



Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

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13 Schools, 2 Districts Selected for Fifth Professional Learning Communities at Work® Cohort

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education’s Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with Solution Tree, a national professional development provider, announces the fifth cohort selected for the Arkansas Professional Learning Communities at Work® project.

Thirteen schools and two districts from around the state were selected for the 2021-2022 school year and join 39 schools and five districts chosen over the last four years. Because of additional funding allocated by legislators, DESE was able to select additional schools and districts to participate this upcoming school year.

As with the first four cohorts, each school and district in the fifth cohort will receive up to 50 days of training, coaching, and support to build and sustain a strong culture of collaboration that will enhance student learning. Those chosen completed a rigorous application and evaluation process. A panel of education professionals reviewed all applications, and DESE selected the following schools and districts to receive support from Solution Tree.

- Arkansas High School, Texarkana School District
- Booker Arts Magnet Elementary School, Little Rock School District
- Camden Fairview Middle School, Camden Fairview School District
- Glenview Elementary School, North Little Rock School District
- Hellstern Middle School, Springdale School District
- Howard Elementary School, Fort Smith School District
- Lake Hamilton Middle School, Lake Hamilton School District
- Leverett Elementary School, Fayetteville School District^[1]_[SEP]
- Magazine School District^[1]_[SEP]
- Meekins Middle School, Stuttgart School District
- Oaklawn STEM Magnet School, Hot Springs School District
- Parson Hills Elementary School, Springdale School District^[1]_[SEP]
- Searcy County School District^[1]_[SEP]
- University Heights Elementary School, Nettleton School District
- Washington Elementary School, Little Rock School District

“The PLC model has proven to be a successful best practice implemented in many schools around the state,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. “Schools that have embraced the PLC partnership, teacher coordination, and student-focused learning have seen improved learning and a culture that breeds success. I am excited that additional schools and districts now have the opportunity to learn about the benefits associated with this highly-successful program.”

“Since the first cohort was announced four years ago, we have seen tremendous growth in teacher collaboration, school culture, and student learning,” ADE Secretary Johnny Key said. “This new cohort has joined the others by making an important commitment to rebuilding internal systems, leveraging best practices, and creating a strong culture of learning. I congratulate them on their dedication to student learning and embracing the hard - but rewarding - work involved with this initiative.”

Recent research conducted by Education Northwest, a third-party research firm, validates the success of the Arkansas PLC program. Data show the project positively impacted student achievement in math on the ACT Aspire assessment. (Learn more at <https://bit.ly/3sP2Jh4>.)

“We are encouraged by the accomplishments of these cohorts year after year,” Solution Tree President and COO Ed Ackerman said. “We truly believe - and now research confirms - there is no better way to improve student education than with the transformative process of implementing professional learning communities. We are excited to welcome the fifth cohort to the project and look forward to working in conjunction with DESE to help Arkansas schools succeed.”

As with the previous four cohorts, the 2021-2022 cohort will be matched with a certified PLC at Work associate from Solution Tree and receive intensive job-embedded training, observation, and coaching. The schools and districts will create action plans that focus on increasing student achievement through aligned curriculum, formative assessments, and proven instructional strategies. During the second year, the schools and districts will deepen their understanding and focus on implementing multi-tiered systems of support, followed by strengthening their systems and sustaining the process in year three.

Solution Tree recently launched a new documentary, “A Child's Best Hope: The Arkansas PLC Story,” that highlights the efforts of three schools throughout various stages of the implementation process. The documentary is available at <https://bitly.com/3tQvJ9M>. For more information about the Arkansas PLC at Work project, please visit the DESE website at <https://bit.ly/2QNvSvU>.

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