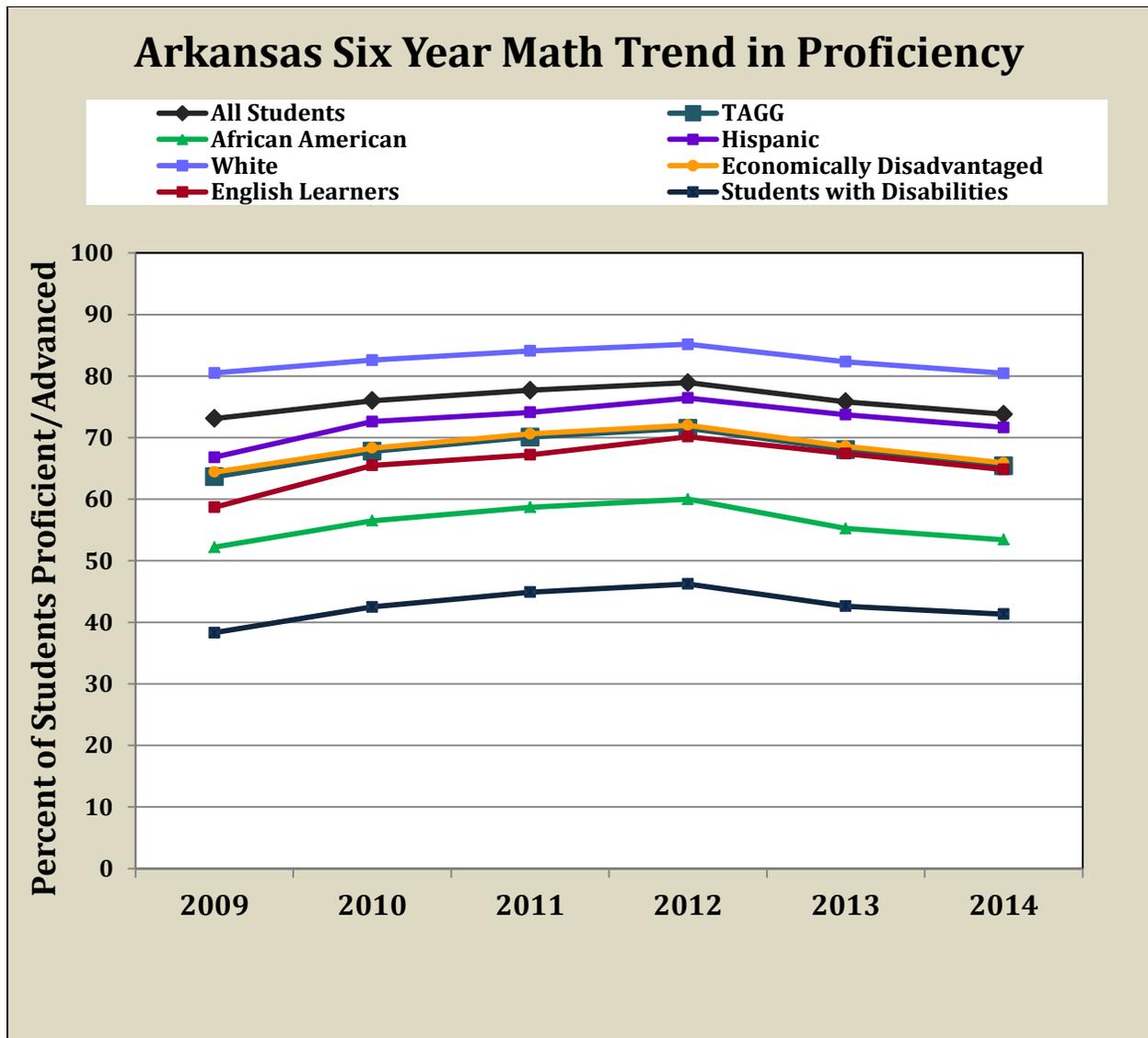
Figure 7. Literacy performance trends for students in ESEA subgroups, TAGG, and All Students.

- Note the math achievement gaps for ESEA subgroups demonstrate a slight narrowing relative to the 2009, and even 2011, at the start of ESEA Flexibility, despite the transition challenges noted earlier. ELs and students with disabilities show the most gap closure.

- Of the 48 schools identified as Priority Schools in 2011, 11 schools have been removed from the list—six schools have closed or reconfigured within their districts, four schools exited in 2013 and 1 school in 2014 by meeting their AMOs for two consecutive years. Comparing the performance of Priority Schools when they were identified in 2011 to how the remaining Priority Schools performed in 2014:
  - The mean literacy percent proficient for Priority schools has increased from 40.62 to 51.06 for the schools remaining in Priority Status, a meaningful increase that is well above chance given a 95% confidence band.

- o The mean math percent proficient for Priority Schools has remained relatively unchanged for the schools remaining in Priority Status (mean of 44.52 in 2014 compared to 43.41 in 2011). This difference is not at a significant or meaningful level.
  - o Median graduation rate (four-year adjusted cohort rate) has improved to 76.67 percent in 2013 for these lowest performing schools compared to 72.04 percent in 2010.
- Of the 110 Focus schools identified in 2011, 25 schools have been removed from the list— 15 schools met their AMOs for two consecutive years in 2013 and one school met its AMOs for two consecutive years in 2014. The remaining nine schools removed from the list were closed or reconfigured due to consolidation/annexation or grade level changes within a district.
  - o Focus Schools' mean math and literacy performance gap decreased 8.23 percentage points from a high of 33.43 percentage points in 2011 to 25.20 percentage points in 2014.
  - o Act 696 of the 2013 General Assembly created an A-F grading system requirement. The A-F determinations include attention to achievement gaps within schools, further drawing schools' and districts' attention to closing the achievement gap.

Learning
Prior to ESEA Flexibility, Arkansas's LEAs contended with federal and state accountability laws that had similar overarching goals yet somewhat divergent requirements; which resulted in school and district accountability systems classifying schools in sometimes different and confusing categories in terms of student performance and growth. School and LEA designations under ESEA Flexibility allowed the ADE to simplify federal accountability designations in response to stakeholder feedback, and to respond to state-specific needs for differentiating intervention and support through its plans for Priority, Focus and all other Title I schools.

When Act 696—an Act to clarify for parents the public school rating system--was passed during the 2013 Arkansas General Assembly the ADE had an opportunity to further the goal of a unitary, focused system of accountability, recognition, and tiered support. Using statewide data from Arkansas's enhanced data and information systems, the ADE responded to stakeholders' requests to model the data for requested components for inclusion in schools' Letter Grade determination. ADE used an iterative modeling and reporting process to engage stakeholders in determining components to include in school letter grades, and to winnow stakeholders' suggestions to four salient components aligned to experts' suggested criteria for rating schools (Education Commission of the States, 2014).

After twelve months of meeting with stakeholders to share results and solicit feedback, the ADE put forth suggested rules to the State Board of Education for public comment. The resulting A – F letter grades provide a score that combines a weighted performance component, a growth and/or improvement component, graduation rate for high schools and an adjustment for the size of achievement gaps. Arkansas's A-F School Rating rules integrate an improvement requirement that mirrors several components of Arkansas's approved DARTSS. **The A-F School Rating _is not included in this ESEA Flexibility Renewal application._** However, it is important to note that the ADE garnered invaluable stakeholder feedback and accountability modeling through the development process that resulted in the state's A-F Rating System. The information learned

through Arkansas's process continues to inform future iterations toward an increasingly unified state and federal accountability system. Notably, schools that are meeting AMOs for DARTSS are, by design, reducing achievement gaps, improving performance and growth, and concomitantly improving their potential A-F School Rating. **Thus, schools can focus on improvement to benefit both state and federal accountability ratings rather than focusing on two completely disparate systems.** (Attachment 19)

An important challenge for ADE is the transition of accountability given the transition to next-generation assessments aligned to rigorous CCR standards. The ADE is proposing phasing in full implementation of all components of status determination after pausing in 2015. Details are provided in Section 2.A on page 57.

P3- Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems

Success

Arkansas's teacher evaluation system (based on Danielson's model) was carefully designed to balance the need for statewide consistency with local district autonomy. Arkansas will continue with statewide implementation of the state evaluation rubric, Danielson's Framework for Teaching, during the 2014-2015 school year. All administrators who evaluate teachers have completed the Teachscape Proficiency Assessment. The state will continue to require training and credentialing for proficiency in the system of evaluation.

- The state has allocated numerous resources to ensure evaluators have the necessary knowledge and skills to evaluate all teachers in a fair, consistent, and valid manner. The state has also provided other trainings to support administrators so the primary purpose of the evaluation system is not lost, the primary purpose being a formative process to improve professional practice, thereby, improving student learning. A host of training modules, materials, and supporting documentation for TESS implementation are available at http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/office-of-educator-effectiveness
- As additional support, the state has purchased an electronic observation and data system from BloomBoard, to assist administrators and teachers with the transparency and management of data. While training everyone on the details of the system is important, a concerted effort to emphasize the formative process has been a focus so the evaluation system does not become what the state has had in the past, a system of compliance. To this end, the state has focused training on coaching and calibration of evaluators to ensure evaluators can host conversations that lead to productive feedback and to prevent a rating "drift."
- Teacher level measures of student growth have been calculated for all teachers for 2012, 2013, and 2014 assessments, and made available to teachers and leaders through a secure portal on the ADE Data Center under Student Ordinal Assessment Rank (SOAR) data portal at https://adedata.arkansas.gov/

Learning
As the teacher evaluation system has been operationalized, rules for implementation guide the process. Staff from the ADE have been meeting with a Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC) since September 2012. Members of the TEAC are teachers, district level administrators,

building level administrators, representatives from various educational organizations, and the business community. The TEAC has met regularly, and ADE staff has provided research and collaborated with the Arkansas Research Center and Office for Innovations in Education to provide modeled data sets under consideration as measures for student growth.

- In developing rules for implementation, the ADE (with the input of the TEAC and Administrator Advisory Committees) determined that effectiveness ratings are rated based on two parts: professional practice and student growth. Annually, educators receive an overall rating, a combination of the two parts, Professional Practice Ratings and Student Growth. Professional practice ratings are determined based on the educator's observed performance, rated according to the state's adopted framework for evaluating performance rubric and also on evidence of how the educator's practice impacts students as evidenced by progress on the educator's professional growth plan and artifacts to demonstrate student progress/growth. This rating is established as a "soft" rating each year prior to the availability of student assessment data or other criteria determined to measure growth.

- In the event that a teacher receives strong professional practice ratings and demonstrates a low impact on student learning, it is expected that the teacher's PGP will address this discrepancy and its root causes. Persistently low student growth will result in a lower teacher effectiveness rating. For example, teachers rated as Proficient, rather than Distinguished, due to low growth of his/her students will be rated as Basic if the low growth of his/her students persists over multiple years as indicated in the Rules for TESS. Likewise, teachers rated as *Proficient* or *Basic* may have their rating reduced to a lower level of teacher effectiveness in the event their students demonstrate persistent low growth (a level below the threshold for multiple years).

- Performance ratings are the catalyst to engage educators in the process of continuous professional improvement as formalized in the educators' PGP. The *Framework for Teaching's* detailed performance descriptors provide guidance to the educator and evaluator for formulating goals within the PGP, enhancing the understanding of evaluators and educators in the evidence required to demonstrate proficient and distinguished practice. Differentiated PGPs reflect the differentiated professional growth needs of educators and allow districts and schools to provide resources and supports based on the differentiated PGPs. For example, educators receiving a rating of Basic for a category are required to address the professional learning needs identified within the category. Each educator must dedicate one-half of the professional development hours required by law or rule to professional learning in the educator's content area, instructional strategies applicable to the educator's content area or the educator's identified needs from summative evaluation and interim appraisals. Teachers in Intensive Support Status must use all professional development hours required by rule or law to address identified needs. Evaluators use teachers' performance ratings that are not Proficient or Distinguished as areas for growth when performing formative observations as part of the interim appraisal process. Formative observations are critical in the evaluator's role of monitoring the teacher's professional growth and helping guide professional development decisions.

- The interim appraisal process is designed to provide teachers with meaningful feedback, targeted professional development activities, and multiple opportunities for self-reflection of practice. The interim appraisal allows teachers to focus on areas of weakness identified in previous summative evaluations. Additionally, the interim appraisal focuses on student learning results and growth every year. During this process, principals continue to observe all teachers, but with a more targeted focus. Each year, principals facilitate conversations with

teachers based on their individualized professional growth plans. Teachers have input in their growth plans; however, the principal has final approval on the content, based on identified areas. During the interim process, teachers receive feedback and coaching from peer teachers and instructional facilitators.

- In cases where educators require intensive support to improve their practice TESS provides a timeline for intervention of no more than two semesters unless the educator has demonstrated significant progress within that time period. Evaluators shall notify the superintendent of an educator in Intensive Support Status who does not accomplish the goals and complete the tasks established for the Intensive Support Status during the given period. Upon review and approval of the documentation, the superintendent shall recommend termination or non-renewal of the teacher's contract.

Multiple measures for supporting convergent validity of teacher effectiveness and producing reliable ratings are required in TESS. The post-observation conference includes presentation of artifacts and external assessment measures that provide evidence of student growth (Ark. Ann. Code § 6-17-2804 (7). In the 2013 legislative session, the half of the artifacts language was removed to help clarify the operationalization of the system. Since Arkansas is using a trigger method to determine the impact of student growth on an educator's rating, that language was very confusing and made it difficult to integrate with the trigger system. The artifacts listed below may be used to support the professional practice ratings OR used for future pre/post measures for SLOs/SGOs. Artifacts that provide clear, concise, evidentiary data to improve student achievement, growth, and demonstrate high levels of performance in professional practice may include one or more of the following:
Lesson plans or pacing guides aligned with the standards;
- Self-directed or collaborative research approved by the evaluator;
- Participation in professional development;
- Contributions to parent, community or professional meetings;
- Classroom assessments including samples of student work, portfolios, writing, projects, unit tests, pre/post assessments and classroom-based formative assessments;
- District-level assessments including formative assessments, grade or subject level assessments, department level assessments and common assessments; and
- National assessments including AP assessments, NRTs and career and technical assessments.

Student growth for inclusion in the educator's annual overall rating will be measured by the educator meeting an established threshold for growth, based on their students' growth/progress on state assessments or other approved criteria. The state expects to add additional growth measures in the future as assessment decisions are finalized.

*Challenge*s

ADE proposes that one option for the inclusion of Student Growth to be incorporated into a teacher's final summative rating by assigning a "SOAR" (Student Ordinal Achievement Ranking) value. SOAR values are based on an SGP-like calculation model. A teacher's rating will be based on the median value of his/her students' SOAR values, based on math or literacy assessment data. Arkansas has a "trigger" model for the inclusion of growth. A teacher who does not meet the threshold for growth the first year cannot be rated Distinguished. If a teacher does not meet the threshold for growth for the second consecutive year, his/her overall rating will be lowered one level. The threshold for growth has been set at a SOAR value of 30.

- While the growth threshold is currently established at a growth percentile of 30, the number was not chosen arbitrarily. To determine the threshold, the "trigger" point at which an educator's rating is impacted, the TEAC committee analyzed data modeled by the Arkansas Research Center. A growth to standard model was run concurrently with the SOAR ranking model to determine the impact of teachers who had students scoring below the 30th percentile. Data showed that a teacher with a SOAR value of 30 or below had over half of his/her students showing negative gains in terms of expected growth toward a proficiency standard.

- The ADE seeks to continue this process in the future, using this criterion to re-establish the threshold each year based on student progress on future assessments. This represents a challenge since the properties of the scores on the new assessments have yet to be analyzed for this use, and growth will not be available until the second year of administration. Given compatible properties, the threshold will be reevaluated with the new scores and applied to both teacher and administrator evaluations. The growth for principals will be based on a school SOAR value, depicting the impact of success for all students within the school.

Teacher median SOAR values for 2014 are illustrated in Figure 8.
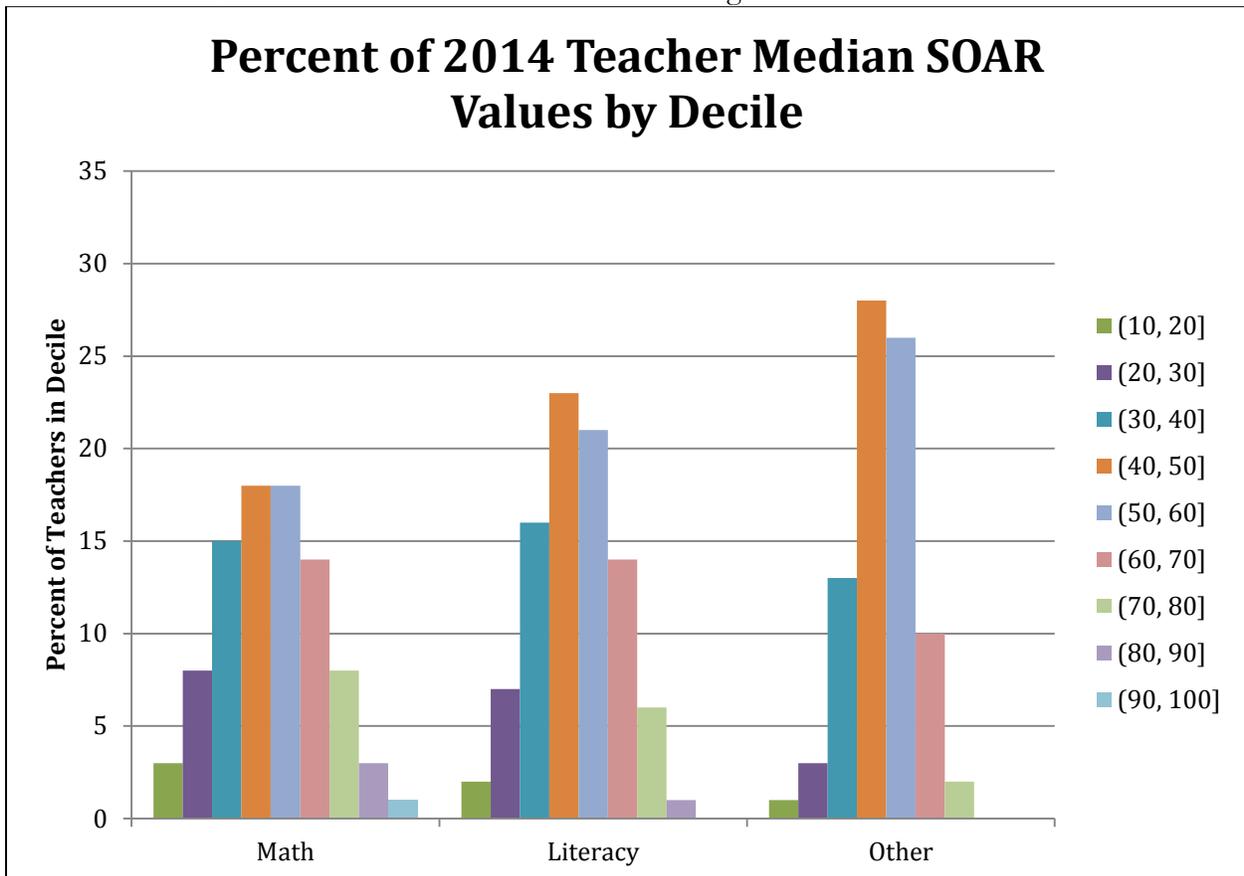
Figure 8. Teacher median SOAR values for 2014.

- Another challenge for incorporating student growth into teacher ratings has been the frequency of teachers with fewer than 10 students, falling below the stability N for use of SOAR (Table 1).

Table 1. Number and Percent of Teachers with Fewer than 10 Students for SOAR

Test & Grade	Number of Math Teachers Student N < 10	Test & Grade	Number of Literacy Teachers Student N < 10
ITBS		**ITBS**	
Grade 2	16% (308)	Grade 2	11% (214)
Benchmark		**Benchmark**	
Grade 3	12% (196)	Grade 3	15% (259)
Grade 4	17% (229)	Grade 4	19% (281)
Grade 5	21% (227)	Grade 5	21% (259)
Grade 6	29%(247)	Grade 6	28% (270)
Grade 7	34% (272)	Grade 7	33% (283)
Grade 8	41% (338)	Grade 8	35% (292)
Algebra			
Grade 8	18% (44)		
Grade 9	23% (133)		
Geometry			
Grade 9	45% (142)		
Grade 10	47% (387)		
All Test Groups	13% (1099)	All Grades	10% (772)

The distribution of teacher median SOAR values would lend itself to establishing low, expected and high growth to provide more information for teachers. Multiple years of teacher median SOAR values demonstrate similar properties for establishing expectations (Table 2).

Table 2. Median SOAR Values for Various Percentiles Within the State Distribution

Year	Subject	N	MEAN	STD	5th %ile SOAR	10th %ile SOAR	11th %ile SOAR	12th %ile SOAR	13th %ile SOAR	14th %ile SOAR	15th %ile SOAR	18th %ile SOAR	20th %ile SOAR	25th %ile SOAR	50th %ile SOAR	75th %ile SOAR	80th %ile SOAR	85th %ile SOAR
2014	Math	7270	50.5	16.9	23.0	28.5	29.0	30.0	31.0	31.5	32.5	34.0	35.5	38.0	50.0	62.5	65.5	69.0
2013	Math	4005	50.7	15.9	24.5	30.0	31.0	31.5	32.0	33.0	33.5	36.0	37.0	39.5	51.0	61.5	64.8	67.5
2012	Math	4127	50.3	16.2	23.0	29.0	30.0	31.0	32.0	32.0	33.0	35.0	36.5	39.0	50.5	61.5	64.0	68.0
2014	Literacy	16973	49.5	12.7	28.5	33.0	34.0	34.5	35.0	36.0	36.5	38.0	39.0	41.0	49.0	58.0	60.0	62.0
2013	Literacy	3628	50.7	13.5	28.5	33.0	34.0	35.0	35.5	36.0	37.0	38.0	39.0	41.0	50.5	60.0	62.5	65.0
2012	Literacy	3698	50.3	13.7	27.5	32.5	33.0	34.0	34.5	35.0	36.0	38.0	38.5	41.0	50.5	59.5	62.0	64.0
2014	All Subjects	24243	49.8	14.1	27.0	32.0	32.5	33.0	34.0	34.5	35.0	37.0	38.0	40.5	49.5	59.0	61.0	64.0
2013	All Subjects	7633	50.7	14.8	26.5	31.5	32.5	33.0	34.0	34.5	35.0	37.0	38.0	40.0	50.5	61.0	63.5	66.0
2012	All Subjects	7825	50.3	15.0	25.0	30.5	31.5	32.0	33.0	34.0	34.5	36.5	37.5	40.0	50.5	60.5	63.0	66.0

ADE plans to continue to implement the teacher and leader evaluation systems as detailed with additional decisions outlined in amendments. Given the transition to next generation assessments and the transition challenges outlined in Principal 2.b. of this ESEA Flexibility Renewal, growth scores for teacher and leader development will need to be revisited in 2015-2016 once the assessment scale has been developed and growth metric options made available by the assessment company.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE – AND CARREER-READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1.A   ADOPT COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B
☒ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that are common to a significant number of States, consistent with part (1) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.	☐ The State has adopted college- and career-ready standards in at least reading/language arts and mathematics that have been approved and certified by a State network of institutions of higher education (IHEs), consistent with part (2) of the definition of college- and career-ready standards.
i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 4)	*i.* Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process.
	ii. Attach a copy of the memorandum of understanding or letter from a State network of IHEs certifying that students who meet these standards will not need remedial coursework at the postsecondary level.

1.B   TRANSITION TO COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS

Provide the SEA's plan to transition to and implement no later than the 2013–2014 school year college- and career-ready standards statewide in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for all students and schools and include an explanation of how this transition plan is likely to lead to all students, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and low-achieving students, gaining access to and learning content aligned with such standards. The Department encourages an SEA to include in its plan activities related to each of the italicized questions in the corresponding section of the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Review Guidance*, or to explain why one or more of those activities is not necessary to its plan.

Overview

The goal of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is to prepare children to compete in a global environment. This begins and ends with college and career readiness. In an ethnically diverse state where more than half of our students are economically disadvantaged (60.0 percent), education is the ticket to a better life.

Arkansas participated early and eagerly in the development of CCSS, initially under the leadership of former Arkansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Ken James. In 2009, he

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chaired the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), as thoughtful conversation about shared standards turned to carefully crafting them. Current Commissioner Johnny Key energetically continues the commitment to embed the standards in our state's education ethic and practice.

These internationally benchmarked standards reflect college and career readiness (CCR) expectations that, by design, equip our students with the skills needed to be successful after graduating from our high schools—a focus for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), and an economic necessity for our state. The Arkansas State Board of Education strongly supported the initiative and formally adopted the CCSS in July 2010 (Attachment 4), thus proving Arkansas's commitment to making sure our students are prepared for college, careers and life.

Arkansas played a role in the development and review of the CCSS to ensure the new standards were as solid as the state's former standards. Arkansas served as a governing state in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium.

The CCR expectations set forth by the adoption of the CCSS require Arkansas educators to focus on all students, including those who do not speak English as a first language and those with special learning needs. Arkansas's expectation for their inclusion is evidenced by and captured in our vision for CCR aligned instruction in all Arkansas schools, which is a part of our Strategic Plan for the Implementation of CCSS (Attachment 7). This vision reads, "All students in every Arkansas classroom will be engaged daily in rigorous learning experiences that build on students' talents, challenge their skills and understandings, and develop their ability to reason, problem solve, collaborate and communicate. Students will monitor their learning and direct their thinking to become productive and contributing team members. Students will grapple with complex texts and problems, construct viable arguments and persist until solutions are identified and substantiated. Through these learning experiences, students will be confident in their preparation for success in their post-school lives, including college and career."

This vision sets high standards for our students and forced educators to examine the practices they use each day in their classrooms across our state so they are ensuring all students experience learning at this level. The full implementation of the new Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) and CCSS have occured simultaneously in our state with purposeful connections created to support effective instruction for all students.

Arkansas has made a great deal of progress over the past several years on developing robust student-level longitudinal data systems that can track individual student progress from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and into postsecondary education. In 2009 Arkansas was recognized for its exemplary longitudinal data system, which satisfies all ten essential Data Quality Campaign elements. These systems provide better information for policymakers and educators about student and system performance at the school, district and state levels. In examining the state's data it is evident achievement gaps exist for many of our student subpopulations. The proposed accountability system outlined in Principle 2 will demonstrate a greater focus on at-risk student groups and ensure accountability for decreasing the achievement gap.

Implementation

The ADE transitioned to CCR aligned standards starting with Grades K-2 in 2011-2012 and completed transition of all grades in full implementation of CCSS during the 2013-2014 school year. Specifics of our alignment efforts, work to ensure that ELs and SWD are able to fully access the CCSS, our comprehensive plan for providing teachers and principals with ongoing professional development and support, and more, are outlined below.

Alignment

Following the adoption of the CCSS, the ADE brought together educators from across the state to perform an alignment analysis of the Arkansas Mathematics Curriculum Framework and English Language Arts Curriculum Framework to the CCSS. This work was completed by a committee of educators that included teachers at all grade levels, math and English language arts specialists, other content area specialists, including ELs and special education and faculty from institutions of higher education. To accomplish this work, the committees used the Common Core Comparison Tool created by Achieve to assist in determining the relationship between state standards and the CCSS documents. After this work, the ADE published these crosswalks to illustrate the results of this alignment analysis for Arkansas educators to use in the development of their local curriculum.

Arkansas's current work to support college and career readiness through rigorous standards may be viewed on our website at http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/common-core-state-standards

Special Populations

Ensuring students with disabilities (SWD), English language learners (ELs), economically disadvantaged, and low achieving students access rigorous CCR expectations is an ever-present challenge that is made easier with appropriate tiered response systems. To expand educators' tool boxes of strategies for ensuring all students access rigorous CCR expectations, the ADE is expanding its professional development in Response to Intervention to all schools in Arkansas starting in 2016 through 2020.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is an educational framework designed to identify students who may be at risk for learning or behavior challenges, offer support, and monitor progress (United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2010). RTI is a systematic approach to assist all struggling students—not just special education students. Core curricula developed at the local level and instructional strategies implemented in the classroom serve as the foundation for RTI. The RTI framework includes several components: screening and progress monitoring, formative and summative assessment, and data-based decision making. The fourth component is a three-tiered system of supports. The three-tiered system of supports encompasses core instruction; supplemental, small-group instruction; and specialized, individualized instruction.

A newly-developed system for Arkansas (RTI Arkansas) uses the multi-tiered system and frames it with the other three components. This integrates the system of supports with assessments; building upon the previous work done through the first SPDG grant.

The expectation is that most students, at least 80 percent, will benefit from Tier I instruction, which uses well-differentiated instruction in the core curriculum. Tier II is the second level. Approximately 10–15 percent of students are expected to need the supplemental, small-group instruction of Tier II to benefit from the core instruction and curriculum. Tier III includes specialized, individualized instruction for students with intensive needs. It typically involves small group and/or one-on-one instruction of one to three students who are significantly behind their peers.

Decisions regarding student participation in both Tier II and Tier III are made on a case-by-case basis according to student need. What is necessary to remember for all tiers is that they are flexible. Students may move from one tier to another and back again, depending on their response to the intervention and their progress.

Focusing on how RTI Arkansas will serve students is vital to collective commitment and successful implementation. It's important to understand that RTI Arkansas
- Offers a preventative system of support, rather than a single program;
- Provides a continuum of services, not a lone intervention;
- Focuses on effective, differentiated instruction in the general education classroom, rather than on pre-referral strategies specific to special education; and
- Calls for collaborative effort throughout the district and school to provide immediate instructional and behavioral support to students, as opposed to individual teacher, classroom, or out-of-the-classroom service.

RTI Arkansas has the potential to improve access to CCR standards for all students and to mitigate the nagging achievement gaps. With RTI, schools will have the means to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior and attendance issues by identifying the needs of students and providing services early, as well as assessing and monitoring students effectively and with fidelity. And, because RTI is not a special education initiative, its structure targets improved academic experiences for all students, including at-risk students, culturally-diverse students, students with language differences, and students with disabilities.

This general education initiative calls for collaboration among administration, special- and general-education teachers, specialists, and other education professionals to diligently screen, effectively instruct, immediately intervene, and continuously monitor for maximum student achievement. To realize this potential, Arkansas RTI will include specific professional development support.

RTI Arkansas consists of several professional development modules that can be used for small or large group discussions regarding components of RTI. The modules are located on the AETN Ideas portal with additional resources and a facilitator's guide to assist in the delivery of professional development.
- Module 1: Overview of RTI is completed and ready for schools to use in developing the conceptual knowledge of an effective RTI program. The next two modules will be completed by August.
- Module 2: Leadership is aimed at equipping Arkansas administrators with the skills to lead an RTI program within their district or school.
- Module 3: Multi-tiered System of Support- Handbook is designed for the RTI team to

> identify, organize and assess their current practices regarding instruction and intervention.
- Additional modules will be completed in the fall of 2015 to continue to support schools in the implementation of an effective response to intervention.

Special Education

The goal of CCSS is to ensure all students are prepared for college, careers and life. SWDs are no exception. One tool to assist in the effort of preparing and supporting teachers of SWDs is the program funded through the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). This is a multi-tiered response to intervention framework that facilitates high-quality core instruction for ELs, SWDs and other students as identified.

During the transition to college-and-career-ready standards, a large portion of our professional development for all educators focused on technology innovations and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Assessment items adhered to the UDL principles so they are accessible to all students, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design. This training has been an essential component in providing opportunity for all students, including those with disabilities, ELs, and low-achieving students to achieve success. Arkansas is in the writing process of submitting a new grant application for the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). This grant continues to build on the work that began with the last SPDG grant by developing personnel to establish Response to Intervention systems within the schools.

In addition, coaching assistance will be provided for the Little Rock School District schools in Priority, Focus or Needs Improvement status. The rest of the state will benefit, if awarded the grant, in a statewide multi-level of support system model. Training will be sustainable as it will be developed through online modules designed with the assistance of the Arkansas Cooperative specialists and Academic Institute of Research. The educational cooperatives will be trained to deliver the online modules or provide assistance to support those schools not directly receiving coaching services from the grant.

English Learners

Immigration's impact is often seen first in the classroom. Arkansas's student population has become increasingly more diverse with the state ranking 24th in the nation in terms of diversity. In 1987, the diversity index for Arkansas was 38 percent; in 2006 that increased to 49 percent and continues to rise (*NCES.gov, National Center for Education Statistics*).

Current assessment, data collection and accountability goals for ELs were reviewed for needed changes to transition to CCSS. As members of the PARCC consortium, the state accessed resources, materials and assessments in alignment with ELs linguistic demands. Separate English Language Proficiency standards have been developed by several national consortia, and were reviewed and vetted by a statewide ESL stakeholder committee of practitioners which made a recommendation to the Arkansas Board of Education for adoption in March, 2014. The new English Language Proficiency standards were implemented during the 2014-15 school year. Assessment systems used to measure EL progress against the standards and accountability benchmarks for both English fluency and core content for ELs include the PARCC in 2014-2015 (core content) and 2015-2016 (ELPA21). To date, Arkansas has met Annual Measurement

Achievement Objectives measuring progress and success in reaching English fluency goals for ELs.

Economically Disadvantaged and Low-achieving Students

The planned RTI professional development will serve all students who have factors that put them at risk of not accessing or achieving CCR standards. The multi-level system of support, promoted through the professional development, is designed to provide a structure and tools for schools to implement universal screening to ensure all students that need intervention or support are identified early in the school year. As students' needs are identified and differentiated, individual plans will be developed to include specific interventions or support based on identified needs. Progress monitoring and benchmarking will provide additional data points for teachers and leaders to ensure students are receiving the appropriate level of support and/or challenge to maximize their potential for accessing grade level CCR standards.

In addition, Arkansas is a member of the State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards Assessing Special Education Students (SCASS ASES) and the English Language Learner (ELL) SCASS. Both collaboratives address the inclusion of SWD and ELs in large-scale standards, assessments and accountability systems. The shared efforts of state education personnel, associate members, and partners to improve educational performance of SWD and ELs are further enhanced through shared understanding, policy guidance, research activities and professional development.

Committees of Arkansas educators are worked to design a literacy tool that addresses the skills, understanding and success criteria as required by the rigor of CCSS ELA. Educators identified critical target areas and wrote examples of interventions and/or scaffolds for supporting ELs, SWDs, economically disadvantaged and/or low achieving students during core instruction. The literacy tool is available online and extensive professional development are available to general education teachers and teachers of ELs and SWDs.

Finally, the ADE will direct more comprehensive communication to districts and schools recommending that Title I, EL, and SWD teachers collaborate with general education teachers throughout the implementation of CCSS. Professional development, as noted in the strategic plan, is appropriate for all educators and focuses on the core instruction of CCSS.

Outreach and Dissemination

ADE began the awareness phase of implementation of the CCSS during the 2010-2011 school year. Videos posted on the ADE website, presentations to boards and educators across the state and professional development offerings were some of the approaches used to begin discussions in our state about the new standards. ADE has also engaged the Arkansas Department of Career Education and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education in meetings to discuss the intentions of CCSS and to plan for its implementation, and has shared the stage with both groups in an effort to highlight the collaboration present and support for CCSS.

In November 2010, a representative group of educators, parents, business leaders, school board association members, education support organization representatives, higher education officials, charter school advocates and the Governor's Office policy analyst was formed to serve as the

CCSS Guiding Coalition. The role of the Coalition is to help guide the state's efforts during implementation of the CCSS, to assist the state with communication to educators, parents and members of the public and to assist with the removal of bureaucratic barriers to change, while exerting their influence at key moments that support implementation. A list of Guiding Coalition members is included (Attachment 9).

ADE has developed and provided tools to the state's school districts to assist educators in disseminating information to parents and community members about the CCSS and the impact the standards will have on children's long-term success. Informational brochures for parents of students in elementary, middle school and high school are posted on the CCSS page of the ADE's website (http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/communications/video-gallery/12/common-core-arkansas -Attachment 11)

In October 2011, the CCSS Guiding Coalition and the Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) (in partnership with the ADE, the CCSSO, and Arkansas ASCD) hosted a summit to advance the successful implementation of the CCSS. Educators, school board members, community leaders and higher education partners participated in activities designed to:

- Assess state and local needs to ensure the successful implementation of the CCSS.
- Learn and share successful implementation strategies and practices from national and Arkansas colleagues.
- Understand the importance of a whole child approach to education in setting the foundation for success from kindergarten through college and career choices.
- Begin an effective communication plan to bring awareness of the CCSS to community stakeholders.

At this summit, a video featuring former Governor Mike Beebe, former Commissioner of Education Dr. Tom Kimbrell and others was debuted. A DVD of this video has been provided to all school districts and Arkansas legislators for use in community, civic, parent or other meetings. This video is also accessible for anyone to view at http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/communications/video-gallery/12/common-core-arkansas In March 2012, Arkansas ASCD and ADE continued this effort of outreach by hosting regional summits across our state that aim to advance understanding and awareness of CCSS.

Former Commissioner Kimbrell held meetings with the state's journalists to explain the CCSS and garner support from the media. He has made guest appearances on local television and radio stations to talk about CCSS. Specific information and resources for parents, educators and community members are posted on the CCSS page of the ADE website http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/common-core-state-standards A detailed list of resources may be found in Attachment 11.

Over the past three years, educators phased in the implementation of the CCSS. As indicated on pages 19-22, the ADE surveyed teachers and leaders regarding the implementation, professional development to support implementation, and the constraints that were challenging them in implementing the standards. The ADE responded with support and communication. Concurrent to the survey in the summer of 2013, legislative

hearings were conducted by the Joint Education Committee to seek testimony from the public as to CCSS implementation and concerns that were being heard by legislators. Over the course of the next two years ADE worked to communicate the system of professional development and technical assistance for implementation of CCSS.

After the November 2014 elections, Governor Hutchinson created a Common Core Review Council headed by Lt. Governor Griffin. This council has held public hearings and engaged in a listening tour to gather public input on CCSS. This Council is completing its hearings and will provide a recommendation late summer 2015 on CCSS for future implementation.

Supporting Arkansas Educators

The adoption of the CCSS in English language arts and mathematics by the Arkansas State Board of Education on July 12, 2010, served as a catalyst for the transformation of K-12 education in Arkansas. Because the standards are anchored in the knowledge and skills for all students to be successful in college and career, the effectiveness of their implementation requires all educators to teach in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of common, rigorous standards. This expectation, in turn, required sustained professional development efforts in all Arkansas schools.

To assist schools in their efforts to strengthen the educational opportunities of all students, the ADE continues to provide comprehensive support to the state's educators. Specifically, ADE is provides ing tailored professional development offerings to support teachers in the implementation of CCSS. A comprehensive three-year strategic plan (Attachment 7) was developed completed.

Arkansas completed the following transition plan.

Phase One: Building awareness of the CCSS among educators, including the rationale for having common standards across states

Phase Two: Going deeper into the standards to identify, understand, and implement significant instructional shifts implicit in the mathematics and ELA standards

Phase Three: Focusing on curriculum development/adoption an utilizing the full range of assessment strategies to ensure success for all students

Phase Four: Evaluating progress and making necessary revisions to the strategic plan to ensure success for all students.

Each of the phases required intensive professional learning at the local level. The ADE supported the following elements during transition to CCSS.

Learning Communities: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility and goal alignment.

Leadership: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate and create support systems for

professional learning.

Resources: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Data: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator and system data to plan, assess and evaluate professional learning.

Learning Designs: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Implementation: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Outcomes: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Educators in districts and schools across Arkansas needed systems that incorporate these research-based elements of practice to create a coherent, consistent culture of learning.

A Guide for Professional Development Planning for Implementation of the Common Core State Standards (Attachment 12) laid out in detail the priorities that were the most significant and took both time and effort to fully implement in Arkansas classrooms.

As evidenced by the CCSS Implementation Survey results shared earlier in this document, educators and students benefited – in the short term and long term – from the guidance in these recommendations for professional learning. Through ADE Division of Learning Services' Professional Development Unit training continues to be provided to ensure teachers can teach effectively to the new standards. Significant work still needs to be done, and we continue to work with curriculum directors, instructional leaders, instructional facilitators, and teachers to make thoughtful choices for providing support to districts and schools.

A series of Common Core Institutes were developed and offered statewide with the help of our partners at Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) through Arkansas IDEAS (Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools). Arkansas IDEAS is a one-of-a-kind online resource for our state's teachers and administrators and provides Arkansas educators with the highest quality online professional development available in the country. All professional development opportunities are recorded and available on the Arkansas IDEAS network.

The education service cooperatives, the ADE listserve (which includes all teachers and leaders), and a curriculum directors' listserve are used to notify and promote ADE coordinated and supported professional development and key resources. Approximately 50 specialists are housed in education service cooperatives and STEM centers to support and promote professional development in regards to enhancing teacher development for the purpose of ensuring all

students access an aligned system of rigorous CCR instruction in math, literacy and science. The education service cooperatives use a professional development survey system to collect evaluative information on the professional development provided to educators. This enables the ADE to determine delivery to the classroom level and accountability for Priority and Focus school training.

The ADE and the Arkansas Department of Career Education, in partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), rolled out a three-year state initiative to implement the new Common Core literacy and mathematics standards in grades nine through twelve, with full implementation completed in the 2013-2014 school year. The programs, Literacy Design Collaborative and Mathematics Design Collaborative (LDC/MDC) support CCR instruction at the high school level, integrating formative assessment and just in time intervention. Eight expert content specialists in literacy and mathematics worked with the eight pilot high schools. These expert trainers supported the state in years two and three to develop literacy and mathematics trainers in the state to roll out this initiative to additional high schools. The basic strategy built capacity within schools to implement classroom practices to address the new Common Core literacy and mathematics standards. In 2015, over 160 high schools are participating in LDC/MDC.

Special Considerations for Teachers of EL and SWD

For the past 18 years, the ADE has developed, funded and implemented a two-week summer training institute—the EL Academy. This training opportunity has educated over 2,100 public school and charter school teachers and administrators in effective strategies for working with EL students. Completion of this institute leads to the state's EL teaching certification endorsement. In order to support ADE efforts to reach the milestone of successfully preparing ELs to meet college and career ready standards, ADE transitioned the current EL Academy curriculum to focus specifically on CCSS and the application of teaching strategies and classroom methods that address ELs' needs in mastering CCSS. Furthermore, EL Academy faculty and ADE professional development staff designed and implemented additional training required for continuing professional development on CCSS for teachers working with ELs.

In 2015 ADE put out proposals to host the EL Academy. The University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and Arkansas Tech University won the contract to host the EL Academy program. The program is supported over the entire school year by the Academy Faculty. Participants meet for class time in the summer, and participate in online courses throughout the school year and additional face-to-face trainings on weekends. Participants earn 12 graduate credit hours and upon completion of their Praxis they receive an endorsement on their Teachers License for EL instruction.

Because the standards are anchored in the knowledge and skills for all students to be successful in college and career, the effectiveness of their implementation requires all educators to teach in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of common, rigorous standards. This expectation, in turn, requires sustained professional development efforts for school boards, superintendents, building administrators and teachers in all Arkansas schools on a continuous basis in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Activity	Timeline
Implementation of redesigned EL Academy Training	Ongoing
Implementation of the revised EL component of ACSIP	Ongoing
Implementation of the revised parental outreach for EL families	
Coordination with Career Education on development of bilingual materials and professional development on career ready standards	On-going

The ADE is submitting a new Staff Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) with the primary goal of working with schools, districts, communities and regional partners to maximize struggling learners' academic, behavioral skills and success. To meet that goal, intensive professional development and targeted technical assistance are provided in the areas of literacy and math instruction, intervention, school-wide Positive Behavior Support Systems (PBSS), or intensive cognitive-behavioral interventions, multi-tiered response-to-instruction and intervention and data-based problem solving; parent and community involvement and outreach; and personnel preparation.

With the currently awarded SPDG grant, a web-based mathematics intervention matrix was designed to help educators across the state identify and implement evidence-based instruction and intervention strategies at different levels of need and intensity for students who are underachieving, unsuccessful or unresponsive in the different facets of mathematics across the school-age spectrum. In addition, the SPDG literacy intervention matrix is currently being updated. All of these materials will be organized and guided by state adopted standards.

Several of the most significant accomplishments and data-based outcomes from the first two and one-half years of the SPDG include:

- The establishment of an integrated statewide professional development network;
- Strategic monitoring, planning and implementation of scientifically-based interventions/strategies to meet identified needs of target schools in school improvement status; and
- Aggressive recruitment, training and capacity building to achieve 100 percent fully licensed special education teachers and to increase retention for special education teachers.

An expanded timeline for the SPDG program is included as Attachment 8.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Activities	Timeline
Develop RTI Training Modules (In partnership with AIR, Educational Coops, and Arkansas State University)	2015-2017
Provide MTSS/RTI training to districts/schools throughout the state	2016-2020
Apply for a new Statewide Personnel Development Grant	February 2015
Goals: Establishment of an integrated statewide professional development network Strategic monitoring, planning, and implementation of scientifically-based interventions/strategies to meet identified needs of target schools in school improvement status Aggressive recruitment, training and capacity building to achieve 100% fully licensed special education teachers and increase retention for special education teachers	2009 – 2014 and ongoing
The SPDG's school leadership and strategic planning, response-to-intervention (RTI)/closing the achievement gap (CTAG), and school improvement processes have become more completely embedded into the ADE's Smart Accountability process	Year II 2010 – 2011 and ongoing
SPDG staff continues to serve as full members on the Specialty Support Teams (SST's) that are working out of the ADE's Learning Services Division. SPDG coordinator for math/literacy is working on a national committee with U.S. Department of Education on integrating mathematics instruction and the RTI process	ongoing
A number of data collection and/or evaluation tools or spreadsheets were developed with Public Sector Consultants, our Grant Evaluators, and disseminated as completed.	
SPDG continues relationship with Mashburn Institute (SIM Project—Leadership and Classroom Instructional Strategies)	
The SPDG continues to support special education recruitment and retention activities across the state, as well as financially supporting paraprofessionals working toward their highly qualified status and undergraduate students who are earning licensure in different areas of special education	

Principal Development

All professional development centered around CCSS is open for administrators and teachers, and each school has been urged to attend as a leadership team, with the principal and assistant principal as integral members of this team. Administrators have played a key role in transitioning local curricula to align with CCSS and have worked to ensure TESS implementation includes a focus on CCSS practices and strategies.

Training for TESS provided for all administrators through the professional organizations as well as regional educational cooperatives (See Principal 3 for details). Administrators have the opportunity to lead teachers through a monumental shift in evaluation practices and assist their staff in the implementation of this new system of evaluation and support. The ADE has been responsive to requests to integrate standards and assessment practices into the new teacher and leader evaluation frameworks in a intentional manner. The training materials for TESS are available at http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/office-of-educator-effectiveness

The ADE funds and supports career professional development for administrators and teacher leaders. The Arkansas Leadership Academy creates learning opportunities where school administrators can gain the skills, knowledge and tools to be more effective facilitators of the change process. The Arkansas Leadership Academy and the Master Principal Program were legislated to build the leadership capacity in schools and communities in the state (Attachment 13). The Master Principal Program, Assistant Principal Institute, Superintendent Institute, Central Office Leader Institute, Teacher Leader Institute and Team Leadership Institute focus on the five performance areas of Leading and Managing Change, Creating and Living the Vision, Mission and Beliefs, Developing Deep Knowledge of Teaching and Learning, Building and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships, and Building and Sustaining Accountability Systems. Participants engage in sessions focused on leading students and adults to higher levels of learning and achievement through the continuous improvement process. CCR standards and next generation principles have been integrated into the Academy's programs to provide alignment across these efforts and with ADE professional development efforts.

The ADE is collaborating with Arkansas institutes of higher education, educational foundations, and the National Center for School Turnaround to develop a registry and turnaround principal program and pipeline to further build leader capacity for placement in high need schools.

High Quality Instructional Materials

Arkansas is has been a governing state in the PARCC consortium. PARCC's goal is to provide guidance and support that will help teachers bring the CCSS to life in their classrooms. To support educators in their efforts to provide all students, including ELs and SWD, a first class education, PARCC developed a number of tools and resources aligned to the CCSS and the PARCC assessments.

The tools and resources have provided opportunities for ADE to engage, involve, and empower educators around the implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments. The development and dissemination of these resources was built into Arkansas's communications and engagement plan. This helped ensure ADE was providing district leaders, administrators, school leaders and classroom teachers with regular, hands-on experiences with PARCC tools and resources. All

tools and resources available-are released at http://PARCConline.org

Arkansas is an active member of the Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP), for the purpose of developing tools and processes to identify the quality of instructional materials aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The EQuIP team is a diverse group of curriculum leaders from Higher Education and K-12 schools. We have been working with our member States to:

- Use a common rubric and rating scale to determine the alignment and quality of current instructional materials (tasks, lessons, units) in order to identify how they might need to be modified to better address the CCSS.
- Identify exemplars to increase the supply of high quality instructional materials (tasks, lessons, units) aligned to the CCSS that will be available to elementary, middle and high school teachers across the EQuIP states.
- Learn the tools and processes to build the capacity of educators across EQuIP states to evaluate the quality of instructional materials for use in their schools/classrooms.
- Learn how the Quality Review Process can be embedded as a professional development activity in the state's long-term implementation plan for the CCSS.

In addition, PARCC developed model instructional units that include a coherent set of tools including information about assessment results, formative activities, professional development materials and communications materials. The consortia developed online modules to support states and districts in:

1. Evaluating open-source and commercially-produced instructional materials for quality and alignment to the CCSS and PARCC;
2. Adapting previously successful materials to be aligned to the CCSS and PARCC; and
3. Creating their own high quality instructional materials aligned to the CCSS and PARCC.

The EQuIP team assisted in building capacity within the state's regional educational cooperatives' teacher center leaders. Professional development on these tools and resources has been offered during statewide curriculum institutes.

Expansion of College-Level Courses, Dual Enrollment Courses, or Accelerated Learning Opportunities

Arkansas is positioned well for the focus on college and career ready standards through CCSS. Prior to the adoption of CCSS the state was taking steps to ensure its students were college and career ready. In 2004 Arkansas was one of only 3 states to adopt college- and career- ready graduation requirements. In 2005 the state joined the ADP Assessment Consortium in the creation of a rigorous Algebra II exam, administered for the first time in 2008. In 2006, Arkansas aligned high school graduation standards with college admission requirements. Arkansas student participation in advanced placement has quadrupled since 2001.

Arkansas schools have been nationally recognized for increasing participation in Advanced Placement by the College Board. In 2011, 21,280 Arkansas high school students took one or more AP courses. That's was an increase of 6.5 percent over the previous year. Those students took

36,421 AP exams, which was an 8.7 percent increase. Arkansas student participation in advanced placement quadrupled from 2001 to 2011. In 2014, 25, 547 students completed AP courses and 44,424 AP exams were completed by Arkansas students.

Most notably, Arkansas experienced a significant increase in the number of tests receiving a grade of 3, 4, or 5, which are the marks generally allowed for college credit. There were 10,949 such scores, which is an increase of 12.3 percent. In 2014, 32% of students completing an AP exam received a score of 3, 4, or 5. This is an increase from 30% in 2011.

The gains cut across demographic lines:
--Among white students, the number of test takers increased 6.2 percent and scores of 3, 4, and 5 increased 14.7 percent.
--Among black students, the number of test takers increased 7.4 percent and scores of 3, 4 and 5 increased 15.4 percent.
--Among Hispanic students, the number of test takers increased 19.9 percent and scores of 3, 4, and 5 increased 12.4 percent.

Arkansas is the only state that requires every school district to offer at least one AP course in each of the four core subjects — mathematics, English, social studies, and science. Arkansas also picks up the cost of each AP exam as an incentive for students to take AP. In all, 21,280 Arkansas high school students took an AP test last school year. That's an increase of 6.5 percent over the previous year. Those students took 36,421 AP exams, which is an 8.7 percent increase.

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS), an affiliate of the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), has funded an Advanced Placement Training and Incentive program in 30 schools that began in August 2008. Under a competitive request for proposal process issued in August 2008 and 2009, AAIMS invited schools to apply for participation in the program. The goals of the program are to strengthen the teaching of the AP® mathematics, science, and English courses and to build enrollment and increase the number of students taking and earning qualifying scores on AP® exams in these subjects.

A primary goal of NMSI and AAIMS is to increase the number of students taking and scoring 3 or higher on AP math, science and English exams. AAIMS is required to implement proven strategies to increase significantly the number of students taking and passing Advanced Placement courses and exams. These strategies were developed by Advanced Placement Strategies, Inc. of Texas. In the schools they serve, over a five year period, on average the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP English has tripled, the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP mathematics exams has quadrupled, and the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP science exams has quintupled. The strategies included extensive formal and informal training of AP and Pre-AP teachers, additional time on task for students, financial incentives based on academic results, and cultivation of lead teachers to provide leadership to the Program in their schools by mentoring other AP and Pre-AP Teachers.

During the 2011 legislative session, a bill was passed that required establishment of a statewide transfer system for core courses among all public postsecondary institutions, resulting in the creation of the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS). This system contains information about the transferability of more than 90 general education courses within Arkansas public colleges and universities. Students are guaranteed the transfer of applicable credits and equitable

treatment in the application of general education credits for admissions and degree requirements. Students may complete specified general education courses anywhere in the public system, as well as many courses in the degree/major that have been pre-identified for transfer. Among the state's high schools, 22,354 students are currently taking advantage of concurrent credit courses. Students could be enrolled in multiple courses.

Although the impetus for this project was a legislative directive, there is now a growing interest in expanding the project to include Career Technical Education (CTE) courses. With so many existing individual articulation agreements and concurrent-credit possibilities in CTE courses, secondary CTE and Division of Workforce Education (CWE) will work collaboratively to establish an integrated system of statewide articulation agreements between secondary and postsecondary institutions. ADHE already has begun discussions with postsecondary chief academic officers regarding expansion of the ACTS system to include CTE courses. Student participation in dual enrollment and concurrent credit courses has increased since Arkansas first submitted for ESEA Flexibility.

On August 16, 2011, STEM Works, the former Governor's initiative to increase knowledge of science, technology, engineering and math was announced. This program's aim is to educate more K-12 students in the fields that need the most qualified workers and have the most potential for expanding the state's economy. Another project goal is equipping Arkansas colleges with the tools they need to better educate future K-12 teachers in these core subjects.

Fifteen school districts and one technical center were designated by the cabinet to participate in either Project Lead the Way or the New Tech Network. The New Tech high school model integrates STEM education and extensive project-based learning throughout the curriculum. Project Lead the Way includes several introductory courses in engineering or biomedical sciences that show how basic concepts taught in the classroom are used in the work world.

In the 2015 legislative session, Governor Hutchinson was successful in promoting a computer science initiative (Act 187) that will provide students across Arkansas with the opportunity to take a computer science course. All high schools in Arkansas are required to offer a computer science course by 2015-2016 either face-to-face or through virtual means. This will provide students with equitable opportunities to pursue interests in these areas.

Arkansas has capitalized on technological advancements to increase students' access to rigorous content and high quality instruction. Act 1280 of 2013 expanded course access and digital learning opportunities for all Arkansas Public School students (http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/rules/Current/Digital_Learning_Rules_-_FINAL.pdf). Virtual Arkansas is a state-led effort to provide high quality digital courses to public school students. http://virtualarkansas.org/ LEAs that do not offer advanced-level courses prior to high school may register students for high quality courses offered through Virtual Arkansas, thus expanding opportunities and removing geographic barriers to CCR preparation.

The accelerated learning opportunities described above will garner more student participation as schools implement CCSS. The ADE envisions more learning opportunities of this nature to be offered as more students become college and career ready. To further the transparency of these

efforts, ADE began reporting the College Going Rate and College Credit Accumulation for Arkansas K-12 students entering Arkansas's higher education institutions on the ADE's annual K-12 School Performance Report and the State Report Card available on the ADE Data Center (https://adesrc.arkansas.gov/ReportCard/View?lea=AR&schoolYear=2014).

Coordination Across State Agencies

We are very fortunate in our state to have a long-standing, strong and positive working relationship with our Department of Higher Education and our Institutions of Higher Education. Higher education plays a vital role in the success of the CCSS and CCR. No issue looms larger for higher education than teacher preparation and professional development.

The ADE has worked with higher education to develop course competencies for teacher preparation programs that align to CCSS.

The ADE works with higher education institutes to conduct research on issues of teaching and learning the CCSS, teacher quality, and the implementation of the CCSS.

Faced with the need to create a competitive workforce and dramatically improve the quality of our education system, Arkansas has embraced an aggressive policy agenda to better prepare students for postsecondary education and careers. In doing so, we have made it a priority to better align and coordinate services, resources, and data across state agencies that serve children. We realize that a true 21st century education for students requires that state and local governments dismantle the obstacles to real collaboration between and among school systems and the social, health and safety support services in our system.

Higher education faculty and administrative leaders in Arkansas have been actively engaged in PARCC Higher Education Leadership Team Meetings; Joint K-12 and Higher Education Leadership Team Meetings; PARCC Transition and Implementation Institutes; K-12 and Higher Education Design Meetings; Advisory Committee on College Readiness (ACCR) Meetings; and Technical Advisory Groups – Mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy. Southern Arkansas University is partnering with PARCC to determine whether PARCC's college and career ready score information can be used for admissions purposes. Representatives from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville have participated on PARCC working groups for data processing, research and psychometrics.

The Arkansas Educator Leader Cadre (ELC) Team has played a major role in helping build expertise in the CCSS and PARCC. The ELC Team is made up of K-16 educators who accomplish the goal of building statewide expertise through a combination of face-to-face meetings, on-line modules, and professional development webinars. Cadre members continue to discuss best practices around the use and implementation of the PARCC Model Content Frameworks and PARCC item prototypes, review sample tasks and model instructional units and identify ways of disseminating information through the network on how the PARCC resources can inform classroom practice.

> The Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) is a higher education partner with ADE housed in the College of Education and Health Professions at UAF. ALA provides leadership

development for teachers, assistant principals, principals, central office administrators, superintendents and boards of education. Additionally, ALA provides 25 low performing schools within 11 districts leadership and instructional capacity-building professional development and support. Working directly with schools from within higher education enhances the ability for pre-service programs to stay informed regarding practitioner issues, needs and challenges. David Cook, ALA director, communicates between agencies to inform pre-service and practicing educator development programs.

- The College of Education at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) in Conway partnered with ADE to provide math education professors to develop professional development programs to assist Arkansas's teachers and leaders through the major shifts in mathematics with the CCSS and implementation of instructional and assessment strategies aligned with CCSS. This partnership provides the benefit of informing pre-service programs at UCA regarding important transitions in instruction for CCSS.
- The UAF hosts an annual Literacy Symposium for area teachers and pre-service teachers to increase their literacy content knowledge. The focus of the Literacy Symposium 2012 is transition to CCSS in literacy.

Increase Rigor

Increasing rigor in the classroom can be good for a variety of reasons, including better-equipping students for success on statewide assessments and with postsecondary opportunities. However, increasing academic challenge without increasing student failures requires balancing challenge with support. Arkansas has taken critical steps to prepare all students for college and careers and has made a commitment to help support schools in mastering the balancing act by focusing on best practices to support rigor which include, but are not limited to: examining instruction, classroom-based assessment, curriculum coherence, expectations for student work, grading practices, course taking or grouping patterns, and student support. Collaboration among teachers is also essential for practices that support rigor.

Transition to New Assessments

The transition to the CCSS preceeded the next-generation assessment system.

With over a third of all students requiring remedial education upon enrollment in our nation's public two- and four-year institutions of higher education (IHEs), it is clear there is a disconnect between the knowledge and skills students have when they graduate from high school and what they need for success in credit-bearing college courses. A next-generation assessment system aims to eliminate this disconnect by measuring whether students are on track to graduate ready for college and careers. Students who do not meet CCR performance levels will receive supports and interventions to address their readiness gaps, well before they enter their first year of college.

Transitioning to the CCSS and related next-generation assessments provided the ideal opportunity to think about how educators are trained on the new standards and related assessments.

Arkansas developed a strategic plan to transition to the CCSS and next-generation assessments. The Arkansas plan articulates a vision of success, describing in detail various levels of alignment and implementation, identifying best practices for alignment and implementation of

standards, creating tools and methods to help districts and schools design an aligned system for learning, and incorporating points of view from a broad cross-section of stakeholders.

For several years, the ADE has conducted training for special education teachers in the use of accommodations as well as in the administration of alternative assessments for special education students. Special education teachers will continue to receive this training aligned with the CCSS.

Waiver 14 Justification (Removing Double Testing of Advanced Students in Grades 7 & 8)

Arkansas Standards for Accreditation governing public schools and school districts address the requirements for students to receive a Smart Core diploma (http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/rules/Pending/2-3-15_Standards_Rules_for_public_comment_1406.pdf)

The Rules read as follows:

> *14.02 Specifically, for the graduating class of 2013-2014, and all graduating classes thereafter, the required twenty-two (22) units, at a minimum, shall be taken from the "Smart Core" curriculum or from the "Core" curriculum. Only one (1) of the required units may be in a physical education course. All students will participate in the Smart Core curriculum unless the parent or guardian waives the student's right to participate. In such case of a waiver, the student will be required to participate in Core. The required twenty-two (22) units, at a minimum, are to be taken from the Smart Core or Core as follows:*
>
> *SMART CORE - Sixteen (16) units*
>
> *English - four (4) units - 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th*
> > *Mathematics - four (4) units or three (3) units of Math and one (1) unit of Computer Science. [All students must take a mathematics course in grade 11 or grade 12 and complete Algebra II.] Comparable concurrent credit college courses may be substituted where applicable. Algebra I or Algebra A & B (Grades 7-8 or 8-9) Geometry or Investigating Geometry or Geometry A & B (Grades 8-9 or 9-10) Algebra II Fourth math unit range of options: (choice of: Transitions to College Math, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Trigonometry, Statistics, Computer Math, Algebra III, or an Advanced Placement math)*
> > *Natural Science - three (3) units with lab experience chosen from Physical Science, Biology or Applied Biology/Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics or Principles of Technology I & II or PIC Physics or two (2) units with lab experience and one (1) unit of Computer Science.*

The Smart Core is the default curriculum and the typical curriculum for students taking advanced mathematics courses in early grades. Fewer than 5% of students complete less than the 16 required Smart Core credits annually. All public schools and school districts are required to teach at a minimum six mathematics courses in within its high schools' required 38 units. These six units include Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, a unit of Pre-Calculus mathematics which includes trigonometry, and other options as approved by the department. Some advanced Grade 7 and 8 students take Algebra I and Geometry before entering high school and these courses are counted as high school graduation credits. These students are on track to complete AP Calculus AB

and/or AP Calculus BC. Approximately nine percent of students complete AP Calculus AB annually. These students must begin high school course work prior to Grade 9 to be on track to do so.

Arkansas's implementation of rigorous CCR standards and Smart Core graduation requirements help ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to be prepared for and take advanced-level courses prior to high school. LEAs that offer courses for high school credit at the middle level are required to attain course approval to ensure the course offerings match the rigor of a high school level course. The course approval process is delineated for LEAs on the ADE website at http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/curriculum-and-instruction/course-approvals. Act 1280 of 2013 expanded course access and digital learning opportunities for all Arkansas Public School students (http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/rules/Current/Digital_Learning_Rules_-_FINAL.pdf). Virtual Arkansas is a state-led effort to provide high quality digital courses to public school students. http://virtualarkansas.org/ LEAs that do not offer advanced-level courses prior to high school may register students for high quality course offered through Virtual Arkansas, thus expanding opportunities and removing geographic barriers to CCR preparation.

Rigorous state mandated assessments aligned with Common Core Standards are administered to students participating in Algebra I and Geometry at Grades 7 and 8. After considerable discussion, the TAC recommended that students be tested only in the math course in which they are enrolled rather than completing the course assessment as well as the grade level assessment requirement in 2014 and previous years. This would avoid double testing. The Algebra I and Geometry scores of these advanced students are counted for accountability at the school that provided the instruction.

In 2014, approximately one percent of students (314) who completed required Algebra I End of Course Exams were in Grade 7 and approximately 20 percent of students (6,477) who completed Algebra I End of Course Exams were in Grade 8. These students were expected to have been enrolled in advanced Geometry courses in 2015 in Grades 8 and 9, respectively. Students enrolled in Geometry, regardless of grade level, were required to complete the PARCC Geometry assessment in 2015. Thus, 99 percent of students were expected to have at least one mathematics assessment at the high school level and these assessment scores are included in federal accountability.

Approximately one percent of students annually are on track to complete Geometry prior to Grade 9. These students are expected to be assessed for CCR. Effective for the 2014-2015 grade 9 cohort and beyond, and mandated under A.C.A 6-16-2012, "Before a student's graduation from high school, a high school shall assess the student's college readiness based on the statewide college and career readiness standards determined and implemented by the State Board of Education." The Algebra II assessment is designed to be the College and Career Readiness assessment. If a district elects not to administer the Algebra II PARCC assessment, it must provide students the opportunity to participate in another identified readiness assessment.

For 2014-2015 the ADE administered PARCC in grades 3-10 ELA, grades 3-8 mathematics, Algebra I, and Geometry to meet state and federal assessment requirements. The grade 11 ELA and Algebra II assessments were optional at the district level.

Prior to the 2014-2015 K-12 implementation of Common Core curriculum and the transition to PARCC assessments, to meet accountability requirements in literacy under ESEA, Arkansas had only one end of level (grade 11) high school ELA College and Career Readiness assessment. High school math accountability requirements have been met through Algebra I (if taken in HS) and Geometry EOCs. 2015 base year targets may be set using the grade 10 ELA and Geometry EOC to meet ESEA requirements for CCR. Grade 11 ELA and Algebra II assessments would be required in 2016 and the ADE could reset targets for high schools in the second year of PARCC. Arkansas will administer the PARCC assessment or another assessment that complies with USDE requirements in 2016 and beyond.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) collaborated with Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and other state education agencies to create a transition course for math and literacy. These courses, Math Ready and Literacy Ready, are complete and available for districts in the 2015-2016 school year. These courses were created online for a blended environment and require a teacher certified in the content area. Math Ready and Literacy Ready are designed to prepare students for college level algebra and freshman composition upon successful completion. Some schools piloted Math Ready or Literacy Ready in the spring of 2015. In partnership with SREB, over 350 Arkansas high school teachers are participating in Math Ready and Literacy Ready in July 2015. In collaboration with Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the ADE and SREB will gather data from the first year of implementation to determine whether students completing these courses to a satisfactory degree may use these courses in place of college remedial coursework.

<u>Other Activities</u>

Arkansas is participated as a lead state in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). During the Next Generation Science Standards development process, 26 states provided leadership to the writers and to other states as they consider adoption of the NGSS, and address common issues involved in adoption and implementation of the standards. This should also tie in to current and future goals of having our students ready for college and careers.

Arkansas has adopted Arkansas K-8 science standards grounded in the NGSS. Arkansas is the 14th state to adopt science standards grounded in the NGSS. Arkansas teachers made Arkansas clarification statements to specific standards. During the 2015-2016 Arkansas high school teachers are making clarification statements and completing the high school science standards which will go before the Arkansas Board of Education the summer of 2016.

Implementation
K-4 science standards will be implemented in the 2016-17 school year, Grades 5-8 standards will be implemented in 2017-18, and high school standards will be implemented in 2018-19.

1.C   DEVELOP AND ADMINISTER ANNUAL, STATEWIDE, ALIGNED, HIGH-QUALITY ASSESSMENTS THAT MEASURE STUDENT GROWTH

Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide evidence corresponding to the option selected.

Option A	Option B	Option C
☒ The SEA is participating in one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition. *i.* Attach the State's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under that competition. (Attachment 14)	☐ The SEA is not participating in either one of the two State consortia that received a grant under the Race to the Top Assessment competition, and has not yet developed or administered statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. *i.* Provide the SEA's plan to develop and administer annually, beginning no later than the 2014–2015 school year, statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs, as well as set academic achievement standards for those assessments.	☐ The SEA has developed and begun annually administering statewide aligned, high-quality assessments that measure student growth in reading/language arts and in mathematics in at least grades 3-8 and at least once in high school in all LEAs. *i.* Attach evidence that the SEA has submitted these assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review or attach a timeline of when the SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review.

Arkansas has been a member and governing state of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which was formed to create an historic assessment system to provide more services and supports to students and teachers than were currently available. The initial memorandum of understanding with PARCC can be found in Attachment 14. Arkansas students completed the first year of next-generation assessments in 2014-2015.

Act 1074 of the 90th General Assembly requires the State Board of Education to not renew its role

as a governing state or its participation with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or enter into any contract or agreement in excess of one year related to statewide assessment for public school students after the 2015-2016 school year or any year thereafter. This same Act required the State Board of Education to take into consideration assessment recommendations made by the Governor's Council on Common Core Review.

On June 8, 2015 Governor Hutchinson accepted the Council's early recommendation to enter into negotiations with ACT/ ACT Aspire for the 2015-2016 school year. On June 11th the State Board of Education did not approve a motion to enter into negotiations with ACT/ACT Aspire. The State Board of Education approved a motion to enter into a one year contract to administer the PARCC for the 2015-2016 school year.

At this time, the ADE has not entered into an assessment contract for the 2015-2016 school year. The timeline for the resolution of this matter is still unclear. The ADE will work with the State Board of Education and the Governor to resolve this matter. Arkansas will administer either the PARCC or another compliant assessment in 2015-2016. Should another assessment be selected, the ADE will work with the State Board of Education and the Governor's office to ensure the assessment meets the requirements set forth by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and supply the appropriate documentation to the USDE. At that time, the ADE will submit an amendment to its ESEA Flexibility renewal accompanied by the required documentation.

The documentation will include the following: (1) The process and timeline for development of test blueprints and item specifications; (2) the review and selection of items for inclusion in the assessments; (3) scaling and scoring procedures to be used; (4) test administration procedures, including selection and use of appropriate accommodations; (5) data analyses proposed to document validity and reliability of the assessments; (6) an independent evaluation of alignment of the assessments with the State's college- and career-ready standards; (7) the process and timeline for setting college- and career-ready achievement standards and the method and timeline to validate those achievement standards; and (8) meaningful report formats to communicate results to students, parents, and educators.

PRINCIPLE 2: STATE-DEVELOPED DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A   DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A STATE-BASED SYSTEM OF DIFFERENTIATED RECOGNITION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND SUPPORT

2.A.i   Provide a description of the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system that includes all the components listed in Principle 2, the SEA's plan for implementation of the differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system no later than the 2012–2013 school year, and an explanation of how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system is designed to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

Overview

The primary goal of Arkansas's proposed Differentiated Accountability, Recognition and Tiered-Support System (DARTSS) is to continuously improve educational access and opportunity such that all students attain college and/or career success. The 2012 approved ESEA flexibility proposal delineated a comprehensive and coherent plan to integrate CCR curriculum, instruction and assessment efforts into a revised differentiated recognition, accountability and tiered-support system.

In Arkansas's initial application for ESEA Flexibility, the ADE responded to stakeholder input by simplifying the accountability and reporting system with the goal of streamlining disparate state and federal accountability systems. ESEA Renewal will allow Arkansas to come closer to realizing the goal of a unitary, focused system of accountability, recognition, and tiered support informed by enhanced information systems and feedback loops (Figure 3, repeated).

Accountability System and Feedback Loop

Exemplary Schools

Differentiated ACSIP and Multi-Tiered Response to Intervention Framework

All Other Schools

| Achieving | Needs Improvement |

Differentiated ACSIP and Multi-Tiered Response to Intervention Framework

Focus Schools

Differentiated ACSIP and Multi-Tiered Response to Intervention Framework

Targeted Change Interventions

Priority Schools

Differentiated ACSIP and Multi-Tiered Response to Intervention Framework

Systemic Change Interventions

Accountability for Implementation and Change in Practice (ACSIP and TESS)
Accountability for Student Performance (Student Assessment System)

Professional Development/Technical Assistance for CCR Standards

Ensuring access and opportunity for all students, including at-risk students, English learners and students with special needs.

Figure 3 repeated. Differentiated Accountability and Feedback Loop

Arkansas's Differentiated Accountability, Recognition, and Tiered Support System (DARTSS) has matured since the 2012 proposal through data- and stakeholder-informed amendments. Several notable accomplishments have resulted from the implementation of DARTSS since its approval in 2012. These include deeper integration of research and technology to support informed decision-making, increased coherence of the learning, assessment and accountability systems that support student learning and teacher effectiveness, and implementation of a letter grade school rating system that further differentiates schools strengths and challenges for parents and community stakeholders.

Through Flex Renewal the Agency proposes to refine the system further. These refinements are anchored in data and responsive to lessons learned by the Agency in early implementation of DARTSS, stakeholder feedback on DARTSS, and state statute.

Figure 9 illustrates the integration of comprehensive elements of Arkansas's proposed CCR standards, assessment, accountability and teacher/leader effectiveness systems through DARTSS

The timeline highlights the transitions expected at the time of the proposed ESEA

2013-2014

Implmentation of CCSS all grades.

Arkansas CRTs used for performance and growth accountability with

Option C AMOs.

Option C Graduation Rate AMOs.

Implementation of TESS. Teacher median growth scores available to teachers.

2014-2015:

Implementation of CCSS all grades.

PARCC Exam used for reporting performance against AMOs using 20th percentile rank of school performance in 2015 & existing Graduation Rate AMOs.

Accountability status paused.

Implementation of TESS. Growth Scores unavailable for first year of new tests.

2015-2016

Implementation of CCSS all grades.

PARCC Exam used for performance accountabiliy using 2015 baseline for individualized AMOs , growth against AMOs using 20th percentile rank of school growth in 2016 & existing Graduation Rate AMOs.

Accountability status deterimined.

Implementation of TESS. Teacher median growth scores avail able to teachers.

2016-2017:

Implementation of CCSS all grades.

PARCC Exam used for performance accountabiliy using 2015 baseline for individualized AMOs , growth against AMOs using 20th percentile rank of school growth in 2016 & existing Graduation Rate AMOs.

Accountability status deterimined.

Implementation of TESS. Teacher median growth scores avail able to teachers.

Figure 9. Arkansas's proposed accountability determination transition.

The transition of Arkansas's accountability system was carefully choreographed under ESEA Flexibility to minimize confusion during the transition to CCR standards and assessments. DARTSS was admittedly parsimonious and the revised system was an integration of simplifications to the former AYP determinations.

Comprehensive Elements of DARTSS

Data-informed continuous improvement starts with ambitious and achievable goals for schools and districts and transparency in accountability for meeting the goals. With its approved ESEA Flexibility, the ADE holds all schools accountable for reducing by half the proficiency gap or growth gap, and the graduation rate gap for high schools within six years (Option C). School-based and district-based AMOs provide individualized and achievable progress targets for schools and districts similar to growth or progress targets for students that are based on prior achievement.

Arkansas students have made progress across the board, yet statewide achievement gaps for some students persist. These AMOs, based on prior performance, require all schools to reduce the achieveme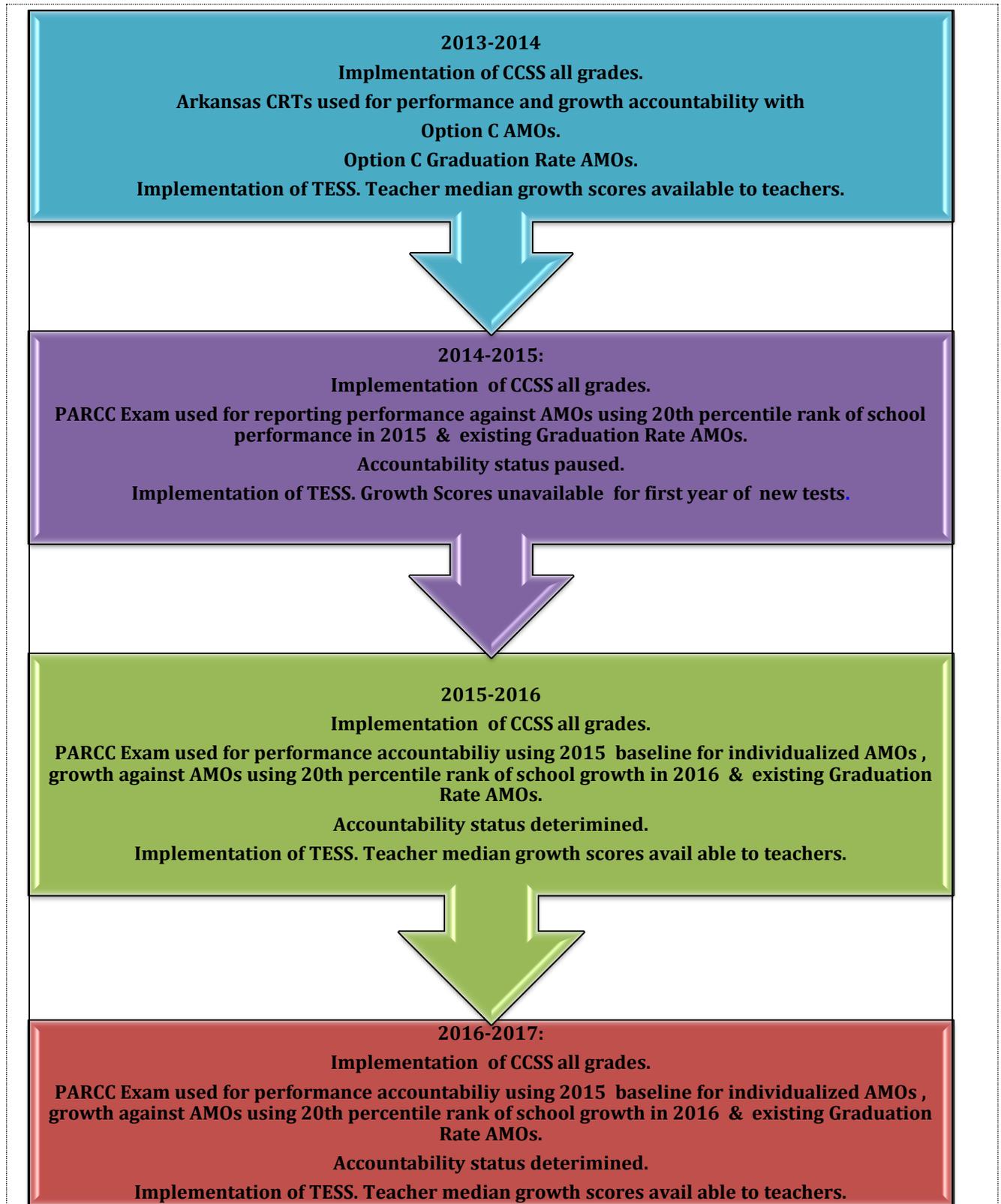nt gap for all students and the ESEA subgroups within their schools. Arkansas proposes to transition to new performance-based AMOs once new assessment results are available for modeling and analysis. Arkansas proposes to set new prior performance-based AMOs with Option C in 2016 such that schools that are furthest behind are required to make greater gains in the same time frame. In addition to using individualized AMOs for schools, ADE proposes to use the A-F letter grade system enacted as Act 696 of 2013, to differentiate further among schools that are not Priority or Focus Schools.

Figure 3, the accountability and feedback loop, illustrates the major elements of DARTSS. Schools are broadly classified as Achieving or Needs Improvement based on the modified annual progress decision rules and AMOs approved in 2012. Exemplary schools will continue to be identified annually. Focus and Priority Schools will be identified from among all schools using data from 2012 through 2014 data. A differentiated system of incentives, support and interventions will serve as a statewide multi-tiered framework to guide the ADE's response to schools' and districts' classifications. Sections 2.C. through 2.F. detail the differentiated incentives, supports and interventions for each classification of schools. Section 2.G. explains the intended integration of these elements for State, district and school capacity building. A strategic plan for statewide support and professional development to facilitate implementation of CCSS, PARCC assessments and TESS provides a foundational component for transitioning to CCR standards and assessments under DARTSS. TESS and the ADE's continuous improvement planning and monitoring processes (ACSIP) are necessary feedback loops within the system, and will inform leadership at school, district and state levels regarding fidelity of implementation as well as impact on student achievement.

Arkansans asked for a simpler accountability and reporting system that clearly indicates schools' progress in meeting student performance and growth goals yet maintains the focus on all students. Arkansas's 2012 ESEA Flexibility proposal was an important step in streamlining disparate state and federal accountability and reporting systems into a unitary, focused system that meets the needs of stakeholders to ensure schools are providing all students with access to and achievement of college and career readiness standards. Under the existing approved ESEA Flexibility proposal Arkansas was approved for broadly classifying schools as Achieving or Needs Improvement based on meeting AMOs in performance or growth and graduation rates (high school) for All Students and a Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) within each school. The TAGG includes students with membership in any or all of the following ESEA subgroups: economically disadvantaged students, ELs and SWD.

Arkansas reduced the minimum N to 25 in the 2012 approved ESEA DARTSS ensured more schools serving sufficient numbers of students in ESEA subgroups are included in the accountability model. The use of the TAGG for accountability increased accountability for at risk students over and above reducing the minimum N from 40 to 25. Specifically, reducing the minimum N to 25 and using the TAGG in accountability increased the inclusion of specific subgroups, African Americans, ELs and SWD in particular, and increases increased the number of schools accountable for students in the ESEA subgroups. Annual School Report Cards continue to report schools' ESEA subgroups' performance, as well as schools' progress in meeting their AMOs for All Students, TAGG students and the ESEA subgroups. These determinations serve to activate a multi-tiered support and intervention framework based on schools' needs as identified through the data.

At the time of Arkansas's initial ESEA Flexibility proposal NCLB and state accountability requirements resulted in general improvement trends in mathematics and literacy through 2011 as measured by Arkansas's criterion-referenced assessments (Figure 2.) Updated performance charts indicate the following.

- Literacy performance improved significantly in 2012 compared to prior years, and although schools demonstrated a slight dip in literacy, results are higher in 2014 than in 2011, the baseline for ESEA Flexibility.
- Students' mathematics scores show a larger drop in 2013 and 2014 which may represent specific and significant construct differences between CCR and Arkansas's prior standards in mathematics at particular grade levels.
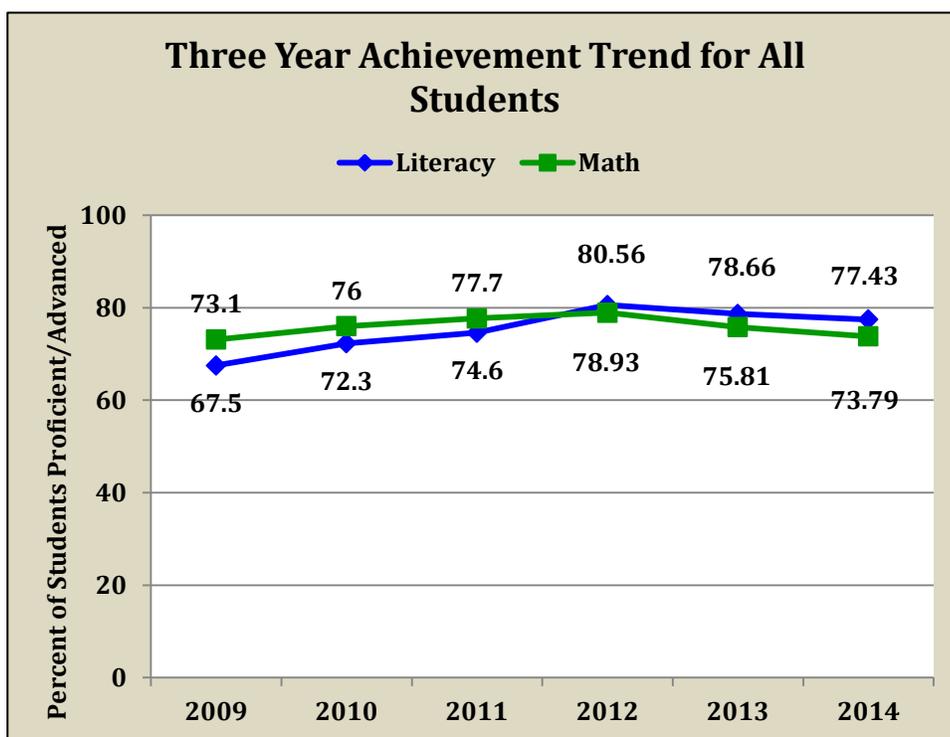
Figure 2 repeated. Six-year achievement trends for all students in math and literacy.

As intended by NCLB, disaggregation of these trends revealed large achievement gaps for several subgroups of students (Figures 2.4 and 2.5) At the time of Arkansas's initial ESEA Flexibility proposal

these subgroups demonstrated improvement trends, yet not at the differential rates necessary to close these gaps, except for ELs and Hispanic students. By 2014, achievement gaps in literacy have noticeably decreased and achievement gaps in mathematics are marginally smaller (Figures 4 and 5) even as teachers and students have transitioned to a new set of CCR standards.
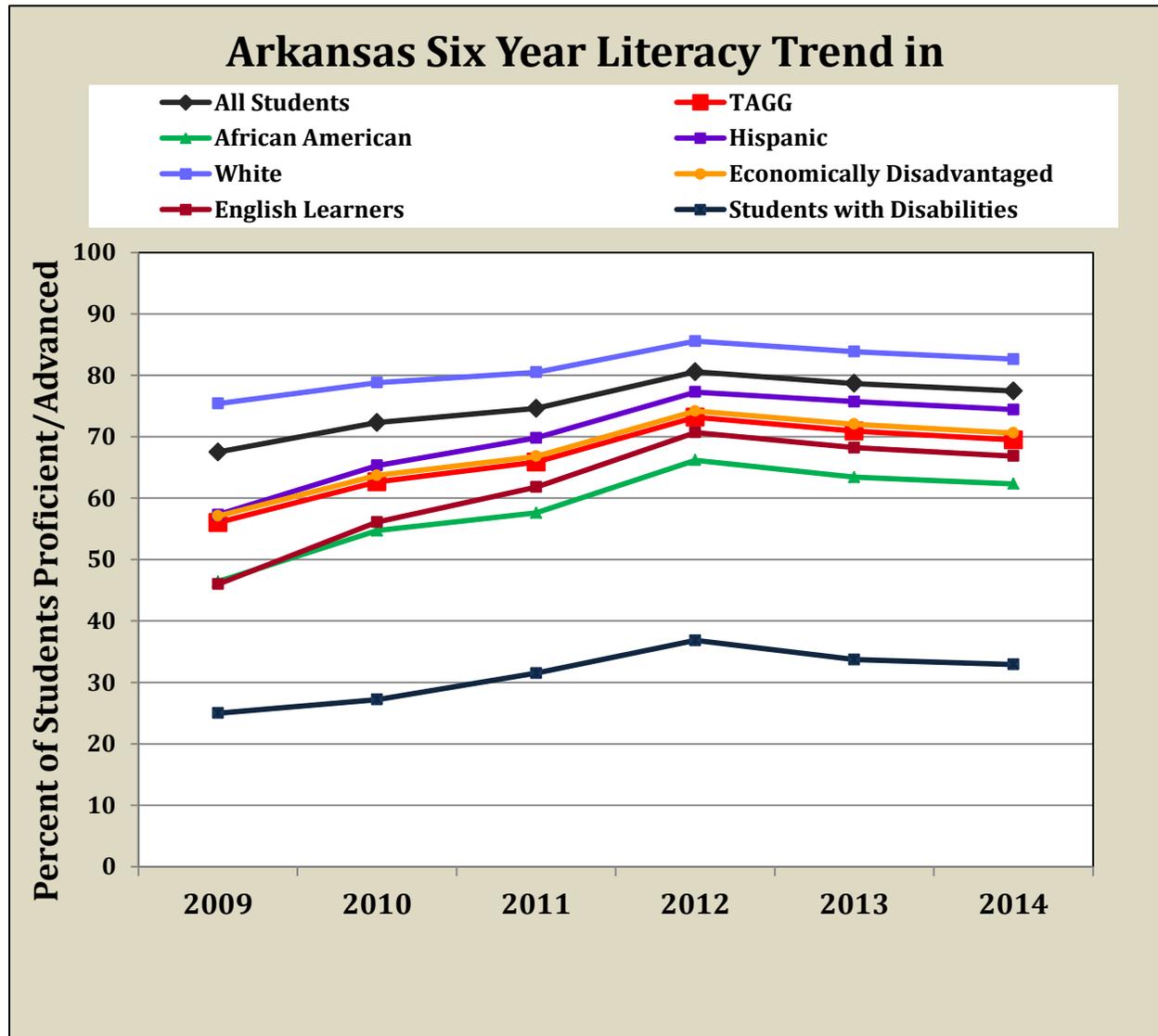
Figure 4 repeated. Six-year literacy trends by ESEA subgroups.
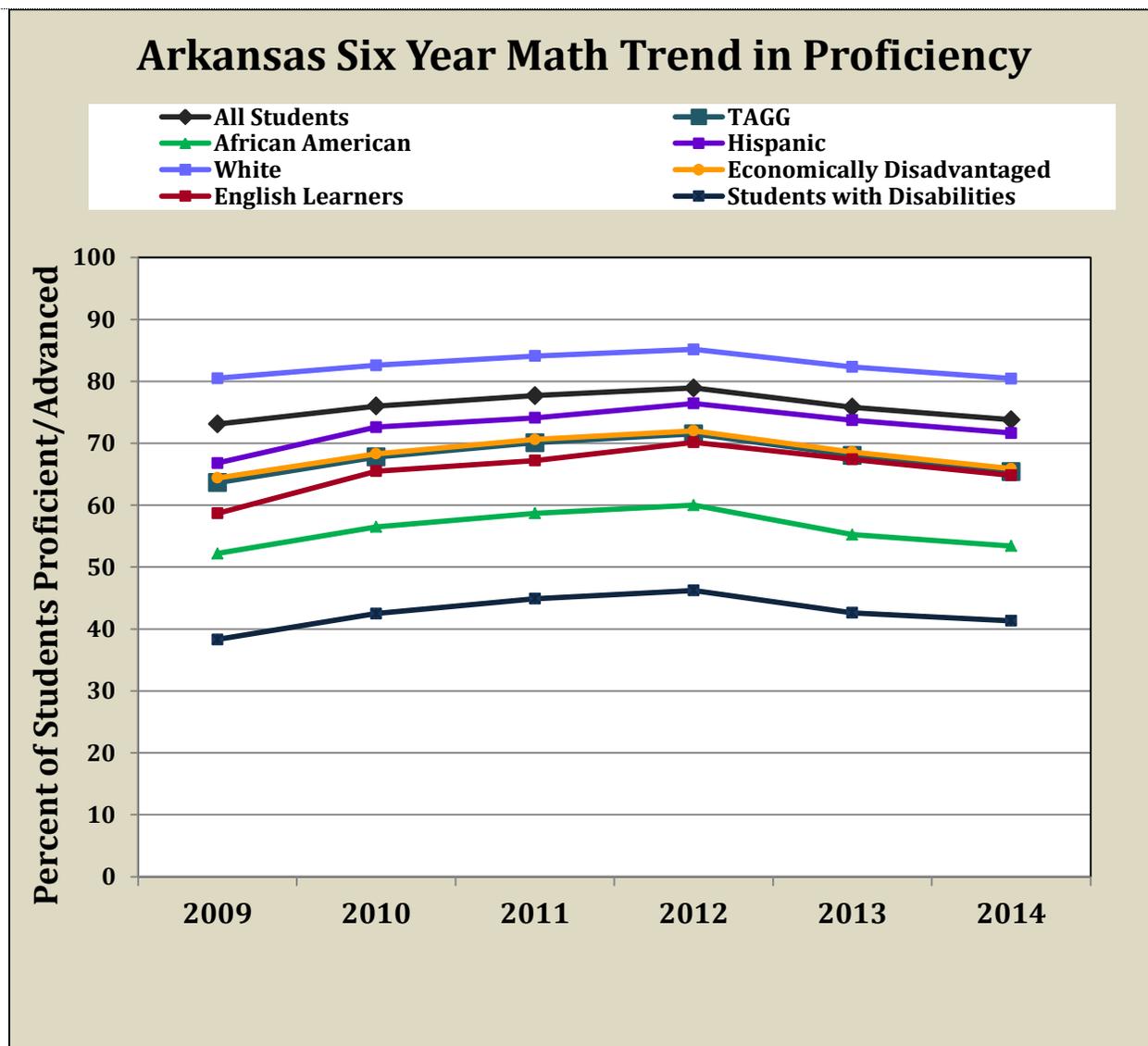
Figure 5. Six-year trends in math for ESEA subgroups.

Segments of our student population continue to struggle to achieve at desired levels, yet some progress has been made. Arkansas's initial ESEA Flexibility proposal was a timely opportunity to move from an accountability system that provided an unintended positive bias for schools with small populations, to a system that focused on long-term, continuous improvement through differentiated identification of schools' needs in a manner sensitive to Arkansas's students' characteristics.

At the time of Arkansas's initial ESEA Flexibility proposal submission, Arkansas made a case for using a Targeted Achievement Gap Group or TAGG to incentivize schools to reduce achievement gaps. Table 4 shows the percentage of schools that were accountable for each of the subgroups included in Arkansas's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Workbook based on the prior minimum N of 40, and the percentage of schools that were not accountable for these subgroups despite having students identified as members of these subgroups. The final column in Table 4 indicates the percentage of schools with one or more students with membership in these subgroups.
Table 4

Percentage of Schools in 2011 Accountable for and with Enrollment of Students in ESEA Subgroups

Group	Schools with subgroup that meets Minimum N (40)	Schools *not accountable* for students as a subgroup with Minimum N (40)	Schools with one or more students tested in the subgroup
African American	33%	47%	80%
Hispanic	13%	76%	89%
Caucasian	84%	6%	95%
Econ. Disadvantaged	92%	4%	96%
English Learners	9%	54%	63%
Students with Disabilities	16%	80%	96%

Arkansas lowered the minimum N to 25 and used the TAGG group as a subgroup proxy in determining whether schools were Achieving or Needs Improvement. The ADE continued to report progress of subgroups against individualized prior-performance AMOs that achieved the same goal as all other groups—closing the gap with 100% proficient by half in six years.

Ninety-six to ninety-eight percent of schools in Arkansas are accountable for TAGG students' performance and growth, as well as graduation rates. Using its data systems, ADE determined that lowering the minimum N alone provided a minimal increase in accountability for EL and a moderate increase in the number of schools accountable for SWD in 2011 as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparison of 2011Percentage of Schools Accountable for ESEA Subgroups with Minimum N of 40 and 25

Group	Schools with subgroup that meets Minimum N (40) or 5% of ADM for schools with 800 or larger ADM	Schools with subgroup that meets Minimum N (25) for all schools regardless of ADM
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	91%	98%
African American	33%	40%
Hispanic	13%	23%
Caucasian	84%	88%
Econ. Disadvantaged	92%	97%
English Learners	9%	15%
Students with Disabilities	16%	43%

Arkansas reduced its minimum N size for accountability in 2012 through its approved ESEA Flexibility. This resulted in a limited increase in the percentage of schools accountable for each of the ESEA

subgroups. The ADE addresses the persistence of achievement gaps through DARTSS by requiring schools to be accountable for all students that have membership in at-risk subgroups.

Since approval of the initial ESEA Flexibility Proposal, Arkansas has examined all students as well as a Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) based on students' membership in historically underperforming at risk subpopulations. Each ESEA subpopulation within each school was given individualized AMOs, and progress against these AMOs continues to be reported and used to plan interventions and support. The TAGG, in addition to the All Students group, is used to identify focus schools, and to inform accountability labels for all schools and districts in the P-12 system, thus increasing the number of schools accountable for students at risk.

The All Students group, the TAGG and the ESEA subgroups trigger the Statewide System of Support (SSOS) and interventions. This change in a key trigger for accountability (the TAGG), in addition to a lower minimum N for all schools, has ensured more schools are held accountable for and attending to closing the gap between top performing students and any lower performing students. Stakeholders were involved in the discussion of the creation of the TAGG, a mechanism for ensuring all schools were attentive to the needs of students at risk, and supported this as a strategy for improving accountability for reducing the achievement gaps in Arkansas (Attachment 20).

The TAGG consists of students with membership in any of the three groups historically at risk for underperformance: economically disadvantaged students, ELs and SWD. Table 6 presents the percentage of each race/ethnicity group represented in the TAGG in 2014. Note the TAGG captures more of the diversity of Arkansas's students for accountability than the ESEA subgroups alone. Ninety-eight percent of Arkansas's schools continue to have a TAGG that meets the minimum N of 25 for all schools and districts.

Table 6

Demographics of the TAGG 2014

NCLB Subgroup	TAGG	Not TAGG
Hispanic	91%	9%
Native American/Alaskan Native	64%	37%
Asian	55%	45%
Black/African American	86%	14%
Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander	93%	7%
White	52%	48%
Two or More Races	69%	31%

The use of the TAGG to hold schools accountable for performance and growth of all students was not without challenges. In one tenth of Arkansas schools, the TAGG included the entire school population due to the extent of poverty in these schools. Thus a within-school gap between TAGG and Non-TAGG could not be calculated. In schools where the Non-TAGG is smaller than the minimum N, the

percentage of Non-TAGG students proficient is subject to greater variability due to the smaller group size. Therefore, for the purposes of determining the magnitude of the achievement gap between TAGG and Non-TAGG students for Focus School determinations (Section 2.E), the median school percentage of Non-TAGG students proficient is used as the proxy for the Non-TAGG students in schools where the TAGG represents All Students and meets the minimum N of 25, and the Non-TAGG falls below the minimum N.

In 2012, through consultation with stakeholders, the ADE was provided with feedback on the inclusion of students in the TAGG. Specifically, the stakeholder groups indicated the importance of identifying students in the TAGG from among the historically at risk groups of economic disadvantage, ELs and SWD. Consideration of inclusion of students identified as African American or Hispanic was discouraged by stakeholders during consultation.

Further analysis of student performance based on TAGG or Non-TAGG membership was conducted in 2012 to determine whether excluding students from the TAGG for membership in the African American or Hispanic subgroup without membership in any of the three at risk groups provided sufficient safeguards for meeting the academic needs of students in these historically underperforming minority groups.

- Figures 4 and 5 indicate the progress of schools in reducing the achievement gap as represented by the NonTAGG versus TAGG gap. Note the literacy gap has reduced significantly since 2011, whereas the math gap was reduced in 2012 and has increased to a similar gap size in 2014 as in 2011. The timing of implementation of new standards—three years in advance of assessments aligned to the standard—has been a challenge for teachers and leaders particularly in mathematics where the shifts in grade level content create the greatest disparity in expectations between what is being taught and what is still tested. This may play some role in the different trends between math and literacy given that math has more grade level shifts in CCSS expectations than literacy.

Median School Literacy Performance for TAGG and NonTAGG

NonTAGG ——— TAGG ———

NonTAGG: 85.0 (2009), 88.4 (2010), 89.9 (2011), 94.6 (2012), 93.9 (2013), 92.6 (2014)

TAGG: 58.0 (2009), 64.6 (2010), 67.5 (2011), 75.5 (2012), 72.7 (2013), 71.1 (2014)
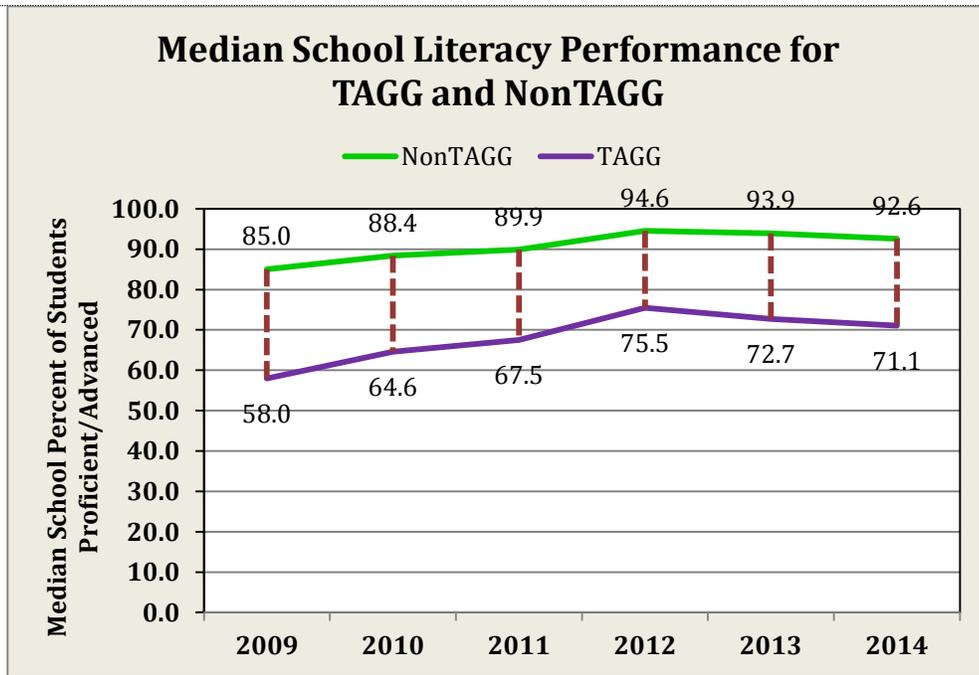
Figure 4 repeated. Literacy performance trend for NonTAGG and TAGG students.

Median School Math Performance for TAGG and NonTAGG

NonTAGG ——— TAGG ———

NonTAGG: 88.2 (2009), 90.3 (2010), 91.7 (2011), 92.9 (2012), 91.8 (2013), 89.7 (2014)

TAGG: 67.2 (2009), 71.9 (2010), 73.6 (2011), 75.8 (2012), 72.8 (2013), 68.9 (2014)

Figure 5 repeated. Math performance trend for NonTAGG and TAGG students.

Serving All Students in Districts and Schools

Accountability under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has been a key driver of focused educational change in Arkansas. State rules for identification of school districts in academic distress did not align

with the prior Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) system, and were not aligned to the proposed ESEA Flexibility in 2012. This resulted in fractured efforts with AYP identifying some schools for specific interventions (choice, supplemental education services, corrective action, restructuring), and Arkansas Academic Distress rules identifying schools differently with different sanctions. The Arkansas Board of Education worked with the ADE to adopt rules for Academic Distress that align more closely with DARTSS to identify persistently low performing schools as in Academic Distress. The overlap among Priority Schools and Academic Distress Schools allows ADE to focus it's Statewide System of Support on a specific group of schools.

The challenge of serving all students in districts and schools has been complicated, Arkansas must be able to address the root causes—the impact of poverty, low expectations, chronic disruption from student migration, demonstrably lower teacher capacity relative to schools serving more affluent student populations—to be truly successful at any kind of scale. Turning around failing schools requires not just repair work but also a re-engineering of the school model and the systems that support it. That re-engineering requires more than the application of some reform "medicine." Re-engineering requires re-thinking the structures, authorities, capacities, incentives and resources that define the context, the operating conditions in which these schools do their work.

ADE proposes to renew ESEA Flexibility to continue its efforts to streamline federal and state accountability, help districts better manage improvement in their schools, and make systemic changes to improve instruction and student achievement. Creating a more focused, more congruent accountability system has allowed ADE to accelerate support and more intentionally target resources, technical assistance and interventions to the schools and districts that need the most assistance.

The interventions for Priority Schools, and intensified interventions under DARTSS represent a shift toward a stronger systems approach to continuous improvement by involving the district leadership more directly in the responsibility for improving Priority Schools.

ADE worked with the Arkansas Board of Education and other stakeholders to rewrite the Academic Distress rule-so that ADE may have the authority to identify a district that does not have a clear path for a student to go from kindergarten through Grade 12 without having to enter a Priority School that is not making progress. A district may be identified as in Academic Distress when a Priority School does not make the progre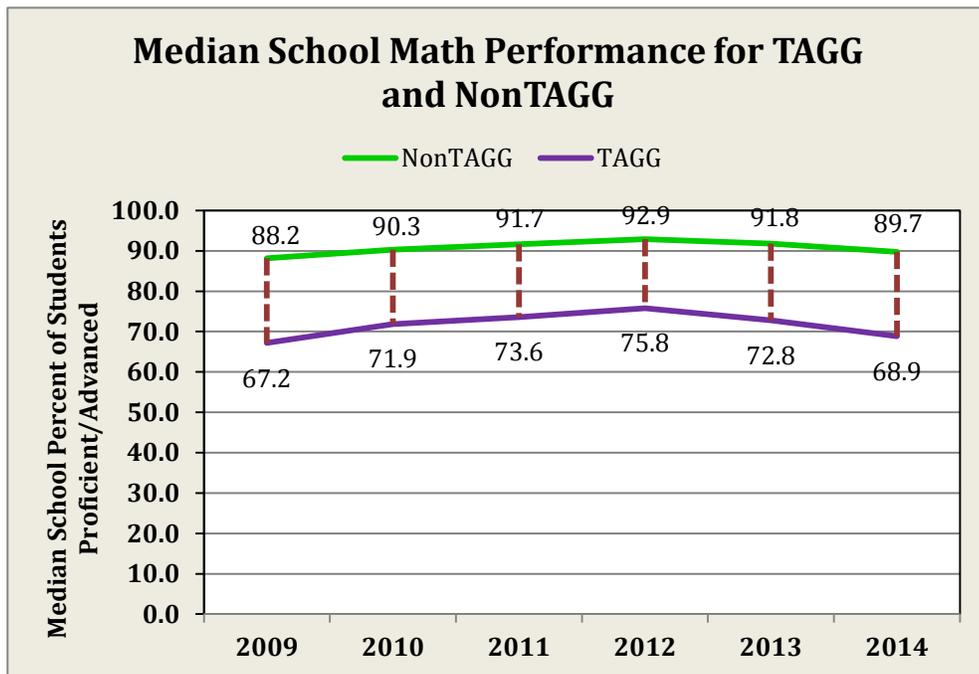ss expected under the Priority School's Priority Improvement Plan (PIP). Under these circumstances, district autonomy is greatly reduced and the ADE becomes a very active partner not only in that school, but in all schools within that district, in the allocation of district human capital and financial resources and in the governance of the Priority School. Under Academic Distress rules, Arkansas Board of Education has removed the local school board and/or superintendent resulting in state governance of the district in situations where the district has failed to make progress or failed to implement improvement strategies. Similar to mechanisms other states have utilized such as a turnaround office or state conservatorship—these actions have been delineated in a revised statute and rule. This ESEA Flexibility and proposed DARTSS provide an initial avenue to identify schools that are underperforming and put rigorous, ambitious change expectations in place. Through revision of the Academic Distress rule, Priority Schools that do not make progress have increased involvement of the ADE in how their districts resource and govern their schools.

When a district reaches the level for designation of Academic Distress, State intervention is necessary,

yet capacity is a constraining factor within the system. DARTSS has several advantages over the prior disparate State and federal accountability systems that help to build capacity as well as turn schools around. Through tiered intervention and support based on schools' designation of Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority Schools, districts and their schools-engage in differentiated improvement processes based on the severity of needs rather than a one-size fits all approach to improvement. District and school educators are incentivized by increased flexibility to construct local solutions to local problems. In the cases of Priority and Focus Schools, the local leadership may not have the tools to facilitate an ambitious change process. Thus, the differentiated interventions for these schools reflect these potential obstacles and allow provision for external expertise and leadership focused on building local capacity for change and continuous improvement. ADE School Improvement Staff focus support and/or intervention based on the degree of need as determined by the achievement indicators and implementation indicators in the system. The addition of the A-F letter grading system provides a means for further differentiating ADE response to other Title I schools. Responsibility for implementation and results continues to rest on districts with increasing oversight based on severity of the accountability designation. Lack of local action may result in loss of local flexibility and control as specified in the revised Rules for Academic Distress.

Ensuring Access to CCR Expectations and Opportunities

In 2011, public regional meetings hosted by the ADE around the state and follow up focus groups indicated that the majority of Arkansans believe the disaggregation of data under NCLB by subgroups has been positive, shedding new light on the issue of achievement gaps for historically underachieving groups. However, as NCLB matured several unintended consequences of the focus on became evident. One example was evident in school improvement plans that include mechanical interventions based on subgroup membership. The interventions were often isolated from a systemic plan and focused mostly on surface level characteristics of the subgroup's needs, rather than on the authentic learning needs of the lower performing students within each group. Changes to the accountability system must provide incentives to not only disaggregate and report, but to clarify students' learning needs and respond with interventions and supports informed through deeper diagnostic views based on patterns of performance rather than subgroup labels. The intent is to incentivize the use of data to inform rigorous core instruction for all students and appropriate intervention or support for students with identified common and individual learning needs. Additionally, Arkansas's statewide data indicate many students belong to more than one of the ESEA subgroups. In schools where more subgroups meet the minimum N, the perception was that membership of one student in multiple subgroups resulted in an exaggeration of school failure. Essentially, the low performance of the student, regardless of subgroup membership, should be the concern that demands a response within the accountability system. Use of the TAGG to trigger accountability has been responsive to stakeholders concerns and lessons learned from Arkansas's statewide data.

DARTSS aligns more closely with the intent of leaving no child behind based on the known characteristics of students and schools in Arkansas. Identification and use of the TAGG has mitigated issues that arose under the compliance mindset that evolved under NCLB. The formation of the TAGG is responsive to what ADE has learned from the data, particularly with regards to schools' accountability for ELs and SWD. Students with membership in lower performing or at risk groups are included in TAGG. Second, identification of the TAGG enabled a more authentic focus on student learning needs which enables teachers to move beyond at-risk labels to individual students. The TAGG exposes hidden achievement gaps by creating a subgroup that meets the minimum N in 98 percent of

the schools in Arkansas. This is particularly important in schools where ELs and SWD have struggled, but the accountability N had not prompted a focus on these students' needs in particular. Continued reporting of NCLB subgroup progress in reducing the proficiency and growth gaps, combined with accountability for the TAGG group, continues to activate Arkansas's re-conceptualized tiered-support system.

Accountability for the All Students group and the TAGG group provides a macro-view of school and LEA performance that is intended to inform the macro-level of a continuous improvement process. However, this macro-level is not sufficient to inform student instruction at the classroom or micro-level, and changes in school performance happen first at that micro-level. An intended outcome of the DARTSS is to provide deeper diagnostic views of subgroup and student progress on CCR indicators that will jump-start stalled continuous improvement processes, and ultimately lead to daily micro-adjustments to learning strategies thus maximizing students' access to CCR. To accomplish this outcome, ADE is envisions enhanced, thematic reporting of critical indicators along the pathway to CCR. The ADE reports annual accountability designations, progress of schools and districts in meeting AMOs for All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroups, as well as progress on CCR relevant indicators and releases these reports to the public following the appeal period https://adedata.arkansas.gov/arc .

A sample public report is provided in Figure 10. This school met its AMOs for both the All Students and TAGG in literacy, math and graduation rates. This is a school that demonstrated significant improvement in 2014. Notice that this school is a Focus school that met its first year exit criteria.

District: SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT   Superintendent: JIMMY ROLLINS   Report created on: 10/29/2014
School: SPRINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL   Principal: PETE JOENKS
LEA: 7207049   Grade: 10 - 12   % Prof/Adv.
Address: 101 SOUTH PLEASANT   Enrollment: 2238   2014 Math + Literacy 81.3
Address: SPRINGDALE, AR 72764   Attendance: 95.64   2013 Math + Literacy 65.0
Phone: 479-750-8832   Poverty Rate: 65.73   2012 Math + Literacy 68.9

OVERALL SCHOOL STATUS: NEEDS IMPROVEMENT FOCUS - MET 1YR

PERCENT TESTED
PERCENT TESTED STATUS: ACHIEVING

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	LITERACY # Attempted	# Expected	Percentage	MATHEMATICS # Attempted	# Expected	Percentage
All Students	700	717	97.63	666	679	98.09
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	522	531	98.31	542	551	98.37
ESEA Subgroups # Attempted	# Expected	Percentage	# Attempted	# Expected	Percentage	
African American	18	23	78.26	22	22	100.00
Hispanic	366	368	99.46	355	358	99.16
White	230	235	97.87	183	189	96.83
Economically Disadvantaged	492	500	98.40	518	524	98.85
English Language Learners	242	246	98.37	279	284	98.24
Students with Disabilities	58	63	92.06	33	34	97.06

STUDENT PERFORMANCE -- LITERACY
LITERACY STATUS: ACHIEVING

PERFORMANCE -LITERACY

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	524	657	79.76	72.36	91.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	360	488	73.77	64.17	91.00
Three Year Average Performance	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	1298	1862	69.71	72.36	91.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	847	1384	61.20	64.17	91.00
ESEA Subgroups	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	
African American	10	17	58.82	71.88	
Hispanic	264	341	77.42	65.40	
White	200	219	91.32	83.98	
Economically Disadvantaged	344	462	74.46	65.16	
English Language Learners	125	222	56.31	47.10	
Students with Disabilities	15	52	28.85	38.04	

STUDENT PERFORMANCE -- MATHEMATICS
MATHEMATICS STATUS: ACHIEVING

PERFORMANCE -MATHEMATICS

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	517	624	82.85	77.79	92.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	405	506	80.04	73.32	92.00
Three Year Average Performance	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	1369	1850	74.00	77.79	92.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	1062	1506	70.52	73.32	92.00
ESEA Subgroups	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	
African American	11	17	64.71	81.25	
Hispanic	292	342	85.38	74.22	
White	151	167	90.42	87.06	
Economically Disadvantaged	389	486	80.04	74.04	
English Language Learners	187	263	71.10	65.49	
Students with Disabilities	17	27	62.96	38.04	

2013 SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE
GRADUATION RATE STATUS: ACHIEVING

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	# Actual Graduates	# Expected Graduates	Percentage	2013 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	554	645	85.89	76.91	94.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	367	439	83.60	73.68	94.00
Three Year Average Performance	# Actual Graduates	# Expected Graduates	Percentage	2013 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	1563	1856	84.21	76.91	94.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	1031	1252	82.35	73.68	94.00
ESEA Subgroups	# Actual Graduates	# Expected Graduates	Percentage	2013 AMO	
African American	n < 10	n < 10	n < 10	82.35	
Hispanic	300	347	86.46	74.84	
White	207	232	89.22	81.18	
Economically Disadvantaged	332	391	84.91	75.31	
English Language Learners	203	250	81.20	72.99	
Students with Disabilities	48	58	82.76	72.87	

Figure 10. High School ESEA Accountability report with subgroup performance.

Color coding and thematic presentation enable easier interpretation of the groups that have met or failed to meet AMOs. This facilitates connections between accountability and continuous improvement planning since school leaders, teachers, parents, and community can readily see which groups are making

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expected progress and which ones are not. In Figure 11, a middle schools' ESEA Accountability Report indicates that this school is making progress enough to be considered Achieving. However, there is still work to do as evidenced by the red cellswhich show the subgroup(s) that need additional attention (white students and English Learners in literacy and English Learners in math).

District: SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	Superintendent: JIMMY ROLLINS	Report created on: 11/12/2014
School: SONORA MIDDLE SCHOOL	Principal: SHAWNA LYONS	
LEA: 7207069	Grade: 6 - 7	% Prof/Adv.
Address: 17051 E HWY 412	Enrollment: 795	2014 Math + Literacy 72.0
Address: SPRINGDALE, AR 72764	Attendance: 94.73	2013 Math + Literacy 67.1
Phone: 479-750-8821	Poverty Rate: 78.36	2012 Math + Literacy

OVERALL SCHOOL STATUS: ACHIEVING

PERCENT TESTED

PERCENT TESTED STATUS: ACHIEVING

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	LITERACY			MATHEMATICS		
	# Attempted	# Expected	Percentage	# Attempted	# Expected	Percentage
All Students	769	771	99.74	779	781	99.74
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	656	658	99.70	666	668	99.70
ESEA Subgroups	# Attempted	# Expected	Percentage	# Attempted	# Expected	Percentage
African American	25	25	100.00	25	25	100.00
Hispanic	344	344	100.00	345	345	100.00
White	236	237	99.58	236	237	99.58
Economically Disadvantaged	632	634	99.68	641	643	99.69
English Language Learners	365	365	100.00	375	375	100.00
Students with Disabilities	73	74	98.65	73	74	98.65

STUDENT PERFORMANCE -- LITERACY

LITERACY STATUS: ACHIEVING

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	PERFORMANCE -LITERACY					GROWTH -LITERACY				
	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	502	713	70.41	70.36	91.00	462	664	69.58	72.54	93.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	406	604	67.22	65.54	91.00	373	558	66.85	68.68	93.00
Three Year Average Performance	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	943	1380	68.33	70.36	91.00	884	1279	69.12	72.54	93.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	737	1150	64.09	65.54	91.00	694	1058	65.60	68.68	93.00
ESEA Subgroups	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO		# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	
African American	16	22	72.73	79.41		14	21	66.67	74.27	
Hispanic	230	324	70.99	70.84		212	305	69.51	71.50	
White	181	222	81.53	82.66		168	216	77.78	81.36	
Economically Disadvantaged	396	584	67.81	65.96		364	540	67.41	68.54	
English Language Learners	188	334	56.29	60.75		174	300	58.00	65.72	
Students with Disabilities	19	65	29.23	16.67		9	52	17.31	24.79	

STUDENT PERFORMANCE -- MATHEMATICS

MATHEMATICS STATUS: ACHIEVING

ESEA Flexibility Indicators	PERFORMANCE -MATHEMATICS					GROWTH -MATHEMATICS				
	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	526	715	73.57	72.10	92.00	496	700	70.86	68.41	81.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	426	606	70.30	67.69	92.00	406	591	68.70	63.60	81.00
Three Year Average Performance	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	90TH PCTL
All Students	981	1383	70.93	72.10	92.00	889	1315	67.60	68.41	81.00
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	771	1153	66.87	67.69	92.00	698	1091	63.98	63.60	81.00
ESEA Subgroups	# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO		# Achieved	# Tested	Percentage	2014 AMO	
African American	14	22	63.64	63.97		14	21	66.67	63.97	
Hispanic	246	325	75.69	72.42		228	318	71.70	67.14	
White	187	222	84.23	81.11		170	221	76.92	74.89	
Economically Disadvantaged	413	586	70.48	67.35		396	572	69.23	62.94	
English Language Learners	205	336	61.01	65.35		199	324	61.42	63.24	
Students with Disabilities	30	65	46.15	16.67		17	52	32.69	32.46	

Figure 11. Middle school ESEA Accountability report.

These reports facilitate interpretation of the accountability portion of DARTSS, but these reports are not sufficient to drive improvements in student learning. To enable teachers and leaders to dig deeper into the groups that need attention, ADE has provided to all schools the Student GPS system. The system is available at https://adedata.arkansas.gov/sgps/Default.aspx

Figure 12 shows the teacher view once logged into the system.
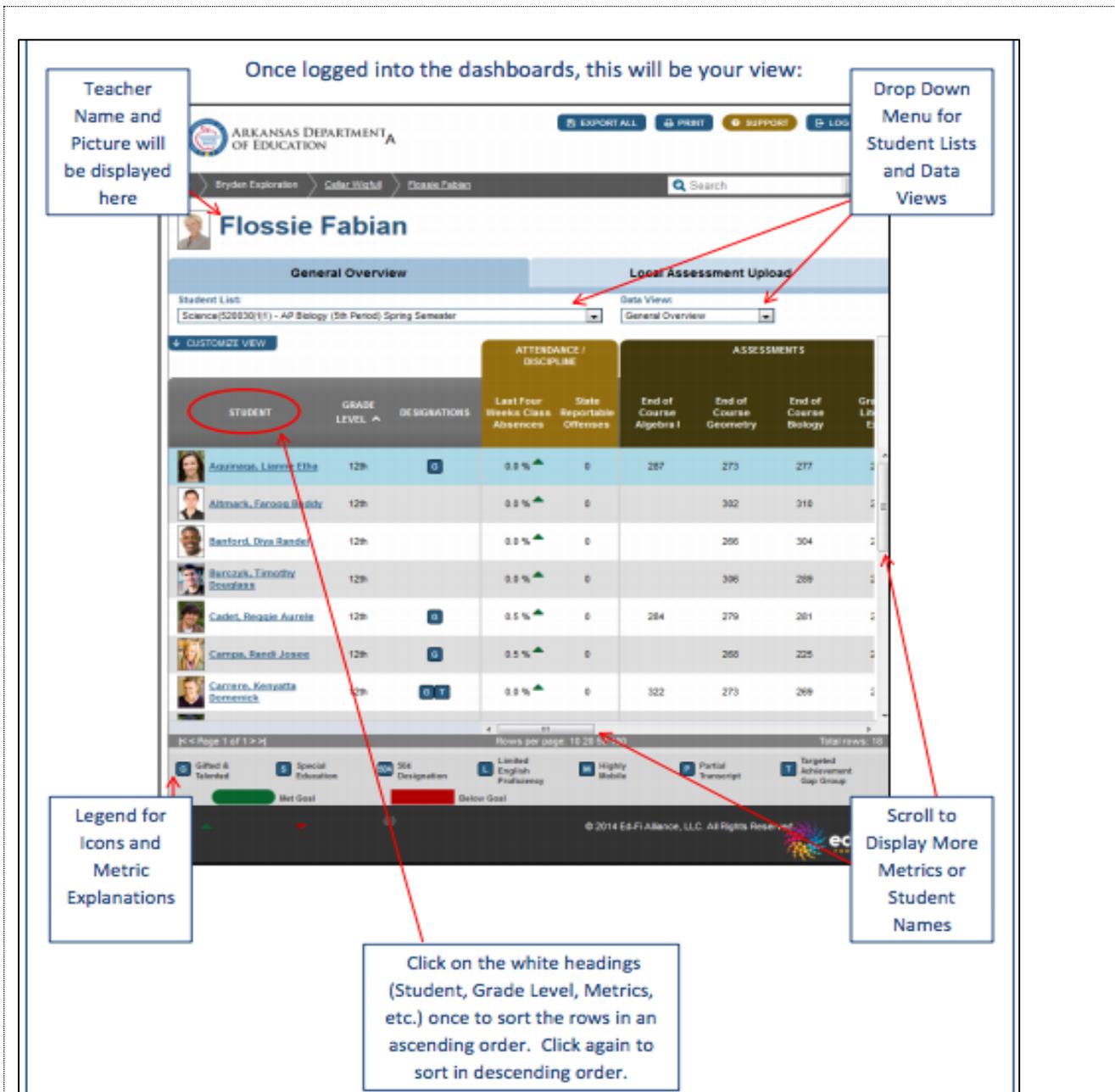
Figure 12. Student GPS system teacher dashboard.

Teachers' role-based access allows teachers to organize and view reports and relevant information to facilitate classroom instruction- and assessment-related decisions, as well as enhance their analysis by augmenting their view with classroom level data such as screening, progress monitoring and interim assessment results. These technical improvements to reporting support a data-informed culture of decision making along the continuum from macro- to micro-level. Teachers have the ability to upload local assessment data to deepen their ability to uncover and respond to patterns or trends from the classroom level down to the student level using the level of data appropriate to the instructional decisions they need to make.

Using the Student GPS system, role-based access to critical learning indicators allows leaders to organize and view reports and relevant information to facilitate decisions at the leadership level.
The inclusion of data from attendance, discipline, and other areas allows leaders to look for trends and patterns that may inform the learning structures, routines, and strategies at a grade or building level. Schools can set parameters to flag levels of performance or discipline, etc. that are school specific and teachers can set metrics that are classroom specific, allowing them to focus on their particular context and data.

Figure 13. Student GPS System building leader dashboard.
Accountability Determinations During and After Transition

In its initial ESEA Flexibility proposal the ADE proposed a simpler system of classification for all other schools that included the simple differentiation of schools between Achieving and Needs Improvement based on schools and districts meeting individualized prior-performance AMOs for math, 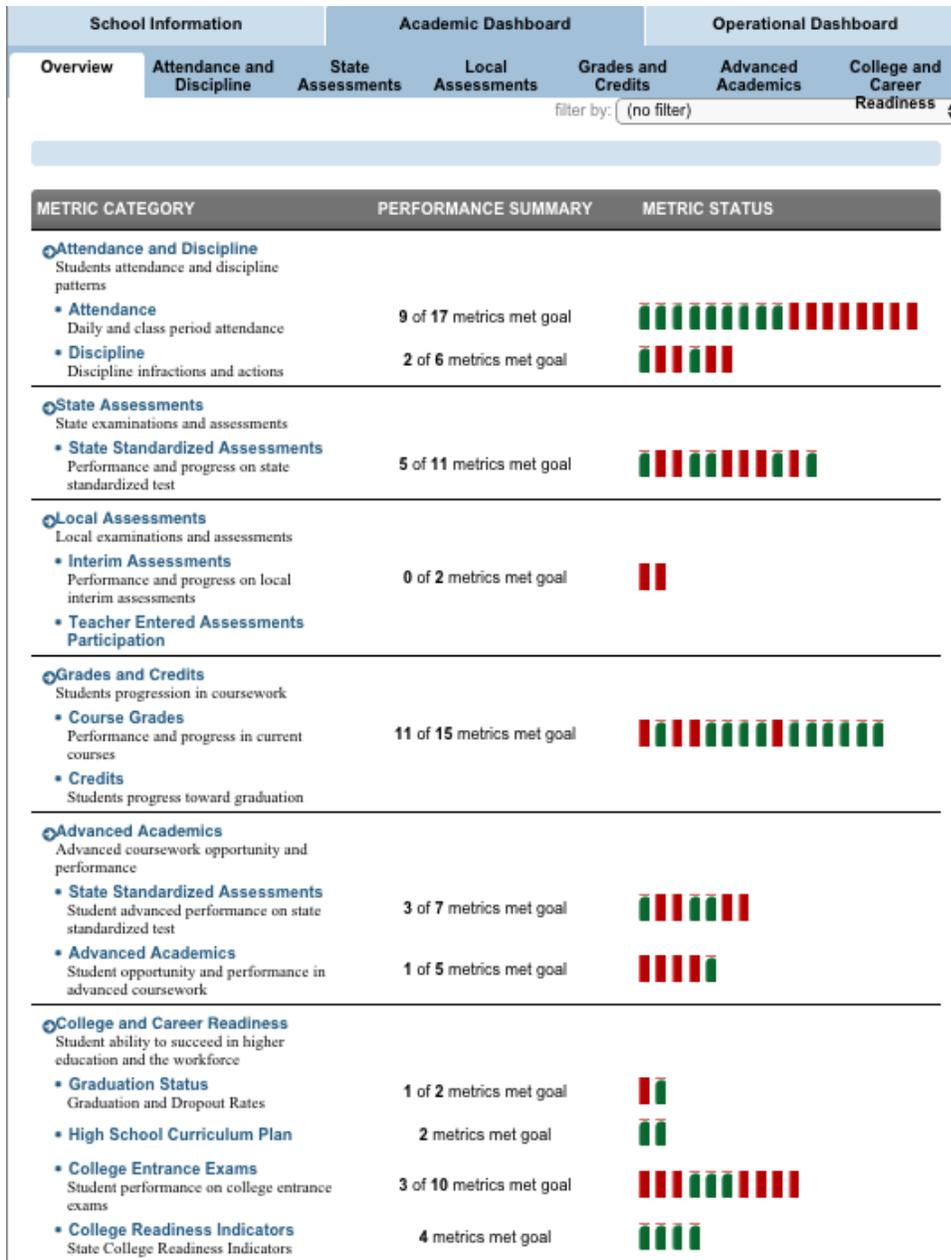literacy and graduation rate (where applicable). As mentioned previously, this system suffered from a problem with timing: transition to new standards concurrent with sunset of Arkansas's Benchmark and End of Course Exams, and the required use of 2011 (a peak performance year for most schools) as the baseline for individualized AMOs. The conceptualization of individualized AMOs was well-founded, but the factors listed above resulted in many schools failing to meet linear improvement targets as school and district performance peaked in 2011 and 2012 on the aging Arkansas exams and school/district improvement trajectories flattened.

In the current DARTSS schools receive the broad state-level classification of Achieving or Needs Improvement with more explicit identification of schools at the extremes of performance: Exemplary Schools, Focus Schools and Priority Schools as delineated in Sections 2.C. through 2.E and illustrated in Figure 3. Determinations of Achieving and Needs Improvement are based on a set of decision rules approved in 2012. As Arkansas continues to seek a focused and unified accountability system, and the state assessment system is updated to assess students' CCR trajectories, the ADE finds it necessary and appropriate to pose the following changes during the transition to new assessments. ADE proposes to phase in components of the decision rules as scores from the new assessments become available (Figure 9). Figure 14 indicates the decision rules for determining annual ESEA Accountability with regards to AMOs.

The recalculation of AMOs using Option C for individualized district, school and group AMOs is proposed after results on the new assessments are available, presumably in 2016, following a pause in school and district status determination in 2015. AMOs for 2015 will be distinct from prior or future years and will be used to report to the public on schools' and districts' performance on the new assessment.

Following the transition to new assessment scores status determination will resume as indicated. Schools and districts will continue to apply current year performance or a 3-year weighted average to determine whether schools meet their AMOs for the proficiency gap. In 2016 only 2 years of performance results will be available so the 2-year composite will be used until 3 years of comparable assessment scores are available. This will continue to addresses concerns about year-to-year stability in the calculations when dealing with different groups of students from year to year.

ESEA Accountability Determinations

Proficiency Gap (AMOs)

All schools have individualized AMOs for All Students, TAGG & ESEA subgroups. AMOs in 2015 baased on percent meeting expected standards of school at the 20th percentile rank of state school distribution. AMOs in 2016 reset using new baseline to close performance gap in half in 6 years and additional criteria (Option C).

High Schools have individualized graduation rate AMOs for All Students, TAGG & ESEA subgroups based on 2010 graduation rates to close gap in half by 2017.

Pause Status Determinations in 2015, resume in 2016

Achieving or Needs Improvement

Must test 95% of All Students and TAGG **and**

must meet proficiency AMOs **or** must meet growth AMOs for All Students & TAGG.

High Schools

Must test 95% of All Students and TAGG **and**

must meet proficiency AMOs **and** must meet graduation rate AMOs for All Students & TAGG.

All Schools

ESEA subgroups' performance, percent tested & graduation rate reported for N ≥ 10 for transparency, intervention and support.

Growth (Grades 4-10 beginning with 2016 assessment scores)

AMOs established for growth independent of performance level.

Growth model to be determined with transition to new assessment

Resume use of growth as an alternate criteria for determining whether schools and dsitricts meet AMOs for designation as Achieving or Needs Improvement.

College & Career Ready Indicators

Graduation Rate (High School)

AMOs established for All Students, TAGG & NCLB subgroups on CCR aligned assessments.

All Students & TAGG must meet graduation rate AMOs for Achieving designation.

Other CCR Indicators:

Continue reporting CCR indicators included on Annual School Performance Report

Additional CCR Indicators for middle and high schools will be included in reporting as developed and validated.

Figure 14. Proposed transition of decision rules for accountability labels and reporting CCR indicators.

The small school rule will continue to be applied. Schools with fewer than 25 students in the All

Students group for math or literacy would be required to use the 3-year in place of current year performance (2-year weighted average in 2016).

Arkansas's approved ESEA Flexibility determinations continue to apply to the system. As already approved, the current year or a 3-year weighted averages are used to determine if AMOs were met. Accountability determinations use the better case of either current year for All Students *and* TAGG, or 3-year weighted average *for both groups* within a subject for Performance (percent proficient) and Growth (percent meeting annual expected growth) and *for All Students and TAGG* for Graduation Rate.

The growth model that has been used for ESEA accountability was designed specifically for the Arkansas Benchmark Exams and the vertically moderated scale of the exams. With the sunsetting of the Benchmark Exams, the ADE will use its longitudinal data system capabilities to evaluate potential growth models that are not scale dependent while waiting for PARCC, Incorporated to complete scaling of its next generation assessment. This will provide ADE opportunity to study the advantages and disadvantages of different scale-invariant models to inform the transition of the growth measures for use with Arkansas's next generation assessment. Transition of the growth model will be informed by statistical modeling of school, teacher and student impact. Based on the results of this modeling, growth calculations will be transitioned concurrent with at least two years of full implementation of Arkansas's next generation assessments for use in accountability and TESS.

Arkansas will continue to use the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in annual accountability determinations specified in its approved ESEA Flexibility. The ADE continues to publish this rate for All Students and for ESEA subgroups for the first time with the 2010 Annual School Performance Report. The graduation rate data revealed gaps in the graduation rates among subgroups within schools that had not previously been accounted for in Arkansas's AYP model. Graduation rates provide a valuable indicator for CCR in high school accountability because high school graduation is influenced by all teachers at the high school level as each teacher contributes to students' cumulative credits toward a diploma. Similar to proficiency gaps, the graduation rate gap has been masked by relatively high graduation rates of the All Students group. Arkansas will continue to require high schools meet AMOs for graduation rates for All Students and the TAGG based on 2010 baseline graduation rates and Option C for calculating annual targets. Arkansas schools have increased the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates for all groups since publishing the rates and using them in accountability (see page 17 of the state report card at https://adesrc.arkansas.gov/ReportCard/View?lea=AR&schoolYear=2013). The gap between the Non-TAGG and TAGG graduation rates is considered proportionately with performance indicators in identifying high schools as Focus Schools. High schools' progress in meeting their graduation rate AMOs are used in identifying multi-tiered interventions and supports as outlined in Sections 2C - 2F.

The following clarifications of Arkansas's accountability system and safeguards are reinforced in the Arkansas request for ESEA Flexibility renewal. These clarifications apply to status determination following a pause year for 2015.

- All schools and districts are accountable for meeting Performance AMOs *or* Growth AMOs for **both math and literacy** for All Students and the TAGG in order to be classified as Achieving. Additionally, high schools must meet Performance AMOs for **both math and literacy and Graduation Rate AMOs** for All Students and the TAGG to be classified as Achieving.
- The growth model and growth AMO determination, as an alternative for meeting AMOs for

math and literacy, will to be determined during the transition year. At this time, the following differentiation of ACSIP response is determined by the 2014 status and will apply through the pause year. Once growth metrics are available, ADE will evaluate the following statements in light of the new data and propose amendments to the following if needed.

- Schools that meet AMOS for both subjects and for Performance and Growth enter a three-year cycle for continuous improvement planning. Specifically, these schools engage in a substantive revision of their ACSIP every three years as long as they maintain the conditions of meeting both Performance and Growth AMOs for All Students and the TAGG for both subjects. This provides an incentive to Achieving Schools meeting Performance or Growth to work toward meeting both sets of indicators. All schools, including the Achieving Schools on this three-year cycle, must address the needs of all ESEA subgroups that meet the minimum N of 25 and do not meet the ESEA subgroup AMO for performance, growth and/or graduation rate (for high schools) by addressing these needs with specific interventions in their ACSIP that align strategies, human capital and financial resources necessary to support the interventions.

- Schools that meet AMOs for both subjects for Performance for All Students and the TAGG, yet fail to meet AMOS for Growth for All Students, the TAGG or any ESEA subgroups are required to continue an annual ACSIP cycle and to demonstrate through their ACSIP further data-driven analysis of the growth concerns identified for any group (All Students, TAGG, and/or ESEA subgroups) not meeting Growth AMOs that is comprised of 25 or more students. Further, these schools demonstrate through their ACSIP that human resources and funding are targeted to support these interventions and sufficient to enable successful implementation of the interventions. To reiterate, all schools, including the Achieving Schools on an annual ACSIP cycle, must address the needs of all ESEA subgroups that meet the minimum N of 25 and do not meet the ESEA subgroup AMO for performance, growth and/or graduation rate (for high schools) by addressing these needs with specific interventions in their ACSIP that align strategies, human capital and financial resources necessary to support the interventions.

- For high schools, the accountability for meeting Graduation Rate AMOs for All Students and the TAGG is required in addition to meeting Performance AMOs for math and literacy. Further, differentiation of consequences occurs within the Achieving and Needs Improvement schools in that schools failing to meet Graduation Rate AMOs for any ESEA subgroup with N greater than or equal to 25 are required to engage in deeper analysis of the ESEA subgroup data, plan appropriate interventions for inclusion in ACSIP, and support these interventions with aligned human and financial resources sufficient to ensure successful implementation. To reiterate, all schools, including Achieving High Schools on a three-year or annual ACSIP cycle, must address the needs of all ESEA subgroups that meet the minimum N of 25 and do not meet the ESEA subgroup AMO for performance and graduation rate by addressing these needs with specific interventions in their ACSIP that align strategies, human capital and financial resources necessary to support the interventions.

- Districts continue to submit ACSIP annually when any schools within the district are required to submit annual school ACSIP, regardless of whether the district is classified as Achieving or Needs Improvement. The district ACSIP must address aligned support and/or interventions as appropriate for all schools, including Achieving Schools on a three-year or annual ACSIP cycle, for ESEA subgroups that meet the minimum N of 25 and do not meet the ESEA subgroup AMO for performance, growth and/or graduation

rate and must ensure sufficient human capital and financial resources to support the successful implementation of interventions.

o The incentives for districts to meet AMOs and receive an Achieving status are embedded within the incentives for schools and the level of autonomy a district is granted based on school status.

This addressed several USDE considerations. Through DARTSS, Achieving Schools have further differentiated consequences: those who meet AMOs for Performance *and* Growth enter into a three-year cycle for continuous improvement planning with the caveat that the three-year cycle is discontinued any year the school does not meet AMOs for Performance *and* Growth. Further, if these schools have any ESEA subgroups with 25 or more students that do not meet their AMOs, the ACSIP must include interventions for these subgroups to be implemented and monitored over the three-year cycle. Achieving Schools that do not meet for both subjects for Performance *and* Growth must continue an annual ACSIP cycle that attends to the needs identified through deeper analysis of All Students, TAGG and ESEA Subgroup performance and growth. Their ACSIP plans must align strategies, human capital and financial resources necessary to support the interventions for the TAGG, All Students and/or any ESEA subgroup that meets the minimum N of 25 but does not meet the AMO.

To clarify, schools are considered Achieving Schools on a three-year ACSIP cycle when the schools

- meet AMOs for both math and literacy for Performance and Growth, and
- for high schools, meet AMOs for both math and literacy for Performance and meet AMOs for Graduation Rate.

Schools are considered Achieving Schools on an annual ACSIP cycle when the schools

- meet AMOs for both math and literacy for Performance or Growth, and
- for high schools, meet AMOs for both math and literacy for Performance and meet AMOs for Graduation Rate.

To be identified as an Exemplary School All Students, TAGG, and all ESEA subgroups that meet minimum N must:
- meet AMOs for both math and literacy for Performance. By design, the individualized AMOs require a school to close performance gaps between All Students, the TAGG, and ESEA subgroups by requiring any group performing at lower level to make greater annual gains. Schools that meet their AMOs for all groups are on a trajectory to reduce all gaps with 100 percent proficient by half within 6 years.
- not exhibit significant achievement gaps between All Students and TAGG or any ESEA subgroup,
- meet 95 percent tested for All Students and the TAGG, and for high schools, meet AMOs for graduation rate without exhibiting significant graduation rate gaps for All Students, TAGG and any ESEA subgroup that meets minimum N. Significant gaps are defined under 2.C Reward Schools Significant Gaps.

Needs Improvement Schools are differentiated through public reporting of their label as Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Focus School or Needs Improvement Priority School. In addition,

Needs Improvement Schools that are not classified as Focus or Priority are differentiated within this classification by their progress compared to their AMOs. Needs Improvement Schools may meet for most, some, or few of the ESEA subgroups. This information is transparently provided through the ESEA Accountability reports (Figures 10 and 11). Using Needs Improvement reports and summaries of progress against AMOs, the ADE can identify areas of needed improvement and subsequent differentiated consequences. For example, a high school may be Needs Improvement if the school meets the Performance and/or Growth AMOs for literacy for All Students and the TAGG, but Graduation Rate AMOs are not met for both All Students and the TAGG. In this example, the school would be Needs Improvement for their Graduation Rate deficiency, and would be required to address the Graduation Rate concerns for any group, including ESEA subgroups that meet the minimum N of 25, that did not meet the AMOs for Graduation Rate within their annual ACSIP.

For ESEA Accountability Reports and Arkansas's Annual School Performance Report Card, ADE reports the progress of All Students, the TAGG, *and* all ESEA subgroups with 10 or more students as compared to their AMOs. Schools are required to address the needs of the All Students group, the TAGG, and any ESEA subgroup with 25 or more students that fail to meet their expected AMOs through ACSIP. Schools in Needs Improvement engage in deeper analysis of areas identified through DARTSS as failing to meet AMOs, and identify evidence-based practices or interventions to serve the needs identified in analysis. The Student GPS system provides schools with tools to dig deeper into performance, growth and other indicator trends. The school and district ACSIP are required to demonstrate alignment between the needs identified through data, the interventions and practices proposed, and the human and financial resources allocated to support these efforts sufficient for their success in order to be approved by ADE. Further, ADE reviews all annual and three-year ACSIP plans for approval to ensure required elements and alignment of interventions, strategies, human and financial resources to the needs identified through annual accountability AMOs and deeper analysis.

Arkansas requires districts to report school and student progress and performance annually (Arkansas Ann. Code § 6.15.1806) Districts are required to inform parents of student progress and performance on Arkansas's state-mandated assessments and on Norm Reference Tests (NRT). Districts must provide School Performance Reports to the local newspaper annually. The ADE publishes annual School, District and State Performance Reports on the department website at https://adedata.arkansas.gov/ Additionally, districts are required to publish schools' ACSIP on districts' websites in order to ensure transparency of the school improvement process. Through web-based reporting, stakeholders may access critical school performance indicators and schools' approved ACSIP designed to address schools' identified needs.

Another safeguard for students not meeting annual grade level expectations is the state required Academic Improvement Plan and Intensive Reading Intervention requirements. Arkansas Code § 6.15.1803(a)(2) requires any student not meeting proficiency standards in the previous spring to participate in remediation and/or intervention activities outlined in an individual Academic Improvement Plan (AIP) or Intensive Reading Intervention (IRI) for primary students scoring Below Basic in reading. Schools must notify the parent(s) of this requirement and inform the parent(s) of his/her role and responsibilities and the consequences for the student's failure to participate in the plan. Retention is the consequence outlined in the law for students who do not participate in the AIP or IRI. The requirement of an AIP or IRI (in the case of primary reading deficiency) for students not Proficient in math, literacy or science, provides an additional safeguard for all students, particularly students who are members of ESEA subgroups that may not meet the minimum N for accountability for the group at

the school level. Accountability for students' participation in remediation and/or intervention to attain grade level proficiency ensures that students needs are addressed regardless of ESEA subgroup size. The Arkansas Student Intervention System, housed at https://adedata.arkansas.gov/asis/ , provides schools with an electronic means to monitor student progress. This browser-based software allows schools to manage the RTI data and record keeping elements in a time-efficient manner.

Multi-tiered Support System: Incentives, Interventions and Supports

DARTSS results in determinations for all schools and districts as Achieving or Needs Improvement, and in particular Exemplary, Focus and Priority Schools. Accountability determinations result in all schools receiving a classification of Achieving or Needs Improvement based on meeting their AMOs as described in Section 2.A. Within the broader accountability framework, Exemplary Schools will be identified annually as described in Section 2.C. Needs Improvement Focus Schools and Needs Improvement Priority Schools will be identified using 2012 through 2014 assessment results to differentiate further among degrees of school performance. Within Achieving and Needs Improvement categories ADE proposes to differentiate recognition and consequences based on the degree of excellence or needs as determined by schools' and districts' Performance, Growth and Graduation Rates. Arkansas's approved flexibility includes a careful plan for providing a congruent differentiated system of reward/recognition, incentives, interventions, and supports.

ADE recognizes that plans for accountability and support must be cognizant of what is workable and manageable given the capacity and resources of the agency. ADE has benefited from ESEA Flexibility by targeting resources where they are most needed and resisting the temptation to spread available resources too thinly. ADE has recognized exemplary performance and progress and increased transparency to proclaim the degree of achievement concerns and/or gaps where they exist. The incremental improvements proposed for DARTSS through renewal provides enhancements to the blueprint used to accomplish the aforementioned goals by aligning recognition, supports, engagement and interventions based on the degree of needs revealed through accountability measures. ADE constantly monitors the effectiveness of DARTSS, making mid-course corrections where necessary to jump-start stalled improvement efforts or misaligned improvement efforts.

DARTSS accountability levels, supports, engagement, and interventions are summarized as follows.
- Exemplary Schools:
  - Recognition and/or reward;
  - Very low engagement by ADE SSOS except to support/coordinate Model School activities;
  - 3-year ACSIP cycle with ADE review and approval of plan;
  - High district autonomy.
- Achieving Schools Meeting Performance AMOs *and* Growth AMOs (and Graduation Rate AMOs for high schools):
  - Very low ADE SSOS engagement;
  - 3-year ACSIP cycle with ADE review and approval of plan;
  - High district autonomy
- Achieving Schools Meeting Performance AMOs *or* Growth AMOs (and Graduation Rate AMOs for high schools):
  - Very low ADE SSOS engagement;
  - 1-year ACSIP cycle with ADE review and approval of plan;

- o   High district autonomy;
- Needs Improvement Schools:
    - o   Low to moderate ADE SSOS engagement differentiated based on degree of identified needs;
    - o   1-year ACSIP cycle with ADE review and approval of plan;
    - o   Low to high engagement of regional support center staff and resources for local, customized support;
    - o   Moderate district autonomy with the degree of ADE engagement differentiated based on progress of Needs Improvement Schools or persistence of gaps and other areas of need.
        - ▪   Schools that demonstrate a lack of progress in performance, graduation rate, or closing the achievement gaps after interventions will be subject to increasing state direction of interventions and funding allocations.
- Needs Improvement Focus Schools:
    - o   High SSOS engagement;
        - ▪   ADE School Improvement Specialist (SIS) approval of Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) and resource/funds allocation,
    - o   1-year ACSIP (with ADE review and approval) with TIP interventions and quarterly measurable objectives embedded;
        - ▪   Schools must demonstrate alignment of federal and National School Lunch Act (NSLA) fund allocations sufficient to support implementation of interventions;
    - o   High engagement of regional support center staff and resources;
    - o   Low district autonomy;
        - ▪   ADE approves interventions,
        - ▪   District and school leadership teams required,
        - ▪   District assigns locally-hired site-based SIS or optionally an external provider to monitor,
        - ▪   Persistent lack of progress will result in any or all of turnaround principles applied to school(s) including replacing the leader and/or staff using teacher and leader evaluation information as described in Principle 3.
- Needs Improvement Priority Schools:
    - o   Very high SSOS engagement;
        - ▪   ADE assigns SIS to approve interventions & resource allocations,
        - ▪   ADE SIS monitors implementation;
        - ▪   1-year ACSIP (with ADE review and approval) with PIP interventions and quarterly measurable objectives embedded;
        - ▪   Schools must demonstrate alignment of federal and NSLA fund allocations sufficient to support implementation of interventions;
    - ▪   Low district autonomy;
        - ▪   District assigns locally-hired site based SIS or optionally an external provider,
        - ▪   District and school leadership teams required,
        - ▪   PIP interventions must address all seven turnaround principles including district replacing school leader and addressing teacher effectiveness needs,
            - •   ADE may require leader replacement if lack of progress in the first year (SIG requirement),
            - •   Local evaluation process and progress on PIP may be used to ensure teacher effectiveness in Priority Schools.

- Priority schools' staff and leaders will participate in TESS training prior to the 2013-2014 school year, and pilot TESS during the 2013-2014 school year;
  - Lack of progress on interim benchmarks results in state direction of interventions as well as federal and NSLA funds,
  - Continued lack of progress on interim benchmarks and/or annual AMOs may result in district academic distress.

Differentiated consequences for districts are embedded in the consequences for Achieving, Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority Schools as indicated by the differentiated levels of district autonomy related to school designations. Districts with Exemplary Schools and Achieving Schools that meet Performance AMOs and Growth AMOs (and Graduation Rate AMOs for high schools) will have the most autonomy. At the other end of the accountability spectrum, districts with Needs Improvement Focus and/or Priority Schools have the least autonomy. Thus, districts are incentivized to support their lowest performing schools in their improvement efforts to achieve the greatest autonomy. When this doesn't occur, and low performing schools fall into academic distress, state statute and rule provide response mechanisms to intervene on behalf of students and parents within these schools.

Re-conceptualizing Arkansas's Statewide System of Support (SSOS) was a fundamental factor in the development of this multi-tiered system of support. The ADE has adopted a careful balance of flexibility as incentive to build capacity for locally-based, data-informed decisions with a revised role as an initial collaborator to support local decisions and oversight as necessary when local efforts do not achieve attended implementation and results.

The ADE approach to providing a multi-tiered support system is to assist schools and districts to make informed decisions regarding continuous improvement from the "bottom-up as much as possible and top down as much as necessary," as delineated above. ADE has supported school and district level development of continuous improvement plans through ACSIP which included an annual review and approval of the plan. *ADE-continues to review and approve (where appropriate) all ACSIP.* However, the level of engagement by ADE in the needs assessment and planning process varies based on schools' and districts' degree of need for support or intervention. This approach has several advantages. Through the changes in accountability designations provided through ESEA Flexibility, ADE School Improvement Staff are able to support and/or intervene based on the degree of need as determined by the achievement, growth and graduation rate indicators and implementation indicators in the system. Those with the greatest needs receive the most intensive interventions and support from the start. The incentive of flexibility in set asides for Title I, Part A funds through Flexibility enables district and school leadership to build their local capacity for decision-making and holds them accountable for the outcomes of those decisions where high to moderate district autonomy is appropriate. Collaborative support from ADE SISs, School Support Teams (SST) and state/regional/local content specialists facilitates knowledge and skill building for leaders and teachers. Again, the level of intervention and support are greater for Needs Improvement Priority and Needs Improvement Focus Schools, and the levels of district autonomy are lower as is appropriate for districts with these schools. Oversight for implementation of interventions is responsive to the level of intervention need and the level of local response. Needs Improvement Priority and Focus Schools begin with greater oversight and involvement of ADE SIS compared to all other schools. Districts and schools begin with more flexibility for local control of resources and decisions. Progress in turning around student performance, improving

instructional effectiveness and closing achievement gaps determines whether flexibility for decisions and use of Title I, Part A funds remains in the hands of local leadership or must shift to increasing ADE oversight, or advance to state direction and/or District Academic Distress Status and state sanctions.

ADE utilizes a regional approach to customize support available to schools and districts that allows districts to pool some of their resources within Regional Education Cooperatives (REC) to meet professional development and other systemic needs. In collaboration with partner organizations such as regional STEM centers and Education Renewal Zones, among other partners, RECs support schools and districts in self-assessment and planning, developing effective leadership and instructional practices; and provide training, modeling, and facilitation of the use of ADE resources and tools to support improvements. Districts have a strong incentive to participate in REC activities because they add value and needed capacity, provide customized professional development and other supports; and serve as an avenue for networking, particularly in Arkansas's rural communities. This collaborate relationship between districts and the RECs builds trust and a climate of support. Superintendents participate in governance of RECs as members that constitute their boards of directors.

Each REC is led by a director who is a proven educational leader based on his or her prior record of accomplishment. These directors bring a deep understanding of the local, civic, cultural, economic, and educational context and the ability to meaningful engage local stakeholder groups in their work. The directors are supported by teacher center coordinators who interact with the instructional corps within the region to analyze needs and provide resources and support. RECs employ a variety of specialists to support local districts in technology, data use, core instructional areas, EL programs and SWD programs.

Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority School Interventions begin with ADE SIS and/or external provider facilitated deep diagnostic analysis of systems that support student instruction and family/community engagement. District and school leadership teams are created to develop local structures that support systemic changes and continuous improvement. Needs Improvement Priority Schools have more systemic needs and their planning and oversight processes reflect this difference in degree. Needs Improvement Focus Schools vary in their intensity and needs and the planning and oversight processes reflect this as well. The re-conceptualized SSOS and the redefined roles of ADE's School Improvement Staff through ESEA Flexibility have enhanced the ADE's capacity to meet the support and monitoring needs of all schools. The following general timeline guided the transition to ESEA Flexibility and has been extended to articulate the timeline for Flexibility Renewal.

Implementation Timeline
February 2012
- Exemplary, Priority and Focus Schools preliminarily identified using 2011 CRT results and other indicators as outlined in Sections 2.C.-2.E.
- Preliminary individualized school, district and state AMOs calculated for All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups using 2011 CRT results.

Spring/Summer 2012
- Exemplary, Priority and Focus Schools determined using 2011 CRT results and other indicators as approved by USDE in the Flexibility request process.
  - o Priority and Focus Schools announced. School and district leadership meet with Commissioner and ADE Learning Services and Accountability Divisions' staff to initiate

Priority and Focused Improvement Processes.

- o Exemplary Schools announced and recognized. Exemplary Schools' district and building leaders meet with Commissioner and ADE Learning Services and Accountability Divisions' staff to initiate model school activities. Exemplary Schools will be recognized through a variety of public media and will serve as model schools for leader and teacher development to build capacity for improving achievement in similar schools from across Arkansas.

- Individualized School AMOs are published for All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups using 2011 CRT results.
- Division of Learning Services and Accountability undergo restructuring to ensure alignment of personnel and resources to support planed interventions and support for Priority and Focus Schools, as well as all other schools.
- Communications plan operationalized to inform stakeholders of changes in accountability system and integration with CCSS, PARCC and TESS implementation.
- 2012 CRT results used to calculate 2012 Accountability Reports for schools, districts and state.

School Year 2012-2013

- Exemplary Schools recognized and model school activities initiated as per timeline provided in Section 2.C.
- Priority and Focus School intervention activities initiated as per timeline provided in Section 2.D.
- Accountability determinations for all schools and their districts released, supports and interventions for all schools initiated.
  - Accountability Status Determination
    - o Meet proficiency gap AMOs (prior year or 3 year proficiency rate)—All Students and TAGG, or
    - o Meet growth gap AMOs—All Students and TAGG (will include high schools once PARCC assessments are fully implemented)
    - o High Schools meet proficiency gap AMOs **and** graduation rate gap AMOs—All Students and TAGG.
    - o Apply Minimum N of 25.
  - Concomitant and transparent reporting of ESEA subgroups' progress provides an early warning system regarding students within the TAGG that may be contributing to schools' overall achievement gap.
    - o Report progress toward meeting proficiency gap AMOs (prior year or 3 year proficiency rate)—All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups.
    - o Report progress toward meeting growth AMOs— All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups.
    - o Report high schools' progress toward meeting graduation rate AMOs—All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroups.
- Apply confidentiality N of 10 for reporting purposes.
- School-based review of All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroup indicators is augmented at the school level by the use of deeper diagnostic data collected locally to inform the micro-level view of strengths and obstacles to closing achievement gaps.
- Schools' revise their ACSIP to replicate successes where applicable, and to address identified obstacles and concerns where needed.
- The ACSIP (continuous improvement plan) is submitted for ADE approval.
  - o Every three years for Exemplary and Achieving schools that maintain an Achieving status

during that period.
- o Annually for schools designated as Needs Improvement.
  - ▪ Districts are the primary vehicle to support and intervene for school improvement efforts for schools that are not identified as Focus or Priority Schools.
  - ▪ Districts have primary responsibility for schools not identified as Focus or Priority Schools with oversight by ADE.
  - ▪ The ADE will provide coordinated web-based resources to support districts' efforts and will analyze regional impact and implementation data to coordinate district resources through regional educational cooperatives, Education Renewal Zones and regional math and science centers.
  - ▪ District monitors interim and annual progress.
  - ▪ ADE monitors and holds districts accountable for annual progress of Needs Improvement schools that are not Priority or Focus Schools.
- o Systemic intervention and support for Priority Schools (Section 2.D.).
- o Focused intervention and support for Focus Schools (Section 2.E.).

Spring 2015
- Priority and Focus Schools preliminarily identified using 2012-2014 CRT results and other indicators as outlined in Sections 2.D.-2.E.
- Schools maintain (pause) status from 2014 except for newly exited Priority Focus schools (using letter grade and gap criteria) and newly identified Priority and Focus schools.

Fall 2015
- Upon receipt of new assessment scores, 2015 AMOs set and school, district and state performance reported against 2015 AMOs.
- Data modeling continues to consider options for new growth metrics under new assessment.
- New Priority and Focus Schools complete needs assessments and plans as described in Sections 2.D. and 2.E.
- New Exemplary schools are named from new test scores based on performance, graduation rate and performance/graduation rate gaps.

Spring 2016-Fall 2017
- Identify strategies for AMO calculations based on new assessment scores and new performance level definitions. Identify strategies for use of growth in DARTSS and statistically model the strategies within status determination to prepare for status determination in 2016.

DARTSS, in conjunction with tools available through the state longitudinal data system and Student GPS Systems, provide the requisite infrastructure to support a data-informed culture at all levels of Arkansas's educational system (P-20+). The ADE recognizes the importance of modeling and supporting continuous improvement processes, thus Arkansas has continuously studied the impact of its accountability system on the desired outcomes, and participated in ESEA Flexibility and prior flexibility offered through federal Pilot Growth and Differentiated Accountability models in its efforts to refine the state's ability to impact all students. These iterations of accountability have provided valuable information as Arkansas seeks to refine further its accountability system through this flexibility renewal. The proposed elements in this renewal are founded in lessons learned through the iterative process of using multiple measures and feedback to inform policy and practice decisions.

2.A.ii   Select the option that pertains to the SEA and provide the corresponding information, if any.

Option A	Option B
☒ The SEA includes student achievement only on reading/language arts and mathematics assessments in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system and to identify reward, priority, and focus schools.	☐ If the SEA includes student achievement on assessments in addition to reading/language arts and mathematics in its differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system or to identify reward, priority, and focus schools, it must: *a.* provide the percentage of students in the "all students" group that performed at the proficient level on the State's most recent administration of each assessment for all grades assessed; and *b.* include an explanation of how the included assessments will be weighted in a manner that will result in holding schools accountable for ensuring all students achieve college- and career-ready standards.

Assessments included in DARTSS

Arkansas's Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) included criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) for all students in math and literacy at Grades 3 through 8 and Grades 5 and 7 for science. At the high school level, Arkansas required all students to complete End of Course Exams in Algebra, Geometry and Biology, as well as a Grade 11 Literacy Exam. In 2015, Arkansas students in grades 3 – 10 completed the PARCC and NCSC assessments in math and literacy, and continue to complete CRTs in Grades 5 and 7 science along with an End of Course Exam for Biology. SWD and ELs participate in these required assessments with or without accommodations as specified in their Individual Education Plans (IEP) or English Language Acquisition Plans (ELPA). Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the required assessments by completing the NCSC exam. The NCSC exam will continue to be used as the required math and literacy assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities for 2016 and beyond.

Act 1074 of the 90th General Assembly requires the State Board of Education to not renew its role as a governing state or its participation with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or enter into any contract or agreement in excess of one year related to statewide assessment for public school students after the 2015-2016 school year or any year thereafter. This same Act required the State Board of Education to take into consideration assessment recommendations made by the Governor's Council on Common Core Review.

On June 8, 2015 Governor Hutchinson accepted the Council's early recommendation to enter into

negotiations with ACT/ ACT Aspire for the 2015-2016 school year. On June 11th the State Board of Education did not approve a motion to enter into negotiations with ACT/ACT Aspire. The State Board of Education approved a motion to enter into a one year contract to administer the PARCC for the 2015-2016 school year.

At this time, the ADE has not entered into an assessment contract for the 2015-2016 school year. The timeline for the resolution of this matter is still unclear. The ADE will work with the State Board of Education and the Governor to resolve this matter. Arkansas will administer either the PARCC or another compliant assessment in 2015-2016. Should another assessment be selected, the ADE will work with the State Board of Education and the Governor's office to ensure the assessment meets the requirements set forth by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and supply the appropriate documentation to the USDE. At that time, the ADE will submit an amendment to its ESEA Flexibility renewal accompanied by the required documentation.

The documentation will include the following: (1) The process and timeline for development of test blueprints and item specifications; (2) the review and selection of items for inclusion in the assessments; (3) scaling and scoring procedures to be used; (4) test administration procedures, including selection and use of appropriate accommodations; (5) data analyses proposed to document validity and reliability of the assessments; (6) an independent evaluation of alignment of the assessments with the State's college- and career-ready standards; (7) the process and timeline for setting college- and career-ready achievement standards and the method and timeline to validate those achievement standards; and (8) meaningful report formats to communicate results to students, parents, and educators.

2.B   SET AMBITIOUS BUT ACHIEVABLE ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

Select the method the SEA will use to set new ambitious but achievable annual measurable objectives (AMOs) in at least reading/language arts and mathematics for the State and all LEAs, schools, and subgroups that provide meaningful goals and are used to guide support and improvement efforts. If the SEA sets AMOs that differ by LEA, school, or subgroup, the AMOs for LEAs, schools, or subgroups that are further behind must require greater rates of annual progress.

Option A	Option B	Option C
☐ Set AMOs in annual equal increments toward a goal of reducing by half the percentage of students in the "all students" group and in each subgroup who are not proficient within six years. The SEA must use current proficiency rates based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. *i.* Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☐ Set AMOs that increase in annual equal increments and result in 100 percent of students achieving proficiency no later than the end of the 2019–2020 school year. The SEA must use the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year as the starting point for setting its AMOs. *i.* Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs.	☒ Use another method that is educationally sound and results in ambitious but achievable AMOs for all LEAs, schools, and subgroups. *i.* Provide the new AMOs and an explanation of the method used to set these AMOs. *ii.* Provide an educationally sound rationale for the pattern of academic progress reflected in the new AMOs in the text box below. *iii.* Provide a link to the State's report card or attach a copy of the average statewide proficiency based on assessments administered in the 2010–2011 school year in reading/language arts and mathematics for the "all students" group and all subgroups. https://adesrc.arkansas.gov/

Method for Calculating Proficiency and Growth AMOs

As indicated in Principle 1, Arkansas has transitioned from its Benchmark and End of Course Examinations to the PARCC in 2015. This transition is accompanied by a number of challenges that must be addressed in ESEA Flexibility Renewal. The Technical Advisory Committee for Public School Accountability for Arkansas provided the following points regarding assessment scores during the transition years. These facts form the justification for the Agency's proposed pause in ESEA status determinations for 2015 and the proposed transition of AMOs.

Administration Issues during the Transition Years

1. First and most important are concerns about (first-year) use of online testing via computer. These are centered on documented differences in the adequacy of computer facilities and lack of training in using computer for testing on the part of many students, particularly those in low-income groups. For example, students at lower grade levels may not have acquired skills and experience in using online tools to solve mathematics problems. As a consequence, test scores for these students may not fully reflect their achievement on the items tested.

2. Questions are raised on the use of a mixture of online and paper-and-pencil (P&P) modes for test administrations. Some Arkansas districts are using P&P mode for all students. Some other districts that use online testing will also have some students with P&P mode. Online and P&P forms are intrinsically different from each other because online forms use a number of technology-enhanced items and where P&P forms do not. Even if PARCC has been very diligent in making online and P&P forms as equivalent and with comparable scores to the feasible extent, concerns are raised on potential interaction between test administration modes and major student demographics such as income level.

3. Lastly, PARCC is a new testing program with considerably demanding content standards. It is therefore expected that, as students become more familiar with the tests and instruction emphasis is more geared to new content areas, considerable student improvement is expected in subsequent years (as is well-known in other new testing programs). Thus the testing environment may be considered as not fully stable in the first few years of PARCC assessments.

Timing and Nature of PARCC 2014-15 Test Result

It is anticipated that a digital format of raw test data will be available in August 2015. (It will not have scores that are interpretable at this stage of analysis.). Scale scores are expected to be available in November but the scale has not been specified.
Assessment results from the 2015 PARCC assessments in Grades 3-10 English/Language Arts, Grades 3-8 mathematics, algebra, and geometry will be used to calculate and report against AMOs in 2015 as required by ESEA. The AMOs will be for the following groups for all schools:

*   All Students (Combined Population)
*   Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG)
*   African American Students
*   Hispanic Students
*   White Students

- Economically Disadvantaged Students
- English Learners (EL)
- Students with Disabilities (SWD)

Arkansas proposes to use the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the grade level standard on the PARCC for the school(s) at the 20th percentile rank of statewide distribution of school performance on the PARCC for math and for ELA due to the aforementioned reasons. The grade level standard will be determined through the standard setting process. This will provide stakeholders and educators with information on status and achievement gaps regarding students' status as CCR for the 2015 school year.

Following the reporting of the 2015 school, district, and state results against these AMOs, the Agency will use 2015 PARCC, as well as historic trends and patterns in assessment results, to model various AMO calculations to determine the best course of action for setting AMOs through the 2018-2019 school year.

Proficiency AMOs

For the transition year of 2015, AMOs will be calculated based on the school performance at the 20th percentile rank of the state distribution. The AMO for each subject for each group will be set at the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the grade level standard as determined through the standard setting process. For 2016 and future years, individualized school, district, and state performance AMOs will be determined after review and modeling based on 2015 results.

Growth AMOs

Individual student growth from year to year will not be available for the PARCC assessment until the 2015-16 assessment. The utility of any PARCC-based growth scores depends on sufficient variability in student test scores. With high concentration of test scores at the lower end of the distribution (as expected for the first few years), growth scores such as SGPs need to be interpreted with care and due diligence. Although the PARCC assessment will include individual SGP scores for students, the use of these scores at the school, district, and state level may take several different forms. The Agency will review the distributional characteristics of scores for 2015 and 2016 and work with the Technical Advisory Committee and stakeholder groups prior to proposing a particular growth metric at the aggregate levels for ESEA Flexibility purposes.

Graduation Rate AMOs

Baseline graduation rates for 2010 were used to determine AMOs using Option C. The 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate represents the percentage of students graduating out of the students expected to graduate. The percentages of students not graduating in 2010 were calculated at the school, district and the state levels for All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroups. The percentage of students *Not Graduating* represents the *Graduation Gap* for each group within the school. Under Option C, the *Graduation Gap* must be reduced by half by 2017. Table 9 provides an example of the calculations within a school, district and the state for All Students and the TAGG. ESEA subgroups were also calculated for all schools, districts and the state using the same procedure.

Arkansas uses a lagging graduation in accountability; therefore, graduation rate AMOs will be calculated using 2010 cohort graduation rate.

Table 9.

Sample Graduation Gap and Annual Measurable Objective Calculations

All Students' Graduation Rate AMOs	TAGG's Graduation Rate AMOs
76% Graduation Rate = 24% Graduation Gap	52% Graduation Rate = 48% Graduation Gap
12% = Graduation Gap (24) ÷ 2	24% = Graduation Gap(48) ÷ 2
2 Percentage Points = Annual Increase (12% ÷ 6)	4 Percentage Points = Annual Increase (24% ÷ 6)
2012 AMO = 76 + 2 = 78% Graduation Rate	2012 AMO = 52 + 4 = 56% Graduation Rate
2013 AMO = 78 + 2 = 80% Graduation Rate	2013 AMO = 56 + 4 = 60% Graduation Rate
2014 AMO = 80 + 2 = 82% Graduation Rate	2014 AMO = 60 + 4 = 64% Graduation Rate
2015 AMO = 82 + 2 = 84% Graduation Rate	2015 AMO = 64 + 4 = 68% Graduation Rate
2016 AMO = 84 + 2 = 86% Graduation Rate	2016 AMO = 68 + 4 = 72% Graduation Rate
2017 AMO = 86 + 2 = 88% Graduation Rate	2017 AMO = 72 + 4 = 76% Graduation Rate

Prior to 2015, Arkansas elected to set individualized AMOs for each school, district and the state based on 2011 performance and growth consistent with Option C. This option ensured schools that were furthest behind had to make the largest gains. This option also addressed several concerns expressed by stakeholders in the regional public meetings. Specifically, stakeholders were concerned that existing AMOs did not recognize the diversity of starting points in performance across the state. Schools and districts that had started with very low percentages of students meeting proficiency had made progress, but because they had started 20-30 points behind the initial AMOs, these schools or districts were struggling to get credit for improvement. The individualized AMOs provide ambitious and achievable goals for schools by acknowledging each schools' starting points, yet requiring each school to close the gap with 100 percent proficiency, 100 percent growth, and 100 percent graduating by the same proportion within six years.

Due to the aging of the Arkansas Criterion-Referenced Exams and the transition to PARCC assessments, individualized AMOs will be paused for 2015 and the percentage of students at the 20th percentile rank of the school distribution will be used for the transition year.

LEAs will be required to report on district and school report cards the performance of all subgroups against established LEA AMOs. The ADE will set AMOs for the SEA and report progress. The ADE will reset AMOs upon full implementation of the PARCC assessments in 2014-2015.

Schools that change configuration within a district and new schools will be held accountable for the district level AMOs. Once the first year of testing for these schools is complete, individualized AMOs will be calculated to close the gaps within six years.

A listing of all schools and their AMOs is provided as a data file in an Excel spreadsheet.

Baseline Performance, Growth and Graduation Rate Distributions

New baseline performance and growth distributions will be calculated; performance in 2015 and growth in 2016.

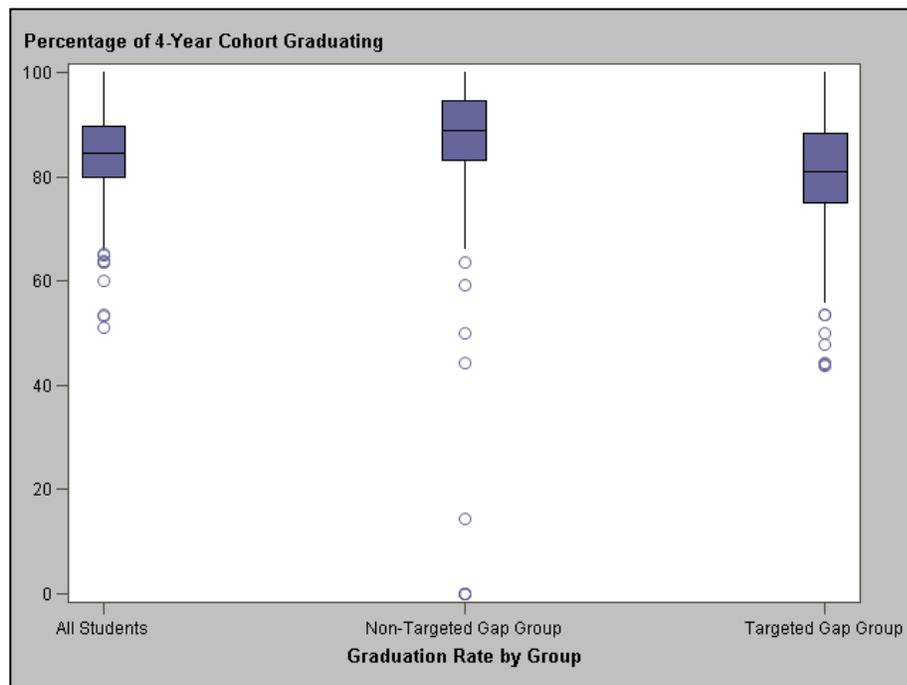Graduation rate distributions for baseline are provided in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Graduation Rate for All Students and Targeted and Non-Targeted Achievement Gap Group.

A concern of stakeholders communicated through the regional meetings and follow-up draft review meetings was that of high performing schools receiving a label of Needs Improvement simply because their proficiency gap is so small in 2011 and their AMOs would place them in the range of performance that is most difficult to exceed consistently on an annual basis, strictly due to random error. For example, a school at 94.5 percent proficient in 2011 demonstrates exemplary performance, scores 94.5 percent again in 2012, but because they must increase to 95 percent the school becomes a Needs Improvement School. Stakeholders communicated concerns about the validity of a system that would penalize a school where 94.5 percent of its students meet grade level benchmarks. The use of a three-year weighted average or the most current year percentage provides some relief from being mislabeled because the three-year weighted average is more stable. However, the students included each year will vary as these calculations are based on cross-sectional data.

The ADE proposes to continue give schools and districts full credit for meeting AMOs when the Performance, Growth or Graduation Rate meet or exceed the baseline percentage at the 90th percentile rank of the state school-level distributions for Performance, Growth or Graduation Rate. The percentages associated with the 90th percentile rank of the state distributions at baseline

are provided in Table 2.7.1. This safeguard ensures schools and/or districts demonstrating high-performance, high-growth and/or high graduation rates are not penalized for variations due to measurement error rather than a true decline in performance, growth or graduation rate.

Table 7. *Percentages Associated with the 90th Percentile Rank in the 2012 State School-Level Distributions*

	Literacy for All Students	Math for All Students	Graduation Rate for All Students
Performance—Percent Proficient	TBD*	TBD	
Growth—Percent Met Annual Expected Growth	TBD	TBD	
Graduation Rate			94

* To be determined

- o The annual school performance report is available at
  http://arkansased.org/testing/performance_report.html

School, District and State AMOs

The AMOs for performance for 2015 will be determined as described above, and will be provided following the availability of 2015 scale scores and performance levels. The AMOs for graduation rates based on 2010 results remain unchanged from the original ESEA Flexibility proposal.

- o Grade level state performance is provided at
  https://adesrc.arkansas.gov

The state assessments used in Arkansas for accountability in 2014 were administered for the final time in Spring, 2014. Students completed PARCC assessments in 2015. A major issue for ADE is determining appropriate procedures for measuring changes in student performance aggregated at the group level, such as schools, school districts, and major reporting sub-groups identified in various ADE accountability documents that meet the desired criteria put forth by stakeholders, specifically, to reduce complexity in the system where possible.

PARCC assessments are based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and are delivered via computer-based modes. The construct (also known as content area and type of skills) and testing mode associated with the current ADE assessments are not identical with those of the PARCC assessments. These inherent differences limit the nature of student and group changes that can be meaningfully quantified based on student achievement from 2014 to 2015.

The ADE proposes to maintain their accountability status from 2014 during the 2014-2015 school transition in assessment for performance and growth as recommended by the TAC. Interventions to assist schools will be based upon areas of need as identified under the rating a school receives under the one category grading system implemented in the 2013-2014 school year.

2.C   REWARD SCHOOLS

2.C.i   Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying highest-performing and high-progress schools as reward schools . If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of reward schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

The ESEA Flexibility represented an opportunity to move existing disparate State and NCLB accountability systems toward a unitary approach to differentiated recognition and accountability. State law in 2012 posed a challenge to this unification in that existing state accountability specifications passed through Act 35 in the Second Extraordinary Session of the General Assembly in 2003 include specific language and performance rating systems reflect 2003 State and NCLB accountability provisions (Arkansas Ann. Code § 6.15.21). Exemplary Schools methodology provides for recognition of schools demonstrating high performance and high progress, along with several safeguards to ensure performance and progress are not attained at the expense of other indicators such as achievement gaps and graduation rates.

The ADE is using the DARTSS accountability designations and associated methodologies in 2.C. through 2.E. to set the foundation for a unitary state and federal accountability system moving into the 2013 General Assembly.

Stakeholders indicated four types of performance that should be valued in Exemplary School designation. These include:

- Schools demonstrating high performance;
- Schools with high TAGG populations with high performance;
- Schools with high progress; and
- Schools with high TAGG populations with high progress.

Arkansas Annotated Code Sections 6-15-2107 (Attachment 16) specifies a School Recognition Program to provide incentives for outstanding schools identified under the state accountability performance ratings. ADE proposes to identify Exemplary Schools that satisfy the state criteria for high performance and high improvement and the ESEA Flexibility criteria for high performance and high progress. Selecting schools from the four categories valued by stakeholders ensures performance and progress are equally valued and fairly assessed given the diversity of school populations and that Exemplary Schools criteria are congruent with federal and state criteria for designation. ESEA Flexibility requires the additional criteria for schools that qualify for consideration as Exemplary Schools. These schools must not exhibit significant achievement gaps for any ESEA subgroups, and these schools must meet 95 percent tested for Combined Population and the TAGG in order to be considered for Exemplary School designation.

Schools are considered to have high TAGG populations when two-thirds of the students tested are members of the TAGG, i.e., economically disadvantaged, ELs and/or SWD.

To determine Exemplary Schools for high performance, high progress, high-TAGG performance

and high-TAGG progress three years of scores were used to calculate a three-year weighted average percentage of students Proficient for math and literacy combined. The percentage for each school was determined by dividing the sum of all full academic year students tested who scored at or above Proficient at each tested grade for each of three consecutive years by the total number of full academic year students who tested for each of the three consecutive years. Combining the grade levels and the years for each school provides stability of the scores for accountability purposes. This process will undergo transition beginning in 2015. Exemplary schools will pause designation in 2015 and continue in 2016. In 2016 only two years of scores will be available for these calculations.

Schools' progress is determined by comparing the three-year weighted average percent meeting grade level expectations for the three most recent years to the three-year weighted average percent meeting grade level expectations for the prior three year period. This results in a change or progress score for each school. Schools are classified into three groups for ranking: K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 ranges. Arkansas schools have many different grade configurations, thus schools are classified within one of the three ranges based on the predominance of tested grades within the school. For example, a K-6 school would be classified in the K-5 range because the majority of tested grades (Grades 3-5) are in the K-5 level. A school serving Grades 5 through 8 would be classified as a 6-8 range. When a school has an equal number of tested grades for each range, the school is classified in the upper range.

To determine reasonable criteria for consideration as Exemplary Schools, the descriptive statistics for the distribution of performance and progress scores were calculated. Schools were included for consideration if they were ranked in the top of their range, and their scores were at or above the 99th percentile (K-5) or the 95th percentile (6-8 and 9-12). Schools were eliminated from Exemplary designation if subgroup performance demonstrated significant achievement gaps between All Students and the TAGG, as well as All Students and the largest within-school or TAGG gap.

In 2016 two years of scores will be available to calculate growth/progress of schools. If changes are needed to accommodate growth in lieu of progress an amendment will be submitted to that effect.

Significant Gaps

The within-school gap is the largest gap between the highest and lowest performing groups within the school. For example, some schools have the largest achievement gap between white and African American students, whereas other schools have the largest achievement gap between white student and SWD. Distributional analysis of the magnitude of the three-year average TAGG gap and the three-year average within school gap provided appropriate criteria for quantifying a significant gap.

Schools were eliminated from Exemplary School consideration if their TAGG and/or their largest gap (TAGG or within-school gap) are greater than the gap size at the 25th percentile of the gap size distribution. In other words, Exemplary Schools must be in the bottom quartile of gap size to remain in consideration for Exemplary School designation. The same process is completed for high progress schools.

A further check of graduation rates for high schools is completed to ensure high schools included for Exemplary School Status are at or above the median Graduation Rate of 83.78. Graduation Rate gap distribution is examined to determine an appropriate criteria for maintaining inclusion in Exemplary Status. The lower bound of the 50th percentile Graduation Rate gap was selected as the cut point for 2011. These additional constraints for Exemplary School eligibility are applied prior to finalizing the lists.

One consideration for future Exemplary Schools is that of Needs Improvement Priority and Needs Improvement Focus schools that make immediate and substantive process in turning around school performance and/or closing the achievement gap and find themselves at the top of the high progress rankings. At this time a school may not be named Exemplary unless it is Achieving, or has exited Priority or Focus school status.

Another consideration for future Exemplary Schools is that of ensuring performance, growth and Graduation Rates of ESEA subgroups (for ESEA subgroups that meet the minimum N of 25 within a school) are appropriate to the designation of exemplary. Schools are eliminated from consideration in the annual Exemplary School designation for high performance or high progress (among all schools and high TAGG schools) if the All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups do not meet their annual AMOs for performance, growth and Graduation Rate when the group meets the minimum N of 25. This is especially important given the individualized AMOs help level the playing field for annual improvement. In the case of a school whose performance, growth or Graduation Rate AMOs exceed 94 percent, and the school achieves 94 percent for performance, growth or Graduation Rate, the school is retained for consideration.

2.C.ii   Provide the SEA's list of reward schools in Table 2.

Given the high performance levels of the Arkansas CRT exams in 2011, most high performing schools were unable to meet the linear increasing targets for all groups as required for Exemplary status. One school was listed as Exemplary in 2014. This situation will be mitigated when Arkansas uses its new assessment to set new AMOs.

High Performance. One school qualified as Exemplary under performance.

High Progress.

2.C.iii   Describe how the SEA will publicly recognize and, if possible, reward highest-performing and high-progress schools.

The ADE consulted with representative stakeholders and with the Commissioner's Superintendent Advisory Committee regarding criteria for determining Exemplary Schools and incentives and rewards. Both groups indicated the following incentives are valued: reduction in paperwork requirements, recognition and financial flexibility and/or reward. Exemplary Schools are exempt from annual approval of ACSIP and submit ACSIP plans on a 3-year cycle provided these schools continue to meet accountability requirements to be designated an Achieving School (pp.79-81). The ACSIP flexibility for a 3-year cycle remains as long as the school maintains Achieving status and meets requirements for a 3-year cycle by meeting Performance AMOs *and*

Growth AMOs for All Students *and* the TAGG for math *and* literacy. For high schools the 3-year ACSIP cycle requires the high school to meet all Graduation Rate AMOs for All Students and the TAGG in addition to the requirement to meet Performance AMOs for math *and* literacy. This ~~will~~ reduces paperwork burden for these schools and recognizes that their current plans are working. The differentiated consequences among Achieving Schools are detailed in 2.A.i.a.

To distinguish among Achieving Schools that are designated as Exemplary Schools, additional rewards and recognitions apply. Exemplary Schools receive public recognition for their designation and serve a capacity building role in Arkansas as Model Schools that collaborate and share best practices with other schools around the state. The Arkansas Reading First Annual Evaluation Reports indicated Arkansas educators place a high value on job-embedded learning and coaching achieved through establishing model classrooms. Exemplary Schools may serve a similar capacity across the P-20 educational system by hosting opportunities to observe and discuss exemplary practices for practicing teachers as well as pre-service teachers. Additional funds will be requested to support Exemplary Schools' expenses related to travel to state and regional conferences to share best practices and to host school visits.

The Arkansas School Recognition Program s been revised to reward schools financially for high levels of performance and/or high levels of growth. Exemplary schools typically are among these schools receiving financial awards.

2.D   PRIORITY SCHOOLS

2.D.i   Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of lowest-performing schools equal to at least five percent of the State's Title I schools as priority schools. If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of priority schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Method for Identifying Priority Schools

Calculations for Priority Schools are based on performance levels from Arkansas criterion-referenced assessments for the three most recent years of data at the time of calculation for Priority designation (2012, 2013, and 2014) for Grades 3 through 8, Algebra and Geometry End of Course Exams, and Grade 11 Literacy Exams. Percentages include all students completing a full academic year, as well as students completing an alternate assessment. Five percent of the 816 Title I schools identified in 2012-14 result in a minimum of 40 Title I Priority Schools, inclusive of SIG schools, and 6 non-Title I schools with commensurate low performance. Priority Schools are identified from among all schools in 2012-2014, high schools with graduation rates less than 60 percent over several years, and Tier I or Tier II schools using SIG funds for a school intervention model. Lowest performance is determined using the Added Ranks method in A-15 of the SIG FY2010 Guidance. This method was used to identify persistently low achieving

schools under Section 1003(g) and has consistently identified the lowest performing schools that have not shown progress within the prior three years.

To be eligible for Priority designation, a school must meet minimum N of 25 for each subject for the All Students group for each of the three years included in the calculation of the added ranks to ensure the sum of the added ranks are based on a sufficiently statistically stable number in each subject each year.

1. Schools were ranked on current performance based on 2014 academic achievement for mathematics and literacy combined using an added ranks method.
   a. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for the percentage of students proficient in mathematics in 2014. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
   b. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for the percentage of students proficient in literacy in 2014. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
   c. An overall rank for 2014 academic achievement was obtained by summing the ranks for mathematics and literacy. Lowest performing schools in 2014 had the highest summed ranks.
2. Schools were ranked on progress by utilizing the added ranks method 2013 and 2014 performance.
   a. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for percentage of students proficient in mathematics for each year. Each school was assigned a rank value based on this order for each year, with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
   b. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest for percentage of students proficient in literacy for each year. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order for each year, with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
   c. Overall ranks for 2012 and 2013 were obtained by summing the ranks for mathematics and literacy.
   d. A 3-year progress ranking was obtained by summing the 2012, 2013 and 2014 overall rank values.
3. A final combined rank score was obtained by creating a weighted sum that included overall rank for performance in 2014 and the overall 3-year progress rank. Three-year progress was weighted 1.0 and 2014 performance was weighted .80, thus giving slightly more credit to schools that may have been low performing, but demonstrated progress during the three years.
4. The schools identified as persistently lowest-achieving were the bottom 5 percent of schools when sorted by the final combined rank score. Schools participating as Tier I or Tier II schools under SIG were included in the 5 percent.
5. The four year adjusted cohort graduation rate was used to identify schools with rates persistently below 60 percent.

2.D.ii   Provide the SEA's list of priority schools in Table 2.

SIG Schools and others with masked identity, associated rank scores, and performance data are provided in Table 2. Additional Information on priority schools is provided as a data file in an Excel spreadsheet.

2.D.iii   Describe the meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles that an LEA with priority schools will implement.

Existing structures for ADE technical assistance and monitoring for schools and districts in NCLB Improvement, coupled with existing sanctions of NCLB have had a limited impact on whole school achievement in persistently low achieving schools, and limited impact on the achievement gap in other schools, despite continuous improvement of student performance in math and literacy. Arkansas' pilot of differentiated accountability allowed the ADE to investigate the impact of focusing ADE's response based on the level of schools' needs and to identify obstacles to promoting changes in the effectiveness of district and school systems. The experience of working with the pilot differentiated accountability model has revealed patterns of dysfunction within schools that have not demonstrated improvement sought in student outcomes. Priority Schools have persistent, systemic improvement needs that are evidenced in academic expectations and school culture, as well as instructional, leadership and community engagement practices. Therefore, interventions must focus on identifying concerns at the educational system level and intervening within the entire system; both within the district's organizational and support system and their Priority Schools' organizational and instructional systems.

Schools are interdependent within their respective districts and achievement challenges are not isolated to a single campus within a district system, but may manifest to different degrees across schools in the district dependent upon many factors. Some factors are under the control of the school and others may be influenced by district level factors that are not easily mitigated within the school without district intervention and support. Therefore the ADE proposes to engage district leadership in diagnostic analysis and needs assessment in partnership with Priority School Leadership with oversight for quality and effectiveness provided by the ADE.

Under approved Flexibility the ADE requires Priority Schools to engage in comprehensive diagnostic analysis and needs assessment in tandem with an ADE SIS and SST from the ADE. Another concern in Priority Schools is the development of local capacity for continuous improvement. The interventions for Priority Schools are designed to build local capacity for leading change by providing flexibility for decision making with greater responsibility for outcomes. The interventions are aligned with the Turnaround principles as indicated in the implementation timeline. The timeline provides an outline of the basic elements of the ADE's required Priority School Intervention.

Under the Arkansas ESEA Flexibility, Priority Schools undergo a diagnostic analysis and needs assessment. The findings from this process are used to develop a 3-year Priority Intervention Plan (PIP). The diagnostic analysis process is-used to identify the barriers within the LEA and its associated Priority School(s) that have prevented development of a supportive school culture for high achievement. Priority Schools are given flexibility to use Title I funds previously set aside under ESEA Section 1116 (b) to support implementation of its PIP with approval from the ADE. The level of involvement of the lead SI specialist is deeper than in the prior differentiated accountability

models, particularly in ensuring the schools are meeting their interim measurable objectives and intervening earlier to hold schools accountable for progress. Schools are required to continue interventions under ADE SIS monitoring for three years once exited from Priority Status to ensure continuity of interventions and sustained progress.

Teacher and leader effectiveness are primary components for emphasis within the PIP. District involvement in the needs assessment and subsequent PIP development maximizes the opportunity for assessing leader effectiveness and ensuring an effective leader is in place or developed within its Priority School(s). In the event it is determined during the needs assessment that leadership must be replaced, the district will take this action prior to development of the PIP. The PIP is developed with participation of the new leader, rather than the leader being replaced. Likewise, district involvement in the PIP is essential to assessing teacher effectiveness and supporting a culture of change in instructional practice. Specifically, school leadership must have the flexibility, as well as the support of district leadership to ensure effective teachers are encouraged to remain in a district's Priority Schools, ineffective teachers are developed into effective teachers, and teachers that do not satisfy development criteria within the timeframe specified for improvement are recommended for nonrenewal. Further, districts play a central role in ensuring that effective teachers are incentivized to remain in or transfer to Priority School(s), and ensuring transfer policies do not inadvertently incentivize the movement of ineffective teachers to Priority School(s) through inter-district transfer policies that may prioritize hiring at Priority School(s) on factors that do not account for teacher effectiveness. The waiver of set asides under ESEA Section 1116(b) provides districts with flexibility to target funds to ensure effective teachers and leaders in Priority School(s) that may include incentives for effective teachers to transfer to or remain in Priority School(s), funds to support extensive job-embedded professional development through coaching and model classrooms.
All Priority Schools are required to utilize the Indistar School Improvement tool (software) to guide a self-assessment/needs assessment and assist with the development of the PIP. All Priority schools are required to align their PIP interventions with the turnaround principles using the Transformation Model.

- Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including staffing, calendars/time, and budgeting) to implement fully a comprehensive approach in order to substantially improve student achievement outcomes and increase high school graduation rates if the needs analysis indicates the existing principal has not been effective and may not be effectively developed.
- Using locally adopted competencies to measure the effectiveness of staff who can work within the turnaround environment to meet the needs of students.
    a. Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent; and
    b. Select new staff
- Implement such strategies as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and more flexible work conditions that are deigned to recruit, place and retain staff with the skills necessary to meet the needs of the students in the turnaround school.
- Provide staff ongoing, high-quality job-embedded professional development that is aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program and designed with school staff to ensure that they are equipped to facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement school reform strategies.
- Adopt a new governance structure, which may include, but is not limited to, requiring the school to report to a new "turnaround office" in the LEA or SEA, hire a "turnaround

leader" who reports directly to the superintendent or chief academic officer, or enter into a multi-year contract with the LEA or SEA to obtain added flexibility in exchange for greater accountability.

- Use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and vertically aligned from one grade to the next as well as aligned with state academic standards.
- Promote the continuous use of student data (such as from formative, interim and summative assessments) to inform and differentiate instruction in order to meet the academic needs of individual students.
- Establish schedules and implement strategies that provide increased learning time.
- Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students.

The external provider must meet qualifications as outlined in the External Provider Requirements utilized for SIG. Requirements adhere to the following principles:

ADE uses greater specificity and rigor in its requirements and evaluation of external providers for Priority Schools. The ADE focuses on the extent to which providers' methodology is likely to result in systemic, sustained improvement. Requirements to be met for approval of external providers are based on the growing body of empirical evidence delineating effective elements of systemic intervention. Guidelines adhere to the following principles.

1. External providers will demonstrate expertise in evidence-based practices to build internal leadership capacity (scaffolded supports).
2. External providers will provide evidence of effectiveness in improving school performance (student and adult learning).
3. External providers will provide evidence of effectiveness in closing achievement gaps.
4. External providers will demonstrate how they will collaborate with other partners and community on a frequent basis.
5. External providers will demonstrate how they will collaborate with districts and schools in the development of a TIP or PIP within the ACSIP framework.
6. External providers must provide evidence of a proven track record—credible/valid results in other systems.
7. External providers will be required to use a systemic approach at the school, district, board, community and state level that is likely to build capacity at the local level when the external provider completes its partnership with the district. The external provider's systemic shall:
   a. Be grounded in research in effective school improvement.
   b. Develop instructional leadership at all levels of the system.
   c. Provide timely, frequent (weekly) support and reports to district and state.
   d. Incorporate a system for adult learning (Professional Development).
8. External providers shall provide ADE appropriate credentials and prior experience of staff.
9. External providers shall engage with the ADE Learning Services Division in effectiveness evaluations of the provider, district and schools.

This systemic approach to turnaround of priority schools applies to all levels within the educational system to ensure that change and continuous improvement occur. The focus is on increasing student and adult learning and leadership capacity within the school and district.

2.D.iv   Provide the timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more priority schools implement meaningful interventions aligned with the turnaround principles in each priority school no later than the 2014–2015 school year and provide a justification for the SEA's choice of timeline.

Implementation Timeline

Prior to the Start of 2015-2016 and through Year 1, Semester 1 (as needed):
- As early as possible following USDE approved flexibility request Commissioner announces and meets with Priority Schools' principals and their district superintendents.
- ADE assigns lead SIS to LEA and its Priority School(s) to provide technical assistance/support and monitor Priority Intervention Plan.
    - A SST with diverse content area expertise will be created and assigned for each Priority School and its LEA.
- Diagnostic analysis and needs assessment of school system:
    - Community/stakeholder input on school's strengths and challenges. Where applicable, districts partner with the Arkansas School Boards Association to use Study Circles methodology to gain stakeholder engagement and support *(Turnaround Principle 7: Community Engagement)*
    - Determine Leader effectiveness *(Turnaround Principle 1: Strong Leadership)*
        - School culture to support continuous improvement
        - Organizational structures to support continuous improvement
            - Allocation of human resources aligned with identified needs
            - Alignment of ACSIP interventions with identified needs
            - Allocation of financial resources aligned with identified needs
            - School schedule provides adequate time to support teacher collaboration for data use and instructional planning *(Turnaround Principle 3: Redesign School Day/Week/Year)*
            - Teacher team structure to support collaboration to meet students' needs *(Turnaround Principle 3: Redesign School Day/Week/Year)*
            - Alignment of professional development plans with identified needs of students and teachers
            - Teacher team effectiveness in data use, problem identification, problem clarification and problem solving to support instructional change
        - Accountability systems to support continuous improvement (*Turnaround Principles 1, 2 & 4: Strong Leadership, Effective Teachers, & Strengthening Instruction)*
            - A teacher effectiveness system to support continuous instructional improvement:
                - Presence and sufficiency of classroom walk through practices and teacher follow up
                - Alignment of teacher evaluation practices with student growth and achievement findings
            - School academic assessment practices and response to intervention practices to support instructional improvement and student

learning. *(Turnaround Principles 4 & 5: Strengthening Instruction & Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)*
- o Valid and reliable screening, progress monitoring and interim assessments are used as part of a multi-tiered framework for responding to student learning needs.
- o Data use is role-based and includes sources of data that are differentiated to provide appropriate information for leadership decisions and instructional decisions.
  - School classroom management/student behavior management practices *(Turnaround Principle 6: School Environment)*
    - o A positive behavior and instructional support system is evident and used to improve learning environment. *(Turnaround Principle 5: Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)*
  - o Determine Teacher effectiveness
    - ▪ Diagnostic analysis of instructional program effectiveness *(Turnaround Principle 2: Effective Teachers)*
    - ▪ Immediate recommendations for professional development, support and/or intervention beginning Semester 2.
- Leadership teams established at school and district level to build leadership capacity of school and district. *(Turnaround Principle 1: Strong leadership)*

Priority Schools that failed to exit after year 3 (Priority Year 4)

- Must review/revise all of Year 1 first semester actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 3 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
  - o Continue intervention that are effective and/or conduct a new Diagnostic Analysis
  - o Must review and revise current PIP to include effective interventions and new areas as determined by the new Diagnostic Analysis and ADE
- LEA's must reconstitute their District Leadership Team to address/align support for their Priority Schools that failed to exit status.
  - o District Leadership Team is required to participate in Leadership Team Training provide by the ADE
  - o District Leadership Team are required to meet at least monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets to the assigned ADE SIS
- Schools must reconstitute their School Leadership Team to re-address their Priority Status.
  - o School Leadership Team is required to participate in Leadership Team Training provide by the ADE
  - o School Leadership Team are required to meet at twice monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets in Indistar
- Must schedule training on the State RtI model during the 2015-2016 academic year.

2015-2016

Year 1, Semester 2:

- District assigns a locally-hired, site-based SIS, to provide technical assistance and support in development of the PIP and to monitor implementation of the PIP (Capacity Building).
- School and district leadership sign Memorandum of Understanding that outlines accountability and sanctions for development and implementation of PIP and failure to meet interim measurable objectives.
- In collaboration with the ADE SIS and SST, the district and school leadership team will specify a professional development plan to build the leadership capacity of the district and school leadership team members to be implemented immediately.
  - District and school leadership team works with ADE SIS and SST to develop leader and teacher effectiveness interventions. *(Turnaround Principles 1 & 2: Strong Leadership & Effective Teachers) Can this be streamlined seems redundant*
    - Transfers in and out of Priority Schools
      - ADE SIS works with district and school leadership teams to ensure effective teachers are incentivized to remain in Priority Schools and within district transfers into Priority Schools do not undermine the effectiveness of the teacher corps.
      - The ADE SIS will collaborate with district and school leadership in developing district level strategies to confirm alignment of the strategies in the PIP with Turnaround Principles 1 and 2.
    - Leadership change (replacing ineffective leader or intensively developing and maintaining promising leader and providing support to enable promising leader the flexibility and support to affect teacher effectiveness)
      - Leadership change may be limited in some rural or isolated communities. In this case, the development of the existing leader along with a strong leadership team is paramount.
      - Data indicated principal turnover was higher in schools in advanced School Improvement status, with only one-fourth of schools maintaining consistency in leadership over a three year period.
      - The ADE SIS will collaborate with district and school leadership in developing district level strategies to confirm alignment of the strategies in the PIP with Turnaround Principle 1.
  - District and school leadership teams work with ADE SST and locally-hired, SIS to develop a three year PIP as a component of the Arkansas Consolidated Improvement Plan (ACSIP). In the event it is determined that leadership must be replaced, the PIP will be developed with participation of the new leader, rather than the leader being replaced. The PIP must address:
    - Teacher effectiveness *(Turnaround Principles 1 & 2: Strong Leadership & Effective Teachers)*
      - Flexibility provided through the waiver of ESEA Section 1116(b) will allow districts to develop incentives to ensure Priority School(s) retain effective teachers and have the funds to develop the existing teacher corps through intensive, job-embedded professional development through coaching, model classrooms, and other evidence based models for improving instructional

practice.
- The ADE SIS will collaborate with district and school leadership in developing district level strategies to confirm alignment of the strategies in the PIP with Turnaround Principles 1 and 2.
- Priority Schools' PIPs will address teacher development and resources to support effective, evidence-based interventions and strategies for EL and SWD where appropriate. Priority Schools will receive professional development and implementation support from ADE to incorporate and implement effective evidence-based interventions and practices for meeting identified needs of EL and SWD subgroups where applicable. Details for this professional development and support are provided in 2.F. Incentives and Supports for Other Title I Schools (pages 136).

- o Redesign schedule to support teacher teaming/collaboration and data use *(Turnaround Principles 3 & 5: Redesign School Day/Week/Year & Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)*
- o Interim measurable objectives for
  - Change in teacher and leader practice
  - Student progress and achievement
    - Objectives must be set for evaluating interim progress of each low performing subgroup contributing to achievement gaps within the school.
  - Student safety and discipline
  - Parent and community engagement (*Turnaround Principles 1, 2 & 4: Strong Leadership, Effective Teachers, & Strengthening Instruction*)
- Locally-hired SIS, reports weekly progress to ADE oversight team through ADE SIS and to the district superintendent.
- Locally-hired SIS engages leadership team and school board in ongoing development/training to include regular community engagement opportunities. *(Turnaround Principle 7: Community Engagement)*
- ADE SIS provides quarterly reports of school progress to the State Board of Education. *(Turnaround Principle 7: Community Engagement)*
- Priority Schools and their LEAs that fail to show progress on their Interim Measurable Objectives such as lack of commitment to implementing the PIP may be subject to losing flexibility in the use of state and/or federal categorical funds.

Priority Schools that failed to exit after year 3 (Priority Year 4)

- Must review/revise all of Year 1 second semester actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 3 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
- District must assign a full time locally-hired, site-based School Improvement Specialist (SIS) who
  - o Reports directly to the LEA superintendent
  - o Provides required weekly reports to the assigned ADE SIS

- o Provides monthly reports to the LEA's Board
- o Attends required School Improvement trainings including any summer trainings
- o Attend ADE Summer School Improvement Conference
- School Leadership Team must submit an annual Report on the effectiveness of the PIP to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meeting
- District Leadership Team must submit an annual Report on the effectiveness of support provided to the Priority School to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meeting

2016-2017
Year 2

- Priority Schools implement PIP including any changes in the following as specified in the PIP:
  - o Change in school leader or participation of existing school leader in Arkansas's Master Principal Program.
- PIP is revised to address findings from Year 1 PIP progress report.
- ADE SIS monitors locally-hired SIS, school and district progress weekly based on the PIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- Locally-hired SIS reports weekly in written form to ADE SIS detailing school's progress in implementing the PIP, persistent obstacles, and next steps to support continued progress and address obstacles.
- ADE SIS collaboration sessions to share best practices, successes and challenges across spectrum of Priority Schools to increase ADE capacity to support Priority Schools and their LEAs. Collaboration will consist of in person and technology-bridged sessions. SST members will join as needed to share expertise for capacity building and problem solving. *(Turnaround Principles 4 & 5: Strengthening Instruction & Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)*
  - o Collaboration sessions will enhance capacity building by providing networks to share promising practices and to enable problem solving across Priority and Focus Schools.
- ADE School Improvement Unit (SIU) provides quarterly reports on Priority School progress to State Board of Education. *(Turnaround Principle 7: Community Engagement)*
- School leadership team and locally-hired SIS submit Year 2 PIP progress report of Priority Schools' progress on interim measurable objectives to district leadership team and ADE SIS and SST. *(Turnaround Principle 7: Community Engagement)*
- Priority Schools meeting AMOs for All Students and TAGG for 2nd consecutive year exit Priority status, and must maintain interventions as outlined in the PIP for 3 years with revisions approved by ADE SST.
- Priority Schools and their LEAs that fail to meet interim measurable objectives may be subject to Academic Distress status. The Arkansas State Board of Education has begun the process to redefine academic distress. A new definition would provide the state with the authority to take control of the school district if progress toward stated goals is not

occurring. See Principle 2.A. page 53 for additional details.

- o Consequence—ADE oversight of all state and/or categorical funds.

Priority Schools that failed to exit after year 4 (Priority Year 5)

- Must review/revise all of Year 2 actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 3 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
  - o Must review and revise current PIP to include effective interventions and any recommendations provide by ADE through the School Improvement Unit or State Board
- District must continue the assignment of a full time locally-hired, site-based School Improvement Specialist (SIS) who
  - o Reports directly to the LEA superintendent
  - o Provides required weekly reports to the assigned ADE SIS
  - o Provides monthly reports to the LEA's Board
  - o Attends required School Improvement trainings including any summer trainings
  - o Attend ADE Summer School Improvement Conference
- School Leadership Team must submit semi-annual Reports on the effectiveness the PIP to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meetings
- District Leadership Team must submit semi-annual Reports on the effectiveness of support provided to the Priority School to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during regularly scheduled meetings
- District Leadership Team must submit a written annual Report to the State Board
  - o The State Board may require the Superintendent to appear before the State Board or sub-committee to report/testify regarding Priority Schools failure to exit status

2017-2018
Year 3

- Priority Schools implement PIP including any changes in the following as specified in the PIP:
  - o Participation of existing school leader in an ADE approved program to intensively develop a promising leader and provide support to enable a promising leader the flexibility and support to affect teacher effectiveness
- ADE SIS monitors locally-hired SIS, school and district progress weekly based on the PIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- Locally- hired (SIS) reports weekly in written form to ADE SIS detailing school's progress in implementing the PIP, persistent obstacles, and next steps to support continued progress and address obstacles. *(Turnaround Principles 4 & 5: Strengthening Instruction &*

Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)

- ADE SIS collaboration sessions to share best practices, successes and challenges across spectrum of Priority Schools to increase ADE capacity to support Priority Schools and their LEAs. Collaboration will consist of in person and technology-bridged sessions. SIS team members will join as needed to share expertise for capacity building and problem solving. *(Turnaround Principles 4 & 5: Strengthening Instruction & Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)*
  - Collaboration sessions will enhance capacity building by providing networks to share promising practices and to enable problem solving across Priority and Focus Schools.
- PIP is revised to address findings from Year 2 PIP progress report.
- ADE SIU provides quarterly reports on Priority School progress to State Board of Education. *(Turnaround Principle 7: Community Engagement)*
- Priority Schools meeting AMOs for All Students and TAGG for second consecutive year exit Priority status, and must maintain interventions as outlined in the PIP for 3 years with revisions approved by ADE SST.
- Priority Schools and their LEAs that fail to meet interim measurable objectives may be subject to Academic Distress status. The Arkansas State Board of Education has begun the process to redefine academic distress. A new definition would provide the state with the authority to take control of the school district if progress toward stated goals is not occurring. See Principle 2.A. page 57 for additional details.

  - Consequence—ADE oversight of all state and/or categorical funds.

Priority Schools that failed to exit after year 5 (Priority Year 6)

- Must review/revise all of Year 3 actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 3 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
  - Must review and revise current PIP to include effective interventions and any recommendations provided by ADE through the School Improvement Unit or State Board
- District must continue the assignment of a full time locally-hired, site-based School Improvement Specialist (SIS) who
  - Reports directly to the LEA superintendent
  - Provides required weekly reports to the assigned ADE SIS
  - Provides monthly reports to the LEA's Board
  - Attends required School Improvement trainings including any summer trainings
  - Attends ADE Summer School Improvement Conference
- School Leadership Team must submit quarterly Reports on the effectiveness of the PIP to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during regularly scheduled meetings
- District Leadership Team must submit quarterly Reports on the effectiveness of support provided to the Priority School to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during regularly scheduled

meetings
- District Leadership Team must submit a written semi- annual Report to the State Board
  - The State Board may require the Superintendent to appear before the State Board or sub-committee to report/testify regarding Priority Schools failure to exit status

2.D.v Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement exits priority status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Priority Schools that meet their AMOs for proficiency or growth for two consecutive years in math and literacy (and graduation rate for high schools) for All Students and TAGG, and are making satisfactory progress on their PIP will be eligible to exit Priority Status.

Exited Priority Schools must continue to maintain the aforementioned interventions that have been implemented at the time the school meets these criteria and submit timely reports of progress on the PIP interim objectives to ADE for monitoring. ADE SIS will maintain a collaborative relationship to provide support to the LEA and its Priority Schools as needed.

Priority schools must continue implementing interventions aligned with the turnaround principles for at least three years, even if the school exits priority status.

2.E FOCUS SCHOOLS

2.E.i Describe the SEA's methodology for identifying a number of low-performing schools equal to at least 10 percent of the State's Title I schools as "focus schools." If the SEA's methodology is not based on the definition of focus schools in *ESEA Flexibility* (but instead, e.g. based on school grades or ratings that take into account a number of factors), the SEA should also demonstrate that the list provided in Table 2 is consistent with the definition, per the Department's "Demonstrating that an SEA's Lists of Schools meet ESEA Flexibility Definitions" guidance.

Method to Identify Focus Schools

Focus Schools include at a minimum 10 percent (80) of the Title I schools in Arkansas based on Title I program information from the 2010-11 school year (first cohort) and 2014-15 (second cohort), as well as any non-Title I schools with commensurate magnitude gaps as the Title I schools identified through this process. Priority Schools with commensurate gaps remain Priority Schools. The intent of the Focus School methodology is to identify schools with the largest and most persistent achievement gaps between their highest performing subgroups and their lowest performing subgroups. Under Flexibility the ADE uses the TAGG for the purpose of calculating the magnitude of achievement gaps within Arkansas schools. Once schools are ranked by the

magnitude of the TAGG to Non-TAGG gap, additional analyses are conducted to ensure the use of the TAGG does not mask larger gaps among ESEA subgroups within schools based on the minimum N. Three years of proficiency data are used to ensure Focus Schools are schools with the largest gaps over a persistent period of time.

The ADE uses the TAGG in its calculations for classifying Focus Schools. Annual reporting to the public includes the TAGG and ESEA subgroup indicators, where the subgroup includes 10 or more students, reported separately as indicated in Section 2.A. The purpose of reporting ESEA subgroups, rather than using the TAGG for determinations alone, is to enhance the transparency of accountability and subsequent engagement of the community in planning targeted interventions and support. Identification of the TAGG enables a more authentic focus on student learning needs rather than a focus on group labels. The TAGG exposes hidden achievement gaps by creating a subgroup that meets the minimum N of 25 in 98 percent of the schools in Arkansas. This is particularly important in schools where ELs and SWD have struggled, but the accountability N has not prompted a focus on these students' needs in particular.

The use of the TAGG to hold schools accountable for performance and growth of all students is not without challenges. In one tenth of Arkansas schools, the TAGG includes the entire school population, due to the extent of poverty in these schools. Thus a gap between TAGG and Non-TAGG cannot be calculated. In schools where the Non-TAGG is smaller than the minimum N, the percentage of Non-TAGG students Proficient is subject to greater variability due to the smaller group size. Therefore, for the purposes of determining the magnitude of the achievement gap between TAGG and Non-TAGG students for Focus School Determinations (Section 2.E), the median school percentage of Non-TAGG students Proficient is used as the proxy for the Non-TAGG students in schools where the TAGG represents All Students and in schools where the Non-TAGG falls below the minimum N.

The annual school performance data from the Arkansas assessments required under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA for literacy and mathematics, as well as the 2012 and 2013 graduation rates for Arkansas high schools are used to identify Focus Schools. Calculations are based on the size of the gap in proficiency levels from Arkansas CRTs in 2012, 2013, and 2014 for Grades 3 through 8 and high school for math and literacy End of Course Exams, and include all students completing a full academic year, as well as significantly cognitively disabled students completing an alternate assessment. Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates are also used as an additional indicator in identifying high schools as Focus Schools.

The magnitude of the achievement gaps for the Focus School determinations are calculated using three years of Arkansas CRT scores.
1. The three-year percent of students Proficient or Advanced in math and literacy was calculated for All Students, TAGG, Non-TAGG and all ESEA subgroups. The number of Proficient and Advanced scores in math and literacy for 2012, 2013, and 2014 were summed and divided by the sum of the number of valid test scores for math and literacy for 2012, 2013, and 2014. The use of three years of scores and test attempts provided stability to ensure year to year variations and the impact of smaller N sizes that might inflate or deflate gap size were minimized.
2. The gap magnitude was calculated by subtracting the percent of students Proficient/Advanced in the TAGG from the percent of students Proficient/Advanced for

Non-TAGG students within each school. In the case of schools with a Non-TAGG smaller than the minimum N, the median percent Proficient for Non-TAGG performance for all schools meeting the minimum N for Non-TAGG was substituted in the calculation. The median for Non-TAGG performance was 88.7 percent.

3. Schools were sorted from highest to lowest gap based on the size of the TAGG/Non-TAGG gap.

4. High schools' four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates were calculated. All high schools' graduation rates for the TAGG and ESEA subgroups were reviewed to ensure the identified Focus Schools included schools with the lowest performance and/or graduation rates for subgroups.

5. The schools identified as Focus Schools include 10 percent of Title I schools with the largest TAGG/Non-TAGG achievement gaps. Priority Schools that fell in the bottom 10 percent were not included in the Focus School list.

6. The largest gap was also calculated post-hoc in 2011 to clarify whether the proposed method for identifying Focus Schools was capturing the significance of achievement gaps within-school. The Largest Gap was determined by comparing all within-school gaps to the TAGG gap and retaining the larger magnitude gap. This Largest Gap variable was used to sort and rank the schools in decreasing magnitude to identify the 10 percent of Title I and other schools with the largest magnitude gap. Thirty-eight schools were in the range for Focus School designation regardless of using Largest Gap or TAGG gap. The remaining schools designated would be different if the Largest Gap were used for Focus School designation. Further analysis of the within-school gaps that these schools would be accountable for indicated that the TAGG gap method held more schools accountable for larger within school gaps that would not be considered large enough to meet the minimum N if not included in the TAGG. For example, Focus Schools determined using the TAGG gap included only 26 schools with large enough groups of SWD to be held accountable, and these students had a median gap of 54.38 percentage points. In contrast, the Focus Schools determined using the Largest Gap included 96 schools that were already accountable for SWD as a subgroup and the median for this within-school gap for this group was 46.78. ADE examined these descriptive statistics for each of the within-school gaps for the Focus Schools that would be different under the two different methodologies. Each within-school gap for Focus Schools using the TAGG had larger mean and median gaps compared to the within-school gaps for the Focus Schools using Largest Gap. In the case of the Largest Gap Focus Schools, more schools were already meeting minimum N for the problematic achievement gap areas and would be held accountable for interventions based on this. In contrast, the Focus Schools determined using the TAGG gap identified more schools whose ESEA subgroups did not meet the minimum N on their own.

7. To ensure Focus Schools are not overrepresented by schools whose majority population are TAGG students, a frequency analysis was conducted in 2011. In the first cohort of Focus Schools, fifty-nine percent (61) of the Focus Schools' TAGG/Non-TAGG gaps were determined by the schools' Non-TAGG to TAGG performance. In other words, 59 percent of Focus Schools have a group of 25 or more tested students. In the first cohort of Focus Schools, forty-one percent (42 Focus Schools) did not have a Non-TAGG group that was large enough (N ≥ 25) to use to calculate their TAGG/Non-TAGG gaps. The median state Non-TAGG performance was used to calculate the gaps for the 42 Focus Schools whose Non-TAGG groups were fewer than 25 tested students. The

identified Focus Schools include the schools contributing the most to the statewide achievement gap for TAGG students and ESEA subgroups.

2.E.ii   Provide the SEA's list of focus schools in Table 2.

The list of focus schools is provided in Table 2. Additional information on focus schools is provided as a data file in an Excel spreadsheet.

2.E.iii   Describe the process and timeline the SEA will use to ensure that its LEAs that have one or more focus schools will identify the specific needs of the SEA's focus schools and their students and provide examples of and justifications for the interventions focus schools will be required to implement to improve the performance of students who are the furthest behind.

Focus Schools have persistent and oftentimes systemic concerns related to the schools' and districts' educational effectiveness in meeting the needs of particular groups of students, as evidenced by disparate performance between students classified in at risk groups and students not classified as at risk. Similar to Priority Schools, these needs are often evidenced in divergent academic expectations for students from historically underperforming or at risk groups. Further, instruction, leadership and community engagement practices that have enabled some students to achieve at high levels have not had the same impact on students in the TAGG. Therefore, diagnostic efforts must focus on identifying the elements of the educational system that are not working to serve the needs of these learners, thus perpetuating such large achievement gaps. Interventions need to focus on providing the necessary support to teachers, leaders and the community, as well as providing a system of instruction and accountability that enables these students' needs to be identified and met, regardless of group membership.

Schools are interdependent within their respective districts and achievement gaps are typically not isolated to a single campus within a district system, but may manifest to different degrees across schools in the district dependent upon many factors. Some of the factors are under the control of the school and others may be influenced by district level factors that are not easily mitigated within the school without district support or intervention. Therefore, the ADE engages district leadership in diagnostic analysis and needs assessment in partnership with Focus School leadership, with oversight for quality and effectiveness provided by the ADE.

Focus Schools are determined based on the magnitude of the achievement gap within the school. Due to the characteristics of Arkansas's schools, ADE has identified that 10 percent of schools do not have a group of students not considered at risk (Non-TAGG) due to the extent of the poverty within the school community. Applying the minimum N of 25 to all schools in 2011, 27.7 percent of schools did not have a sufficient Non-TAGG population for gap calculation. The TAGG proficiency gap in schools without a large enough Non-TAGG is determined using a proxy for the Non-TAGG population—the median proficiency of all schools' Non-TAGG. Many of these schools are identified as Priority Schools due to the TAGG group comprising the majority of the schools' populations. Some of Arkansas's schools with the largest gaps that are not identified as Priority Schools are identified as Focus Schools.

Analysis of the within-school gaps and TAGG gap for Focus Schools indicates variation in the level of systemic needs among Focus Schools. District involvement in Focus School needs assessment and planning is critical to provide the flexibility to meet specific low performing students' needs. The ADE requires Focus School leadership and their respective district leadership to engage in diagnostic analysis and needs assessment to investigate the factors contributing to Focus Schools' achievement gaps and to develop a TIP within their ACSIP that reduces the magnitude of the identified achievement gap as measured by their annual AMOs for the TAGG and each ESEA subgroup. Needs Improvement Focus Schools' levels of support, engagement, district autonomy and interventions are clarified below.

- Needs Improvement Focus Schools:
  - High SSOS engagement;
    - ADE SIS approval of TIP and resource/funds allocation,
  - 1-year ACSIP with TIP interventions and quarterly measurable objectives embedded;
    - Schools must demonstrate alignment of federal and NSLA fund allocations sufficient to support implementation of interventions;
  - High engagement of regional support center staff and resources;
  - Low district autonomy;
    - ADE approves interventions,
    - District and school leadership teams required,
    - District assigns locally-hired site-based school improvement leader, or optionally an external provider to monitor,
    - Persistent lack of progress will result in any or all of turnaround principles applied to school(s) including replacing the leader and/or staff using teacher and leader evaluation information as described in Principle 3.

ADE recognizes districts with Focus Schools may vary in their size, school configurations, and Title I, Part A allocations. The district is expected to allocate resources and funds differentially to appropriately address the needs of the Focus Schools. Focus School leadership, in consultation with ADE SIS, will allocate resources toward interventions determined through this in depth analysis of Focus School needs.

Focus Schools that fail to make progress after the second year of TIP implementation are required to implement actions aligned with the turnaround principles as directed by ADE, to include leader replacement and/or removal of staff following appropriate evaluation.

If an external provider is engaged, the external provider must meet qualifications as outlined in the External Provider Requirements utilized for SIG. These requirements include criteria to evaluate external providers for Focus Schools based on the extent to which the providers' methodology supports the needs of the identified TAGG and is likely to result in immediate and sustained improvement for TAGG students. Requirements to be met for approval of external providers are based on the growing body of empirical evidence delineating effective practices for identifying and meeting the needs of particular subgroups of students such as ELs and SWD. Requirements adhere to the following principles:

- External providers will demonstrate expertise in evidence-based practices to build internal

leadership capacity (scaffolded supports).

- External providers will provide evidence of effectiveness in improving school performance (student and adult learning).
- External providers will provide evidence of effectiveness in closing achievement gaps.
- External providers will demonstrate how they will collaborate with other partners and community on a frequent basis.
- External providers will demonstrate how they will collaborate with districts and schools in the development a TIP or PIP within the ACSIP framework.
- External providers must provide evidence of a proven track record—credible/valid results in other systems.
- External providers will be required to use a systemic approach at school, district, board, community and state level that is likely to build capacity at the local level when the external provider completes its partnership with the district. The external provider's systemic shall:
    - Be grounded in effective school improvement research.
    - Develop instructional leadership at all levels of the system.
    - Provide timely, frequent (weekly) support and reports to district and state.
    - Incorporate a system for adult learning (Professional Development).
- External providers shall provide appropriate credentials and prior experience of staff.
- External providers shall engage in collaborative, formative evaluation of the provider, district, and school's effectiveness by ADE Learning Services Division.

Implementation Timeline
Prior to Start of 2015-2016

- Commissioner announces Focus Schools and meets with Focus School principals and their district superintendents.
- ADE assigns a SIS to provide oversight.
- District assigns a locally-hired, site-based SIS, to provide oversight for the diagnostic analysis and needs assessment, to provide technical assistance and support in development of the TIP and to monitor implementation of the TIP (Capacity Building).
- District establishes a district leadership team to work with the Focus School leadership and ADE to facilitate diagnostic data analysis, needs assessment, TIP development and TIP implementation.
- Focus School establishes a school leadership team to work with the district leadership team, and the site-based school improvement specialist or optionally an external provider.
- The site-based school improvement specialist submits weekly school and district progress reports to the assigned ADE SIS.
- Diagnostic analysis and needs assessment of school system and district interdependencies:
    - Community/stakeholder input gathered (within 30 days of the Commissioner's announcement) on each school's strengths and challenges, particularly as this relates to the identified achievement gap
        - What are the core beliefs and vision about student learning and achievement of family and community stakeholders?
            - What are the aspirations of families and the community regarding their children?
        - What are the core beliefs and vision of the educational system (school & district) about student learning and family/community engagement?

- Do educators in the system believe all parents have the capacity to support their children's learning, or that all children have appropriate opportunities to achieve CCR?
  - What strengths and challenges exist for the district and school system and community in ensuring all students achieve CCR within their P-12 years?

Diagnostic analysis and needs assessment of school system:
  - to assess the current effectiveness of the system with regards to the following:
    - School culture to support continuous improvement.
    - Organizational structures to support targeted improvement and closing the achievement gap—
      - Allocation of human resources aligned with identified needs
      - Alignment of ACSIP interventions with identified needs
      - Allocation of financial resources aligned with identified needs
      - School schedule provides adequate time to support teacher collaboration for data use and instructional planning
      - Teacher team structure to support collaboration to meet students' needs
      - Alignment of professional development plans with identified needs of students and teachers
      - Teacher team effectiveness in data use, problem identification, problem clarification and problem solving to support instructional change
    - Accountability systems to support targeted improvement.
      - Teacher effectiveness system supports continuous instructional improvement
        - Presence and sufficiency of classroom walk through practices and teacher follow up
        - Alignment of teacher evaluation practices with student growth and achievement findings
      - School assessment practices and response to intervention practices support instructional improvement and student learning.
        - Valid and reliable screening, progress monitoring and interim assessments are used as part of a multi-tiered framework for responding to student learning needs.
        - Data use is role-based and includes sources of data that are differentiated to provide appropriate information for leadership decisions and instructional decisions.
    - Instructional Program and Teacher Effectiveness
      - Extent and effectiveness of the school and district multi-tiered framework for response to intervention.
      - Curriculum expectations and alignment for all students.
      - District interdependencies impacting instructional program and teacher effectiveness.

2015-2016
Year 1, Semester 1:

- District and school leadership teams work with ADE SIS to finalize 3-year TIP within its ACSIP. The TIP must address the concerns and obstacles identified as contributing to the achievement gap.

- Given the statewide low performance of SWD, Focus Schools and their districts will be given preference to participate in the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). This grant program is funded by the USDE's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Arkansas's SPDG integrates intensive professional development and targeted technical assistance to participating schools to maximize all students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral skills and success, including SWD. Professional development and technical support in the areas of leadership, literacy and math instruction, intervention, positive behavior support systems, social skills/self-management instruction, strategic or intensive cognitive-behavioral interventions, closing the achievement gap (CTAG), multi-tiered response to intervention and data-based problem solving. Additionally, the SPDG provides professional development and targeted technical assistance in parent and community involvement, personnel preparation, and special education teacher recruitment and retention.

- Given the growing EL population in Arkansas and the need to build capacity to meet the needs of ELs in a growing number of schools, Focus Schools and their districts with EL subgroups will be given preference for participation in the EL Academy described in Principle 1 to support teacher and leader development of best practices for EL students.

- Focus Schools' TIPs will address teacher development and resources to support effective, evidence-based interventions and strategies for ELs and SWD where appropriate. Focus Schools will have access to professional development and implementation support from ADE to incorporate and implement effective evidence-based interventions and practices for meeting identified needs of ELs and SWD subgroups where applicable. Details for this professional development and support are provided in 2.F. Incentives and Supports for Other Title I Schools (pages 136).

- The ADE SIS will monitor quality and effectiveness of the district and school in meeting interim objectives and summative AMOs in the TIP.
  - Interim measurable objectives for closing the achievement gap:
    - Change in teacher and leader practice and district/school/team structures to support instructional practices and teacher effectiveness for students contributing to the achievement gap;
    - Student progress and achievement;
    - Student safety and discipline where appropriate to support closing the achievement gap; and
    - Parent and community engagement.

- Locally-hired SIS reports weekly in written form to ADE SIS detailing school's progress in implementing the TIP, persistent obstacles, and next steps to support continued progress and address obstacles.

- ADE SIS will provide quarterly reports of school progress to the State Board of Education

- School and district leadership sign Memorandum of Understanding that outlines accountability and sanctions for implementation of TIP and failure to meet interim and/or summative measurable objectives.

Focus Schools that failed to exit after year 3 (Focus Year 4)

- Must review/revise all of Year 1 actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 3 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
    o Continue intervention that are effective and/or conduct a new Diagnostic Analysis
    o Must review and revise current TIP to include effective interventions, remove ineffective interventions, strengthen promising interventions, new areas to be evaluated during a new Diagnostic Analysis, and interventions outlined by ADE
- LEA's must reconstitute their District Leadership Team to address/align support for their Focus Schools that failed to exit status.
    o District Leadership Team is required to participate in Leadership Team Training provided by ADE
    o District Leadership Team are required to meet at least monthly
- Must use Indistar to develop and monitor their School Improvement Plan
- Schools must reconstitute their School Leadership Team to re-address their Focus Status.
    o School Leadership Team is required to participate in Leadership Team Training provide by ADE
    o School Leadership Team are required to meet at twice monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets in Indistar
- Must schedule training on the State RtI model during the 2015-2016 academic year.
- District must assign a half time locally-hired, site-based School Improvement Specialist (SIS) who
    o Reports directly to the school principal and/or LEA superintendent
    o Provides required weekly reports to the assigned ADE SIS
    o Provides semi-annual reports to the LEA's Board
    o Attends required School Improvement trainings including any summer trainings
    o Attend ADE Summer School Improvement Conference

2016-2017
Year 2
- ADE SIS monitors site-based school improvement leader school and district progress monthly based on the TIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- Locally-hired SIS reports weekly in written form to ADE SIS detailing school's progress in implementing the TIP, persistent obstacles, and next steps to support continued progress and address obstacles.
- The ADE SIS will share best practices, successes and challenges across spectrum of Focus Schools to increase ADE capacity to support Focus Schools and their LEAs.
- ADE SIU reports on Focus School progress to State Board of Education on quarterly basis.
- School leadership teams and locally-hired SIS submit Year 2 TIP progress report of Focus Schools' progress on interim measurable objectives to district leadership team and ADE

SIS.

- TIP is revised to address findings from Year 2 TIP progress report.
- Focus Schools meeting AMOs for All Students and TAGG for second consecutive year exit Focus status.
- If ADE determines a Focus School is not making progress after one year on the interim measurable objectives or the AMOs, the district will be required to allocate additional resources to facilitate the implementation of the TIP.

Focus Schools that failed to exit after year 4 (Focus Year 5)

- Must review/revise all of Year 2 actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 4 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
  - Continue intervention that are effective and/or conduct a new Diagnostic Analysis
  - Must review and revise current TIP to include effective interventions, remove ineffective interventions, strengthen promising interventions, new areas to be evaluated during a new Diagnostic Analysis, and interventions outlined by ADE
- District Leadership Team are required to meet at least twice monthly to address areas of support that it has provide focus schools and additional support needed to assist the focus school(s) in exiting status
  - District Leadership Team is required to meet at least twice monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets in Indistar
- Focus school must use Indistar to develop and monitor their School Improvement Plan
- School Leadership Team identifies all concerns/barriers that prevented them from exiting Focus Status.
  - School Leadership Team is required to meet at twice monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets in Indistar
- District assigned locally-hired, site-based School Improvement Specialist (SIS)
  - Reports directly to the school LEA superintendent
  - Provides required weekly reports to the assigned ADE SIS
  - Provides monthly reports to the LEA's Board
  - Attends required School Improvement trainings including any summer trainings
  - Attend ADE Summer School Improvement Conference
- School Leadership Team must submit an annual Report on the effectiveness the TIP to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meeting
- District Leadership Team must submit an annual Report on the effectiveness of support provided to the Focus School to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meetings
- District Leadership Team must submit a written annual Report to the State Board
  - The State Board may require the Superintendent to appear before the State Board or sub-committee to report/testify regarding Focus Schools failure to exit status

2017-2018
Year 3

- ADE SIS monitors site-based school improvement leader, school and district progress monthly based on the TIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- Locally-hired SIS reports weekly in written form to ADE SIS detailing school's progress in implementing the TIP, persistent obstacles, and next steps to support continued progress and address obstacles.
- The ADE SIS will share best practices, successes and challenges across spectrum of Focus Schools to increase ADE capacity to support Focus Schools and their districts.
- ADE SIU reports on Focus School progress to State Board of Education on Quarterly basis.
- School leadership teams submit Year 2 (previous year) TIP progress report of Focus Schools' progress on interim measurable objectives to district leadership team and ADE SIS.
- TIP is revised to address findings from Year 2 TIP progress report.
- Focus Schools meeting AMOs for All Students and TAGG for second consecutive year exit Focus status.
- If ADE determines a Focus School is not making progress after one year on the interim measurable objectives or the AMOs, the district will be required to allocate additional resources to facilitate the implementation of the TIP.
- Persistent lack of progress will result in any or all of turnaround principles applied to school(s) including replacing the leader and/or staff using teacher and leader evaluation information as described in Principle 3 under the direction of the ADE SIS.

Focus Schools that failed to exit after year 5 (Focus Year 6)

- Must review/revise all of Year 3 actions listed above to identify what interventions were taken during the prior 5 years and the effectiveness of the interventions.
    - Continue intervention that are effective and/or conduct a new Diagnostic Analysis
    - Must review and revise current TIP to include effective interventions, remove ineffective interventions, strengthen promising interventions, new areas to be evaluated during a new Diagnostic Analysis, and interventions outlined by ADE
- District Leadership Team are required to meet at least twice monthly to address areas of support that it has provide focus schools and additional support needed to assist the focus school(s) in exiting status
    - District Leadership Team is required to meet at least twice monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets in Indistar
- Focus school must use Indistar to develop and monitor their School Improvement Plan
- School Leadership Team identifies all concerns/barriers that prevented them from exiting Focus Status.
    - School Leadership Team is required to meet at twice monthly and submit agenda's, minutes, and sign-in sheets in Indistar

- District assigned locally-hired, site-based School Improvement Specialist (SIS)
  o Reports directly to the school LEA superintendent
  o Provides required weekly reports to the assigned ADE SIS
  o Provides monthly reports to the LEA's Board
  o Attends required School Improvement trainings including any summer trainings
  o Attend ADE Summer School Improvement Conference
- School Leadership Team must submit an semi-annual Reports on the effectiveness the TIP to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meeting
- District Leadership Team must submit an semi-annual Reports on the effectiveness of support provided to the Focus School to the ADE School Improvement Unit and present the report to local school board during a regularly scheduled meeting

Just as students have some needs in common and some unique concerns, Focus Schools are anticipated to have some diversity in their intervention needs, particularly given the characteristics of Arkansas's schools and subpopulations. Thus the plan for interventions recognizes and addresses this diversity, while maintaining a standard of intervention empirically supported to meet the needs of low performing students, and in particular ELs and SWD with the greatest achievement gaps.

A critical component of technical assistance to Focus Schools will be ensuring congruence between the factors identified as potentially contributing to large and persistent achievement gaps, and the interventions and actions developed in the TIP. Below are two contextual examples of needs assessment findings and subsequent interventions that Focus Schools may be required to implement based on different types of achievement gaps and different needs.

- District A has a middle school designated as a Focus School due to a large TAGG/Non-TAGG gap. The All Students group had 59 percent of students scoring Proficient or Advanced in 2011. However, the Focus School needs assessment revealed a 24 percentage point gap for African American students, as well as a gap for SWD twice the size (50 percentage points) of the African American students' gap. Analysis by the district leadership team revealed a problem with alignment of expectations for SWD and AA students that extends into the feeder elementary schools. Further analysis revealed the middle school was not implementing a response to intervention (RTI) framework for its students to address the needs of learners within core instruction, identify students needing additional support, and identify students needing intensive intervention. Progress of students most at risk of not meeting grade level standards was not being monitored on a frequent basis. The ADE SIS guided the district and school leadership teams to develop district and school level interventions to address this in the TIP. The following are examples of possible required interventions.
  o District leadership was charged with assessing the implementation of an RTI framework in district schools, starting with the schools in the middle school feeder pattern.
  o Due to the size of the gap for SWD, the district planned to assign the school a designated Master Principal with a track record for closing achievement gaps within high poverty, high minority settings who had successfully implemented an RTI framework in previous settings.

- o District leadership provided the support to enable the formation of professional learning communities whose focus would be on implementing an RTI framework to close the achievement gaps.
- o The school's TIP outlined a plan for participation of teachers and instructional support staff in the SPDG program provided through ADE. This program provides development and targeted assistance to the school in the areas of leadership, literacy and math instruction, appropriate learning interventions, progress monitoring, establishing PBSS, social and self-management skills instruction, etc. within a RTI framework.
- o The school's TIP included the implementation of universal screening in math and reading to identify students requiring intervention and progress monitoring and to inform students' needs within the RTI framework.
- District B has a junior high school and a high school designated as Focus Schools based on 30 and 33 percentage point TAGG/Non-TAGG gaps, respectively. The Focus School needs assessment revealed poverty achievement gaps in both schools and larger achievement gaps for the ELs and SWD. Under prior accountability, the schools did not meet the minimum N for accountability for SWD but did have at least 40 ELs. Further assessment with Indistar indicators revealed concerns with expectations for academic achievement. Collaborative structures and resources to support the needs of ELs and SWD within core instruction in the general education classroom were also deficient. The ADE SIS guided the district and school leadership teams to develop district and school level interventions to address this in the TIP. An evidence-based theory of action was developed to guide the TIP. The following are examples of possible required interventions.
  - o The district and school leadership teams develop and implement a plan to redesign the school day to ensure time for collaboration through multidisciplinary professional learning communities. Redesigning the schedule will facilitate collaborative job-embedded professional development and provide a vehicle for RTI collaborative discussions to identify and meet the needs of these special populations.
  - o The schools' TIPs outlined a plan for participation of teachers and instructional support staff in the SPDG and the EL Academy professional development programs provided through ADE. This program provides development and targeted assistance to the school in the areas of leadership, literacy and math instruction, appropriate learning interventions, progress monitoring, establishing PBSS, social and self-management skills instruction, etc. within a RTI framework.
  - o The school's TIP included the implementation of universal screening in math and reading to identify students requiring intervention and progress monitoring and to inform students' needs within the RTI framework.
  - o The district evaluates its existing protocols for ELs and SWD screening and intervention and revises these processes to ensure a RTI framework within and across schools to support the needs of ELs and SWD.
  - o The district uses Title I, Part A funds to provide instructional coaches at the junior high and high school to support instruction, particularly for ELs and SWD.
  - o Multi-disciplinary teams participate in ELs and/or SWD professional development to differentiate cultural and linguistic differences from disabilities in special education.
  - o Alternately, a district may elect to work with an external provider with expertise in

> ELs to address the systemic needs identified, and/or with an external provider with expertise in SWD to address systemic needs identified for this group.

2.E.iv   Provide the criteria the SEA will use to determine when a school that is making significant progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps exits focus status and a justification for the criteria selected.

Focus Schools will exit Focus status upon meeting annual AMOs for proficiency or growth for All Students and TAGG for two consecutive years. The annual AMOs for the TAGG set ambitious and achievable AMOs that reduce the proficiency gap or growth gap in half. All schools (Focus Schools in particular) must continue interventions for all ESEA subgroups that do not meet their AMOs even when the TAGG and All Students meet their AMOs. Additionally, the requirement that the progress is reported for all ESEA subgroups toward meeting AMOs provides schools with an incentive to investigate and address the factors contributing to achievement gaps across the full spectrum of each school's diversity.

   o   A Focus school may be designated a Priority school if the school is in the first cohort of Focus schools, fails to have met its AMOs to exit Focus status by 2014, and falls in the lowest performing 5% of schools or meets the criteria for Priority designation in 2014.

TABLE 2: REWARD, PRIORITY, AND FOCUS SCHOOLS

Provide the SEA's list of reward, priority, and focus schools using the Table 2 template. Use the key to indicate the criteria used to identify a school as a reward, priority, or focus school.
The ADE has used the procedures and criteria as described in 2.C (Reward Schools), 2.D. (Priority Schools), and 2.C. (Focus Schools) to identify additional schools for designation in these categories. Arkansas has 816 schools that are Title I participating schools in the 2014-2015 school year

Total # of Title I schools in the State in 2014-15 school year: _____816_____
Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: _____ 3 high schools (each of the three is an alternate learning environment).
Graduation Rate Gaps are also represented by G in the Focus School Column. Focus Schools that are high schools also have large graduation rate gaps. The number of of Focus Schools that are high schools with large TAGG/Non-TAGG and ESEA Subgroup achievement and graduation rate gaps will be determined once the Focus school list has been finalized.
Total # of Exemplary (Reward) Schools: 1 with a subset of 1 Title I Schools.
Total # of Priority Schools 46 with a subset of 40 (5%) of Title I Priority Schools.
Total # of Focus Schools: 103 with a subset of 81 (10%) Title I Focus Schools.

- • Table 2 will be updated to reflect the designation of new Priority and Focus schools

Key	
Reward School Criteria: A. **Highest-performing school** B. **High-progress school** **Priority School Criteria:** C. **Among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the proficiency and lack of progress of the "all students" group** D-1. **Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years** D-2. **Title I-eligible high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a** **number of years** E. **Tier I or Tier II SIG school implementing a school intervention model**	**Focus School Criteria:** F. **Has the largest within-school gaps between the highest-achieving subgroup(s) and the lowest-achieving subgroup(s) or, at the high school level, has the largest within-school gaps in the graduation rate** G. **Has a subgroup or subgroups with low achievement or, at the high school level, a low graduation rate** H. **A Title I-participating high school with graduation rate less than 60% over a number of years that is not identified as a priority school** I.

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	NCES	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
BERGMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	BERGMAN HIGH SCHOOL	050309000078	A, B		
DERMOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT	DERMOTT HIGH SCHOOL	050517000239		C	
EARLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	EARLE HIGH SCHOOL	050555000266		C	
WEST MEMPHIS SCHOOL DISTRICT	WONDER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	050804000532		C, E	
HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT	SUMMIT SCHOOL	050789000949		D-2 and Bottom 5% All Students Peformance	
DOLLARWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT	ROBERT F MOREHEAD MIDDLE SCHOO	050541000252		C	
DOLLARWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT	DOLLARWAY HIGH SCHOOL	050541000253		C, E	
PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT	BELAIR MIDDLE SCHOOL	050002600855		C	
PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT	OAK PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050002600866		C	
PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT	PINE BLUFF HIGH SCHOOL	050002600867		C	
PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT	JACK ROBEY JR. HIGH SCHOOL	050002601338		C	
DISTRICT 8	SCHOOL 11			Title 1 Eligible Not Participating Bottom 5% Performance	
DISTRICT 9	SCHOOL 12			C	
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	WHITTEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050936000679		C	
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	ANNA STRONG INTERMEDIATE SCHOO	050936001554		C	
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	LEE HIGH SCHOOL	050936000675		C	
TEXARKANA SCHOOL DISTRICT	ARKANSAS HIGH SCHOOL	051311001068		C	

DISTRICT 12	SCHOOL 17			C	
DISTRICT 12	SCHOOL 18			C	
OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT	OSCEOLA HIGH SCHOOL	051095000825		C	
OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT	OSCEOLA STEM CHARTER	051095001555		C	
HELENA/ W.HELENA SCHOOL DIST.	CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	050768000476		C, E	
MARVELL-ELAINE SCHOOL DISTRICT	MARVELL-ELAINE HIGH SCHOOL	050951000694		C, E	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	HALL HIGH SCHOOL	050900000616		C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	HENDERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL	050900000617		C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	BASELINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050900001378		C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	GEYER SPRINGS ELEM. SCHOOL	050900001382		C	
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 27			C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	J.A. FAIR HIGH SCHOOL	050900001389		C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	MCCLELLAN MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL	050900001390		C, E	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	CLOVERDALE AEROSPACE TECH CHAR	050900001387		C	
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	HARRIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051185000916		C	
DISTRICT 17	SCHOOL 32			Title 1 Eligible Not Participating Bottom 5% Performance	
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	JACKSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	051185000919		E, Title 1 Eligible Not Participating Bottom 5% Performance	

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PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	WILBUR D. MILLS HIGH SCHOOL	051185000945		Title 1 Eligible Not Participating Bottom 5% Performance	
COVENANTKEEPERS CHARTER SCHOOL	COVENANT KEEPERS CHARTER	050039701469		C	
DISTRICT 19	SCHOOL 36			C	
DISTRICT 20	SCHOOL 37			D-2, Title 1 Eligible Not Participating Bottom 5% Performance	
FORREST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	FORREST CITY JR. HIGH	050627000345		C, E	
FORREST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	FORREST CITY HIGH SCHOOL	050627000344		C, E	
DISTRICT 21	SCHOOL 40			C	
DISTRICT 22	SCHOOL 41			C	
HUGHES SCHOOL DISTRICT	HUGHES HIGH SCHOOL	050801000520		C, E	
FORT SMITH SCHOOL DISTRICT	BELLE POINT ALTERNATIVE CENTER	050633000354		C, D-1	
FORT SMITH SCHOOL DISTRICT	TRUSTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050633000377		C	
STRONG-HUTTIG SCHOOL DISTRICT	STRONG HIGH SCHOOL	051293001049		C	
AUGUSTA SCHOOL DISTRICT	AUGUSTA HIGH SCHOOL	050267000034		C	
DEWITT SCHOOL DISTRICT	DEWITT MIDDLE SCHOOL	050000100217			F, G
STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT	MEEKINS MIDDLE SCHOOL	051296001057			F, G
STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT	STUTTGART JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	051296001249			F, G
HAMBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT	WILMOT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050004201339			F, G
DISTRICT 30	SCHOOL 52				F, G
DISTRICT 31	SCHOOL 53				F, G

HERMITAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT	HERMITAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050771000484			F, G
HERMITAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT	HERMITAGE HIGH SCHOOL	050771000485			F, G
DERMOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT	DERMOTT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050517000238			F, G
LAKESIDE SCHOOL DIST(CHICOT)	LAKESIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050864000576			F, G
GURDON SCHOOL DISTRICT	GURDON HIGH SCHOOL	050711000430			F, G
MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050004400653			F, G
MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	EAST SIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050004400654			F, G
MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	MAGNOLIA JR. HIGH SCHOOL	050004400655			F, G
MAGNOLIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	MAGNOLIA HIGH SCHOOL	050004400656			F, G
DISTRICT 36	SCHOOL 63				F, G
DISTRICT 37	SCHOOL 64				F, G
JONESBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT	HEALTH/WELLNESS ENVI MAGNET	050828000553			F, G
JONESBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT	MICROSOCIETY MAGNET SCHOOL	050828000554			F, G
JONESBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT	ANNIE CAMP JR. HIGH SCHOOL	050828000547			F, G
JONESBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT	DOUGLAS MACARTHUR JHS	050828000548			F, G
JONESBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT	JONESBORO HIGH SCHOOL	050828000551			F, G
CEDARVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	CEDARVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	050408000150			F, G
MULBERRY SCHOOL DISTRICT	MULBERRY HIGH SCHOOL	051029000753			F, G
MULBERRY SCHOOL DISTRICT	PLEASANT VIEW JUNIOR HIGH	051029001454			F, G
WEST MEMPHIS SCHOOL DISTRICT	WEST MEMPHIS HIGH SCHOOL				F, G
MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT	MARION HIGH SCHOOL	050939000682			F, G
FORDYCE SCHOOL DISTRICT	FORDYCE HIGH SCHOOL	050621000335			F, G
DUMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT	DUMAS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	050550000261			F, G

DUMAS SCHOOL DISTRICT	DUMAS HIGH SCHOOL	050550000262			F, G
MONTICELLO SCHOOL DISTRICT	MONTICELLO HIGH SCHOOL	050984000721			F, G
HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT	HOT SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL	050789000514			F, G
HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT	LANGSTON MAGNET SCHOOL	050789001187			F, G
DISTRICT 44	SCHOOL 81				F, G
DISTRICT 45	SCHOOL 82				F, G
DISTRICT 46	SCHOOL 83				F, G
DISTRICT 46	SCHOOL 84				F, G
DISTRICT 6	SCHOOL 85				F, G
DISTRICT 6	SCHOOL 86				F, G
DISTRICT 7	SCHOOL 87				F, G
DISTRICT 7	SCHOOL 88				F, G
DISTRICT 7	SCHOOL 89				F, G
ASHDOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	L.F. HENDERSON INTERM. SCH.	050258000029			F, G
ASHDOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	ASHDOWN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	050258000031			F, G
ASHDOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT	ASHDOWN HIGH SCHOOL	050258000028			F, G
FOREMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	FOREMAN HIGH SCHOOL	050624000338			F, G
CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT	ACADEMIC CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE	050375001019			F, G
TEXARKANA SCHOOL DISTRICT	UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051311001074			F, G
TEXARKANA SCHOOL DISTRICT	COLLEGE HILL MIDDLE	051311001071			F, G
BRINKLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT	BRINKLEY HIGH SCHOOL	050363000112			F, G
DISTRICT 51	SCHOOL 98				F, G
CLARENDON SCHOOL DISTRICT	CLARENDON HIGH SCHOOL	050435000164			F, G
NEVADA SCHOOL DISTRICT	NEVADA HIGH SCHOOL	050003001405			F, G
JASPER SCHOOL DISTRICT	OARK HIGH SCHOOL	050824000811			F, G
DISTRICT 54	SCHOOL 102				F, G
DEER/MT. JUDEA SCHOOL DISTRICT	MOUNT JUDEA HIGH SCHOOL	050007200735			F, G

CAMDEN FAIRVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	CAMDEN FAIRVIEW HIGH SCHOOL	050606000312			F, G
CAMDEN FAIRVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	CAMDEN FAIRVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL	050606001435			F, G
HARMONY GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT (OUACHITA)	SPARKMAN HIGH SCHOOL	050729001016			F, G
KIRBY SCHOOL DISTRICT	KIRBY HIGH SCHOOL	050849000566			F, G
DISTRICT 58	SCHOOL 108				F, G
DISTRICT 59	SCHOOL 109				F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	050900000607			F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	DUNBAR MAGNET MIDDLE SCHOOL	050900000608			F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	PULASKI HEIGHTS MIDDLE SCHOOL	050900000628			F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	BALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050900001188			F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	FRANKLIN INCENTIVE ELEM. SCH.	050900000612			F, G
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 115				F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	M.L. KING MAGNET ELEM. SCHOOL	050900000176			F, G
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 117				F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	ROMINE INTERDIST. ELEM. SCHOOL	050900000630			F, G
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 119				F, G
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 120				F, G
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 121				F, G
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	WAKEFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050900001385			F, G
N. LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	CRESTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051068000784			F, G
N. LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	INDIAN HILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051068000786			F, G

N. LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	NO. HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051068000793			F, G
N. LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	PIKE VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051068000797			F, G
N. LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	LAKEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL	051068000788			F, G
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	FULLER MIDDLE SCHOOL	051185000914			F, G
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	MURRELL TAYLOR ELEM. SCHOOL	051185001256			F, G
DISTRICT 17	SCHOOL 130				F, G
PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	MAUMELLE MIDDLE SCHOOL	051185001106			F, G
MAYNARD SCHOOL DISTRICT	MAYNARD HIGH SCHOOL	050957000700			F, G
FORREST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050627001425			F, G
FORREST CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT	STEWART ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050627000350			F, G
PALESTINE-WHEATLEY SCH. DIST.	PALESTINE-WHEATLEY SENIOR HIGH	050005100833			F, G
OZARK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT	WESTERN GROVE HIGH SCHOOL	050007601149			F, G
DISTRICT 60	SCHOOL 137				F, G
EL DORADO SCHOOL DISTRICT	WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL	050568000281			F, G
EL DORADO SCHOOL DISTRICT	EL DORADO HIGH SCHOOL	050568000274			F, G
SMACKOVER SCHOOL DISTRICT	SMACKOVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	051251001008			F, G
DISTRICT 63	SCHOOL 141				F, G
FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	FAYETTEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL EAST	050612000319			F, G
DISTRICT 65	SCHOOL 143				F, G
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH	051266001020			F, G

	SCHOOL				
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	SOUTHWEST JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	051266001024			F, G
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	SPRINGDALE HIGH SCHOOL	051266001025			F, G
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	PARSON HILLS ELEM. SCHOOL	051266001259			F, G
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	HAR-BER HIGH SCHOOL	051266001118			F, G
SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT	MONITOR ELEMENTARY	051266001452			F, G
AUGUSTA SCHOOL DISTRICT	AUGUSTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050267000036			F, G
Total of 150 Schools 1 Exemplary, 46 Priority, 103 Focus					

2.F   PROVIDE INCENTIVES AND SUPPORTS FOR OTHER TITLE I SCHOOLS

2.F   Describe how the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system will provide incentives and supports to ensure continuous improvement in other Title I schools that, based on the SEA's new AMOs and other measures, are not making progress in improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps, and an explanation of how these incentives and supports are likely to improve student achievement and school performance, close achievement gaps, and increase the quality of instruction for students.

All Other Schools (Including Title I Schools)

The DARTSS provides a road map to transition to a more robust, unified state and federal accountability system that holds all schools accountable for ensuring Arkansas's students achieve and maintain a trajectory to college and/or career success throughout the P-20 system. The critical elements of DARTSS outlined in this flexibility request are designed to engage all schools and districts in a comprehensive and coherent system that intentionally integrates the transition to CCSS, PARCC assessments and the TESS for teacher/leader effectiveness with Arkansas's proposed accountability system for achieving challenging CCR goals. The modifications included in this renewal reflect continued efforts to provide educators and stakeholders with consistent signaling regarding school accountability. Arkansas began this transition by infusing innovation where appropriate and maintaining important structures that support these innovations in accountability, interventions and support. ACSIP and the related planning process provides foundational structure to advance innovation in accountability, interventions and support for all schools, and in particular Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority Schools. As a dynamic learning organization, the ADE developed this proposal to address lessons learned through the implementation of AYP and the first three years of ESEA accountability workbook for all schools, and feedback from stakeholders received through the consultation process. This renewal includes an intentional continuation of the components of the initial ESEA Flexibility proposal, and modifications, supported by evidence, designed to further the goal of robust, unified accountability system. ESEA Flexibility allowed the ADE to re-conceptualize and ADE Public School Accountability Division's role as well.

The transformation began with ADE facilitating an intentional shift from using ACSIP predominantly as a federal funds allocation tool (an unintended consequence of embedding federal funds approval in the school improvement process), to an ADE/district partnership role in continuous improvement planning through collaborative, data informed continuous improvement efforts that allow greater flexibility and responsibility for districts and their schools to address local learning and organizational needs (Figure 16). Concomitantly, ADE focuses the degree of oversight and monitoring toward schools based on needs as determined by schools and districts designation as Exemplary, Achieving, Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority designations.

ADE recognizes that plans for accountability and support must be cognizant of what is workable and manageable given the capacity and resources of the agency. For this plan to have the intended impacts for schools and districts, ADE must target resources where they are most needed and resist the temptation to spread available resources too thinly. ADE continues to recognize exemplary performance and progress and use increased transparency to proclaim the degree of achievement concerns and/or gaps where they exist, rather than using obscure and confusing labels to communicate school or district needs. DARTSS provided a blueprint to accomplish this by aligning recognition, supports, engagement and interventions based on the degree of needs revealed through accountability measures. The addition of the A-F letter grading system refines further the differentiation of supports for all other Title I schools. ADE constantly monitors the effectiveness of DARTSS, making mid-course corrections where necessary to jump start

stalled improvement efforts or misaligned improvement efforts.

DARTSS accountability levels and differentiated supports, engagement and interventions are summarized below.

- Exemplary Schools:
  o Recognition and/or reward;
  o Very low engagement by ADE SSOS except to support/coordinate Model School activities;
  o 3-year ACSIP cycle; and
  o High district autonomy.
- Achieving Schools Meeting Performance AMOs *and* Growth AMOs (and Graduation Rate AMOs for high schools):
  o Very low ADE SSOS engagement;
  o 3-year ACSIP cycle; and
  o High district autonomy
- Achieving Schools Meeting Performance AMOs *or* Growth AMOs (and Graduation Rate AMOs for high schools):
  o Very low ADE SSOS engagement;
  o 1-year ACSIP cycle; and
  o High district autonomy;
- Needs Improvement Schools (Differentiated further using A-F grades):
  o Low to moderate ADE SSOS engagement differentiated based on degree of identified needs schools with D or F grades have more SSOS engagement;
  o 1-year ACSIP cycle;
  o Low to high engagement of regional support center staff and resources for local, customized support;
  o Moderate district autonomy with the degree of ADE engagement differentiated based on progress of Needs Improvement Schools or persistence of gaps and other areas of need.
    ▪ Schools that demonstrate a lack of progress in performance, graduation rate, or closing the achievement gaps after interventions will be subject to increasing state direction of interventions and funding allocations.

- Needs Improvement Focus Schools:
  - High SSOS engagement;
    - ADE SIS approval of TIP and resource/funds allocation,
  - 1-year ACSIP with TIP interventions and quarterly measurable objectives embedded;
    - Schools must demonstrate alignment of federal and NSLA fund allocations sufficient to support implementation of interventions;
  - High engagement of regional support center staff and resources;
  - Low district autonomy;
    - ADE approves interventions,
    - District and school leadership teams required,
    - District assigns locally-hired site-based school improvement specialist to monitor,
    - Persistent lack of progress will result in any or all of turnaround principles applied to school(s).
- Needs Improvement Priority Schools:
  - Very high SSOS engagement;
    - ADE assigns SIS to approve interventions & resource allocations,
    - ADE SIS monitors implementation;
  - 1-year ACSIP with PIP interventions and quarterly measurable objectives embedded;
    - Schools must demonstrate alignment of federal and NSLA fund allocations sufficient to support implementation of interventions;
  - Low district autonomy;
    - District assigns locally-hired site-based SIS
    - District and school leadership teams required,
    - PIP interventions must address all seven turnaround principles including district replacing school leader and addressing teacher effectiveness needs,
      - ADE may require leader replacement if lack of progress in the first year (SIG requirement),
      - Local evaluation process and progress on PIP may be used to ensure teacher effectiveness in Priority Schools.
      - Priority schools' staff and leaders will participate in TESS training prior to the 2013-2014 school year, and pilot TESS during the 2013-2014 school year;
    - Lack of progress on interim benchmarks results in state direction of interventions as well as federal and NSLA funds,
    - Continued lack of progress on interim benchmarks and/or annual AMOs may result in district academic distress.

The district and school ACSIP, provide structures and performance standards to guide effective education and continuous improvement to ground this work. The ACSIP handbook, available at http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/Learning_Services/School%20Improvement/School%20Improvement-DLS-acsip_handbook_11-12_080311.pdf
provides detailed descriptions of the structural elements required in the ACSIP plans. Districts' and schools' ACSIP integrate annual improvement planning with federal programs funding allocation. This provides districts and schools with a streamlined process and document for guiding continuous improvement. Several safeguards are included in the ACSIP process to promote congruence between identified needs and the allocation of resources to address those needs. Further, the ACSIP requires schools to analyze student achievement and growth results annually to establish priorities for improvement actions that are then specified in the ACSIP. Districts and schools must use three years of results from

Arkansas's CRTs, mandated statewide NRTs, attendance and graduation rates, and other data as appropriate for all students and for all ESEA subgroups to determine school improvement priorities for action. ADE Federal Programs reviews all Title I School ASCIP and provide specific guidance relevant to their submitted plan. During the review process when an area of concern is identified, the ASCIP is returned to the School Improvement Specialist (SIS) and then to the district. Then the SIS works with the district to assist the Title I School in revising and resubmitting the ACSIP for approval.

In accordance with evidence-based practices, districts and schools must use multiple local data sources to inform deeper analysis of weaknesses identified using the state summative measures and to triangulate their findings and clarify their priorities. The ACSIP requirements for data analysis as part of the annual needs assessment ensures that districts and schools use the Performance, Growth and Graduation Rate AMOs to initially identify areas of strength and areas of concern that require additional data and analysis.

The requirement for inclusion of other indicators such as attendance and discipline data guides districts and schools to look at factors beyond academic achievement that may reveal unmet needs of students, issues with school culture and organizational structures that need adjustments to facilitate learning. The requirement to include multiple local data sources for deeper analysis guides districts and schools to look more deeply at student learning to identify concerns that need to be addressed for particular groups of students or individuals, and to base interventions on multiple indicators designed to inform local improvement priorities.

Many districts and schools engage in a high quality, meaningful ACSIP process. However, lower performing schools and schools with large within-school achievement gaps are evidence that meaningful use of the ACSIP process does not always occur. These systems may not identify data-based priorities or allocate sufficient resources to address persistent low performance and/or within-school achievement gaps. Differentiating ADE support, engagement and interventions for all schools based on the proposed DARTSS under ESEA Flexibility would allow ADE to focus with intensity on those schools with the greatest needs for state engagement in ACSIP and subsequent implementation of these plans.

Self-assessment tools are supported by ADE to assist districts and schools in collecting meaningful local data to assess local needs as part of the continuous improvement process. Indistar is useful in identifying structural and organizational factors contributing to persistent low performance or persistent large within-school achievement gaps. Focus and Priority Schools will receive a high level of ADE engagement and monitoring in their ACSIP process to ensure concerns identified through Indistar indicators and other data are appropriately addressed within the priorities and interventions identified in the district and school ACSIPs. Further, ADE must approve the allocation of funds to support the interventions sufficient for successful implementation. For Needs Improvement schools that are not designated as Focus or Priority, ADE engagement will be low to moderate. Differentiating engagement among all other Needs Improvement schools based on attainment or lack of attainment of annual AMOs allows ADE to target more effectively those districts and schools with the greatest needs.

Following needs assessment in ACSIP, districts engage in setting priority interventions, writing SMART goals, and creating action plans for implementation. Districts and schools must set measurable benchmarks that include interim objectives for improving learning for needs identified among *All Students, TAGG students, and any ESEA subgroups not meeting AMOs.* The ACSIP is required to include evidence-based interventions (programs, initiatives, or strategies) to address student academic, behavioral and social needs identified in the data analysis. Districts and schools must demonstrate through their ACSIP plan coordination of federal, state and local funds to support interventions. The following action types may be

found throughout the ACSIP dependent upon the data analysis and priorities determined at the local level:

- Actions involving alignment of district policies, curriculum, instruction, assessment and resources;
- Actions involving AIP/IRI plans for all students not performing at achievement levels as required by the State (ACT 35);
- Actions involving collaboration of all persons and organizations necessary to conduct an intervention;
- Actions involving equity (e.g., funds and programs used to reduce differences among population groups);
- Actions involving evaluation (e.g., periodic review of the plan and revision as required—formative and summative evaluation provisions);
- Actions involving professional development (e.g., provisions for appropriate training for staff and administrators);
- Actions involving technology (e.g., technology used in appropriate ways to achieve the benchmark);
- Actions involving Special Education (e.g., activities in accord with IDEA). Schools that have a special education trigger should include priorities for special education in each building and district ACSIP (this portion of the ACSIP will be approved by the Special Education Unit—contact the local Special education supervisor for assistance with this priority);
- Actions involving the attributes of a school-wide or targeted assistance program in each building, if applicable;
- Actions involving wellness activities contained in a priority for each building and district (this portion will be approved by the Child Nutrition Unit—contact the Regional Child Nutrition Specialist for assistance with this priority); and
- Actions involving parental engagement (Act 307 of 2007) where parents are encouraged to support and extend the resolution of the identified problem.
  - Parental Engagement actions shall include provisions for the following activities and items:
    - Informational Packets (formerly family kits);
    - Parent Involvement Meetings (formerly Parents Make a Difference evenings);
    - Volunteer Resource Book;
    - School's process for resolving parental concerns in handbook;
    - Seminars to inform the parents of high school students about how to be involved in decisions course selection, career planning, and preparation for postsecondary opportunities;
    - Enable formation of PTA/PTO; and
    - Parent Facilitator.

Funds to support intended actions must be clearly delineated within the ACSIP. Responsible parties, timelines and outcomes are also identified within the actions in the ACSIP. If a District and School is identified as failed to meet either AMOs or graduation rate, or both, over a number of years, the ADE assists the District and/or School to reevaluate their most current three years of data. To identify actions and/or interventions that have not been effective and assist in the revision or removal from their ACSIP. If necessary, as determined during the needs assessment, ADE will recommend and require targeted use of funds at ADE's direction. ADE may also require new actions and/or interventions to be put in place to address areas identified by the needs assessment. When a District or School is identified, continual monitoring, follow-up, and assistance will be

provided by the assigned ADE SIS.

Clearly, the ACSIP provides a foundation to support a continuous improvement process. ADE is committed to the foundational structure of ACSIP requirements and seeks through this ESEA Flexibility renewal to continue to help districts and schools re-conceptualize the use of ACSIP to facilitate data-informed continuous improvement cultures at the local level by providing differentiated consequences, recognition, intervention and support as described in Principle 2 of this proposal. One major differentiation is the frequency of the ACSIP submission cycle by allowing Exemplary and some Achieving (2A) to submit ACSIP on a three-year basis provided these schools continue to meet Performance AMOs and Growth AMOs (and Graduation Rate AMOs for High School) for math and literacy for All Students and the TAGG. Schools with greater needs (Achieving Schools that don't meet both Growth AMOs and Performance AMOs, Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority) will submit ACSIP annually, with Needs Improvement Focus and Needs Improvement Priority Schools formalizing interim measurable objectives in their TIP and PIP embedded within their ACSIP.
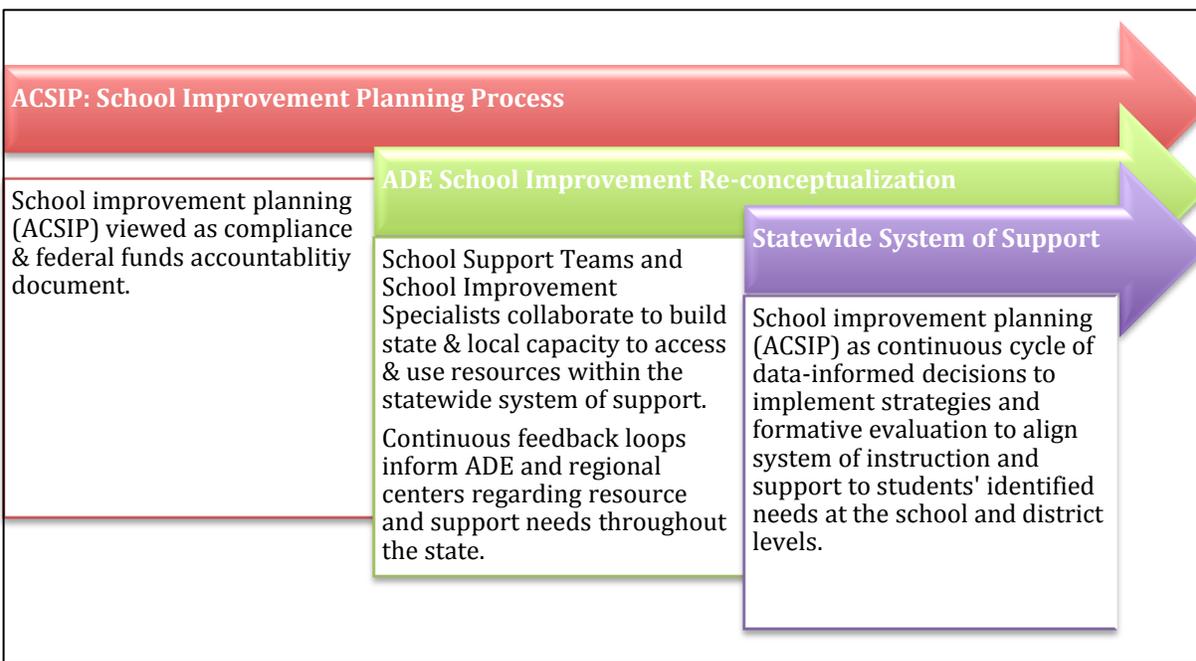
ACSIP: School Improvement Planning Process

School improvement planning (ACSIP) viewed as compliance & federal funds accountablitiy document.

ADE School Improvement Re-conceptualization

School Support Teams and School Improvement Specialists collaborate to build state & local capacity to access & use resources within the statewide system of support.

Continuous feedback loops inform ADE and regional centers regarding resource and support needs throughout the state.

Statewide System of Support

School improvement planning (ACSIP) as continuous cycle of data-informed decisions to implement strategies and formative evaluation to align system of instruction and support to students' identified needs at the school and district levels.

Figure 16. Re-conceptualizing the School Improvement Process and Statewide System of Support.

Arkansas's schools are experiencing increased poverty across most school populations, and growing diversity in student populations in its urban and suburban schools. Arkansas's percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Meals has climbed from 50.1 percent to 60.0 percent in nine years (ADE, 2014). The challenge for the ADE has been its capacity to intensively support schools with greater systemic needs while providing aligned resources to support an increasing diversity of schools in their efforts to improve instruction and achievement. As the variation in schools' needs has increased, access to evidence-based resources provided by the USDE and other organizations has also increased. However, the time and local capacity to locate and integrate aligned resources remains a constraint in local and particularly rural systems.

The SSOS plan capitalizes on the advances in Arkansas's longitudinal data system and increased cross-agency partnerships. These advances allow the ADE to maximize its efforts to build local and state capacity to serve the needs of districts and their schools differentially utilizing aligned, evidence-based resources. Significant advances in Arkansas's longitudinal data system and expanded interagency

partnerships through a Center for Educational Leadership and Technology (CELT) grant enabled cross-agency data sharing and enriched Arkansas's available research and information for decision making across public preschool through postsecondary education

systems. Arkansas was among the first states to meet 10 of the 10 essential elements of statewide longitudinal data systems outlined by the Data Quality Campaign. Arkansas earned the top spot for education information systems by the Data Quality Campaign in 2014. Arkansas established the Arkansas Education to Employment Tracking and Trends Initiative (AEETT) among the ADE, Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) in 2009, to enable cross-agency data sharing and support research connecting P-20 leading indicators with postsecondary and career outcomes. The AEETT Initiative allows creation of detailed High School Feedback reports to inform Arkansas high schools regarding their students' preparation for successful postsecondary education and/or the workforce.

Additional projects funded through the CELT grant enabled significant advances in Arkansas's longitudinal data system that enhanced the Teacher Student Data Link (TSDL) to promote effective use of data for local decision-making. The Expand Enterprise Data Warehouse with Local Assessment Data and Teacher Student Link to Feed Data Visualization project, the Enterprise Architecture project, the Daily Roster Verification Pilot project, and Educator Data Integration project have expanded the longitudinal data system's architecture and capabilities necessary to support expanded district, school and classroom level data visualization and reporting tools. Pilot projects include assimilating uploaded classroom level assessment scores for integration with summative and interim assessment scores for use with Arkansas's data visualization and reporting tools that will enhance local and state-wide data-informed decision making as described throughout this ESEA Flexibility proposal. These advances in the P-20 longitudinal data system, coupled with changes to educator evaluation policy, position Arkansas to meet 10 of 10 *State Actions* recommended by the Data Quality Campaign as essential to linking data use to improved student achievement (Data Quality Campaign (DQC), 2011). These *State Actions* enable leaders at the state and local levels to connect professional development and credentialing decisions to indicators including student growth and achievement outcomes.

These advances enhance ADE's ability to use continuous feedback loops illustrated in Figure 17 to ensure data will be available to move this re-conceptualization of SSOS from vision to action. The continuous feedback loops in the system promote coherent use of data within and across school, district and state levels of decision-making to ensure congruence in level and diversity of need with level and diversity of support. The school, district and state level indicators provide a rich source of information about the progress of students on the path to CCR, as well as patterns and trends across various levels of the educational system. Arkansas's longitudinal data system supports a culture of effective data use across multiple agencies vested in the outcomes of the P-20 system. Continuous feedback within this system provides supporting agencies with information to guide decisions for resource development and allocation with the goal of supporting schools' and districts' continuous improvement processes.
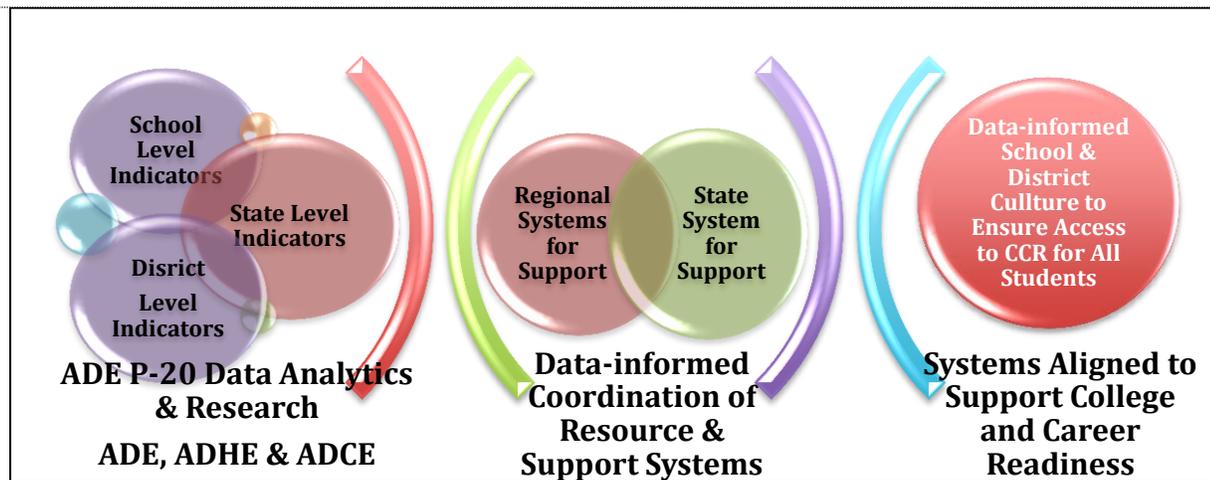
Figure 17. Ensuring congruence in level and diversity of need with level and diversity of support.

Data analytics provide ADE with information to monitor whether Achieving Schools continue to meet required AMOs as well as AMOs for ESEA subgroups, or whether patterns of concern emerge that need to be addressed globally in DARTSS or more specifically within the local district and school systems. Data analytics also provide important information for ADE to monitor the progress of Needs Improvement Schools in meeting the AMOs and ESEA subgroup AMOs. The analytic tools help ADE understand the nature, degree and specifics of district and school academic needs and to direct closer monitoring efforts (moderate engagement) to those systems that are not showing progress over time.

At the state level, broader analytics identify district systems that need further support to meet the needs of their schools, whether through assistance in needs assessment and deeper analysis, or through accessing resources and other available supports regionally to improve outcomes for students.

SSOS to Improve Performance of ELs and SWD

As indicated in Principle 1.B., ADE incorporated Universal Design for Learning Principles (UDL) within the professional development for all teachers and leaders to support districts and schools through the transition to the CCSS and PARCC assessments. ADE has worked with committees of Arkansas educators to develop instructional and local assessment resources to support ELs and SWD during core instruction (SCASS ASES and ELL SCASS).
Further consultation with teachers serving ELs and SWD identified the need for ADE to provide additional resources through SSOS to assist all general education, EL and SWD teachers and instructional facilitators with specific instructional challenges in implementing CCSS. Specifically, teachers have asked ADE to develop and provide resources to help ELs and SWD use key ideas and details from text to gain meaning, and resources to match appropriate informational texts with language and reading levels of ELs. These resources provide critical statewide support to teachers implementing the shift to using much a higher proportion of informational text in literacy instruction.

ADE contracts with an EL specialist through the Mid-Continent Comprehensive Center to develop and provide professional development to teachers working with ELs. These professional development opportunities are offered throughout the year. ADE monitoring of Focus and Priority School ACSIP plans will allow ADE to provide directive support to connect these most needy schools with these resources as a priority for participation. For all other Title I schools, the ACSIP process allows districts and schools to align their resources to support other expenses such as travel or the cost of substitute teachers for their

teachers' and leaders' participation in professional development provided through ADE's SSOS efforts. In schools and/or districts with identified concerns for ELs and SWD the ACSIP approval process provides a check and balance through moderate engagement of ADE in systems where these needs are greatest and the ACSIP doesn't reflect appropriate interventions or resource allocation. For example, a school that is not meeting AMOs (growth, performance or graduation rate) for ELs or SWD would be expected to have interventions and resource allocations to address these concerns commensurate with the need. ADE approval of ACSIP on an annual basis for some Achieving Schools and all Needs Improvement Schools provides opportunity to ensure alignment of needs with appropriate interventions and resources.

Incentives for Improving Student Achievement, Closing Gaps and Improving Instruction

All schools will be expected to meet annual individualized prior performance-based AMOs at the school, TAGG and ESEA subgroup levels. It is important to underscore the potential of the new AMOs for schools, their TAGG and their ESEA subgroups, as strong incentives for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps. These progress targets for schools are conceptually similar to growth or progress targets for students that focus on moving students from their current achievement status toward annual expected growth or progress. These prior performance-based AMOs require all schools and the subgroups within schools, to close the magnitude of the achievement gap within a limited, but realistic timeframe. The use of the TAGG to activate ESEA subgroup accountability focuses more schools on the performance of all students at risk of not achieving CCR, thus bringing more attention to the ESEA subgroups within each school. Achievable annual AMOs are more likely to incentivize authentic school improvement, rather than compliance-motivated improvement planning.

The re-conceptualizing of school improvement planning and the SSOS (Figures 16 and 17) will help incentivize schools to use their school improvement processes to engage in long-term, continuous improvement strategies. To augment this effort, and to build capacity, the ADE proposes to allow greater flexibility in school improvement planning cycles based on schools' accountability status. As explained earlier, Exemplary and Achieving schools that meet AMOs for both performance and growth will be awarded greater flexibility in school improvement planning. Annual financial adjustments may still be necessary to comply with federal requirements. This provides an incentive to schools where improvement efforts are working to maintain successful practices. In schools that are not achieving AMOs, this paperwork reduction provides an incentive to create meaningful long-term plans that are likely to result in improved instruction and student achievement. This longer monitoring cycle for some Achieving and Exemplary Schools recognizes these systems are functioning in a manner that meets their students' learning needs and frees them from annual paperwork requirements. Stakeholders listed reduction in reporting and paperwork as important incentives that would free schools and their districts to spend more time and effort on improving instruction and achievement. Further, the three-year cycle for Exemplary and some Achieving Schools will free up ADE's human and material resources to target effort and assistance to support Priority, Focus and all other schools designated as Needs Improvement.

Exemplary Schools will have the additional incentive of public recognition and will serve as model schools to share successful strategies used to meet the needs of all learners. Given the ADE's plan to identify Exemplary Schools from among high performing, high performing/high TAGG, high progress and high progress/high TAGG schools, Exemplary Schools will represent a variety of levels of diversity in communities successfully preparing students.

An important incentive for all schools that has been underscored in its primacy by superintendents and building leaders during consultation, is the waiver of the set asides under ESEA Section 1116(a). Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and public school choice are required under Arkansas law and

funded through local use of state categorical funding. SES are additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students in schools in the second year of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring. However, waiver of the set asides for Title I, Part A funds will provide districts, where appropriate to their accountability status, with greater flexibility in aligning state and federal resources to strategies for addressing the needs of schools in Needs Improvement, Priority School and School status. District level flexibility in the use of these funds will allow district leadership teams to more aggressively target schools with greater needs and/or larger populations while still providing appropriate support to Needs Improvement schools that may have a limited area of concern or a small population with needs.

This flexibility is accompanied by greater responsibility at the district level for achieving annual AMOs. Failure to meet AMOs for two consecutive years for a school's All Students group and the TAGG may result in increasing oversight of district improvement planning activities, particularly if ESEA subgroup results reveal persistent patterns of low performance. State level data analytics will provide ADE with access to trends and patterns among all schools (including Title I schools) that may signal the need for greater oversight or revision of state support and interventions for some Achieving and Needs Improvement schools through the annual ACSIP approval process. For example, the ADE may find a pattern among schools missing the AMOs for their TAGG group that is related to a specific subgroup such as SWD. The state level analytics would alert ADE to examine the district and school level strategies and resource allocations that may be contributing to this pattern. Guided by this information, an ADE SIS may need to work more closely with a district improvement team to uncover the contributing factors and develop strategies to address these factors. This allows for a tailored approach that integrates incentives and responsibility that is more likely to reap intended results than a one-size-fits-all support and intervention process.

Supports for Improving Student Achievement, Closing Gaps and Improving Instruction

The ACSIP process requires that schools use additional local data for deeper analysis of concerns identified through the use of state CRT results. These other data include the results of several CCR measures such as Graduation Rates, Explore, Plan and ACT results, AP Exam results, and Grade Inflation and Remediation Rates. As mentioned in Section 2.A. an intended outcome of the DARTSS is to provide deeper diagnostic views of school and student CCR indicators that will jump-start stalled continuous improvement processes, and ultimately lead to daily micro-adjustments to learning strategies, thus maximizing students' access to CCR. To accomplish this outcome, ADE has integrated CCR indicators into student GPS as indicated in the screen shot provided previously on page 74 in Figure 13. Annual accountability designations, as well as progress on CCR relevant indicators based on schools' grade range are reported on ESEA Accountability reports and Annual School Report Cards. Color-coding is used to enhance interpretation of indicators to facilitate connections between accountability and continuous improvement planning. Concomitant and transparent reporting of ESEA subgroups' progress provides an early warning system regarding students *within* the TAGG that may be contributing to schools' overall achievement gap.

In order for schools to engage in meaningful analysis and planning efforts the global accountability indicators must be augmented with more and deeper indicators relevant to a school's grade configuration. Arkansas's existing school performance reports include numerous statistics that are important indicators along the pathway to CCR. At present, these data include the following.

- CRT achievement scores disaggregated by ESEA subgroups
- NRT achievement scores for Grades 3-9
- State and NCLB Accountability Status

- Accreditation Status
- Grade level retention rates
- Attendance rates
- Discipline and safety indicators
- Teacher Quality indicators
- School Choice indicators
- District level economic indicators including poverty indicators, per pupil expenditures, mills voted, total expenditures and relative expenditures within the total for instruction, administration, extracurricular activities, capital expenditures, and debt service.
- High schools include additional indicators such as
  - Dropout rates for high schools
  - Number of Students Taking AP Courses
  - Number of Students Taking AP Exams
  - Number of Students Scoring 3, 4 or 5
  - ACT School Average Score: Composite, English, Reading, Math and Science
  - Remediation Rate (% of ACT scores below 19 in math or English for senior class)
  - Grade Inflation Rate: % of students with GPA of 3.0 or higher that did not score proficient on Algebra and Geometry Exams.

As Arkansas continues its research and development in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Arkansas Department of Career Education, additional evidence-based indicators may be added to the report and organized thematically to enhance interpretation of a school system's effectiveness and progress in preparing all students for college and/or career success. For example, these indicators may include the following.

- College and career preparation indicators
  - Work Keys aggregated scores and/or other assessment scores for measuring preparation within specific technical careers
  - ACT aggregate scores and/or other NRT and CRT scores for measuring college preparation
  - Postsecondary enrollment indicators
  - Postsecondary remediation indicators
- College and career success indicators
  - Postsecondary degree completion (technical, bachelors, and advanced degrees)
  - Career placement indicators
- Early pathway indicators linked to CCSS and PARCC assessments for Grades K – 8
- Return on Investment (ROI) indicators

Arkansans have asked for a simpler accountability and reporting system that clearly indicates the school's progress in meeting student performance goals yet maintains the focus on all students. This proposal is an important step in streamlining disparate state and federal accountability and reporting systems into a unitary, focused system that meets the needs of stakeholders to ensure schools are providing all students with access to and achievement of CCR standards. This reporting system signals the level of ADE support and interventions schools require, and the areas in which needs are evident.

As indicated in Figures 16 and 17, the ADE is re-conceptualizing its SSOS to enhance its capacity to affect dramatic change in Priority and Focus Schools, and to provide incentives for all districts and schools to ensure high quality instructional programs and supports meet the needs of all students in their systems. The ADE anticipates renewed capacity to serve the more dramatic needs of its Focus and Priority Schools based on the proposed interventions for these schools, and renewed capacity to support all other schools

by focusing on the district as the primary point of support and responsibility for school improvement as described under the incentives. Additionally, the ADE proposes a shift in its role as a resource provider to one of resource broker. The USDE's National and Regional Comprehensive Centers have led to an explosion of high quality information to guide best practices to meet a variety of student needs. Although these resources are readily available, constraints of human resources in many districts, particularly rural districts, prevents school and district improvement teams from accessing these resources to guide the development of their improvement strategies. The ADE proposes to act as a resource broker to centralize access to and encourage use of these resources by expanding its School Improvement Resource webpage to include thematic links to evidence-based strategies and supports and to model the use of these resources in its collaborative efforts with district and school leadership teams.

For example, the National Center for Instruction provides a wealth of materials to support teachers and leaders in planning and implementing strategies for struggling readers (children and adolescents). Analyses of Arkansas's state-level and regional-level assessment data indicate literacy is a primary challenge in poor, rural community schools. The most recent Webinar published at the Center, *Improving Adolescent Literacy in Rural Schools: A Schoolwide Approach,* includes timely and pertinent information to inform the development of the PIPs and TIPs in Arkansas's rural high schools. The majority of Arkansas's rural high schools are less likely to have the time to search library databases for evidence-based resources and they may be unaware of this resource. Intentional linking of resources based on themes within the School Improvement Resource webpage, coupled with local needs-based collaboration with ADE and regional specialists will increase the likelihood schools will use these resources to guide planning of comprehensive and targeted strategies. There is a capacity building connection here as well. Once school and district personnel are connected to one resource within these websites, they are more likely to navigate within these sites to additional resources to meet their needs. Further delving on the Comprehensive Center on Instruction site might lead educators to the Doing What Works resources on Adolescent Literacy or the Adolescent Literacy resources for principals, *Adolescent Literacy Walk-through for Principals: A Guide for Instructional Leaders,* and the teachers' guides *Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers-Second Edition* and *Assessments to Guide Adolescent Literacy Instruction.* Similarly, the National High School Center link would connect local leadership team members to *Tiered Interventions in High Schools: Using Lessons Learned to Guide Ongoing Discussion.* Many low performing high schools struggle to establish effective tiered intervention systems, and schools with achievement gaps struggle to effectively meet the needs of particular populations within their schools. More direct access to these and related sites will increase ADE's capacity to provide resources while building local capacity to access high quality, evidence-based tools and strategies for improving instruction. The National Centers include a wealth of resources tied to the focus on CCR that may go unused at the local level without intentional resource brokering by the ADE.

Centralized access to resources through the School Improvement Resource webpage provides a base layer of support for all schools. Priority and Focus Schools will be supported directly through the interventions specified in Sections 2.D and 2.E. For all other schools, the SSOS provides an avenue to request ADE assistance for comprehensive needs assessment through the ACSIP process and/or intensive or targeted support from SSTs. SST members are selected based on the specific needs identified by the district and local school teams with the guidance of an ADE SIS. SST members may be content area specialists housed at RECs or regional STEM centers, higher education faculty, Education Renewal Zone personnel, and ADE specialists with expertise in areas of identified need. The aforementioned regional professional development and technical support organizations provide valued services to schools based on regional needs identified through regional analyses of implementation and outcome indicators supplemented by statewide analyses conducted using the statewide data network.

An intended result of this SSOS re-conceptualization, as well as the aforementioned incentives and

supports, is to improve districts' and schools' instructional programs and increase their access to resources, programs and expertise that will enable increased student and school performance in identified areas of need. Through this flexibility request the ADE plans to build the capacity of the agency, districts and schools to allow for more intentional time spent in action related to improving schools' focus on student learning. This plan reduces the paperwork burden for Exemplary and Achieving Schools currently preoccupying personnel, refocuses the work of the ADE SISs to collaborative planning and support, and increases communities' access to state and national resources.

2.G   BUILD SEA, LEA, AND SCHOOL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING

2.G   Describe the SEA's process for building SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning in all schools and, in particular, in low-performing schools and schools with the largest achievement gaps, including through:
  i.   timely and comprehensive monitoring of, and technical assistance for, LEA implementation of interventions in priority and focus schools;
  ii.   ensuring sufficient support for implementation of interventions in priority schools, focus schools, and other Title I schools identified under the SEA's differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system (including through leveraging funds the LEA was previously required to reserve under ESEA section 1116(b)(10), SIG funds, and other Federal funds, as permitted, along with State and local resources); and
  iii. holding LEAs accountable for improving school and student performance, particularly for turning around their priority schools.

Explain how this process is likely to succeed in improving SEA, LEA, and school capacity.

Build SEA, LEA and School Capacity to Improve Student Learning
Our current statewide strategy to support and monitor LEA's is a multi-tiered strategy. All LEA's must submit an annual ACSIP, which is reviewed by the ADE's Title I office and ADE's School Improvement Unit (SIU) personnel at the beginning of the school year. This review focuses on interventions and expenditures the LEA will use to meet the needs of low performing students and address subgroup gaps. During this review, additional guidance and support is provided based on the LEA's identified needs.

LEA's that have an identified Focus School(s) receives additional support and monitoring from assigned ADE SIS. The assigned ADE SIS conducts monthly on-site visits to support and monitor implementation of the State's system. The SIS works closely with the identified Focus School(s) to assist, support, and monitor their implementation of the school's ASCIP and to ensure their ACSIP is aligned with the requirements of Arkansas' ESEA Flexibility Waiver. The SIS also works with the LEA to ensure the LEA supports and monitors its Focus School(s).

LEA's that have an identified Priority School(s) also receive the above cited support and monitoring, but it's on a weekly basis.

ADE has contracted with Mass Insight's State Development Network (SDN) to provide an independent assessment of Arkansas' System. This assessment will be used to strengthen our support and monitoring process within our State System.

ADE is piloting the Indistar school improvement planning system during the 2014-15 school year with LEA's. The SIU will be evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot and the viability of Indistar to replace our existing school improvement software. One aspect of the Indistar software is the ability to provide feedback to LEA's and schools within the software.

The timing of this flexibility request with early implementation of CCSS, PARCC and TESS components in Arkansas's schools proffers an opportunity for the ADE to synthesize greater coherence among previously isolated silos of State support and capacity building activities. Arkansas has devoted resources to develop support structures such as RECs, STEM centers, and Education Renewal Zones whose activities are intended to increase capacity at the state, regional and local level. Intentional coordination of these development efforts through the plans described in Principles 1 through 3 will enable educators to access support within a coherent framework.

Implementation of these three critical elements also provides opportunity and motivation for districts to build capacity to improve student learning. ADE is providing professional development, support and monitoring to ensure an aligned system of support through and following these transitions. Direct technical assistance and informal support will be most intensive in Priority and Focus Schools where ADE engagement will be highest. Continued monitoring and differentiated consequences for all other schools, especially Title I schools, will ensure support will be provided where data indicate more and/or persistent need. ADE must carefully prioritize its direct intervention to support districts improving capacity and outcomes for Priority and Focus Schools in order to avoid spreading the agency's human resources too thin. Thoughtful, data-informed deployment of technical assistance and support through the SSOS is critical to building districts' capacity to identify and meet the needs of their schools. Thus ADE will broker resources designed to support districts without Priority and Focus Schools in building local capacity.

ADE utilizes a regional approach to customize support available to schools and districts that allows districts to pool some of their resources within RECs to meet professional development and other systemic capacity building needs. In collaboration with partner organizations such as regional STEM centers, Education Renewal Zones, among other partners, RECs support schools and districts in self-assessment and planning, develop effective leadership and instructional practices, and provide training, modeling, and facilitation of the use of ADE resources and tools to support improvements. Districts have a strong incentive to participate in REC activities because they add value and needed capacity, provide customized professional development and other supports, and serve as an avenue for networking, particularly in Arkansas's rural communities. This collaborate relationship between districts and the RECs builds trust and a climate of support. Superintendents participate in governance of RECs as members that constitute their boards of directors.

Each REC is led by a director who is a proven educational leader based on his or her prior record of accomplishment. These directors bring a deep understanding of the local, civic, cultural, economic, and educational context and the ability to meaningful engage local stakeholder groups in their work. The directors are supported by teacher center coordinators who interact with the instructional corps within the region to analyze needs and provide resources and support. RECs employ a variety of specialists to support local districts in technology, data use, core instructional areas, EL programs and SWD programs.

In prior years support and development structures served to provide a series of often isolated or disconnected programs. As Arkansas's P-20 longitudinal data system has evolved, a data-informed culture has begun to emerge. The efforts of regional and State agencies have increasingly drawn on actionable information through the use of continuous feedback and analysis integrated across the data system. More

powerful information is readily available to develop educators' focus on the goal of CCR for all students. Educational dashboards are planned to enable teachers to integrate local and State data for richer analyses at the classroom level. The web-based transcript developed through Arkansas's initial SLDS grant now provides critical information to teachers and leaders so they can begin meeting students' needs from the moment they walk through the door. ADE plans to enhance the information available for decision making through daily updates of the enrollment for the educational dashboard enabling teachers to access a dynamic transcript at the student level. The educational dashboard will enable teachers and leaders to integrate and analyze a variety of data to answer deeper questions more relevant to instructional planning and school improvement. The results of interim assessments may be integrated into the educational dashboard to enable richer analyses of patterns in student performance at the local, regional and State level. Richer data and analyses are not enough to affect change in practice. Change in practice occurs through sustained development opportunities such as job-embedded professional development within authentic practice environments. Additionally, data analyses is more effective among teams than at the individual level

Schools are encouraged to establish effective learning communities among teachers, leaders and support staff within and across schools to build capacity for professional development and problem-solving. Job-embedded professional development through these learning communities or team structures proffers an authentic vehicle for application of learning, peer networking and reflective practice. These structures and practices are associated with positive change in personal and organizational performance (Bengtson, Airola, Peer & Davis, 2011). Further, evidence supports the need for teachers to work in teams to analyze data for effective use in improving instruction. In their 2010 report on teachers' ability to use data to inform instruction the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development found that more data literacy skills were evident, and more valid conclusions and inferences were drawn from data when groups of teachers worked together to comprehend, interpret and apply information from educational data. This is particularly important in schools that are struggling. Thus, Needs Improvement Priority and Needs Improvement Focus School interventions include development of these learning communities to augment local capacity for professional development and data-informed problem identification, problem clarification and problem solving. Schools with Needs Improvement status may access support for developing effective learning communities through the aforementioned regional support structures.

The strategic plan for CCSS implementation and educator development is an important component of the capacity building for the ADE. It is a propitious moment to ensure existing resources are used to build capacity at the state, district and school levels to attain the vision of providing "an innovative, comprehensive education system focused on outcomes that ensures every student in Arkansas is prepared to succeeding post-secondary education and careers" (ADE, 2011).

The ADE approach to providing a multi-tiered support system is to assist schools and districts to make informed decisions regarding continuous improvement from the "bottom-up as much as possible and top down as much as necessary." This approach has several advantages. Through the proposed changes in accountability designations, ADE School Improvement Staff will be able to support and/or intervene based on the degree of need as determined by the achievement indicators and implementation indicators in the system. The incentive of flexibility in set asides that this waiver brings allows district and school leadership to build their local capacity for decision making and holds them accountable for the outcomes of those decisions. Collaborative support from ADE SISs and SSTs (Priority Schools) and state/regional/local content specialists facilitates knowledge and skill building for leaders and teachers. At the same time this approach puts more responsibility on schools and districts for committing to and enacting change in their local systems. ADE school improvement staff's role within DARTSS is responsive to the level of initiative and follow through demonstrated by district and school leadership

with increased oversight and direction required for systems that fail to engage in diagnostic needs assessment, intervention planning and implementation. Districts that fail to support Priority and Focus School interventions may be subject to Academic Distress status with concurrent state directed use of funds.

The ADE has established several vehicles for monitoring leading and lagging indicators of schools' and districts' response to differentiated accountability requirements. Schools that are demonstrating success by meeting the criteria to be designated Exemplary, and Achieving Schools meeting both performance and growth AMOs are provided a longer timeframe for submitting their ACSIP, the primary tool for monitoring school improvement processes. Some Achieving (those meeting performance AMOs but not growth AMOs), Needs Improvement, Focus and Priority Schools are monitored through annual accountability designations followed by monitoring of ACSIP planning and outcomes with a scope congruent to schools' needs identified through their annual school performance report. The ACSIP planning and implementation process requires schools to establish interim indicators of progress for adults and students (leading indicators). Focus and Priority Schools have more oversight for meeting interim measurable objectives in their TIP and PIP that will be part of their ACSIP process. As TESS and PARCC assessments are implemented throughout schools in the State, interim achievement indicators will be available to inform teacher and leader effectiveness needs in schools providing a comprehensive accountability and feedback loop for the State and local systems.

The Superintendents Advisory Council to the Commissioner reiterated the importance of flexibility in meeting its needs to develop local capacity for school improvement. The Council supported the conceptualization of flexibility to collaborate with ADE to develop Priority and PIP and TIP as well as ACSIP, followed by state directed interventions and actions when districts and schools fail to embrace the responsibility and flexibility to enact change at the local level. Further, the Council approved the use of state-direction/restriction for fund use when schools and districts fail to implement their plans.

The ADE is requesting ESEA flexibility renewal to continue to waive the mandatory set asides of Title 1, Part A funds for transportation, professional development and SES. Districts with Needs Improvement Schools, Needs Improvement Focus Schools, and Needs Improvement Priority Schools are expected to engage in capacity building in these schools by ensuring these funds are redirected to support the interventions and strategies identified within the schools' ACSIP to address specific concerns within these Needs Improvement schools. The level of district autonomy in determining the allocation of these redirected set aside funds is delineated in Sections 2.A, 2.E and 2.F; districts with Needs Improvement Focus Schools and Needs Improvement Priority Schools have the highest level of ADE involvement and lowest level of district autonomy.

Capacity building is not an afterthought of this proposed accountability system. Capacity building is an important consideration that is integrated throughout this proposal and evidenced in the comprehensive development plans detailed for transition to CCSS, PARCC assessments and TESS, as well as the proposed DARTSS. Limited human and financial resources require the ADE, districts and schools to evaluate prudently the existing structures for accountability and school improvement. ADE's response to Principles 1 and 2 of this flexibility proposal includes a thoughtful selection of carefully choreographed strategies to build the capacity of ADE, districts and schools. Principle 3 demonstrates how the TESS is coherent component within the system of accountability and responsive support to enable data-informed development of local leaders and instructional personnel. The TESS detailed in Principle 3 assists district and school leaders in building leadership and instructional capacity at the local level. Professional development time, however, is scarce.

State Statutory Requirements for SES and Public School Choice

Changes resulting from the 89th Arkansas General Assembly have helped align the state law to mirror the balance of accountability, ADE oversight and flexibility commensurate to Arkansas's approved ESEA Flexibility and to achieve more congruent systems of accountability and intervention.

ADE works with schools designated as Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Priority or Needs Improvement Focus to incorporate the state requirement into their ACSIP and/or TIP/PIP to ensure the SES support or extend the interventions identified during the data analysis and needs assessment. The ADE ACSIP reviewer or ADE SIS reviews the alignment of these services within the schools' plans to maximize the efforts to support the lowest performing students.

The following information describes the ADE's existing SES process to ensure effectiveness of SES provided by SES providers. In addition to the information below, performance of SES providers is made transparent pursuant to Arkansas Annotated Code § 6.15.2011 (Attachment 25).

According to application guidelines, SES provider applicants are required to provide evidence for each indicator listed below. In addition, applicants must participate in an in-person interview as part of the final determination of approval status.

- Provide evidence that this program has contributed to a positive impact on student achievement on state, school, and/or another independent, valid and reliable performance test, particularly for low-income, underachieving students (cite available research studies).
- Provide evidence that this program has had a positive impact on student performance using a measure of school grades, homework completion, or school/teacher administered subject area test. Submit data within this section. Place charts/tables at the end of this section.
- Provide evidence of improved student outcomes, such as student attendance, retention/promotion, graduation, family/parent satisfaction, and/or student behavior/discipline. Discuss how the data from these conclusions were derived.
- Provide a copy of the proposed pre and post-test instrument for each grade and academic content area for which services are proposed. These must be available for review at each interview.
- Demonstrate in the application and provide proof of the capacity of the provider to serve any special populations of students, including special education and students with limited English proficiency, proposed to be served.
- Disclose to the ADE and persons reviewing applications and conducting in-person interviews any and all material requirements for participating in the program including internet connectivity, computer or other equipment including equipment and materials supplied by the applicant. And
- Inform the ADE if the provider has been removed from the approved SES provider list of any state, and the reasons for the removal.

Applicants are required to supply both a cost for each pupil for an instructional hour and per pupil for an instructional day AND a specific and detailed description of the pricing structure employed by the provider. As mandated by regulations, charges must not exceed a maximum of $50 per pupil per hour of instruction, or $100 per pupil per day of instruction or $400 per pupil per instructional week, whichever amount is LESS.

Applicants are also required to indicate in the application whether the entity specializes in providing services to SWD and/or ELs.

According to the application and new for the 2011-2012 school year, external providers are also evaluated

at the end of each school year to determine a performance category rating. This rating will determine if the provider will remain on the State approved list. Providers are measured in three categories: (1) Academic Achievement, (2) Customer Satisfaction and (3) Program Compliance. The results of the three categories are combined to determine the performance category rating (categories are listed below). Ratings are assigned for each provider and posted on the ADE's website annually. Rating categories are approved, satisfactory, probation I, probation II, and removal.

The provider is also required to submit to the school district and ADE a final written report, with supporting data, that summarizes the progress of all students served with their supplemental services. This information will be used to help determine if a provider will remain on the state-approved list.

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PRINCIPLE 3:   SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION AND LEADERSHIP

3.A   DEVELOP AND ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Principle 3 Assurances

Each SEA must select the appropriate option and, in doing so, assures that:

Option A	Option B	Option C
□ 15.a. The SEA is on track to fully implementing Principle 3, including incorporation of student growth based on State assessments into educator ratings for teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals.	If an SEA that is administering new State assessments during the 2014-2015 school year is requesting one additional year to incorporate student growth based on these assessments, it will: □ 15.b.i. Continue to ensure that its LEAs implement teacher and principal evaluation systems using multiple measures, and that the SEA or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2014-2015 school year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects and principals; and □ 15.b.ii Ensure that each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments administered during the 2015-2015 school year.	If the SEA is requesting modifications to its teacher and principal evaluation and support system guidelines or implementation timeline other than those described in Option B, which require additional flexibility from the guidance in the document entitled *ESEA Flexibility* as well as the documents related to the additional flexibility offered by the Assistant Secretary in a letter dated August 2, 2013, it will: √ 15.c. Provide a narrative response in its redlined ESEA flexibility request as described in Section II of the ESEA flexibility renewal guidance.

The manner in which Arkansas evaluates teacher effectiveness has changed since Arkansas first applied for ESEA Flexibility in 2012. The evaluation system has principals spending more time in classrooms observing and analyzing instruction, then following up with teachers to provide feedback.

The prior evaluation system relied on a vague checklist of classroom practices. Teachers did not have a clear sense of what the principal was looking for, so they played it safe and taught a familiar lesson – one they knew would go well but did not improve teaching.

Research revealed almost 90 percent of Arkansas school districts were using some type of checklist as their evaluation instrument in the prior evaluation system. Because there were no descriptors or rubrics, expectations were not clear. This lack of clarity provided little targeted feedback for teachers in improving their professional practice and improving student learning.

Using Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching,* Arkansas found a more in-depth process for measuring teacher practice. It requires more time from the administrator and teacher but leads to a much more valuable conversation about improving instruction in the classroom.

Quality teaching begins with a teacher's formal education, but it grows through a process of continuous improvement gained through experience, targeted professional development and the

insights and direction provided through thoughtful, objective feedback about the teacher's effectiveness. Arkansas took a critical step toward ensuring high quality instruction and instructional leadership through the passage of the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) that defines a system to support effective teaching and leading in Arkansas's schools (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2802). The 2011 Arkansas General Assembly introduced and passed this legislation to standardize comprehensive evaluation and support for licensed educators and non-licensed teachers employed in public charter schools under a waiver of teacher licensure requirements granted by the State Board of Education in the schools' charters.

The passage of TESS culminated the early work of Arkansas educators seeking to reform the educator evaluation system. A teacher evaluation task force was formed in the spring of 2009 with the purpose of researching, evaluating and recommending a framework for summative evaluation that would include valid assessment of educator practice and professionalism, as well as evidence of educator impact on student growth and performance. A diverse group of 36 stakeholders met over a two-year period to accomplish this work collaborating with Charlotte Danielson, author of *A Framework for Teaching*. Stakeholders included teachers, principals and representatives from the ADE, RECs, college deans of education, businesses, legislators, school boards, superintendents and district human resource professionals. A list of the task force members and their affiliations is provided in Attachment 18. Many of the recommendations from the task force were incorporated into TESS.

TESS provides statutory direction for reform of teacher and leader evaluation systems. Rules and regulations promulgated as a result of this legislation provided districts with an initial blueprint to operationalize standardized, valid and reliable evaluation and support systems focused on professional growth of educators as measured by professional practice, as well as student growth and performance. This evaluation and support system, coupled with Arkansas's longitudinal data system teacher/student link provides critical information to state, district and school educators in the form of essential data and feedback to ensure CCR access and achievement for all Arkansas students.

As stated in Arkansas's Annotated Code Section 6-17-2802, the following objectives are promoted through TESS.

- Provide school districts a transparent and consistent teacher evaluation system that ensures effective teaching and promotes professional learning;
- Provide feedback and a support system that will encourage teachers to improve their knowledge and instructional skills in order to improve student learning;
- Provide a basis for making teacher employment decisions;
- Provide an integrated system that links evaluation procedures with curricular standards, professional development activities, targeted support, and human capital decisions;
- Encourage highly effective teachers to undertake challenging assignments;
- Support teachers' roles in improving students' educational achievements;
- Inform policymakers regarding the benefits of a consistent evaluation and support system in regard to improving student achievement across the state; and
- Increase the awareness of parents and guardians of students concerning the effectiveness of teachers.

The objectives of this legislation are congruent with the requirements in Principle 3 of the ESEA Flexibility Renewal and ensure a comprehensive approach to accountability for high quality instruction and instructional leadership congruent with Arkansas's DARTSS. Teacher and leader evaluation is a critical area for reform if educational systems are to improve the quality of instruction to ultimately close achievement gaps and ensure access to CCR standards for all students.

The law delineates the elements of the evaluation and support system that must be enacted including the required components of summative evaluation framework, the performance categories or descriptors and tiered professional support based on designation within each performance level. As per the law, the State Board of Education was charged to promulgate rules and regulations to operationalize TESS. The final rules and regulations shall without limitation:

- Recognize that student learning is the foundation of teacher effectiveness, and that evidence of student learning includes trend data and is not limited to a single assessment;
- Provide the goals of TESS are quality assurance and teacher growth;
- Reflect evidence-based or proven practices that improve student learning;
- Utilize clear evidentiary data for teacher professional growth and development to improve student achievement;
- Recognize that evidence of student growth is a significant part of TESS;
- Ensure student growth is analyzed at every level of the evaluation system to illustrate teacher effectiveness;
- Require annual evidence of student growth from artifacts and external assessment measures;
- Include clearly defined categories, performance levels and rubric descriptors for the framework;
- Include procedures for implementing components; and
  Include professional development requirements for all administrators and teachers to understand and successfully implement TESS (A.C.A. §6-17-2804).
- Rules and regulations pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated § 6-17-2804 serve as the guidelines required under Principle 3.A. of Arkansas's ESEA Flexibility.

TESS represented a significant change for educator evaluation in Arkansas. Prior to TESS districts chose or designed their own teacher and administrator evaluation instruments. TESS established standards for a consistent and uniform evaluation system for the support and improvement of teacher effectiveness across Arkansas. TESS also specified that the ADE shall provide technical assistance to school districts for developing and implementing instruments to evaluate administrators. According to statute, administrator evaluation should be weighted on student performance and growth to the same extent as provided for teachers under TESS. Districts were required to pilot the model created by the ADE or use a nationally recognized model that meets all the requirements of the law and was approved by the ADE by the 2013-2014 school year. The new system of teacher evaluation is in place for all districts this school year. (See Attachment 5: Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2802).

RULES DEVELOPMENT, STAKEHOLDER INPUT AND ADOPTION PROCESS

A TESS rules committee was formed with representation from all constituent groups to draft rules and regulations informed by research, best practices and stakeholder input. Representatives on the committee include the following stakeholders.

Arkansas Education Association (AEA)
  o Teacher representatives and additional AEA staff represent the interests of licensed teachers locally and in Arkansas policy development and implementation;
Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA)
  o Includes representation for Arkansas Association for School Administrators, Arkansas Association for Curriculum and Instruction Administrators, Arkansas Association of Federal Coordinators, Arkansas Association for Special Education

Administrators, Arkansas Association for Elementary Principals, Arkansas Association for Secondary Principals, Arkansas Association for Gifted Education Administrators, Arkansas Association for Middle Level Administrators, Arkansas Association for Career and Technical Education Administrators;

Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)
  o   Representatives from postsecondary institutions' colleges of education and colleges of arts and sciences;

Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA)
  o   Representatives for district boards of education and state policy development related to boards;

 Arkansas Rural Education Association (AREA)
  o   Representatives for small rural and isolated schools' concerns;

Walton Family Foundation (WFF)
  o   Representatives of business and private sector foundations concerns;

Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC)
  o   Representatives for charter schools and rural schools in Arkansas

The rules committee met September 29, 2011 for the first time to establish an agenda for future work and determine the information that would be needed to inform the rule-making process. The rules committee met in October to hear from the districts that had piloted components of TESS in 2010-2011. The feedback from this meeting was used to formulate a rough draft of rules for consideration during the January 17, 2012 meeting. The committee met twice monthly until the rules were presented to the Arkansas Board of Education for release to the public for comment. A focus group of special education teachers met February 16, 2012, to review the draft rules and provide feedback specific to the concerns of special education teachers. A group of teachers of ELs met March 2, 2012, to more specifically address the concerns of teachers working with these students.

In addition to the rules committee meetings, the ADE hosted public meetings in all geographic regions of the state in November and December in an effort to elicit more input in the rule-making process from all stakeholders. Two sessions were presented at each of five locations (10 meetings   total). At each location, one meeting was held at 1:30 p.m. and the second at 5:00 p.m. to provide access to all teachers, administrators, parents and community members. A Commissioner's memo was disseminated to announce the meetings, press releases were sent out and all constituent groups were asked to forward the information about the regional meetings to their memberships. The attendees at the ten public regional meetings included the following:

98 students
22 parents
102 teachers
300 administrators
83 community members

A brief informational PowerPoint presentation was given summarizing the components and timeline of TESS. Attendees were provided the opportunity to comment on TESS, ask questions about TESS and make suggestions for consideration in the rule-making process. At the conclusion of each of the public regional meetings hosted by the ADE, attendees were directed to a survey released on the ADE's website. The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback for TESS rule-making based on questions and

comments from the regional meetings. A Commissioner's memo was released to provide information about the survey to ensure all educators had an opportunity for input to the initial draft of the rules.

The input from the regional meetings and the survey were reported to the rules committee for consideration in their work. Topics of concern that are currently being addressed include incorporation of student growth and performance, inter-rater reliability and determining criteria for artifacts that can be used to satisfy the external assessments in non-tested content areas to ensure districts have adequate guidance in these areas. The October 31, 2011, meeting of the rules committee included reports from representatives in districts that conducted the 2010-2011 pilot of the TESS framework for assessing educator effectiveness. The pilot district representatives shared with rules committee members the positive aspects of using the standardized framework for teacher observation and the rich discussions that followed observations because of the robustness of the performance descriptors in the evaluation rubric. However, the pilot district representatives shared that they did not include a component for weighting student growth and performance into the final teacher performance levels. The pilot district representatives shared their challenges as well, leading to a deep discussion of the extent of detail that would need to be provided as guidance in the final rules.

In its 2012 ESEA Flexibility proposal the ADE propose to use a threshold for expected growth that would act as a trigger for concerns and prohibit the designation of a teacher as Distinguished when growth fell below the threshold, or reduce the designation of a teacher by one performance level if growth fell below the threshold two years in a row. Prior to determining a threshold value to inform teacher effectiveness ratings, the ADE evaluated growth models currently in use for accountability or data visualization in order to determine the usefulness and appropriateness of these models for TESS.

Through a series of Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee (TEAC) meetings two growth models were evaluated for use in TESS: a gain index model and the student growth percentile model. State assessment scores were used to model teacher-level growth scores (teacher gain index and median SGP) and the results of the modeling was shared with TEAC members during the 2012-2013 school year. The gain index provided a criterion-referenced growth value as indicated by changes in students' performance levels on the state assessment. The SGP model provided a normative growth value—a teacher median value for students' performance compared to other students with similar performance in the prior year.

The strengths and concerns of the two models were debated by the committee. The gain index provided direct information about students' change in performance relative to the standards; whereas the SGP provided a relative measure that could be used across different tests with different scales. After further modeling, the TEAC was presented with a threshold value that could be applied to the SGP to anchor the median SGP in a specific criterion: the median SGP value at which more students were losing ground against grade level standards, than gaining or maintaining performance relative to grade level standards.

A further refinement was presented to the TEAC to help teachers and leaders understand the growth values. The Student Ordinal Assessment Rank (SOAR) value was created as a variation of the SGP. This variation involves the use of an academic peer group with identical prior year scale scores, rather than the academic peer group of similarly scoring students. This method of arriving at a student-level growth value that was relative to the change in performance of academic peers was used to calculate teacher medians for 2012, 2013, and 2014 for the purpose of informing teachers and leaders in their evaluation processes

and to ensure the use of growth in teacher evaluation ratings was consistent across districts and schools and to ensure congruence between teacher effectiveness ratings and impact on student growth in achievement.

The median SOAR values were calculated for teachers of literacy and mathematics using their student's literacy and/or math assessment scores. For teachers other than math and literacy, the TEAC decided to apply the SOAR literacy value for all students linked to the teacher during the school year. These 'other teachers' received a median value for 2012, 2013, and 2014 to inform their discussions on teacher effectiveness with their evaluators. State assessments are expected to be used as external assessments in the determination of teachers' ratings. Teachers and leaders were made aware of the availability of the median SOAR values and how to access their median values using a password protected SOAR portal (https://adedata.arkansas.gov/)

The ADE proposed to limit the designation of teachers as Distinguished in the event that teachers' median SOAR values fall below a threshold of growth currently set at a median value of 30. The threshold information is included in TESS implementation guidance. In the event that a teacher receives strong professional practice ratings and demonstrates a low impact on student learning, it is expected that the teacher's Professional Growth Plan (PGP) will address this discrepancy and its root causes. Persistently low student growth will result in a lower teacher effectiveness rating. For example, teachers rated as Proficient, rather than Distinguished, due to low growth of his/her students will be rated as Basic if the low growth of his/her students persists over multiple years as indicated in the Rules for TESS. Likewise, teachers rated as Proficient or Basic may have their rating reduced to a lower level of teacher effectiveness in the event their students demonstrate persistent low growth (a level below the threshold for multiple years).

The special education focus group meeting held February 16, 2012, provided additional input to the rule-making process. This initial meeting was informational, providing special education teachers and supervisors with the basic components of TESS, and eliciting their concerns regarding the need for differentiated training for special education teachers and supervisors, and inclusion of specific guidelines for differentiation of the evidence used to support performance descriptors for special education teachers. This representative group provided additional input based on feedback from other special education teachers and supervisors for the remaining rules committee meetings.

The Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources and Licensure and educator evaluation lead conducted meetings with two groups; EL teachers and special education teachers. The teachers were asked to examine Danielson's framework, which informs the rubric for Arkansas's teacher evaluation system. The teachers were asked to identify components of the framework that might require modification based on the groups of students served. The teachers were also asked to submit suggestions on the application of student growth to the summative evaluations. Follow-up meetings are scheduled to provide further input during the implementation process.

Rules for implementing TESS address the questions and concerns expressed through stakeholder input and rules committee discussion. In April 2012, the draft rules were presented to the Arkansas State Board of Education for review and released for public comment. After the public review and revision process, final rules will be presented to the State Board of Education for approval. Once Board approval is attained the rules will be submitted to the Legislative Rules Committee as per the Administrative Procedures Act. It is anticipated this process will be completed by the end of the 2011-2012 school year. Rules went into effect October 2012. Rules are revised as needed through the ADE's continuous improvement process which includes stakeholder input.

Stakeholder input continues through training events, a Teacher Evaluation Advisory Committee/Leader Evaluation Advisory Group (TEAC), and other informal feedback collection. For example, statewide training that focused on the PGP as a formative process and coaching were conducted early in the pilot. The Director of Educator Evaluation and Assistant Commissioner of Licensure and Educator Effectiveness visited all 15 educational cooperatives   throughout in the state during 2013-14. Administrators from local districts received updates about student growth modeling results, decisions recommended by the TEAC based on the modeling, and other decisions that were mmade regarding the evaluation system. The ADE leaders used these visits to obtain feedback from the pilot.

Trainings to support both administrators and teachers with the evaluation process were held at each regional cooperative in the fall of 2014 based on feedback from the pilot year and in the spring of 2015 based on feedback from the first semester of implementation. Feedback from these visits informs subsequent TEAC discussions and future communication and professional development. In order to involve more educators from across Arkansas, members from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) are conducting Focus Groups in May of 2015 at eight regional locations to provide feedback about the implementation, the evaluation system and ideas for improvement.

RULES UPDATES: 2015 ARKANSAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

During the regular legislative session of 2015, the Arkansas Legislature approved amendments to the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) Statute. Under Act 1091, changes to the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) law include: References to "professional learning plan" are changed to "professional growth plan"

- References to "professional learning plan" are changed to "professional growth plan"
- "Professional development plan" is defined as the overall school district plan and "professional growth plan" is defined as the individual educator's plan under TESS.
- The requirement for educators to have a summative evaluation is changed to every four years (instead of three). This does not include novice, probationary or educators on an intensive support track.
- Informal observations are permitted, but are no longer mandatory during the summative evaluation year(s).
- Superintendents must assure to the Department that evaluators are trained and have passed the credentialing exam required under TESS.
- The method of using external assessments and artifacts is clarified (to align with Arkansas' ESEA flexibility waiver). This section references other commercially available assessments. It is clear that student growth measures will include state assessment where data is available to calculate growth.
- A teacher in a virtual environment may be observed by the technology appropriate to the virtual environment.

Rules and Regulations will be taken to the State Board of Education in August 2015 with revisions based on the 2015 legislation.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

An effective accountability system cannot exist without an evaluation system that provides teachers   and administrators with targeted data and information on educator practice and student learning to   foster professional growth. The components of TESS enhance a comprehensive and coherent system of accountability and support that aligns all components of the system with CCR Goals.

TESS provides an integrated system that links evaluation procedures with curricular standards, professional development activities, and targeted support.

The ADE is focused on improving educator and leader practice through a system of summative evaluations and formative observations that provide a continuous feedback loop for teachers and administrators to address teacher and student learning needs. Summative evaluation will include pre-observation conferencing, formal observation for at least 75 percent of the instructional period using   a specified evaluation rubric with specific performance descriptors, and post-observation   conferencing to include evidence provided by the teacher to inform the evaluation. A PGP will be developed to address findings from the summative evaluation. The plan must include half of the   professional development hours required by rule or law and must address the teacher's content area,   instructional strategies related to the teacher's content area, or the teacher's needs identified through   summative evaluation. Interim appraisals include formative observations of teacher effectiveness   to enhance the ability of district and school administrators to provide 'just in time', job-embedded professional development and support in addition to more formal professional development and   growth opportunities. The frequency of formative observations allows administrators to take the pulse of implementation of recommended improvements in instructional strategies at the classroom level. Formative observations are used to build a collaborative and supportive learning process within schools that is likely to improve student achievement in the short and long term.

TESS enhances the goals of Principle 2 by assisting all districts' and schools' continuous improvement planning. Teacher and leader evaluations inform the development of district and   school professional development plans within the ACSIP, and in the case of Priority and Focus Schools, within the PIP and TIP. This is intended to ensure coherence in needs assessment and continuous improvement planning, particularly in struggling schools. Struggling schools in particular need a very   concise, consistent evaluation support system. Research from the task force revealed that 87 percent   of districts in the state have been using different checklists for teacher evaluations. The instruments   were varied and did not provide any targeted support to teachers, nor did they use documented evidence to support the ratings. Many times struggling schools are overwhelmed with the enormity   of the task of improving student learning overall, or for a particular population of students. Standardizing evaluation rubrics and criteria for performance levels assists leaders and teachers in maximizing the effectiveness of student learning.

TESS provides an instructional and leadership accountability and feedback system to inform continuous improvement planning and to focus districts' and schools' time, efforts and resources with regards to the development of its human resources. The new evaluation system will provide critical data and information needed to transform struggling schools, and allow district and school leadership to differentiate support. With differentiated support, all teachers, including teachers who   provide services to at-risk subpopulations, such as SWD and EL teachers, receive assistance to enhance their professional practice and to implement all aspects of CCSS. The differentiated support provided in the system informs coaching,   professional development and, where appropriate, employment renewal decisions.

COMPONENTS OF TESS

TESS includes a four-tier rating system that differentiates performance levels of educators as Distinguished, Proficient, Basic or Unsatisfactory (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2805 (a) (2)) and differentiates intervention and support based on these ratings. The four performance levels are determined using an evaluation rubric as well as evidence of student growth and performance (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2805 (a)(2)(c)(d)). Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* was determined to be congruent with Arkansas's desired evaluation framework for assessing educator practice and was piloted in several districts during the 2010-2011 school year prior to the enactment of TESS. The *Framework for Teaching* details 22 components of professional practice that are grouped into four broader categories for evaluation. These components provide a valid, research-based framework for evaluation of educators that incorporates national best practices. Danielson's Framework coupled with rigorous training in the use of the Framework was demonstrated to produce observational outcomes that highly correlate with student growth in the Gates Funded Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study. The *Framework for Teaching* is used for observation as well as pre- and post- observation conferences to ensure adequate evidence to support the ratings includes the use of student growth and performance outcomes.

The four categories for evaluation of educator practice include the following:
- planning and preparation
- classroom environment
- instruction
- professional responsibilities

The *Framework for Teaching* provides evaluators with detailed rubrics that include performance descriptors and evidence criteria for rating teacher practice within each of the aforementioned categories. The use of the detailed performance descriptors and evidence criteria in the rubrics ensures a valid, standardized approach to observational ratings of educator practice.

Based on summative evaluation, educators receive ratings for each of the 22 components within the four categories. The ratings determine the frequency of formal summative evaluation, interim appraisals and the level of support and learning to be specified in a PGP. Section 6-17-2808 specifies the frequency of evaluation based on educators' performance ratings, and Section 6-17- 2806 of Arkansas Annotated Code specifies the support components of the evaluation system based on educators' ratings. Teachers who are considered novice or probationary are evaluated annually using the formal summative evaluation process. Non-probationary teachers that are not in Intensive Support Status receive a formal, summative evaluation every four years. New teachers may be novice (first year) or Probationary (two to three years). Novice, probationary and non-probationary teachers may be placed in Intensive Support Status based on the summative evaluation (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2807). A teacher is placed in Intensive Support Status if the teacher has a rating of Unsatisfactory in any one entire teacher evaluation category of the evaluation framework, or if the teacher has a rating of unsatisfactory or Basic in a majority of the descriptors in a teacher evaluation category. Figure 18 provides an overview of the differentiated support based on ratings.
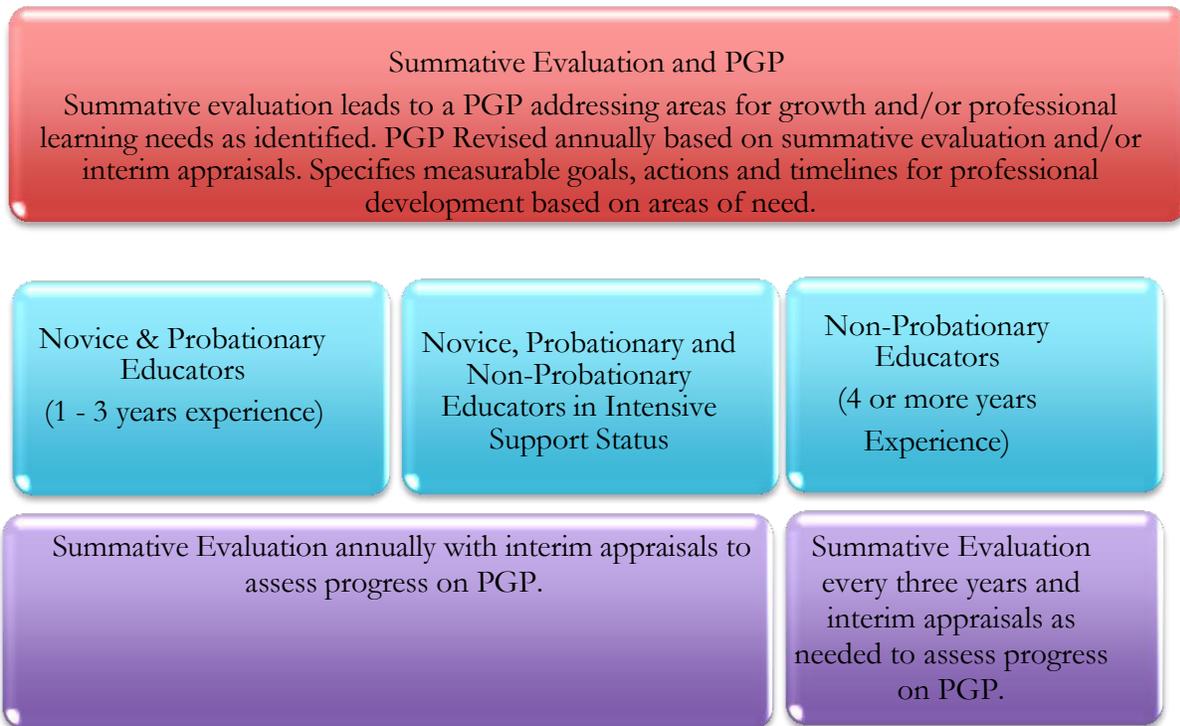
Summative Evaluation and PGP

Summative evaluation leads to a PGP addressing areas for growth and/or professional learning needs as identified. PGP Revised annually based on summative evaluation and/or interim appraisals. Specifies measurable goals, actions and timelines for professional development based on areas of need.

Novice & Probationary Educators (1 - 3 years experience)	Novice, Probationary and Non-Probationary Educators in Intensive Support Status	Non-Probationary Educators (4 or more years Experience)
Summative Evaluation annually with interim appraisals to assess progress on PGP.		Summative Evaluation every three years and interim appraisals as needed to assess progress on PGP.

Figure 18. Overview of TESS and differentiated system of support.

Educators will receive a performance rating annually and aggregated reports of educator performance ratings will be included in the teacher quality indicators of the annual school performance report. All educators' ratings will be published in aggregate form at the school, district and state level on the annual school performance report. Each year all educators will complete a PGP in collaboration with the evaluator. The goals of the plan will be directly related to the areas identified from the most recent summative evaluation as needing improvement.

TESS requires that teacher evaluation include annual evidence of student growth from artifacts and external assessment measures, as well as judgments regarding teachers' professional practice using a clearly defined framework designed to ensure teacher quality and promote teacher professional growth. Teachers are classified into one of four performance categories based on their impact on student learning and their professional practice: Distinguished, Proficient, Basic, and Unsatisfactory. Teachers' performance levels are determined using the intersection of their professional practice ratings and teachers' impact on student learning as evidenced in artifacts and external assessment measures.

Evaluators classify teacher's professional practice using detailed rubric descriptors for subcategories within in four categories of practice:

- planning and preparation,
- classroom environment,
- instruction, and professional
- responsibilities.

These classifications take into account classroom observations, artifacts of preparation, instruction and assessment, contribution to professional culture, and student feedback, among other considerations. ADE has contracted with Bloomboard to provide a statewide on-line observation system to be used by all districts. The system will be beneficial to educators because it will streamline the data collection and evaluation process and allow all documents to be completed electronically. The state system will also provide an avenue for the state to collect teacher ratings to be published on school and district performance reports.

Another part of the performance level judgment considers whether the educator's impact on student learning is low, moderate, or high. Even though a certain percentage of student performance is not assigned to the overall teacher evaluation in the TESS law, it does specify that half of the evidence used to evaluate teachers must be student performance indicators that are externally generated, or artifacts that the teacher has not designed or scored. This part was purposely added to the law to ensure an emphasis on student performance based on external measures such as state and national assessments.

Summary growth statistics at the teacher level that have been available in previous years included Growth to Standard growth model percentages, median SGP using the SGP model, and/or results from local district or school measures of achievement.

- Growth to Standards statistics were available for Grades 4 to 8 in math and literacy using the ACTAAP CRT
- Median SOAR values are available for
  - Grades 3 – 8 for math and literacy on ACTAAP CRT exams
  - End of Course Algebra and End of Course Geometry
  - Grades 5 and 7 science on ACTAAP NRT or CRT exams and End of Course

The rules for TESS delineate the other external assessment measures that may be used when state level assessments of growth in student learning are not available. Other assessments may include pre- and post-test results from classroom and/or district assessments of knowledge, performance measures, and other assessments as listed in the attached rules.

The intersection of the judgment of professional practice and growth in student learning determines the performance level assigned to teachers, as well as the consequences for teachers under the evaluation system. The expectation is that teachers achieve Proficient ratings in professional practice and at least moderate or expected impact on student learning. When professional practice ratings and impact on student learning are not congruent, this is cause for concern and a threat to the validity of the evaluation system. Strong performance ratings and low impact on student learning would not support a judgment of teacher performance as Distinguished. Thus, a safeguard is proposed to ensure the use of growth in teacher evaluation ratings is consistent across districts and schools and to ensure congruence between teacher effectiveness ratings and impact on student growth in achievement.

The ADE proposed to use a threshold for expected growth that would act as a trigger for concerns that would prohibit the designation of a teacher as Distinguished. In grades and subjects where growth model data are available, and of sufficient N to support reliable inferences, the state assessments are expected to be used as external assessments in the determination of teachers' ratings. The ADE proposed to limit the designation of teachers as Distinguished in the event that teachers' summary growth statistics fall below a threshold of growth among all teachers in the state.

The TEAC determined that the student growth measure for all tested grades would be the subject-matter median SOAR value and for non-tested teachers it would be the median SOAR value based on students' literacy SOAR scores for the students that are assigned to those teachers. For example, a United States History teacher that has 128 students assigned to him/her, would be accountable to meet the threshold of student growth for those students based on their literacy SOAR scores. Teachers in non-tested areas use the same SOAR score and are held to the same threshold for growth as math and literacy teachers.

The student growth measures and model to determine growth outlined above will apply to teachers in grades 4-11 that are considered a teacher of record.

The decisions that have not been made in regards to student growth include: K-3 teachers, teachers that teach only seniors, special education teachers, and teachers that are not teachers of record such as counselors, library media specialists, administrators, and elementary art, music, and P.E. teachers that only see students in a pull-out class. ADE staff is working with statisticians to determine if the above outlined model can be used for teachers in grades 2 and 3. Data is being modeled and analyzed to determine the validity of using the SOAR scores as growth from the second grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills to the new PARCC assessment in third grade. ADE staff is also reviewing alternative assessments that could be used for students in primary grades.

One group of teachers for which student growth data has not been determined is the group of teachers that only instruct seniors. Since the PARCC assessments will only assess students through the eleventh grade, a measure has not yet been identified to determine a suitable method for attributing student growth. ADE staff will meet with stakeholders from that group to make a determination, particularly since Arkansas received a waiver for testing Grade 11 literacy and Algebra II for spring 2015. Fewer

students will have state assessment data meaning that fewer teachers will have student growth data based on the state assessment.

ADE believes with the implementation of the CCSS and the transition to next generation assessments, the use of literacy scores in the evaluation system helps the non-tested teachers heighten the use of strategies to implement the literacy standards related to their content area in their classrooms. ADE also believes very strongly that in order to be successful, a state-wide initiative must be put in place to support these teachers with professional development offerings and support from their administrators. Tim Shanahan, an author of the CCSS and expert in disciplinary literacy, was brought in to provide a two-day training in early June of 2014. The training was filmed and placed on AR IDEAS, where it is available to all teachers. ADE worked with content experts in art, music, P.E., science, and social studies to draft content specific training in each of those areas. The content specific trainings were offered at each of the educational cooperatives throughout the summer. Each training was filmed and placed on AR IDEAS for any educator that was unable to attend in person. Because of capacity issues, ADE was not able to include any other content areas last summer; however, a plan was put in place to add other content areas beginning last fall. ADE staff worked with faculty from Career and Technical Education to assist in trainings specific to those areas.

Because effective data use is a critical component of improving outcomes for students an additional area of support planned for teachers and administrators is professional development opportunities concerning data literacy. School and district leaders need to collect, analyze, and use data; therefore, comprehensive training is under design to explain SOAR scores, as well as, support administrators and teachers in understanding the data they need to be reviewing, questions they need to ask based on data, and possible explanations for data trends. A key outcome is to show how data literacy relates to the evaluation rubric and professional growth plan and to demonstrate the value and use of data by leading a data-driven, collaborative culture. Planning for this training is still underway, delayed by the uncertainty in future assessments. In the interim, ADE has requested proposals from Arkansas's higher education institutions to integrate data and assessment literacy integrated with ADE's data tools, into teacher preparation and leader preparation courses. These grants will incentivize higher education programs to prepare teachers and leaders with assessments and data relevant to practice in Arkansas's schools.

Data-Based Proposed Revisions

For instructional purposes, the ADE proposes to include student growth as a measure in the summative evaluation rating starting in the 2017-2018 school year due to the transition in state assessments in 2015-16. As recommended by Arkansas's TAC for public school accountability, this will allow for development and modeling of growth measures using stable student scores from a test that is built to measure the same standards and constructs expected to be taught by teachers and learned by students. During this time period ADE will analyze the growth data across teachers, grade levels, and courses. This is a critical step in developing a growth measure for use in high stakes such as teacher and leader effectiveness. Also during this period ADE will calculate and report student growth scores and teacher median growth values to teachers and leaders to continue to inform their conversations about effectiveness.

Arkansas will continue with statewide implementation of the state evaluation rubric, Danielson's Framework for Teaching, during the transition school years. Many districts chose to early adopt and piloted the system with all teachers during the 2013-2014 year. All administrators who evaluate teachers completed the Teachscape Proficiency Assessment. The state allocated many significant resources to ensure evaluators have had the necessary knowledge and skills to evaluate all teachers in a fair, consistent, and valid manner. The state provided other trainings to support administrators so the primary purpose of

the evaluation system is not lost, the primary purpose being a formative process to improve professional practice, thereby, improving student learning. While training everyone on the details of the system,   forms, etc., is important, a concerted effort to emphasize the formative process has been a focus so   the evaluation system does not become what the state has had in the past, a system of compliance.

Justification for Proposed Revisions

Staff from the Arkansas Department of Education has been meeting with the TEAC since September 2012. Members of the TEAC are teachers, district level administrators, building level administrators, representatives from various educational organizations, and the business community. The TEAC has met approximately once every two months for the first two years, and currently meets on a quarterly basis. ADE staff provides research and summaries of data analysis and modeling to TEAC members to inform discussions and decision-making. ADE collaborated with the Arkansas Research Center and more recently with the Office of Innovation for Education to support the analytics required for TEAC discussions

Initially, the TEAC came to consensus on how student growth would be incorporated into a teacher's final summative rating. Teachers are assigned a median SOAR value. Student SOAR scores are based on an SGP model and calculated using student scores from state assessments. Using data from 2011-2013 a threshold value for low growth was determined to be a median SOAR value of 30. This value was found to be associated with approximately 50 percent or more students losing ground in performance level from the prior year, i.e. negative gains. It was decided that a-teacher must have a minimum of 10 students taking an assessment to receive a SOAR score. This minimum number of students was selected to maximize the number of teachers for which a median SOAR value could be calculated while attending to concerns about reliability for teachers with a smaller number of students assigned to them.

The student SOAR score was considered desirable because the method for determining a student's academic peers was more direct (students with the exact same prior scale score) than for the SGP cohort or SGP baseline methods which use quantile regression. Although the SOAR method used an academic peer group that may have been more accessible to teachers, this was achieved by a tradeoff in more extreme variations in the size of the academic peer group from year to year. For example, within the algebra test in 2014 the size of the academic peer group ranged from 1 student at a scale score of 464 to 773 students with a scale score of 243. For the student at a scale score of 464 his/her growth is limited to being characterized by a SOAR score of 50 regardless of whether the student improved, declined, or gained as expected during the year. ADE collaborated with researchers to determine whether this impacted the use of median SOAR values for teacher evaluation.

During the 2014-15 school year, the ADE calculated a median SOAR value for each teacher and school where a sufficient number of students allowed for the calculation of a math and literacy student SOAR score for the 2012, 2013, and 2014 assessments. These values were posted to a password protected portal for teachers and leaders to access the information and begin to have conversations about teacher performance ratings and teacher growth values. Concurrently, teacher median SOAR values were analyzed to answer questions about year to year stability of the values, as well as the factors that may impact validity and stability of the values for teachers of specific subgroups such as English Learners or Students with Disabilities.

ADE staff met with special education teachers to review the SOAR model for special education teachers. Although the use of a median SOAR value for special education educators has not been ruled out as a viable measure for informing effectiveness there are concerns about its use. All parties want to make sure due diligence has been executed before making a final decision on its use.

In reviewing SOAR data, it was determined that Arkansas's outcomes for special education teachers differed from outcomes for special education teachers in other states. Arkansas special education teachers' median scores were highly likely to be below the median SOAR value of 30 (See Table 8).

Table 8. *Teachers Meeting or Exceeding the Median SOAR Value of 30*

	Teachers of SPED Courses		Teachers of Non-SPED Courses	
	SOAR < 30	SOAR ≥ 30	SOAR < 30	SOAR ≥ 30
One Year Median				
Literacy	814 (54.6%)	678 (45.4%)	1097 (7.0%)	14615 (93.0%)
Math	1098 (56.4%)	850 (43.6%)	2295 (10.3%)	20060 (89.7%)
Three Year Median				
Literacy	804 (53.9%)	688 (46.1%)	961 (6.1%)	14751 (93.9%)
Math	1083 (55.6%)	865 (44.4%)	2195 (9.8%)	20160 (90.2%)

After discussions with national consultants, data from 2012, 2013, and 2014 were used to model student and teacher growth scores using the SOAR calculation, a cohort SGP calculation, and a baseline SGP calculation to determine whether the pattern was associated with the SOAR calculation or potential other factors. Arkansas has determined that the SOAR calculation, which relies only on a prior year and current year comparison, functions differently than a true SGP cohort or SGP baseline growth score for certain subgroups. The SGP baseline calculation which uses multiple years of students' prior scores, provides greater stability and precision across all subgroups and grade levels.

These analyses provided ADE with more data for exploring additional questions that have arisen in TEAC discussions. The comparison of these student growth metrics and the impact on median teacher values was extended to validate the threshold value of 30 using the three most recent years of data. This validation analysis revealed the median SOAR or SGP value of 30 was not associated with a stable criterion of 50 percent or more students experiencing negative performance level gains when disaggregated by grade level or across years. The year to year and grade level differences are enough to lead the ADE, informed by the TEAC, to propose the use of the distribution of median teacher baseline SGP values (represented by the acronym SOAR2) at each grade level and subject to identify "expected", "low" and "high" growth of teachers, rather than a single threshold value. These designations may serve as the threshold for future rating determination. Figures 19 - 22 below illustrate the differences in the distributions given different grades and subjects.

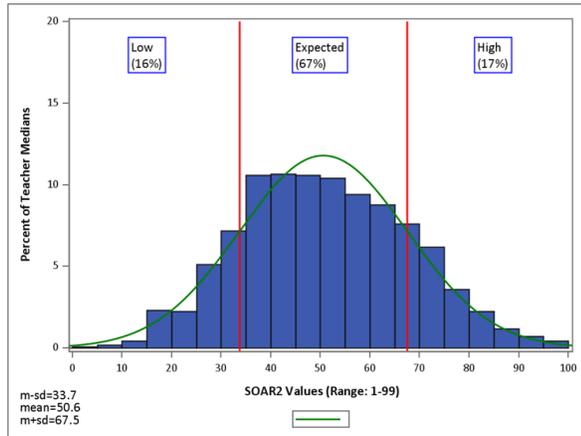## Teacher Median Distribution

(G04 Benchmark Math, N=1115)

Figure 19. Distribution of teacher median growth values for Grade 4 math.

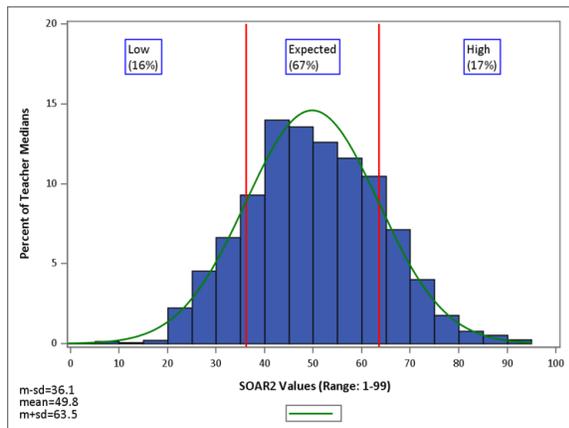## Teacher Median Distribution

(G04 Benchmark Literacy, N=3231)

Figure 20. Distribution of teacher median growth values for Grade 4 literacy.
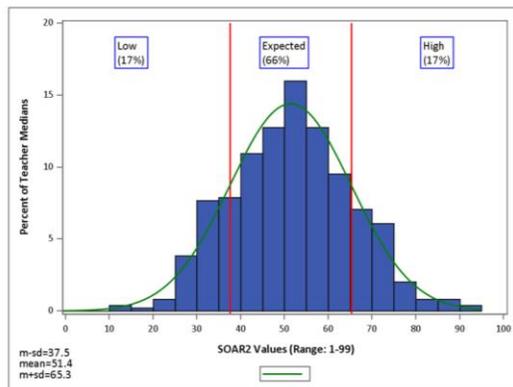
Teacher Median Distribution

Figure 21. Distribution of teacher median growth values for Grade 8 math.

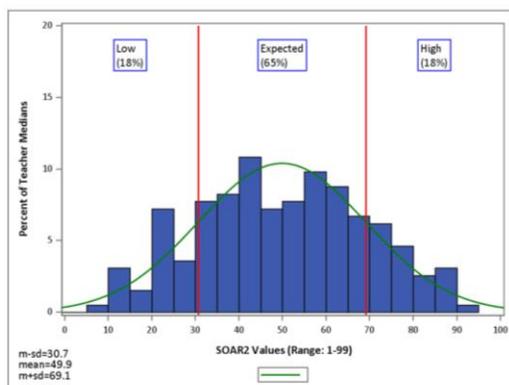## Teacher Median Distribution

Figure 22. Distribution of teacher median growth values for Grade 8 literacy.

Note the differences in the median teacher values at plus and minus one standard deviation. These teacher median values at the cut point for low growth range from 28.2 to 36.1 in math and 30.7 to 37.5 in literacy. The teacher median values at the cut point for high growth range from 65.3 to 69.1 in math and 61.2 to 65.2 in literacy. Rather than receiving a median SOAR2 value that may represent different interpretations of growth from one year to the next, one grade to the next, or one subject to the next, the ADE proposes to determine whether teacher median SOAR2 values represent either low growth (less than the value at one standard deviation below the mean of the median teacher SOAR2 value), expected growth(within one standard deviation of the mean of the median teacher SOAR2 value), or high growth (exceeding one standard deviation above the mean of the median teacher SOAR2 value).

All decisions concerning student growth have been made based on data modeled from the current state assessments. There are a significant group of teachers that are not included in this data due to the grades

in which current state assessments are administered. The state will have to model data when PARCC assessments are administered and set new thresholds, accordingly (Table 9).

Table 9. Percent and Number of Teachers with Fewer Than 10 Students Assigned

Test & Grade	Number of Math Teachers Student N < 10	Number of Literacy Teachers Student N < 10	Other Teachers Student N < 10
ITBS			
Grade 2	16% (308)	11% (214)	40% (1172)
Benchmark			
Grade 3	12% (196)	15% (259)	15% (325)
Grade 4	17% (229)	19% (281)	16% (395)
Grade 5	21% (227)	21% (259)	13% (337)
Grade 6	29%(247)	28% (270)	14%(421)
Grade 7	34% (272)	33% (283)	19% (835)
Grade 8	41% (338)	35% (292)	21% (1027)
Algebra			
Grade 8	18% (44)		
Grade 9	23% (133)		
Geometry			
Grade 9	45% (142)		
Grade 10	47% (387)		
All Test Groups	13% (1099)	10% (772)	16% (1949)

Act 1074 of the 90th General Assembly requires the State Board of Education to not renew its role as a governing state or its participation with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or enter into any contract or agreement in excess of one year related to statewide assessment for public school students after the 2015-2016 school year or any year thereafter. This same Act required the State Board of Education to take into consideration assessment recommendations made by the Governor's Council on Common Core Review.

On June 8, 2015 Governor Hutchinson accepted the Council's early recommendation to enter into negotiations with ACT/ ACT Aspire for the 2015-2016 school year. On June 11th the State Board of Education did not approve a motion to enter into negotiations with ACT/ACT Aspire. The State Board of Education approved a motion to enter into a one year contract to administer the PARCC for the 2015-2016 school year.

At this time, the ADE has not entered into an assessment contract for the 2015-2016 school year. The timeline for the resolution of this matter is still unclear. The ADE will work with the State Board of Education and the Governor to resolve this matter. Arkansas will administer either the PARCC or another compliant assessment in 2015-2016. Should another assessment be selected, the ADE will work with the State Board of Education and the Governor's office to ensure the assessment meets the requirements set forth by the United States Department of Education (USDE) and supply the appropriate documentation to the USDE. At that time, the ADE will submit an amendment to its ESEA Flexibility renewal accompanied by the required documentation.

The documentation will include the following: (1) The process and timeline for development of test blueprints and item specifications; (2) the review and selection of items for inclusion in the assessments; (3) scaling and scoring procedures to be used; (4) test administration procedures, including selection and use of appropriate accommodations; (5) data analyses proposed to document validity and reliability of the assessments; (6) an independent evaluation of alignment of the assessments with the State's college- and career-ready standards; (7) the process and timeline for setting college- and career-ready achievement standards and the method and timeline to validate those achievement standards; and (8) meaningful report formats to communicate results to students, parents, and educators.

The future of the standards and assessment is uncertain. It is difficult for Arkansas to make decisions regarding the future of growth data based on state assessments for high stakes use until the standards and assessment questions have been resolved. The Governor's Council for Common Core Review is expected to announce recommendations for the standards in July 2015. One advantage of the proposed use of a SOAR2 median teacher value to inform teachers and leaders about student growth is that it can be applied to the PARCC assessment or other future assessments as it isn't a scale-based growth metric.

In the event that a teacher receives strong professional practice ratings and demonstrates a low impact on student learning, it is expected that the teacher's PGP will address this discrepancy and its root causes. Persistently low student growth will result in a lower teacher effectiveness rating. For example, teachers rated as Proficient, rather than Distinguished, due to low growth of his/her students will be rated as Basic if the low growth of his/her students persists over multiple years as indicated in the Rules for TESS. Likewise, teachers rated as Proficient or Basic may have their rating reduced to a lower level of teacher effectiveness in the event their students demonstrate persistent low growth (a level below the threshold for multiple years).

Performance ratings are the catalyst to engage educators in the process of continuous professional improvement as formalized in the educators' PGP. The *Framework for Teaching's* detailed performance descriptors provide guidance to the educator and evaluator for formulating goals within the PGP, enhancing the understanding of evaluators and educators in the evidence required to demonstrate proficient and distinguished practice. Differentiated PGPs will reflect the differentiated professional growth needs of educators and allow districts and schools to provide resources and supports based on the differentiated PGPs. For example, educators receiving a rating of Basic for a category will be required to address the professional learning needs identified within the category. Each educator must dedicate one-half of the professional development hours required by law or rule to professional learning in the educator's content area, instructional strategies applicable to the educator's content area or the educator's identified needs from summative evaluation and interim appraisals. Teachers in Intensive Support Status must use all professional development hours required by rule or law to address their identified needs. Evaluators will also use the performance ratings that are not Proficient or Distinguished as areas for growth when performing formative observations as part of the interim appraisal process. Formative observations are critical in the evaluator's role of monitoring the teacher's professional growth and helping guide professional development decisions.

The interim appraisal process will provide teachers with meaningful feedback, targeted professional development activities and multiple opportunities for self-reflection of practice. The interim appraisal will allow teachers to focus on areas of weakness identified in previous summative evaluations. The interim appraisal will also focus on student learning results and growth every year. During this process, principals will continue to observe all teachers, but with a more targeted focus. Each year, principals facilitate conversations with teachers based on their individualized professional growth plans. Teachers will have input in their growth plans; however, the principal will have final approval on the content, based on

identified areas. During the interim process, teachers will also receive feedback and coaching from peer teachers and instructional facilitators.

In cases where educators require intensive support to improve their practice TESS provides a timeline for intervention of no more than two semesters unless the educator has demonstrated significant progress within that time period. Evaluators shall notify the superintendent of an educator in Intensive Support Status who does not accomplish the goals and complete the tasks established for the Intensive Support Status during the given period. Upon review and approval of the documentation, the superintendent shall recommend termination or non-renewal of the teacher's contract.

MULTIPLE MEASURES

Multiple measures for supporting convergent validity of teacher effectiveness and producing reliable ratings are required in TESS. The post-observation conference includes presentation of artifacts and external assessment measures that provide evidence of student growth (Ark. Ann. Code § 6-17-2804 (7). In the 2013 legislative session, the ½ of the artifacts from external assessment measures such as Arkansas's CRTs. The educator and evaluator may determine the additional artifacts for evidence within the guidelines provided by language was removed to help clarify the operationalization of the final rules for TESS system. Since Arkansas is using a trigger method for growth, that language was very confusing and made it difficult to integrate with the trigger system. Artifacts that provide clear, concise, evidentiary data to improve student achievement and demonstrate high levels of performance in professional practice may include one or more of the following:

> Lesson plans or pacing guides aligned with the standards;
> Self-directed or collaborative research approved by the evaluator;
> Participation in professional development;
> Contributions to parent, community or professional meetings;
> Classroom assessments including samples of student work, portfolios, writing, projects, unit tests, pre/post assessments and classroom-based formative assessments;
> District-level assessments including formative assessments, grade or subject level assessments, department level assessments and common assessments; and
- National assessments including AP assessments, NRTs and career and technical assessments.

During the 2015 legislative session, the language of the statute was changed to read that "Annually, a public school shall assign each teacher employed by the school an annual overall rating that is based on:
> (3)(A) The teacher's professional practice, as evidenced by the performance rating for a summative evaluation or for an interim appraisal; and
> (3)(B) Student growth, as determined by rules promulgated by the State Board of Education.

> (4)(A) A teacher shall submit artifacts agreed upon by the teacher and evaluator or by the evaluator if the teacher and evaluator cannot agree, as evidence of professional practice in determining the performance rating for a summative evaluation for or for an interim appraisal.
> (4)(B) External assessment measures may be among the artifacts submitted."

This change ensures that student growth is considered each year in an educator's overall rating but allows flexibility for the State Board of Education to approve rules regarding student growth measures for more flexibility. Other growth measures may be approved after a one year study by a select group of districts who

will be trained on development and use of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Student Growth Goals (SGGs), and other methods that other states have been using that may be of interest to Arkansas's district leaders.

ADE is collaborating with researchers at the Office of Innovation for Education to submit a proposal for an Education Research grant (84.305A) under the Topic *Effective Teachers and Effective Teaching* with a proposed start date of July 1, 2016. The purpose of this proposal is to expand upon the selected pilots in the 2015-16 school year and to invite interested districts to participate in a randomized-cluster trial of the use of these other growth measures to more formally study the impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.

Other Specialty Area Teachers

TESS states that the following specialty area educators are considered teachers for the purpose of evaluation if they are required to hold a valid teaching license from the State Board of Education as a condition of employment, and are employed as a classroom teacher, guidance counselor, library media specialist; or teacher in another position (such as EL teacher) as identified by the State Board. TESS requires an appropriate evaluation framework, evaluation rubric and external assessment measures (such as student growth and achievement) are incorporated in the determination of the performance ratings for specialty teachers.

Managing Multiple Measures

Arkansas has recently contracted with BloomBoard (an online platform for educator development) to work with schools and districts across the state to help implement a sustainable system for teacher and administrator evaluation and growth. The new Arkansas Educator Evaluation Observation and Data System will compile essential learning elements into a systematic educator effectiveness framework that encompasses every facet of the teacher and principal evaluation process. The online evaluation data management system will transform the evaluation process, including the rubrics, evaluation forms, professional growth plans, and other supporting documents, into a digital format that can be accessed online and on multiple mobile devices.

This spring each district will designate a primary contact person who will work with an assigned BloomBoard Account Manager. The account manager will serve as a guide through the onboarding process, training, and offer ongoing differentiated support.

Administrators were trained during the summer of 2014 on how to use the system to conduct observations, to create professional goals, and to monitor progress on Professional Growth Plans. These trainings were held at each of the co-ops and in central Arkansas. Co-ops have been given a calendar of training dates and the calendar will be posted on the ADE website within the next week. Representatives from Bloomboard will train with ADE trainers to demonstrate step-by-step the use of the technology platform's ability to streamline TESS and LEADS evaluation processes including both professional practice and student growth data.

The system will be provided free of charge to all districts in the state. Due to the requirement for reporting teacher evaluation ratings on school performance reports, all districts will be required to utilize the system

The statewide system is the standard evaluation process. However, school districts have the option to develop a system of evaluation as long as it meets the state's expectations for validity and reliability as specified in the rules. Arkansas's teacher evaluation system (based on Danielson's model) was carefully designed to balance the need for statewide consistency with local district autonomy. Districts have the flexibility to adopt the state's system, adapt the state's system to meet local needs, or modify their own systems consistent with the principles of Arkansas's model.

Districts wishing to utilize an evaluation model other than the state's system were required to have their system in place during the 2012-2013 school year.

It is expected that implementation consistency will vary initially due to the extent of the change in evaluation policy from total district autonomy to alignment with or use of the statewide model. Several safeguards for developing consistency in applying TESS and in educator evaluation ratings are planned initially, with additional safeguards developed iteratively as the ADE continues its continuous improvement. Safeguards include but are not limited to the following.

- Training provided to evaluators to familiarize themselves with the Danielson framework and the rubrics for rating educators during summative, interim and formative evaluations.
- The TeachScape tool itself and *BloomBoard* account management system which provide standard structure for recording observations within the Danielson framework and rubric descriptions.
- Role-play and think-aloud modeling strategies employed during the evaluator trainings provide evaluators with learning and calibrating opportunities as they discuss interpretation and scoring/rating within specific examples that may impact consistency.
  - Use of current growth model data reveal a consistent pattern of less than 40% of a teacher's students meeting their annual growth increment in mathematics for three consecutive years in a Grade 5 assignment.
  - In the Danielson framework, Setting Instructional Outcomes (value, sequence, and alignment) and Designing Student Assessments (congruence with instructional outcomes) are two areas of the rubric that are used to address concerns about teachers use of growth results to adjust learning expectations for students and subsequently, adjust instruction and assessment practices. The persistent lack of growth can be inferred by the evaluator and teacher to reflect a lack of alignment between instruction and assessment outcomes in the classroom to higher expectations in state standards or CCSS. Using the rubric, a teacher may receive a rating of Unsatisfactory in these areas. Under TESS rules, the teacher and evaluator would develop professional learning outcomes to address these incongruences coupled with professional development support linked to these concerns.

As indicated in Principle 2, the ADE engages in research and review on a continuous basis for improving statewide systems of support and informing policy revisions and development. Research and review on the implementation of TESS is no different. As a result of ESEA Flexibility data use for informed decision-making has increased and collaboration among divisions to support a coherent system has increased. The ADE will analyze relevant evaluation data collected from districts to ensure the evaluation rule is being implemented effectively and with consistency statewide. A culture of continuous improvement analyses allows ADE to make mid-course corrections and revision of guidance to ensure rapid movement toward statewide consistency. Analyses are conducted on an annual basis to ensure continued high consistency in implementation. Additionally, summary findings based on annual analyses may be publicly reported to provide transparency of this effort.

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

TESS provides direction for evaluation at all levels of instructional leadership. As per law, ADE will provide technical assistance to school districts for developing and implementing evaluation frameworks for administrators. Administrator evaluation will parallel teacher evaluation in regards to ensuring valid and reliable measures for performance ratings and the weight of student performance and growth in these determinations.

Work on administrator evaluation began in 2009 when legislation was passed to create a system of leadership development. Act 222 of the 2009 Regular Session created the School Leadership Coordinating Council. The purpose of the Council is to serve as a central body to coordinate the leadership development system efforts across the state. Representatives from the ADE, Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Leadership Academy, Arkansas Center for Executive Leadership, Career and Technical Education, Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, Arkansas School

Boards Association, Arkansas Education Association, and Arkansas Rural Education Association comprise the Council.

One task of the Council was to recommend an evaluation system for principals. During the 2010- 2011 school year, the Council worked with Dr. Connie Kamm, senior consultant with Dr. Doug Reeves' Leadership and Learning Center. Based on the ISLLC standards, and other leadership systems, the group created a framework for a principal evaluation system. The framework included a 4–tier performance rating, rubrics and descriptors for each of the six standards. Professional growth plans and other resources were also created for the system. (Attachment 20) It should be noted that as with the teacher evaluation system, persistently low student growth will result in a lower principal effectiveness rating.

The ADE sponsored a pilot for the principal evaluation system with ten school districts during the 2011-2012 school year. Dr. Kamm conducted the training for the principals and superintendents of the pilot districts. Personnel from pilot districts participated in an additional   three-day follow-up training in November. Feedback on implementation was obtained from the administrators in the pilot districts to inform revisions and improvements to the system. A three-day   follow-up training was held in March 2012 to obtain final recommendations from the pilot districts. By May 2013, all revisions were made to the framework, rubrics and forms for a statewide system of principal evaluation.

After final revisions were complete, ADE supported legislation in the 2013 legislative session to implement the principal evaluation system. ADE promulgated rules with the same process as followed in the teacher evaluation rules. The rules are posted at (http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/rules/Current/LEADS_Final_Rule_eff_07012014.pdf . All districts piloted the principal evaluation system in the 2013-2014 school year. Training was provided on the new principal evaluation system to all administrators in the summer of 2013. Districts must implement the new system in the 2014-2015 school year. School level median values of student growth were provided through Arkansas's SOAR Portal to inform leaders of the student level growth associated with their school.

Data from this pilot was used to improve the system, to inform future training plans, and to update policymakers. The principal evaluation system will be improved through a similar iterative, continuous process as that described for teacher evaluation.

The LEAD system has been designed to inform leader development as well as leader personnel decisions through a process that is clearly delineated. The process, rubric, and associated forms are available at http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/human-resources-educator-effectiveness-and-licensure/office-of-educator-effectiveness/leader-excellence-and-development-system-leads/leads-evaluation-forms

The superintendent/designee completes a LEADS Summative Evaluation at the end of each year for leaders who are in the Novice/Probationary or Intensive Categories and minimally once every three years for leaders in the Inquiry Category. The Summative Evaluation results in a performance rating for the administrator in each required function and standard on the appropriate LEADS Rubric. An overall rating is also given during the Interim Appraisal years. The ratings for these leaders are based on the functions, which are the focus of the leader's Professional Growth Plan (Form B). Based on the performance levels of the rubric, the evidence of student growth, and progression on the LEADS Professional Growth Plan (Form B or Form C for Intensive), the superintendent/designee makes a recommendation concerning the leader's commendations, areas for improvement, and the annual overall rating decisions. The

performance rating will be combined with student growth measures for the final rating once student growth data are available.

ADE staff convened a LEADS (Leader Excellence and Development System) committee comprised of various administrators to identify an appropriate growth measure for administrators. The state is piloted the LEADS rubric in 2013-2014 and implemented the rubric in the 2014- 2015 school year. The LEADS committee has determined to use a school-wide median SOAR value for principals. The threshold was initially set at 30, same as for teachers. However, this threshold will be reviewed through a similar analytic process as the teacher threshold value to determine whether this continues to be an appropriate and stable manner in which to inform leader effectiveness.

The LEADS committee completed a rubric for specialty administrators, such as curriculum program administrators, gifted/talented administrators, and special education administrators. Arkansas began a pilot of a superintendent evaluation system with 13 districts in January 2015. The superintendent evaluation system is aligned with the intent of the teacher and principal evaluation systems: to promote conversation, collaboration, and growth of the professional.

3.B ENSURE LEAs IMPLEMENT TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

3.B Provide the SEA's process for ensuring that each LEA develops, adopts, pilots, and implements, with the involvement of teachers and principals, including mechanisms to review, revise, and improve, high-quality teacher and principal evaluation and support systems consistent with the SEA's adopted guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION

Although most of the components of the evaluation are set in statute, there were some decisions made in promulgating rules. The State Board of Education approved the rules for TESS. The teacher evaluation systems is in full implementation in the 2014-2015 school year. The principal evaluation system is in implementation as well. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, the percent of teachers that are distinguished and proficient will be published on each school's annual performance report that is provided to all parents.

A key factor in the successful implementation of the evaluation system is inter-rater reliability among evaluators. Providing rigorous, meaningful professional development to all evaluators is crucial to maintaining the fidelity and integrity of the system. Data gathered from pilot years will be used to assess classification accuracy and reliability in the use of observation rubrics. Extensive training and preparation in each evaluation system continues to address evaluator consistency (reliability) as well as the accuracy of the observation rubrics and evaluation protocols based on lessons learned from data during the pilot years. A certification process has been developed for all evaluators to help ensure consistency and fairness in the application of the system.

The district is the entry point for ADE technical support and the primary provider of school support. The ADE provides resources and training to districts for implementation of the evaluation systems

and to ensure district ACSIP includes appropriate resources and support for   school level implementation. The ADE provides guidance iteratively as ADE from implementation of professional development for evaluators and teachers,   receives feedback from stakeholders and pilot districts and reviews district evaluation plans   for alignment with TESS. Local districts are key in facilitating the change process and developing   local capacity to ensure effective instruction and instructional leadership for all students. To   provide additional resources to new administrators, the ADE restructured the mentoring   process for new teachers, principals and superintendents to align with the new evaluation systems.

The ADE continues to review the fidelity of implementation and outcome measures throughout the implementation of TESS. Arkansas's longitudinal data systems ~~will~~ support a culture of effective   data use across multiple agencies vested in the outcomes of the P-20 system. Continuous feedback within DARTSS provides the ADE and supporting agencies such as teacher and leader preparation programs in higher education institutions with information to guide decisions for resource and personnel development. As mentioned in the Overview for this ESEA Flexibility Proposal, Arkansas has achieved significant advances in its longitudinal data systems' capabilities including the enhancement of the Teacher Student DATA Link as part of the Expand Enterprise Data Warehouse with Local Assessment Data and Teacher Student Link to Feed Data.

Visualization project. The data visualizations have been available to educators throughout the   2010-2011 and current school years. Educators have created and used data visualizations of student achievement and growth at the classroom level. Through this and other previously mentioned technology projects Arkansas adopted an official definition of teacher of record and developed a roster verification system that allows the teacher of record to be validated at the local school level. These efforts have positioned the ADE and Arkansas educators to implement more robust models for measuring student growth and assessing teacher impact on student growth and achievement. The student data link has not been in place for teachers of non-tested areas. It is important for ADE to provide the student growth reports by teacher to schools for the 2014- 2015 year to test the validity of the roster verification system. The information from the 2014- 2015 school year is providing ADE with data to determine any issues with the roster verification   system and provided the data to determine how many teachers were not attributed a SOAR score due to a "N" of less than 10.

ADE developed a Roster Correction System for schools and districts to utilize in the review of teacher, school and district median SOAR values. The Roster Correction System is a new tool that allows schools and districts to make corrections that may impact a teacher, school or district median SOAR value.

The state's Roster Verification and Correction System was modified to provide individual educators access to student rosters as a means to ensure that each teacher was assigned and held accountable for the students that they teach. In monitoring the use of the Roster Verification System, feedback from schools and districts has identified areas for improvement. One major concern is the ability for a district to identify co-teachers in order to tie co-teachers to classrooms where they assist the teacher of record and to the students for whom they should be held accountable. The ADE's Division of Research and Technology is working to correct this issue and provide a way for both teachers of record and co-teachers to be identified and tied to students.

The cross-agency agreements for data sharing provide another avenue to synthesize data gathered   on fidelity of implementation and outcome measures of TESS to inform the teacher and leader development pipelines to enhance teacher and leader quality throughout the system. The longitudinal

data system supports local decision-making regarding teacher and leader effectiveness by providing appropriate reports linking student and adult performance.

TESS is becoming a vehicle to drive self-reflection, self-assessment, and more objective measures to guide professional growth for educators. Performance ratings encourage educators to engage in the process of continuous improvement. In cases where educators require intensive support to improve their practice TESS provides a timeline for intervention. A teacher shall be placed in an intensive support status if the teacher has a rating of "unsatisfactory" in any one of the four categories of the evaluation of the framework (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2807). If the teacher does not accomplish the goals and complete the tasks established for the intensive support status during the given period, the evaluator shall notify the superintendent of the district.

Upon review and approval of the documentation, the superintendent shall recommend termination or non-renewal of the teacher's contract.

The interim appraisal process provides teachers with meaningful feedback, targeted professional development activities, and multiple opportunities for self-reflection of practice. The interim appraisal allows teachers to focus on areas of weakness identified in previous summative evaluations. The interim appraisal will also focus on student learning results and growth every year. During this process, principals continue to observe all teachers, but with a more targeted focus. Each year, principals continue to facilitate conversations with teachers based on their individualized professional growth plans. Teachers have input in their growth plans; however, the principal has final approval on the content, based on identified areas.
During the interim process, teachers receive feedback and coaching from peer teachers and instructional facilitators.

ADE continues to gather data to evaluate the system. TESS implementation is informed by student growth reports for educators. ADE proposes to include a teacher value for student growth in the summative rating of a teacher beginning in 2018-2019 after multiple years of new state assessment and growth data can be analyzed.

Arkansas law states that one-half of the artifacts submitted by a teacher for the summative evaluation must relate to student growth. This language was a compromise negotiated by the Arkansas Education Association (state professional teacher association); teachers were not comfortable including a percentage. TESS is designed to promote professional learning and professional growth. The Danielson framework, coupled with reported teacher median growth values, are the impetus for professional conversations and self-reflection not provided for in the current system.

LEADS IMPLEMENTATION

Department of Education (ADE) will provide technical assistance to school districts for implementing evaluation frameworks for administrators. Administrator evaluation parallels teacher evaluation in regards to ensuring valid and reliable measures for performance ratings and the weight of student performance and growth in these determinations.

Work on administrator evaluation began in 2009 when legislation was passed to create a system of leadership development. Act 222 of 2009 Regular Session created the School Leadership Coordinating

Council. The purpose of the Council is to serve as a central body to coordinate the leadership development system efforts across the state

One task of the Council was to recommend an evaluation system for principals. During the 2010-2011 school year, the Council worked with Dr. Connie Kamm, senior consultant with The Leadership and Learning Center. Based on the ISLLC standards, and other leadership systems, the group created a framework for a principal evaluation system. The framework included a 4-tier performance rating, rubrics and descriptors for each of the six standards. Professional growth plans and other resources were also created for the system.

The ADE sponsored a two-year pilot for the principal evaluation system with ten school districts during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years. Dr. Kamm conducted the training for the principals and superintendents of the pilot districts. At the conclusion of the two-year pilot, the principal evaluation system was named, The **Leader Excellence and Development System** (LEADS). ADE supported legislation in the 2013 legislative session to implement the principal evaluation system.

In the 2013-2014 school year, all districts were required to pilot LEADS with principals and assistant principals. All superintendents, assistant superintendents, and principals participated in a two-day training for the principal evaluation system during the summer of 2013. Assistant principals received training during the fall of 2013.

Additional work by administrators in other school and district positions served to create an evaluation system appropriate for positions other than principal and assistant principal. In addition to the LEADS principal rubric (Form A) and the assistant principal rubric (Form A1) a LEADS rubric for building/district leaders (Form A2) outlines the leadership expectations for administrators serving a school or district in additional leadership capacities. The State Board of Education approved Rules and Regulations for LEADS that expanded the work of LEADS to evaluate Building-level and District-level leaders. Administrators in specialty areas, as well as, positions of Assistant, Deputy, or Associate Superintendents may be evaluated using the school/district leader evaluation rubric. The LEADS rubric for building/district leaders is also based on the ISLLC standards and functions.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the LEADS advisory committee met throughout the year to examine appropriate growth measures for the LEADS evaluation system. The advisory committee recommended growth measures for building-level administrators that align with the requirements for teachers. Growth for administrators will be applied to overall yearly ratings according to the same timeline as growth is applied to teacher ratings. Additional research will be done to determine appropriate growth for district administrators.

Districts were required to implement the new system in the 2014-2015 school year without including measures of student growth, basing ratings only on the performance evaluation component of the system. School level student growth medians were provided through ADE's SOAR Portal to provide leaders with access to student growth measures through 2015.

CLARIFICATION OF FULL IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE OF STUDENT GROWTH FOR ALL TESTED AND NON-TESTED AREAS

The shift to next generation assessments will delay the availability of valid and reliable student growth scores for use in leader evaluation. The state is requesting to wait until after the 2017-18 school year to include student growth data in an educator's annual overall rating and a leader's overall rating.

The state has convened a committee of 10 superintendents from districts across the state to form a sub-committee of the TEAC and LEADS advisory groups and to partner with the ADE to study student growth. This group will receive technical assistance on statistical models for growth and also technical assistance for the development of SLOs or SGGs. The group will be charged to take their work back to their districts during the 2015-16 SY and to model different options for student growth inclusion. The superintendents will then make a recommendation to the State Board in March of 2016 on the statistical model and the Student Growth model for non-tested teachers, including a recommendation for the threshold application.

Growth will be applied to an educator's rating after the 2017-18 assessment data is received. Educators whose rating is lowered a level will be based on ratings at the time the assessment data is received. Educators whose rating is based on an SGG will be under the same timeline, as the SGG data will be provided at the end of the school year. Educators will only be placed in intensive support for their domain ratings. Student growth alone will not place a teacher in ISS. Student growth will be a factor in lowering an educator's rating only.

The same rationale will be provided for principals; it is expected that the principal meet or exceed the established threshold using a school-level SOAR rating based on state assessments. Other growth measures will be researched for possible inclusion.

TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party	Resources	Documentation	Consideration
Rules and Regs written for TESS and passed by SBE	Summer 2012	Rule and Reg Committee and SBE	Constituent Groups, Regional Meetings, surveys, and ADE personnel	Teacher Excellence Support System Law (Attachment 5)	Significant decisions regarding the student achievement measures and student growth measures
Complete principal evaluation pilot and make revisions as needed and seek additional legislation for approval of Principal Evaluation system	May 2013	ADE	Outside consultants, constituent groups, legislators, and ADE personnel	Current Principal Evaluation Documents (Attachment 15)	Need to pass legislations to make sure the principal evaluation system is aligned with the teacher evaluation system
Provide professional development to all teachers and administrators on TESS	September 1, 2012-Aug.31, 2013	ADE	Outside consultants, Personnel from regional cooperatives, ADE personnel	Partial documentation is Danielson's _Framework for Teaching_ which will be the framework used in Arkansas (Attachment 17)	Many people in a short time period, cost factor, and delivery of training; certification test for evaluators; time spent away from districts by school
Provide training for principal evaluation training	2013-2014 School Year	ADE	Outside consultants, Personnel from regional cooperatives, ADE personnel	Current Principal Evaluation Documents (Attachment 15)	This will be the pilot year for the teacher evaluation system and the pilot year for the New PARCC assessments

Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party	Resources	Documentation	Consideration
Implement Pilot Statewide for TESS	2013-2014 School Year	ADE; School Districts	ADE personnel, personnel from regional cooperatives		Districts will be piloting this and also training for the principal evaluation system in the same year This is also the pilot year for
Obtain feedback and suggestions from administrators and teachers from pilot to revise as needed	Summer 2014	ADE; Administrators, teachers from school districts	Personnel from regional cooperatives, constituent groups, and regional meetings		Revisions were completed in a very short turnaround before the start of the 2014-15 year.
Implementation of TESS ratings with student growth values available for informational purposes.	2014-2015 School Year	ADE, School, Districts	ADE personnel, Personnel from regional cooperatives		Again, districts will be involved in two new evaluation systems, as well as, new next generation assessments. Growth reported for teachers once available from new assessment. Growth used in summary rating starting in 2017-18.

Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party	Resources	Documentation	Consideration
Implementation of Principal Evaluation rating system with growth available for informational purposes.	2014-2015 School Year	ADE; School Districts	ADE personnel, Personnel from regional cooperatives		Districts will be involved in two new evaluation systems, as well as, new assessments. Growth reported for principals once available from new assessment. Growth used in summary rating starting in 2017-18.
Administer PARCC or new next generation assessment (Act 1074), to be determined by State Board of Education. Set baseline data; Determine number of teachers with and without a SOAR value based on assessments	2015-2016				
Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party	Resources	Documentation	Consideration

Form a committee of selected districts to participate in a project to redefine "student growth" and set criteria for student growth measures;	Summer 2015	ADE Office of Educator Effectiveness (OEE)	Various experts on growth models and on student growth goals and student learning objectives.	Meeting minutes, feedback surveys from the field, reports from OEE	
Committee will make recommendations to the State Board of Education for the student growth measures;	March 2016				
Provide districts with the data from new assessments and make determination on statistical model to measure growth;	Summer 2016				

Activity	Timeline	Responsible Party	Resources	Documentation	Consideration
Begin training on student growth goals.	Summer 2016				
Train and Pilot student growth goals;	2016-2017				
Train educators on statistical model used with state assessment;	2017-2018				
Decide on how growth will be applied to rating in relationship to the trigger model; Provide growth data at the end of year.	2017-2018				
Fully implement -Implement Student Growth Goals and decide how SGG measures will be applied to educator ratings; Provide 2nd year of assessment growth data and apply to educator ratings.	2017-2018				
Personnel decisions will be based on ratings from 2017-2018 assessments incorporating student growth for tested and not tested areas.	2018-2019				