



Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jacob Oliva, Secretary

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CONTACT: Kaelin Clay

PHONE: (501) 442-6977

Email: kaelin.clay@ade.arkansas.gov

Arkansas Awarded \$25 million in Federal Grants to Strengthen Literacy Instruction

Arkansas is the only state in the nation to receive multiple competitive awards, affirming the state's investments in strong literacy foundations prioritized by the LEARNS Act.

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has been awarded two competitive Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grants from the U.S. Department of Education, totaling nearly \$25 million over five years, to scale and study ongoing evidence-based approaches to strengthen literacy instruction and improve outcomes for all students, especially those in rural communities.

The two awards are part of \$256 million in EIR funding announced nationwide to support evidence-based approaches that improve student achievement. Arkansas is the only state nationwide receiving multiple awards, affirming the state's investments in strong literacy foundations through its landmark LEARNS Act.

“Early literacy intervention makes all the difference, and through the LEARNS Act, literacy coaches, and high-impact tutoring, we’re building strong reading foundations from the start,” said Governor Sanders. “These awards recognize the work our educators are doing and the progress Arkansas is making to put students first. I’m grateful to President Trump and Secretary McMahon for their leadership in putting education back in the hands of states and communities so we can help every child read, learn, and thrive.”

“These federal investments affirm the work Arkansas has undertaken to build strong literacy foundations for every student,” said Secretary of Education Jacob Oliva. “Through the LEARNS Act and targeted statewide initiatives, we have focused on early literacy, high-quality instruction, and support for students who need it most. These grants allow us to expand and deepen that work, particularly in rural communities.”

Rural Literacy Study: Testing Evidence-Based High-Impact Tutoring at Scale. Arkansas has been awarded nearly \$15 million to evaluate high-impact tutoring initiatives at rural schools. The project will be implemented in partnership with Air Reading and will include an independent evaluation conducted by Stanford University to assess impact and scalability.

Foundational Reading Study A second award, totaling nearly \$10 million, will study a foundational reading program in partnership with the University of Florida Literacy Institute.

Together, the grants build on Arkansas' recent investments to strengthen literacy statewide through the LEARNS Act, including:

- Statewide high-impact tutoring grants, now in their third year of implementation.
- Increased literacy tutoring support of up to \$1,500 for K-3 students who need additional assistance.
- Deployment of literacy coaches in schools identified with D or F ratings; and
- Implementation of a fourth-grade promotion policy to ensure students are proficient readers before advancing.

These efforts have resulted in:

- A number of Arkansas Literacy Tutoring Grants to support families in providing reading instruction to struggling students.
- Steady trend of growth in literacy improvement in K-3.

"By combining federal research funding with state-level investments, Arkansas will continue to accelerate progress in early literacy and ensure students have the foundational skills needed for long-term academic success."

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