



Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

March 23, 2026

Jacob Oliva
Secretary

Dear Curriculum Publishing Partner,

Stacy Smith
Deputy
Commissioner

Arkansas law requires the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to review and approve K–12 Core English Language Arts (ELA) programs to ensure they align with the Science of Reading and evidence-based instructional practices. School districts may purchase only DESE approved literacy programs. Programs that are not approved cannot be purchased for core literacy instruction.

**State Board of
Education**

Adrienne Woods
Bentonville
Chair

Arkansas Code §6-17-429 as amended prohibits the use of certain balanced literacy practices, such as three cueing or visual memory as the primary method for teaching word recognition. To uphold program quality and ensure compliance with Arkansas law, the ADE is conducting a comprehensive review of all programs included in the approved core ELA curriculum list. This review will verify that ELA programs are maintaining up-to-date, evidence-based literacy practices for Arkansas districts. Publishers are required to adhere to the specified requirements and timeline in order to obtain or retain ADE approval.

Lisa Hunter
White Hall
Vice Chair

Dr. Gary Arnold
Little Rock

Randy Henderson
Blytheville

Timeline Overview

- Beginning February 2026: ADE will open the ELA Program Review cycle and accept publisher participation.
- EdReports review (required): Publishers must submit K–12 ELA programs to EdReports for review using the v2.0 (or later) rubrics.
- To be eligible for ADE approval, programs must receive “Meets Expectations” ratings in all applicable EdReports gateways, as appropriate to the program.
- Final state review (required): After EdReports results are issued, ADE will conduct a final state review of first-grade materials for eligible K–5 programs.
- Vendor fairs: ADE will host vendor fairs in Summer and Fall 2027 to support district adoption of ADE-approved programs.
- Approval expiration: ADE approval for any currently approved core program that has not (1) earned “Meets Expectations” in all applicable gateways using EdReports v2.0 (or later) and/or (2) passed the ADE first-grade materials review expires June 30, 2028.

Jeff Wood
Little Rock

Ken Bragg
Sheridan

Leigh Keener
Little Rock

Dr. Aaron Abbott
Springdale

Publisher requirements for ADE approval beyond June 30, 2028

To obtain or retain DESE approval beyond June 30, 2028, publishers must complete all steps below:

1. Submit an Intent to Submit form to the Arkansas Department of Education, Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.
2. Sign and submit a Statement of Assurance confirming that literacy materials do not violate Arkansas law.

3. Submit the program to EdReports for review using the v2.0 (or later) rubrics.
4. After earning “Meets Expectations” in all applicable EdReports gateways, provide ADE with all first-grade teacher and student materials for final state review.
5. Receive written ADE approval following completion of the EdReports requirements and the ADE first-grade review.

Programs that already meet these requirements remain approved until June 30, 2034. Programs that do not meet these requirements, or do not complete the ADE review process, will not be approved and cannot be purchased by districts for core literacy instruction.

Initial required action

To begin the DESE approval process, publishers must complete the [Intent to Submit](#) and upload the Arkansas ELA Program Review Statement of Assurance. Questions should be directed to (501) 683-4800.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kiffany Pride
Assistant Commissioner for Learning Services
Arkansas Department of Education