ARKANSAS

June 18, 2012 Resubmission

ESEA Flexibility

Request

U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

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COVER SHEET FOR ESEA FLEXIBILITY REQUEST

Legal Name of Requester:	Requester's Mailing Address:
Arkansas Department of Education	Four Capitol Mall Little Rock, AR 72201

State Contact for the ESEA Flexibility Request

Name: John Hoy

Position and Office: Assistant Commissioner of Academic Accountability

Contact's Mailing Address:
Four Capitol Mall, Room 205-B
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Telephone: 501.682.5891

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Chief State School Officer (Printed Name):	Telephone:
Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell	501.682.4203
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: X_____	Date: February 27, 2012

The State, through its authorized representative, agrees to meet all principles of the ESEA Flexibility.

WAIVERS

By submitting this flexibility request, the SEA requests flexibility through waivers of the ten ESEA requirements listed below and their associated regulatory, administrative, and reporting requirements by checking each of the boxes below. The provisions below represent the general areas of flexibility requested; a chart appended to the document titled *ESEA Flexibility Frequently Asked Questions* enumerates each specific provision of which the SEA requests a waiver, which the SEA incorporates into its request by reference.

☒ 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 schoolwide 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 schools 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.

☒ 10. The requirements in ESEA section 1003(g)(4) and the definition of a Tier I school in Section I.A.3 of the School Improvement Grants (SIG) final requirements. The SEA requests this waiver so that it may award SIG funds to an LEA to implement one of the four SIG models in any of the State's priority schools that meet the definition of "priority schools" set forth in the document titled *ESEA Flexibility*.

Optional Flexibilities:

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

☐ 11. 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.

☒ 12. 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 that are not reward schools, priority schools, or focus schools.

☒ 13. 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 rank sufficiently high to be served.

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 the flexibility, as described throughout the remainder of this request.

☒ 2. It will adopt 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 new college- and career-ready standards, no later than the 2013–2014 school year. (Principle 1)

☒ 3. It will develop and 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). (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 SWD, 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 report to the public its lists of reward schools, priority schools, and focus schools at the time the SEA is approved to implement the flexibility, and annually thereafter, it will publicly recognize its reward schools as well as make public its lists of priority and focus schools if it chooses to update those lists. (Principle 2)

☒ 8. Prior to submitting this request, it provided student growth data on their current students and the students they taught in the previous year to, at a minimum, all teachers of reading/language arts and mathematics in grades in which the State administers assessments in those subjects in a manner that is timely and informs instructional programs, or it will do so no later than the deadline required under the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. (Principle 3)

☒ 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 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 State 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 3).

☒ 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 this request.

☒ 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 and for each subgroup described in ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v)(II): 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. It will also 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.

If the SEA selects Option A in section 3.A of its request, indicating that it has not yet developed and adopted all the guidelines for teacher and principal evaluation and support systems, it must also assure that:

☒ 15. It will submit to the Department for peer review and approval a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year. (Principle 3)

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.nclbwaivers@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 3.

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, 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 is the ongoing collaboration between Commissioner of Education Dr. Tom Kimbrell and the State Board of Education to assist the state's schools in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards that define the path to readiness for college, careers and informed citizenship. 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.

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.

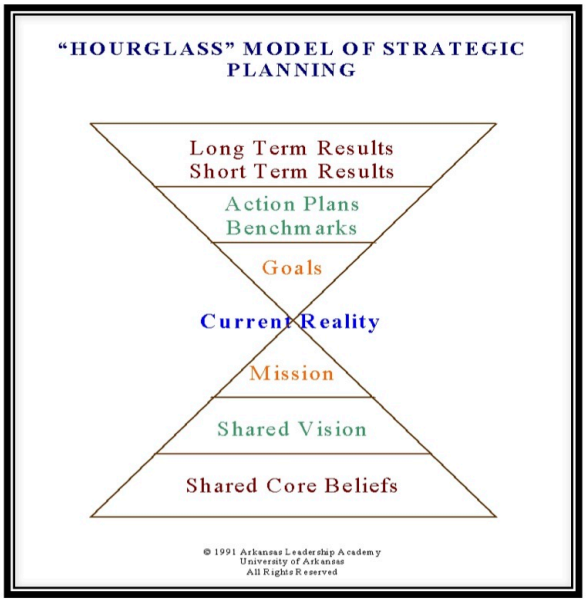
- Leverage partnerships to provide input, support and resources for key strategic initiatives of this plan.
- Cultivate relationships with child-serving agencies to maximize scarce resources, reduce duplication of efforts and provide a coherent set of services to children and families.
- Pursue grants 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 4). 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 below. 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.



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.

PRINCIPLE 1: COLLEGE- AND CAREER-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. i. Attach evidence that the State has adopted the standards, consistent with the State's standards adoption process. (Attachment 7)	☐ 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) 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. (Attachment 5)

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 (59.1 percent), education is the ticket to a better life.

Arkansas participated early and eagerly in the thrust for the development of CCSS, initially under the leadership of former Arkansas Commissioner of Education Dr. Ken James. In 2009, he chaired the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), as thoughtful conversation about shared standards turned to carefully crafting them. Current Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell 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 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 supports the initiative and formally adopted the CCSS in July 2010 (Attachment 7), 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 current standards. Now that the standards have been adopted and work has begun to transform our classrooms to fulfill the vision of the CCSS for college and career readiness, Arkansas has plans to revise other curriculum frameworks, while paying attention to interest at the national level in developing other common standards for science, history/social studies, the arts and foreign languages. During this process, it has been a goal of the ADE to invite our education partners to the table to create a system that covers P-20 and focuses on college and career readiness for all students. Arkansas is also playing a critical role in the assessments for the CCSS by serving as a governing state in the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium.

The college and career readiness 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 college and career readiness in all Arkansas schools, which is a part of our Strategic Plan for the Implementation of CCSS (Attachment 8). 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 will force 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 will occur 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.

High Quality Plan

The ADE has a high quality plan for the transition to CCSS that includes all of the elements of a high quality request as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. This three-year plan is built upon the Strategic Plan referenced above and will lead to full implementation of the CCSS during the 2013-2014 school year.

Arkansas's CCSS Implementation Timeline

Transition	Implementation
Grades K-2	School Year 2011-2012
Grades 3-8	School Year 2012-2013
Grades 9-12	School Year 2013-2014

A more detailed transition plan with additional timeline detail and more information on each key milestone and activity is provided at the end of this section. 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.

A comparison of Arkansas's existing learning standards to CCSS revealed a 96 percent match in English language arts (ELA) and 95 percent in mathematics with some changes in grade level content. The match was both in the scope of content and depth of learning. There are 1,019 ELA Common Core standards. The statewide committee found that 96 percent of the Common Core ELA standards matched a student learning expectation or a cluster of student learning expectations somewhere in the Arkansas English Language Arts framework. It was noted the match might not be at the same grade level. The committee judged 608 of the CCSS to be an excellent match; 258 to be a good match; 95 standards as a weak match and 40 standards as a non-match.

There are 495 math Common Core standards. The statewide committee found that 95 percent of the Common Core math standards matched a student learning expectation or a cluster of student learning expectations somewhere in the Arkansas Mathematics framework. It was noted the match might not always be at the same grade level.

The committee judged 185 of the CCSS to be an excellent match; 210 to be a good match; 73 standards as a weak match and 16 standards as a non-match.

The math content from Algebra which is typically taught in grades 9-12 under the Arkansas frameworks will be pushed into middle school with the Common Core State Standards. Under CCSS Algebra I content standards will move to grade 8 and below. The state's current work toward college and career readiness will help to ensure a smooth transition to CCSS. This work may be viewed on our website at http://arkansased.org/educators/curriculum/common_core.html.

After this comparison was completed, the recommendation was made to the Arkansas State Board of Education to adopt the standards as released without adding any additional content at this time. Because of the high percentage of correlation between Arkansas's existing standards and the CCSS, it is evident Arkansas educators have fully embraced the new learning standards.

Special Populations

English Learners

Immigration's impact is often seen first in the classroom. Arkansas's student population has become increasingly more diverse with the state's 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 (*USDOE, National Center for Education Statistics*).

Current assessment, data collection and accountability goals for ELs will be reviewed for needed changes to transition to CCSS. As members of the PARCC consortium, the state will have access to resources, materials and assessments that will be developed in alignment with ELs linguistic demands. Separate English Language Proficiency standards have been developed. Assessment systems used to measure EL progress against the standards and accountability benchmarks for both English fluency and core content for ELs are in place. To date, Arkansas has met Annual Measurement Achievement Objectives measuring progress and success in reaching English fluency goals for ELs.

The Arkansas Augmented Benchmark and ELDA large-scale (and subsequent CCSS driven) assessments and EL focused data summits will be essential components in determining progress in reaching the milestone of full English proficiency by ELs. An expanded implementation timeline for these efforts is included as Attachment 9.

Special Education

The goal of CCSS is to ensure all students are prepared for college, careers and life. SWD are no exception. One tool to assist in the effort of preparing and supporting teachers of SWD 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, SWD and other students as identified.

During the transition to college-and-career-ready standards, a large portion of our professional development for all educators will focus on technology innovations and the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. PARCC items will adhere to the UDL principles so they will be accessible to all students, to the greatest extent possible, without adaptation or specialized design. This training is an essential component in providing the opportunity for all students, including those with disabilities, ELs, and low-achieving students to achieve success.

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 working to design a literacy tool that will address the skills, understanding and success criteria as required by the rigor of CCSS ELA. The educators will identify critical target areas and write examples of interventions and/or scaffolds for supporting ELs and SWDs during core instruction. The literacy tool will be available online and extensive professional development will be 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 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 10).

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://arkansased.org/educators/curriculum/common_core -Attachment 11)

In October 2011, the CCSS Guiding Coalition and the Association for the Supervision and Curriculum Development (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 Governor Mike Beebe, 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.commoncorearkansas.org/video. 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.

Commissioner Kimbrell has 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 www.arkansased.org/educators/curriculum/common_core. A detailed list of resources may be found in Attachment 12.

In Arkansas, we know communication and implementation must go hand in hand. We believe the best communications strategy is simply having a clear and easily articulated message that ensures an open dialog with critical stakeholders and transparency of the state's intentions.

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, serves 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, will require sustained professional development efforts in all Arkansas schools during the next three years.

As Arkansas planned for the implementation of the CCSS, we recognized the challenges that awaited our school personnel.

- Training teachers to teach a redefined course of study
- Educating parents, business leaders and community members on the purpose, aim and content of the new standards
- Measuring student progress towards mastery of the redefined course of study and ensuring their success on state assessments.

The effective implementation of any one of these changes requires a firm commitment from all involved. The collective implementation poses a great challenge that could stretch the resources of most districts, potentially compromising the effectiveness of any one of the goals.

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 providing tailored professional development offerings to support teachers in the implementation of CCSS. A comprehensive three-year strategic plan (Attachment 8) has been developed and training is being provided to ensure teachers can teach effectively to the new standards.

This transition period between the adoption of the CCSS in 2010 and the first administration of the assessment of the CCSS in the 2014-15 school year requires a phased approach for Arkansas

districts and schools, with successive levels of implementation, each a prerequisite for the next phase.

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 demands intensive professional learning at the local level. Research has shown that successful professional learning requires a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

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 will need 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 13) lays out in detail the priorities that are the most significant and will take both time and effort to fully implement in Arkansas classrooms. Many educators have already begun to explore the CCSS and how the standards will impact their existing curriculum and instructional practices. However, all educators and students will benefit – in the short term and long term – from the guidance in these recommendations for professional learning. There is significant work to be done, and we have worked with curriculum directors, instructional leaders, instructional facilitators, and teachers to make thoughtful choices for the necessary transition in their schools.

A series of Common Core Institutes are being developed and offered statewide with the help of our partners at Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) through ArkansasIDEAS (Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools). ArkansasIDEAS 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 ArkansasIDEAS network.

Each school and district in the state has identified a CCSS leadership team made up of the principal and key staff for communication and implementation purposes. As resources are developed and offered on the ArkansasIDEAS network, these CCSS teams are notified of dates and times for debut. This delivery system allows for engagement at the school level and is also a cost savings to the district in time and money. Recent numbers from the Common Core website on the ArkansasIDEAS network have shown extensive use of follow-up resources; 5,690 visits, 3,355 unique visitors and 16,859 page views. A new component to the system currently under development will require the user to complete an evaluation and implementation survey before logging off to give ADE more information on scale of implementation. This will enable the ADE to determine delivery to the classroom level and accountability for Priority and Focus school training.

During the 2011-2012 school year, kindergarten through second grade classrooms across the state are fully implementing CCSS, with Grades 3-8 fully implementing in 2012-2013. The ADE and the Arkansas Department of Career Education, in partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), are also rolling out a three-year state initiative to implement the new Common Core literacy and mathematics standards in grades nine through twelve, with full implementation occurring in the 2013-2014 school year. Eight expert content specialists in literacy and mathematics will work with the eight pilot high schools. These expert trainers will also support 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 is to build capacity within schools to implement classroom practices to address the new Common Core literacy and mathematics standards.

Special Considerations for Teachers of EL and SWD

For the past 15 years, the ADE has developed, funded and implemented a two-week summer training institute—the EL Academy. This training opportunity has educated over 2,000 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 will transition 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 will design and implement additional training required for continuing professional development on CCSS for teachers working with ELs.

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, will require sustained professional development efforts for school boards, superintendents, building administrators and teachers in all Arkansas schools during the next three years.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Activity	Timeline
Redesign of EL Academy Training to Specifically Address CCSS	January – June, 2012 With Implementation Beginning June, 2012
Review and revision of EL component of the Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ASCIP) for accountability to reflect LEA Common Core initiatives	Fall, 2012 With Full Implementation by Academic Year, 2013
Training on Parental outreach for EL families on CCSS	Fall, 2011; On-going
Coordination with Career Education on development of bilingual materials and professional development on career ready standards	On-going

The ADE was awarded a 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 all students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral skills and success, including SWD. To meet that goal, intensive professional development and targeted technical assistance are provided in the areas of leadership, literacy and math instruction, intervention, school-wide Positive Behavior Support Systems (PBSS), social skills/self-management instruction, strategic or intensive cognitive-behavioral interventions, closing the achievement gap (CTAG), multi-tiered response-to-instruction and intervention and data-based problem solving; parent and community involvement and outreach; and personnel preparation and special education teacher recruitment and retention.

One objective currently of the SPDG is the development of a web-based mathematics intervention matrix that will 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. Supporting this web-based application will be professional development training that will teach educators both how to use the website and how to identify, implement and evaluate the specific evidence-based instruction and intervention strategies cited. In addition, the SPDG literacy intervention matrix is currently being updated. All of these materials and professional development opportunities will be organized and guided by their respective CCSS.

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.

SPDG, as an intervention tool, will be used in all of the state's schools in the Focus category. Focus Schools had a mean achievement gap of 49.9 percentage points compared to the highest performing subgroup in the school. Students in the Focus Schools will need differentiated instruction, intervention and assessment strategies to meet their college and career goals. As members of the PARCC consortium, the state will have access to resources, materials and assessments that will be developed in alignment with these students' specific needs.

An expanded timeline for the SPDG program is included as Attachment 9.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Activities	Timeline
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
Activities: Professional development partnerships explored with nine Educational Service Cooperatives	Year I 2009 - 2010

Existing web-based materials developed during the first 5-year SPDG, were reviewed and updated 35 PBSS Facilitators were surveyed regarding the PBSS certification process Progress was made toward securing two parent mentors for each school district to provide information and training for other parents in scientifically-based literacy and behavior interventions Arkansas's Smart Accountability process was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in January 2009 to help the ADE differentiate and support schools across the state in School Improvement Status Training that integrated components from the ADE's Scholastic Audit and the Project ACHIEVE Implementation Integrity Self-Evaluation (PRAIISE) tool was conducted Schools in School Improvement Status who would participate in the SPDG were identified; strategic planning and implementation plan development to occur during the early part of Year 2 Aggressive recruitment activities were carried out including: job fairs; use of TeachArkansas, efforts to provide financial support for districts' use of Teaches-Teachers.com; efforts to encourage districts' use of strategies developed with the National Special Education Personnel Center, and strategies to attract middle and high school students to teaching careers in special education	
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	Year III 2011 – 2012 (to date) and 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. Besides content knowledge, the role of the school administrator in CCSS is to be a facilitator of the change process in transitioning to Common Core, the new TESS and next generation assessments.

Training for TESS will be provided for all administrators through the professional organizations as well as regional educational cooperatives. Administrators will once again have an 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 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 14). 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.

High Quality Instructional Materials

Arkansas is 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 is developing a number of tools and resources aligned to the CCSS and the PARCC assessments.

The tools and resources will provide opportunities for states to engage, involve, and empower educators around the implementation of the CCSS and PARCC assessments. The development and dissemination of these resources is built into Arkansas's communications and engagement plan. This will help ensure we are providing district leaders, administrators, school leaders and classroom teachers with regular, hands-on experiences with PARCC tools and resources.

Educators have asked for these new instructional materials aligned with CCSS as they are adopting an evaluation system (TESS) that will examine their knowledge of updated instructional tools and practices. All tools and resources will be available as they are released at http://PARCConline.org

Arkansas is an active member of the America Diploma Project (ADP) Network. The network has recently formed a collaborative, 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 will be 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 is developing model instructional units that will include a coherent set of tools including information about assessment results, formative activities, professional development materials and communications materials. The consortia is also developing 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 will assist in building capacity within the state's regional educational cooperatives' teacher center leaders. Professional development on these tools and resources will be 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 all, 21,280 Arkansas high school students took an AP test in 2010-2011. 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 student participation in advanced placement has quadrupled since 2001.

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.

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 test 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 previous 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. With the implementation of CCSS we expect greater numbers of student will take advantage of the opportunity of dual enrollment courses.

On August 16, 2011, STEM Works, the 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 either in 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.

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.

Coordination Across State Agencies

As Arkansas moves forward in the implementation of the CCSS we realize and acknowledge that implementing these standards will, in the long run, require a revolution in our P–20 educational system. Doing it well will take the creation of new partnerships, a commitment to research on our continuing efforts, an equally strong commitment to use those inquiries to alter efforts midstream, and a considerable public education communication strategy.

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. No issue looms larger for higher education than teacher preparation and professional development.

In Arkansas, discussions are taking place and plans are being made to collectively begin work around the following areas:

1. Aligning higher education curriculum with K–12 curriculum, which includes both adapting admissions standards and revising curricula of first year courses that act as bridges between K–12 and college majors.
2. Preparing and educating teachers, both prospective and practicing, which includes revising curriculum in disciplinary departments to prepare teachers to teach the Common Core; revising professional preparation coursework and experiences; and enhancing professional development offerings.
3. Conducting research on issues of teaching and learning the CCSS, teacher quality, and the implementation of the CCSS.
4. Establishing and sustaining long-term partnerships with other organizations and agencies in the educational system.

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.

The Commission for the Coordination of Educational Efforts was created by Act 109 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003. The Act required the appointment of members by the Governor, President Pro Tempore, Speaker of the House, the Presidents Council of Colleges and Universities. Act 109 also required the Commission to recommend policies related to the improvement of coordination among and between the levels of education from pre-kindergarten to the graduate level.

The first meeting of the Arkansas Commission for Coordination of Educational Efforts was held August 12, 2004 where Dr. Ken James, then Commissioner of the ADE, and Dr. Linda Beene, then Director of the Department of Higher Education, presented an explanation of the commission, the reason for its creation and desired outcomes. Current Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell, continues to meet with the Commission on a quarterly basis.

In Arkansas, conversation began very early between P-12 and Higher Education regarding the need to establish and maintain long-term partnerships to ensure the successful implementation of CCSS. Topics including aligning higher education curriculum with P-12 curriculum; preparing and educating teachers (both prospective and practicing); adapting admissions standards and revising curricula of first year courses to act as bridges between P-12 and college majors and other pertinent issues are being addressed.

Higher education faculty and administrative leaders in Arkansas are 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.

PARCC recently revised its bylaws to ensure the governance arrangements around PARCC college-ready decisions foster collaboration between K-12 and postsecondary leaders within each PARCC state and at the PARCC governance level.

The Arkansas Educator Leader Cadre (ELC) Team will play a major role in helping build expertise in the CCSS and PARCC. The ELC Team is made up of K-16 educators who will accomplish the goal of building statewide expertise through a combination of face-to-face meetings, on-line modules, and professional development webinars. Cadre members will 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.

Examples of K-12 educators working with higher education faculty to prepare teachers and leaders to provide instruction and leadership aligned to CCSS are provided below:

- The College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville (UAF) collaborated with the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative to host a regional Common Core State Standards Summit May 2, 2012. Pre-service teachers in the Master of Arts in Teaching Program, their mentor teachers, and building and central office leaders from schools across Northwest Arkansas are the targeted participants for this professional development event. A PARCC representative will present on the anticipated shifts in assessment, the implications for instruction and classroom assessment. Pre-service teachers, mentor teachers and building principals will engage in facilitated, structured discussions of role-alike implications for practice and building level implications for practice. Participants will work together to develop building level plans for implementing strategies to address transition needs.
- 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. Dr. Deborah Davis, ALA director and member of the CCSS Guiding Coalition, communicates between agencies to inform pre-service and practicing educator development programs (Attachment 10).
- The Common Core Guiding Coalition includes representatives from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the Arkansas Department of Career Education and Technical Education, and the dean of the College of Education and Director of Center for Leadership and Learning at Arkansas Tech University.

- 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.
- The National Office for Research on Measurement and Evaluation Systems at UAF and the Arkansas Research Center at UCA are conducting research using P-20 data from the SLDS to identify College and Career Readiness (CCR) indicators that might inform pre-service and practicing educators of important considerations in curriculum, instruction and assessment relative to CCR.

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 failure, 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.

A significant first step in this direction was the State Board of Education's endorsement of Smart Core in 2006. This recommended high school program of studies includes four years of English language arts, four years of mathematics including at least one course beyond algebra II, three years of lab-based science, three years of history, two years of the same foreign language, and one-half unit of fine arts, health and safety, physical education and oral communication. Smart Core also includes six additional units within a career focus. Smart Core is required of all students unless waived by written consent of the parent. Currently, 90.7 percent of Arkansas's Grades 9 through 12 students are enrolled in the Smart Core and 85 percent (30,441 students) of the graduating class of 2012 students completed the Smart Core.

Transition to New Assessments

In Arkansas, the transition to the CCSS will occur simultaneously with a next generation assessment system. Arkansas is a governing state in the PARCC.

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. The PARCC system aims to eliminate this disconnect by better preparing students in high school, and measuring whether students are on

track to graduate ready for college and careers. Students who do not meet readiness/proficiency benchmarks 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 assessments provides the ideal opportunity to think about how educators are trained on the new standards and related assessments.

Arkansas has developed a strategic plan to aid in the successful transition to the CCSS and PARCC 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.

How do scores on Arkansas's criterion referenced tests (CRTs) help ADE, district and school personnel understand students' levels of CCR? Longitudinal research conducted by Dougherty (2010) established suggested targets for determining students' CCR using Arkansas's CRT exams. Dougherty linked scores of comparable difficulty from Arkansas's CRTs to benchmark scores on EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT exams. These links were based on students' location in the grade level score distribution "relative to the average score in their respective grades" (p. 3). He used longitudinally linked scores for one grade of students and the distribution of scores from the other grades to establish targets on the CRTs linked to readiness benchmarks on the ACT, Incorporated exams. Dougherty suggested the targets could be used to establish academic preparation groups based on the distance of the students' scores from the readiness targets in standard deviation units (Dougherty, 2010). Dougherty (2010) found minority and low income students exhibited the largest gap in college and career readiness among students from Arkansas. For Hispanic students and African American students, 31percent and 54 percent, respectively, were more than one standard deviation below the targets. Although this work has not been used to identify students for early intervention in Arkansas, it is possible to employ similar methodology to provide schools with early warning information for student interventions during the transition years to PARCC assessments. This would represent a richer use of CRT results connected to the goal of transitioning students, parents and teachers to think in terms of maintaining a CCR trajectory, particularly at middle and junior high schools.

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.

Other Activities

Arkansas is participating as a lead state in the development of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). During the Next Generation Science Standards development process, 26 states will provide 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.

The lead state partners will:

- Give serious consideration to adopting the resulting Next Generation Science Standards as presented.
- Identify a state science lead who will attend meetings with writers to provide direction and work toward agreement on issues around the standards, adoption and implementation.
- Participate in Multi-State Action Committee meetings (Committee of the Chief State School Officers) to discuss issues regarding adoption and implementation of the new standards.
- Publically announce the state is part of the effort to draft new science standards and make transparent the state's process for outreach/receiving feedback during the process.
- Form a broad based committee that considers issues regarding adoption and provides input and reactions to drafts of the standards.
- Publicly identify a timeline for adopting science standards.
- Utilize the collective experiences of the states to develop implementation and transition plans while the standards are being developed that can be used as models for all states.

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 15)	☐ 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,	☐ 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

	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.	SEA will submit the assessments and academic achievement standards to the Department for peer review. (Attachment 7)

Arkansas is a member and governing state of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), which has formed to create an historic assessment system to provide more services and supports to students and teachers than are currently available. The common assessment is a natural continuation of the work already underway in Arkansas and builds on our current assessment system. By partnering with other states, we will be able to leverage resources, share expertise and produce a system that will meet the needs and expectations of Arkansas students and teachers. The memorandum of understanding with PARCC can be found in Attachment 15.

The PARCC Partnership will begin field testing the new assessments in the 2012-2013 school year, with full operational administration scheduled to begin in 2014-15. This is an aggressive timeline that will require a strategy that draws on state policymakers, district and school officials, and classroom teachers to ensure a successful and efficient implementation and transition.

ADE considered making adjustments to the state assessments currently used for state and federal accountability. However, in Arkansas we need stability as we build capacity for more rigorous content standards with implementation of CCSS and a more rigorous assessment system through our membership in the PARCC that becomes operational in 2014-2015.

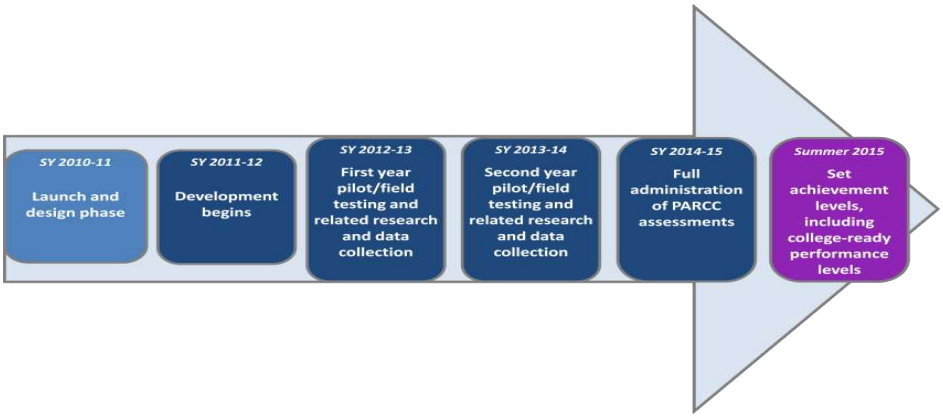
A comparison of current Arkansas standards with CCSS reveals a very high degree of alignment although there is not a perfect grade level match with all standards. Moreover, the CCSS are broader in scope and generally expect students to demonstrate mastery of critical knowledge and skills at an earlier age than now expected. Focusing on the magnitude of these shifts in instruction require tremendous planning and training for teachers and administrators.

Additionally, an early study of the test blueprint for the Benchmark Examinations, End of Course Examinations and the Grade 11 Literacy Examination all reveal the blueprints to be inadequately designed to test the depth and breadth of the CCSS. The idea of placing a few new field test items based on CCSS into open slots was also explored; however, that idea was abandoned because we knew students would be able to identify the field test items and it would be confusing and stressful to school districts to be tested on both the Arkansas Frameworks and the CCSS particularly when there are both state and federal requirements for schools to make annual progress.

Lastly, contracts for testing are already in place as are state budgets. Most of the changes outlined in federal guidance would require state dollars that are not available in the state budget or through additional federal dollars that come to the state.

In March 2012, the Technical Advisory Committee for assessments confirmed the state's course of action for large-scale assessment was proper and correct until the PARCC assessments become operational in 2014-2015.

PARCC TIMELINE



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. Arkansas has established a strong foundation for achieving this goal through adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and membership as a governing state in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). This flexibility proposal delineates a comprehensive and coherent plan to integrate these efforts into a revised differentiated recognition, accountability and tiered-support system designed to further the potential for all students to achieve college and/or career success. This proposal is congruent with the intent of NCLB and responsive to lessons learned from piloting growth and differentiated accountability models, as well as input from stakeholders representing a wide variety of interests and concerns. Arkansas's adoption of CCSS and participation in PARCC are pivotal in this plan. The revised accountability system must work within existing assessment system constraints in the short term, while planning for transition to PARCC assessments that will support more robust models for examining student and school achievement and growth relative to CCSS within three years. Arkansas's longitudinal data system, which meets 10 of the 10 elements and 9 of the 10 actions recommended by the Data Quality Campaign, will enable the ADE to enhance the coherence of its efforts through effective use of educational data.

As a dynamic learning organization, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) has approached this flexibility request as an opportunity to evolve its accountability system using policy and data lessons learned through previous iterations and subsequent challenges of the system. The ADE proposes DARTSS to signal the agency's intention to transition to a system of instructional support, assessment and accountability aligned more directly with College and Career Ready (CCR) expectations for all students. The proposed DARTSS was designed in response to student achievement strengths and concerns, as identified in Arkansas's achievement data, and in response to stakeholder input received through regional public meetings, focus groups and surveys regarding the ESEA Flexibility proposal process and the transition to aligned CCR expectations. The following core values were established to guide innovation and refinement of accountability elements in the system.

1. Reduce the complexity of the current system so that parents and educators more readily discern schools' strengths and weaknesses.
2. Ensure fairness and sensitivity of accountability elements improve identification of needs of underperforming and/or at risk students, particularly ELs and SWDs.
3. Measure what is important—proficiency, growth and progress in gap closure.
4. Honor history—use state data and policy lessons learned to improve the system.
5. Remember fairness is not always simple—constraints/error in assessments and statistical models add some necessary complexity to the model in order to ensure fairness.
6. Infuse incentives in the accountability system.
7. Credit schools for progress and growth—this is a valued element of accountability determinations.
8. Ensure alignment of efforts to support students' path to college and/or career readiness.
9. Anticipate unintended consequences and minimize them.
10. Do what is best for Arkansas's children.

The ADE's theory of action calls for a careful analysis of Arkansas's current reality situated in the context of the agency's shared core beliefs, vision and mission and focused on its strategic goals as indicated in Principle 1. Although the current accountability system meets state and federal requirements, the system doesn't fully support the transition to an aligned CCR system. Further, despite progress made by Arkansas's students over the years of NCLB, achievement gaps for at risk students persist. Careful analysis of process and impact data, the leading and lagging indicators of district and school systems change, are integrated throughout this proposal to provide evidence to support Arkansas's flexibility request.

The ADE has established the timeline in Figure 2.1 to support effective integration of comprehensive elements of its proposed CCR standards, assessment, accountability and teacher/leader effectiveness systems through DARTSS. Arkansas began its transition to CCSS this year and is using feedback from educators to inform professional development and support (as indicated in Principal 1) with the goal of deep learning evidenced by change in instructional practice and student achievement. Additionally, several districts in Arkansas have begun piloting new evaluation rubrics as part of the Teacher Effectiveness and Support System (TESS) outlined in the Overview and detailed in Principal 3. These early pilot efforts provide information to ADE to inform the implementation process and adjust ADE's actions and support of these efforts to ensure all students have access to learning that supports their development toward CCR.

The timeline indicates the transition of Arkansas's assessment system and the use of student achievement scores in accountability proposed under this Flexibility request. Arkansas's Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) includes 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 requires all students to complete End of Course Exams in Algebra, Geometry and Biology, as well as a Grade 11 Literacy Exam. 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 (ELAP). Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the required assessments by completing an alternate portfolio assessment approved by USDE for use in NCLB accountability. Arkansas's approved Adequate Yearly Progress Workbook specifies the use of math and literacy exams in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for identifying schools' and districts' School Improvement status.

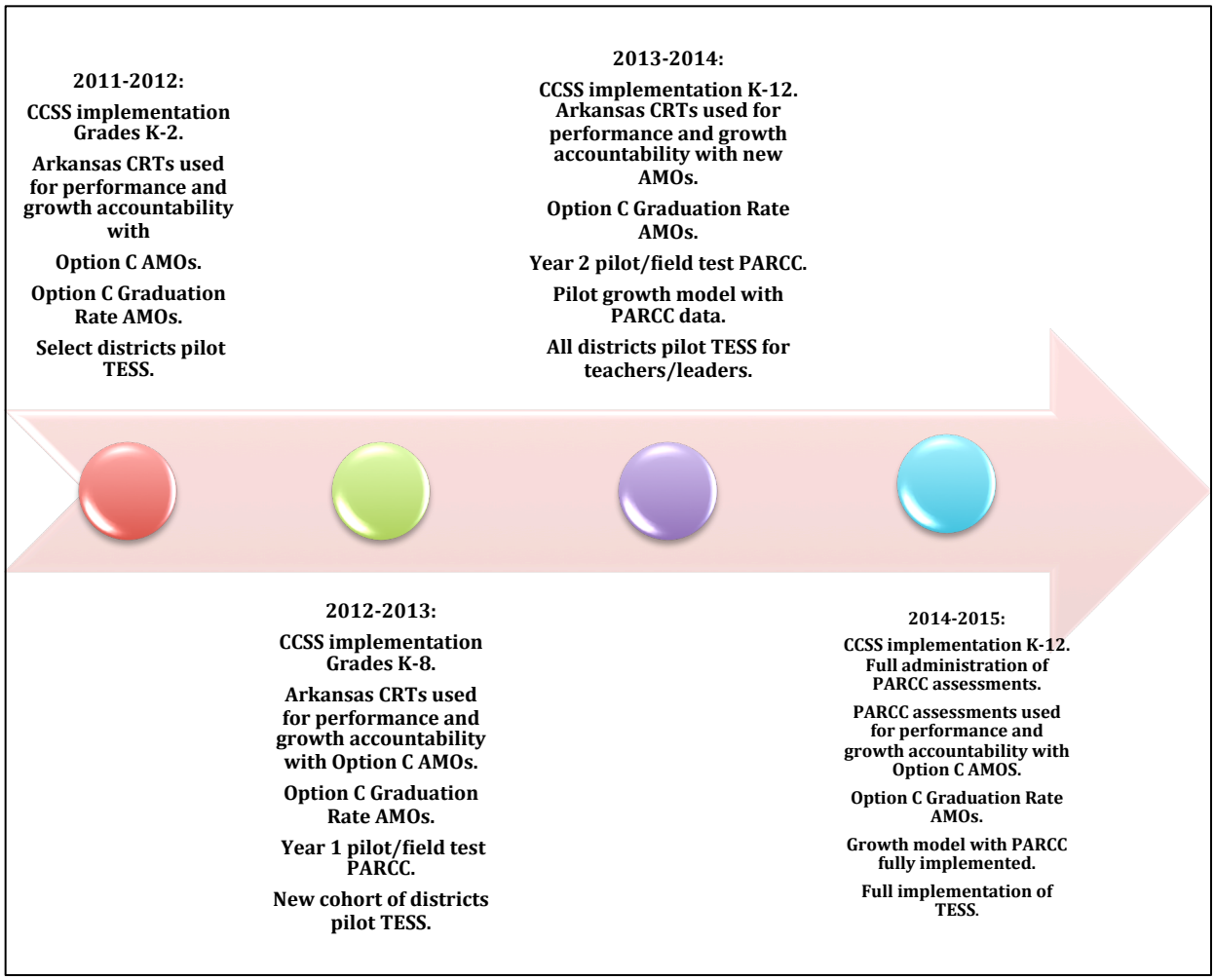


Figure 2.1. Arkansas's timeline for implementing CCSS and assessments for CCR.

The ADE proposes the continued use of its existing CRTs for accountability determinations under this Flexibility request until 2014-2015 for the following reasons: the alignment of Arkansas's approved standards and assessments with CCSS and CCR and lessons learned in the State's efforts to build district and school capacity for implementing systemic change. Arkansas completed an alignment analysis of the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks for math and literacy with the CCSS when the CCSS was adopted in 2010. The analysis revealed a 96 and 95 percent alignment for literacy and mathematics, respectively, in scope of content and depth of learning represented in the standards. Arkansas's CRTs, aligned to the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks, were designed to measure students' attainment of these challenging academic content standards and were approved by USDE for use in Arkansas's NCLB accountability system. Although the Arkansas Frameworks are not a perfect match to the CCSS, the existing assessment system represents the best option for use in accountability while PARCC assessments are developed.

To further students' attainment of challenging content standards, Arkansas incorporated rigor and relevance in its CRTs by requiring 50 percent of students' math and literacy scores derive from

constructed response items that require students integrate and apply grade level content in new contexts. Arkansas further defined rigor through the Performance Standards for students to achieve Proficient and Advanced performance levels. For example, a proficient student in math must "consistently apply integrated procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding to solve problems…" (Arkansas Department of Education, 2011, p. 10). Advanced students are distinguished from their proficient peers by demonstrating application and integration for the most complex math problems. In literacy, proficient students must demonstrate reading comprehension in response to text-based questions in a manner that extends and connects meaning derived from the text, and advanced students must also generalize and make critical judgments in response to text-based questions (ADE, 2011). The item formats that compose Arkansas's CRTs include cognitively rigorous multiple-choice and constructed response items that require students to demonstrate higher levels of critical thinking skills that are aligned with CCR expectations.

Arkansas's definition of CCR indicates that success in credit-bearing, first-year courses at postsecondary schools and successful attainment in a chosen career are valued as outcomes of CCR expectations. Students' successes in first-year credit bearing postsecondary courses are one indicator of attainment of CCR. On-time bachelor's degree completion is another indicator of students' CCR. Research conducted at the Arkansas Research Center through cross-agency agreements established during Arkansas's CELT grant (Principle 1, page 14) has resulted in the synthesis of student records across K-12 and postsecondary inputs and outcomes. Arkansas Research Center linked students' on-time bachelor's degree completion to performance on the Arkansas End of Course Exams in Geometry and Grade 11 Literacy to inform ADE of the rigor of Arkansas CRTs and the relationship between these variables. The findings from this research demonstrate a strong relationship between Geometry Exam scores and Grade 11 Literacy Exam scores, (0.90 and 0.93 respectively), with students' on time completion of bachelor's degrees. Twice as many students that scored Proficient on the Grade 11 Literacy Exam completed degrees as compared to those that scored Basic on the same exam—45 percent of Proficient students completed versus 21 percent of Basic students. Students that scored Advanced had three times the percentage completion (64 percent) compared to students that scored Basic. The results were similar for the Geometry Exam. Fifty-six percent of students scoring Advanced, 43 percent of students scoring Proficient and only 25 percent of students scoring Basic completed on-time bachelor's degrees.

Other links between Arkansas's CRT performance and CCR have been developed and may also be used to inform schools' interventions during the transition to PARCC assessments. Longitudinal research conducted by Dougherty (2010) established suggested targets for determining students' CCR using Arkansas's CRT exams. Dougherty linked scores of comparable difficulty from Arkansas's CRTs to benchmark scores on EXPLORE, PLAN and ACT exams. These links were based on students' location in the grade level score distribution "relative to the average score in their respective grades" (p. 3). He used longitudinally linked scores for one grade of students and the distribution of scores from the other grades to establish targets on the CRTs linked to readiness benchmarks on the ACT, Incorporated exams. Dougherty suggested that academic preparation groups could be established based on the distance of the students' scores from the readiness targets in standard deviation units (Dougherty, 2010). Dougherty (2010) found minority and low income students exhibited the largest gap in college and career readiness among students from Arkansas. For Hispanic students and African American students, 31 percent and 54 percent, respectively, were more than one standard deviation below the targets. Although this work has not been used to identify students for early intervention in Arkansas, it is possible to employ similar methodology to provide schools with early warning information for student interventions during the transition years

to PARCC assessments. This would represent a richer use of CRT results connected to the goal of transitioning students, parents and teachers to think in terms of maintaining a CCR trajectory, particularly at middle and junior high schools. The use of CRT score ranges associated with early warning signals for intervening when students are no longer on track for CCR would facilitate the transition to the use of PARCC assessments for the same purpose.

The concept of CCR continues to evolve as innovative indictors are developed through research that is possible with the advances in Arkansas's longitudinal data system. ADE anticipates the PARCC assessments may raise the CCR bar to some extent. Therefore, the ADE will reset AMOs upon full implementation of the PARCC assessments in 2014-2015 as needed to account for the transition to the new assessments and associated CCR performance levels.

Data- and research-informed decisions are foundational to the implementation of DARTSS. ADE recognized challenges to full implementation of the CCSS would arise on a statewide and local system level, particularly in rural and isolated LEAs with limited personnel to facilitate the changes. The ADE established a feedback loop within the strategic plan for implementing CCSS. Feedback on the ADE's plan for transition to CCSS solicited from educators through online surveys, and educator organizations such as the AEA and AAEA, reflected a growing enthusiasm for the effort, based on the promise of a deeper and more defined set of content standards to guide instructional goals. Concomitantly, educators, and in particular building leaders and instructional facilitators, expressed the need to limit introduction of new initiatives that may inadvertently distract from their primary focus on aligning instructional goals and practices in the classroom with CCSS and CCR expectations. The educational community is focused on transitioning to CCSS and PARCC assessments. Given the rigor of Arkansas's assessments and the alignment of CCSS and Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks, the ADE feels it would be imprudent to introduce interim changes to the existing assessments in addition to the changes proposed to the accountability system. Interim changes to assessments may spark the unintended consequence of focusing teachers on short term changes in the test, rather than the long term changes in instructional practice that will support greater access to CCR for all students. Ben Levin summarized these concerns well at the Forum on ESEA Flexibility.

> "If schools and districts are more concerned about how they get a score than on how they are teaching, that's a problem…If people are spending time prepping for tests instead of teaching kids curriculum, that is a problem." (USDE transcript, 2011).

The transition of Arkansas's accountability system must be carefully choreographed to minimize confusion over the changes and expedite the transition to CCR standards and assessments. The proposed differentiated system for recognition, accountability, intervention and support is admittedly parsimonious. The revised system is an integration of simplifications to the existing AYP determinations with careful consideration of elements that address errors in measurement and models, as well as elements that address fairness across the full spectrum of Arkansas schools (Figure 2.2). The parsimony of the system enhances the ADE's ability to transition more seamlessly as PARCC assessments are fully incorporated into the assessment system. Through the continued development of Arkansas's P-20 longitudinal data system, the ADE will use its rich data stores to inform policy revisions through careful analysis of data from implementation processes, teacher and leader effectiveness impact and student performance. ADE will model for its districts and schools a data-informed culture as it transitions its statewide system of assessment, accountability and support to a coherent focus on closing achievement gaps at the school and subgroup levels. Deeper

diagnostic views of the factors impacting student learning and CCR, coupled with a focus on educator effectiveness, will provide rich, contextual information to guide improvement in systems that have demonstrated resistance to change thus far.

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. The ADE proposes to hold 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 AMOs provide individualized and achievable progress targets for schools 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 prior performance-based AMOs require all schools to reduce the achievement gap for all students and the ESEA subgroups within their schools. Using prior performance-based AMOs with Option C, schools that are furthest behind are required to make greater gains in the same time frame.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the major elements of DARTSS. Schools are broadly classified as Achieving or Needs Improvement based on modified annual progress decision rules and the proposed AMOs. Exemplary, Focus and Priority Schools will be identified from among all schools. 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.

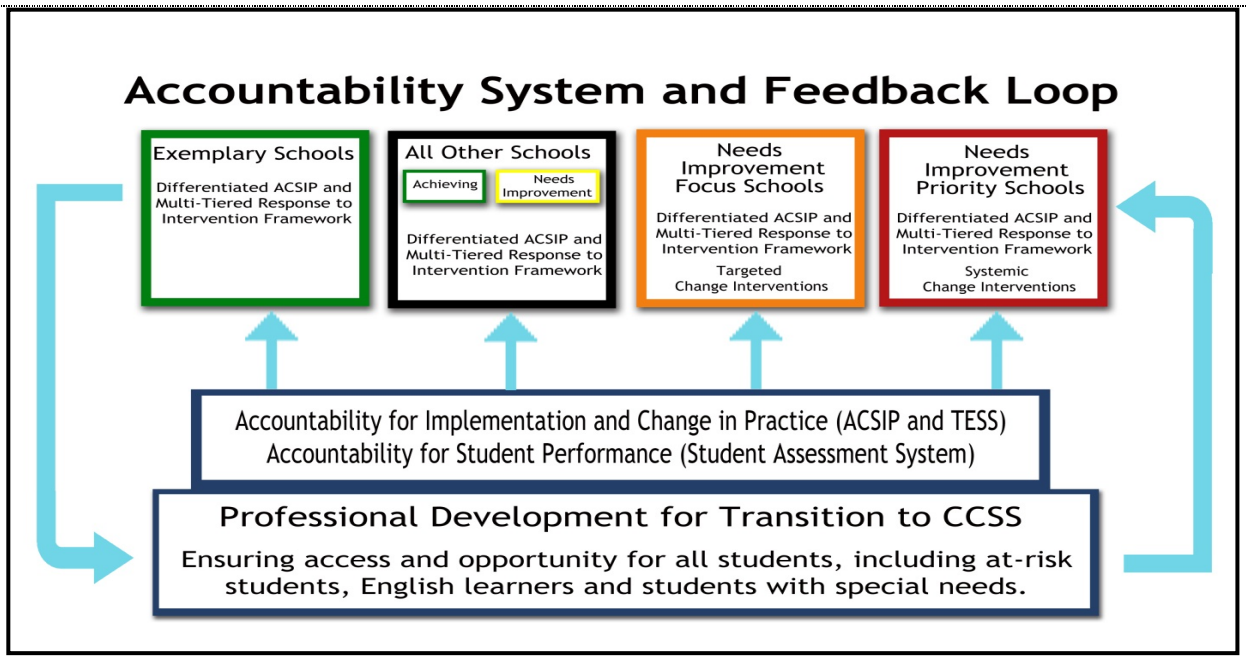


Figure 2.2. Differentiated Accountability, Recognition and Tiered Support System overview.

Arkansans have 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. 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 college and career readiness standards. ADE proposes to broadly classify 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 will include students with membership in any or all of the following ESEA subgroups: economically disadvantaged students, ELs and SWD.

In prior years, the minimum N of 40 has resulted in many schools with few subgroups meeting the minimum number of students for inclusion in the AYP calculations. Reducing the minimum N to 25 results in more schools with more subgroups included in the accountability model, however, it is not sufficient to ensure at risk subgroups receive appropriate attention in all schools. The use of the TAGG for accountability increases 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 increases rates of inclusion of specific subgroups, African Americans, ELs and SWD in particular, and increases the number of schools accountable for students in the ESEA subgroups. Annual School Report Cards will report schools' broad classifications, as well as schools' progress in meeting their AMOs for All Students, TAGG students and ESEA subgroups. These determinations will serve to activate a multi-tiered support and intervention framework based on schools' needs as identified through the data. The parsimony of the system will facilitate struggling schools and districts closing the achievement gap and support educators' transition to CCSS, PARCC assessments and Arkansas's teacher and leader evaluation model by maintaining the focus on mastering the complexities of teaching and student learning and measuring and reporting what

matters to stakeholders.

- Composition of the Non-TAGG group
  - Non-TAGG students are full academic year students that are not participants in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program (not economically disadvantaged), not designated as ELs, and not designated as SWD.

Evidence to Support Proposed TAGG

Arkansas is making progress and this progress has become evident in several national indicators. Arkansas's existing accountability system and instructional support initiatives have resulted in improving Arkansas's overall Quality Counts Grade, ranking fifth among all states in the ratings with a grade of B in 2012. Quality Counts is Education Week's annual evaluation of public school quality indicators (Education Week, 2012). Arkansas received exemplary marks for Standards, Assessment and Accountability (A); Transitions and Alignment (A); and The Teaching Profession (B+) (Education Week, 2012). Yet recent progress has not resulted in commensurate ratings in K-12 Achievement (D) and Chance for Success (C-). Further, Arkansas has exhibited flat performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress in recent years, and persistent gaps still exist in state-mandated assessment scores and graduation rates for underperforming subgroups of students despite all students improving achievement over time. While the current NCLB accountability requirements brought attention to the performance of subgroups, the current system has failed to result in the changes necessary to fully realize the goal of having *all* students attain proficiency in Arkansas's grade level academic content standards.

NCLB and state accountability requirements have resulted in general improvement trends in mathematics and literacy as measured by Arkansas's criterion-referenced assessments (Figure 2.3).

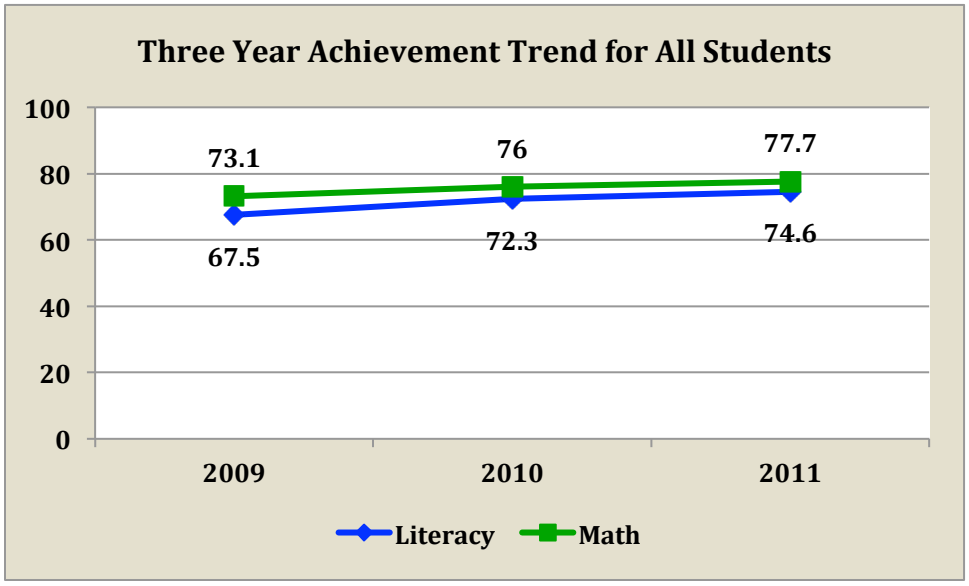


Figure 2.3. Three-year achievement trends for all students in math and literacy.

As intended by NCLB, disaggregation of these trends reveals large achievement gaps for several subgroups of students (Figures 2.4 and 2.5). Further, these subgroups demonstrate improvement trends, yet not at the differential rates necessary to close these gaps, except for Els and Hispanic students.

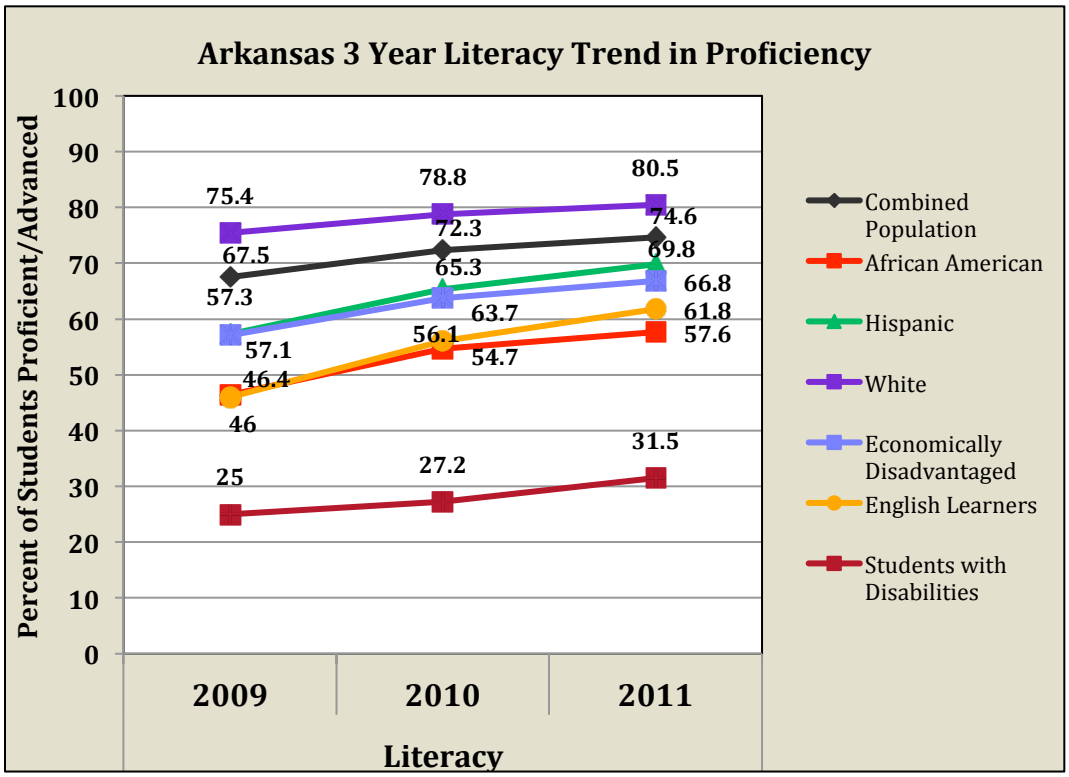


Figure 2.4. Three-year literacy trends by ESEA subgroups.

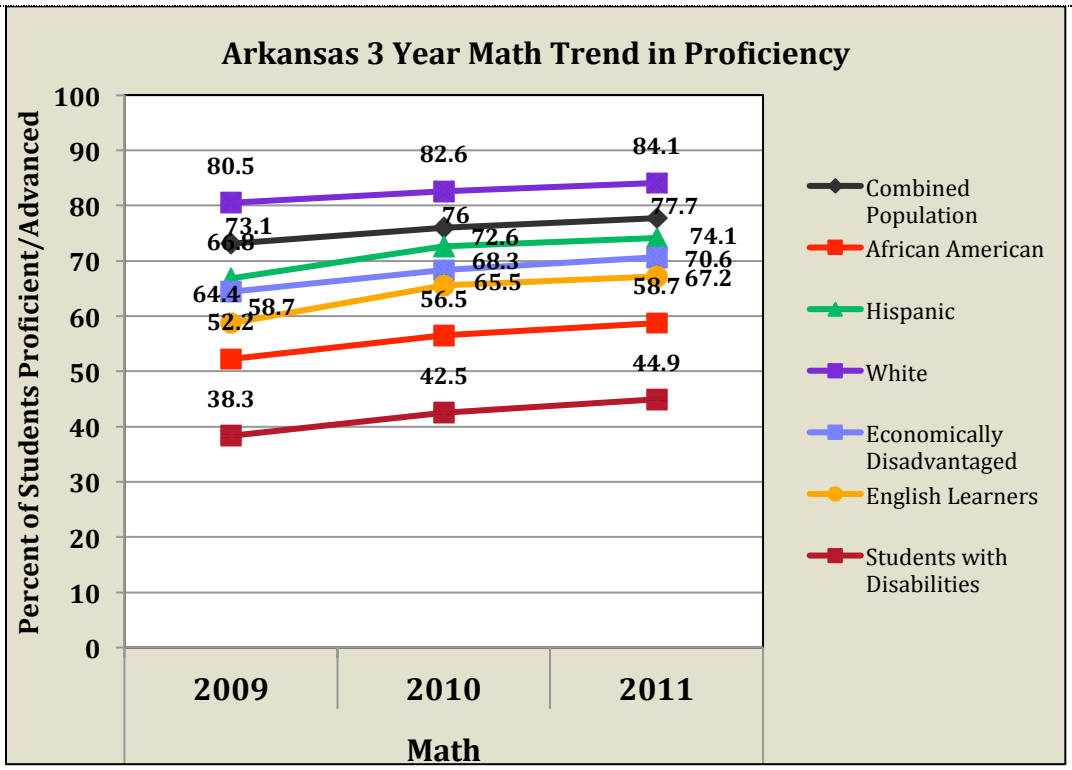


Figure 2.5. Three-year trends in math for ESEA subgroups.

Obviously, segments of our student population have struggled to achieve at desired levels. This ESEA Flexibility request provides a timely opportunity to move from an accountability system that provides an unintended positive bias for schools with small populations, to a system that focuses on long-term, continuous improvement through differentiated identification of schools' needs in a manner that is sensitive to Arkansas's students' characteristics. For example, further analysis of subgroup accountability revealed factors that may contribute to the persistence of the gap between the highest performing subgroups and the lowest performing subgroups. Table 2.1 is a list of the percentage of schools that are accountable for each of the subgroups included in Arkansas's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Workbook based on the current minimum N of 40, and the percentage of schools that are not accountable for these subgroups despite having students identified as members of these subgroups. The final column in Table 2.1 indicates the percentage of schools with one or more students with membership in these subgroups.

Table 2.1

Percentage of Schools 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%

As illustrated in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 SWDs demonstrated the lowest performance of all the subgroups, yet under Arkansas's current AYP workbook; only 16 percent of schools meet the minimum number of SWDs for accountability. Conversely, 96 percent of Arkansas's 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. An unintended consequence of the minimum N of 40 has been that the SWD subgroup has been virtually unaccounted for at the elementary level in larger LEAs and at the elementary and secondary level in small rural schools across the state. Thus, large metropolitan and urban systems have been mainly accountable for these groups, and usually only at the middle and high school levels.

Lowering the minimum N may seem like a logical alternative to the TAGG that would hold more schools accountable yet maintain the focus on the different ESEA subgroups. However, the characteristics of Arkansas's schools indicate this would provide a minimal increase in accountability for EL and a moderate increase in the number of schools accountable for SWD as indicated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Comparison of Percentage 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%

Reducing the minimum N to 25 for all schools, regardless of ADM, results in a limited increase in the percentage of schools accountable for each of the ESEA subgroups. Note with a minimum N of 25, only 40 percent of schools would be accountable for African American students, an increase of only 7 percent. The SWD subgroup triples in the percentage of schools accountable, yet more than half of Arkansas's schools would still be unaccountable for SWD as its own subgroup. The Hispanic and EL subgroups are still minimally represented in the accountability for performance as a group.

The ADE proposes to address the persistence of achievement gaps such as these through this Flexibility opportunity by requiring schools to be accountable for all students that have membership in at-risk subgroups.

Arkansas proposes to examine all students as well as a Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) based on students' membership in historically underperforming at risk subpopulations, thus requiring accountability for all students in their care. Each ESEA subpopulation will have individual AMOs, will continue to be reported separately and will continue to be used to plan interventions and support. However, the TAGG, in addition to the All Students group, will be 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 will trigger the Statewide System of Support (SSOS) and interventions. This change in a key trigger for accountability (the TAGG), in addition to lowering the minimum N for all schools to 25, will ensure more schools are held accountable for 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).

Data gathered from Arkansas's initial pilot of differentiated accountability helped inform the development of the TAGG concept. The pilot differentiated accountability model employed by the ADE differentiated labels and consequences for schools based on the percentage of groups/subgroups that met AYP through status/safe harbor or growth. Status refers to whether schools met annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for performance in math and literacy. Safe Harbor allowed schools to alternatively meet AYP through a 10 percent reduction in the percent of students scoring below proficient levels. The pilot growth model allowed schools to meet AYP through the alternative method of including below proficient students as proficient when these students met their annual growth increment in lieu of meeting the grade level proficient standard.

Data from 2011 accountability reports indicated most schools had fewer than half the subgroups meeting the minimum N for accountability. There are 14 possible groups/subgroups used in AYP in Arkansas. Each group counts once for literacy and once for math. The groups are:

- All Students,
- African American,
- Hispanic,
- Caucasian,
- Economically Disadvantaged,
- Limited English Proficient, and
- Students with Disabilities.

The number and percentage of schools accountable for zero to 14 groups/subgroups in the current AYP determinations are provided in Table 2.3. Note that Arkansas has nine schools that are so small the school does not have an All Students group that meets the minimum N for math and/or literacy. These schools fall under AYP workbook provisions for extremely small schools. Just over half of Arkansas's schools are accountable for four to six groups/subgroups. These groups are usually the

All Students group, the Economically Disadvantaged subgroup, and the schools' primary race subgroup. Twenty-five percent of schools have a substantive second subgroup (7 – 8 groups meeting minimum N) such as a secondary race subgroup or more rarely, an EL subgroup or SWD subgroup.

Table 2.3

Percent of Schools Accountable for Each of the Number of Groups Meeting Minimum N out of 14 Possible Groups

# of Groups Meeting Minimum N	**Count**	**Percent**
0– 1	9	0.84
2– 3	8	0.75
4– 6	611	57.04
7– 8	271	25.30
9 – 13	165	15.41
14	7	0.65

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 4 presents the percentage of each race/ethnicity group represented in the TAGG. 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 have a TAGG that meets the minimum N of 25 for all schools and districts.

Table 2.4

Demographics of the TAGG

NCLB Subgroup	TAGG	Not TAGG
Hispanic	92%	8%
Native American/Alaskan Native	64%	37%
Asian	60%	40%
Black/African American	86%	14%
Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander	90%	10%
White	50%	50%
Two or More Races	65%	35%

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 will be 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.

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 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. Table 2.4.1 provides a summary of performance indicators in math and literacy for minority students that would qualify for TAGG membership based on economic disadvantage, ELs or SWD as compared to the performance of minority students that were not members of one the TAGG risk groups.

Table 2.4.1

Performance of African American, Hispanic and Asian Students classified with in the TAGG or Non-TAGG Groups

	NonTAGG African Americans	**TAGG African Americans**	**NonTAGG Hispanic**	**TAGG Hispanic**	**NonTAGG Asian**	**TAGG Asian**
Literacy						
Below Basic	2.02	10.26	0.55	6.35	0.31	5.36
Basic	21.58	34.80	11.51	25.25	5.93	17.53
Proficient	46.23	39.44	40.89	43.61	26.50	40.80
Advanced	30.17	15.49	47.04	24.80	67.26	36.81
Proficient or Advanced	73.46	56.48	87.93	68.41	93.76	77.11
Math						
Below Basic	7.93	18.45	2.00	9.23	0.79	5.52
Basic	18.61	25.06	9.31	17.89	3.42	10.82
Proficient	40.57	35.30	34.65	38.31	18.89	32.17
Advanced	32.89	21.18	54.05	34.56	76.89	51.49

Proficient or Advanced	76.40	54.94	88.70	72.87	95.79	83.66

As illustrated in Table 2.4.1, the descriptive statistics for minority students belonging to at risk groups (TAGG) indicate significantly lower performance for minority students that are at risk as compared to minority students that are not at risk. Cohen's *h* was calculated to quantify the magnitude of these within race gaps and resulted in extremely large effects ranging from 10.27 (African American literacy) to 19.67 (Asian literacy). These gaps are meaningfully large and support the argument that even within racial/ethnic minority groups, risk factors are associated with educationally meaningful lower performance. The gap between African American students at risk and those not at risk is over 21 percentage points in literacy and 17 percentage points in math. These descriptive statistics support the assertion that membership in TAGG based on risk status, rather than minority status, is a statistically and educationally sound proposition.

Serving All Students in Districts and Schools

The accountability under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has been the key driver of focused educational change. However, after ten years of NCLB implementation, Arkansas has concluded state rules for identification of school districts in academic distress do not accurately describe the degree of complexity necessary for targeting intervention to those districts and their schools.

The challenge is complicated, in this case, because 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.

For this reason, Arkansas has chosen to participate in the ESEA Flexibility initiative in an effort to help districts better manage improvement in their schools and make systemic changes to improve instruction and student achievement. The flexibility proposed in this proposal will also help the state accelerate support and more intentionally target resources, technical assistance and interventions to the schools and districts that need the most assistance.

Clearly, one great challenge is combining the big stick and the helping hand, and pooling talent to push for results. The ADE and the Arkansas State Board of Education are committed to re-engineering our failing schools. The ADE's Rules for Academic Distress are in the process of revision to align with this proposed accountability system and in a manner consistent with Arkansas law. Arkansas can and should expect its schools and districts to function at their best and serve all students well. The ADE's proposed DARTSS will assist districts and their schools to make informed decisions regarding continuous improvement from the "bottom-up as much as possible and top

down as much as necessary" with Academic Distress representing the highest level of "top down" decision-making and a necessary element when local efforts fail to turn schools around.

A challenge Arkansas has with current state statute for Academic Distress is that it provides ADE with authority to identify schools, not districts, as being in Academic Distress. Given this constraint the state may intervene through this vehicle for low performing schools yet still have limited impact on the district. Districts may continue to inadequately resource a low performing school or avoid providing effective leadership structure and high expectations to the school due to the lack of a district systems approach to transformation. The proposed interventions for Priority Schools 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 is working with the Arkansas Board of Education and other stakeholders to rewrite the Academic Distress rule under this flexibility 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. The intent in this case is for a district to be identified as in Academic Distress when a Priority School does not make the progress 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. This could include removing the local school board and/or superintendent and moving forward with state governance of the district. Similar to mechanisms other states have utilized such as a turnaround office or state conservatorship—these actions would be 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, when Priority Schools do not make progress, the ADE would be more involved 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. The proposed DARTSS has several advantages over the existing disparate State and NCLB accountability systems that are likely 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 will 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 will be 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 ensure provision for external expertise and leadership focused on building local capacity for change and continuous improvement. ADE School Improvement Staff will focus support and/or intervention based on the degree of need as determined by the achievement indicators and implementation indicators in the system. External providers may be required (Priority) or optionally (Focus and all other schools) engaged to assist in building local capacity and local expertise through a 'gradual release of responsibility' model. Responsibility for implementation and results rests on districts initially with increasing oversight based on severity of the accountability designation. Lack of local action will result in loss of local flexibility and control that will be

specified in the revised Rules for Academic Distress. 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.

Ensuring Access to CCR Expectations and Opportunities

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 has matured several unintended consequences of the focus on subgroups have become evident. One example is evident in school improvement plans that include mechanical interventions based on subgroup membership. The interventions are often isolated from a systemic plan and focus 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 is that membership of one student in multiple subgroups results 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 is responsive to stakeholders concerns and lessons learned from Arkansas's statewide data.

The changes proposed in DARTSS more closely align 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 mitigates issues that have arisen under the compliance mindset that has evolved in recent years under NCLB. First, 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 will enable a more authentic focus on student learning needs enabling 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 has 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, will activate Arkansas's re-conceptualized tiered-support system.

Accountability for the All Students group and the TAGG group provide 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 envisioning and working toward an enhanced, thematic reporting of critical indicators along the pathway to CCR. The ADE will report 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 (see page 94). Color coding and thematic presentation will enable easier interpretation of indicators to facilitate connections between accountability and continuous improvement planning (details on page 95).

Role-based access to these critical indicators will allow leaders to organize and view reports and relevant information to facilitate decisions at the leadership level. Teachers' role-based access will allow 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. Instructional facilitators' role-based access will ultimately allow them to migrate between leadership and classroom level views to ensure alignment and coherence in response to data findings. These technical improvements to reporting are intended to support a data-informed culture of decision making along the continuum from macro- to micro-level.

Proposed Changes to Accountability Determinations

Arkansas's current accountability system for Adequate Yearly Progress determination utilizes a *Status plus Growth* model. Under the current system a school may meet AYP by meeting AMOs for performance for All Students and all ESEA subgroups, meeting Safe Harbor for All Students and all ESEA subgroups, or meeting AMOs for All Students and all ESEA subgroups using status AMOs, plus counting students below proficient as proficient if they meet annual growth in the status calculations. This model does not account for schools whose students are scoring Proficient or Advanced, but are losing ground toward Proficiency by Grade 8. Thus, schools with high performance are not identified as Needs Improvement when their students are losing ground to the extent that they are no longer on a path to maintain grade level expectations. This can create a systemic problem within a district when elementary schools may meet their AYP targets while students lose ground toward meeting higher grades' standards. The current system uses a minimum N of 40, or 5% of ADM when ADM is greater than 800, which has also allowed many ESEA subgroups to go unaddressed in official ACSIP planning.

The need for all students to achieve or maintain a trajectory toward CCR is paramount as Arkansas transitions from State standards to the CCSS. ADE proposes the use of school and district level Growth AMOs as an additional indicator of progress toward CCR, particularly to transition schools toward habits of mind that address students who may be meeting or exceeding existing grade level standards, but not receiving the attention they need to continue to excel as they progress through higher and higher grade levels. This is critical to building the capacity of all Arkansas students to achieve more rigorous CCSS. Additionally, the ADE proposes lowering the minimum N to 25 beginning with 2012 assessment and reporting cycles to apply to All Students, the TAGG and ESEA subgroups. For the purposes of classifying schools as Achieving or Needs Improvement, ADE proposes using the minimum N of 25. For the purposes of further differentiating within Achieving and Needs Improvement Schools, the ADE proposes applying the minimum N of 25 to ESEA subgroups for requiring ACSIP interventions, as well as aligned human and financial resources to address the needs of ESEA subgroups that do not meet Performance and/or Growth AMOs.

ADE proposes the following actions within this Flexibility request to increase expectation for rigor necessary to achieve and maintain CCR for all students, including those already exceeding the standards; and to ensure that high performing schools are not masking lack of student growth among high performing students.

As indicated in Figure 2.2, DARTSS consists of a broad state-level classification of schools as 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. Determination of the overarching accountability label is based on a set of decision rules modified from the existing Adequate Yearly Progress Workbook. Figure 2.6 compares the proposed decision rules to the existing AYP determination rules. The similarities and differences between the two sets of decision rules are situated within familiar elements to help minimize confusion over the transition in accountability determinations. The differences address specific elements in the flexibility guidance as indicted in Figure 5.

The recalculation of AMOs using Option C for individualized district, school and group AMOs is the first proposed change. The prior year performance or weighted three year average performance would continue to be used as specified in the AYP Workbook to determine whether schools meet their AMOs for the proficiency gap. This addresses concerns about year-to-year stability in the calculations when dealing with different groups of students from year to year. The small school rule would also apply here. Schools with fewer than 25 students in the All Students group for math or literacy would be required to use the 3-year weighted average in place of prior year performance. Another principle from the existing AYP determinations would apply to the proposed system—the consistent use of prior year or 3-year weighted averages to determine if AMOs were met. Accountability determinations would derive from either prior year for All Students and TAGG, or 3-year weighted average for both groups within a subject. The individualized AMOs would replace Safe Harbor by setting incremental progress expectations based on each school's starting point in 2011. The state level confidence interval applied to meeting the prior statewide AMOs would no longer be applicable because schools will be working toward school-based AMOs.

Current AYP Determinations

Proficiency Gap (AMOs)

All districts, schools and subgroups have same AMO by AYP Group with 2014 target of 100%.

Achieving or Needs Improvement

Must test 95% of All Students and NCLB subgroups; **and**

Must meet proficiency AMOs for All Students Group & All NCLB subgroups, or reduce percent not proficient by 10% (Safe Harbor); **or**

Must meet proficiency AMOs for All Students Group & NCLB subgroups with status + growth.

Growth (K-8 Status Plus)

Students below proficient count as proficient if they met annual growth increment.

Secondary Indicators

Attendance Rate (K-8)

Graduation Rate (High School)

College & Career Ready Indicators

Arkansas reports numerous CCR indicators on the Annual School Performance Report including:

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 & Geometry Exams.

Retention rates for Grades K - 8 students

Drop out rates for high schools.

Attendance rates for K - 8 schools.

Proposed Change

Proficiency Gap (AMOs)

All schools have individualized AMOs for All Students, TAGG & NCLB subgroups based on 2011 performance to close proficiency gap in half by 2017

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

Achieving or Needs Improvement

Must test 95% of All Students and TAGG;

and

Must meet proficency AMOs for All Students Group & TAGG,

or

Must meet growth AMOs for All Students & TAGG.

High Schools

Must test 95% of All Students and TAGG;

and

Must meet proficency AMOs for All Students Group & TAGG

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

NCLB subgroups' performance, percent tested & graduation rate reported for N $\geq$ 10 for transparency, intervention and support.

Growth (K-8 Percent Meeting Growth)

AMOs established for percent meeting growth regardless of performance level.

All students expected to maintain trajectory to proficient level in Grade 8.

Growth model is expected to transition as PARCC assessments develop and TESS moves to full implementation.

Accountability for growth will extend to Grade 11 with PARCC assessments.

College & Career Ready Indicators

Graduation Rate (High School)

AMOs established for All Students, TAGG & NCLB subgroups.

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

Other CCR Indicators:

Continue reporting CCR indicators included on current Annual School Performance Report

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

Figure 2.6. Comparison of current and proposed decision rules for overarching accountability labels and reporting CCR indicators.

Another change in the proposed accountability system will support the transition to more robust growth measures as these are developed and validated in the transition to PARCC assessments. The current growth to standard model is scale-dependent based on the vertical moderation of the Grades 3 through 8 Arkansas Benchmark Examination score scale (Lissitz & Huynh, 2003). ADE proposes to employ this model during the transition to PARCC assessments. The ADE will use its longitudinal data system capabilities to evaluate the existing growth model's stability at the teacher level for use in TESS and the congruence between school accountability designations and teacher/leader effectiveness ratings. This will provide ADE opportunity to complete model growth measures using PARCC assessment pilot data to inform the transition of the growth measures for use with PARCC assessment. Ultimately, the growth measures used with the PARCC assessments will replace the current growth model in accountability designations and TESS. Transition of the growth model from the current Grades 3 to 8 score scale to the PARCC assessment score scale for Grades 3 to 11 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 full implementation of PARCC assessments for use in accountability and TESS.

ADE proposes to use the existing growth to standard model approved by USDE to support accountability for growth of all students toward CCR at the K-8 level for the 2012-2013 through 2013-2014 school years. One significant change in the use of the growth model will enhance the focus on CCR for all students. Schools will be held accountable for meeting annual AMOs for growth based on the progress of all students on the continuum of achievement rather than merely crediting below proficient students who meet annual growth as proficient for AYP. This expands the current use of growth in AYP, a "status plus model," by giving schools credit for maintaining students' pathways to proficiency by Grade 8, including students who are proficient and advanced. This change introduces accountability in the growth model for students who are proficient or advanced but do not meet their annual growth. All students regardless of where they are on the achievement continuum would be expected to advance their learning annually to the degree necessary to meet or maintain their trajectory.

Arkansas's current NCLB growth to standard model results in all students in Grades 3 through 8 receiving a calculated growth trajectory (below proficient students) or a proficiency threshold (proficient and advanced students). The annual increments are proportional relative to the annual growth in scale score points needed to maintain a proficient score on the curvilinear scale from Grade 3 to Grade 8. Students' annual scale scores are compared to the sum of their prior scale score and their annual expected growth increment. The comparison of students' actual scale score to their expected scale score results in a determination of whether a student has met or failed to meet expected growth. This dichotomy (Yes/No) for meeting growth is then aggregated to a school level percent of students meeting growth out of all students tested.

Arkansas proposes to change how the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is used in annual accountability determinations by weighting it more heavily in the proposed DARTSS for high schools to enhance accountability for CCR at the high school level. The development of Arkansas's longitudinal data system has enabled the calculation of the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate.

Arkansas published 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 is proposing 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. This will draw attention to and focus interventions and supports on closing identified gaps in graduation rates among high schools' subgroups where appropriate. Graduation rates provide an additional indicator for high schools that is a fundamental requisite to college and career readiness.

Currently, high school graduation rates are included in Arkansas AYP workbook as a secondary indicator for determining AYP. Graduation rates are used to determine schools' eligibility to use safe harbor as an alternative for meeting math and literacy progress, and in the overall improvement status determination, a single graduation rate target must be met for all students in addition to schools' meeting AYP for math and literacy. In DARTSS, the All Students graduation rate, the Non-TAGG and TAGG graduation rates, as well as NCLB subgroup graduation rates will be calculated and reported. Arkansas proposes to set AMOs for the graduation rate for the above mentioned groups by school, and to include schools' progress in meeting the AMOs for All Students and the TAGG in accountability determinations. The gap between the Non-TAGG and TAGG graduation rates will be considered proportionately with performance indicators in identifying high schools as Focus Schools. High schools' progress in meeting their graduation rate AMOs will also be used in identifying multi-tiered interventions and supports as outlined in Sections 2C - 2F.

The following clarifications of Arkansas' proposed accountability system and safeguards are included in the Arkansas request for ESEA Flexibility.

- 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. This is a more rigorous expectation than what is currently employed through AYP determinations using Status Plus Growth in that Growth AMOs and annual calculations of growth outcomes for schools and districts will include all students regardless of performance level.
- ADE will use the full spectrum of student performance (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced) within the growth calculations under DARTSS. Through the inclusion of Proficient and Advanced students in the growth calculations, schools will be incentivized to review the growth of all students within their classrooms, not just those below the Proficient cut point or 'on the bubble', to ensure that all students are achieving or maintaining an appropriate achievement trajectory. This change in the use of growth scores credits schools and districts for improving performance of students from the lowest levels of the performance continuum while also setting the expectation that students proficient and above maintain a high achievement trajectory. Current AYP determinations use only the students below proficient in crediting schools for growth, thus ignoring Proficient or

Advanced students who may be losing ground. Figures 2.6.1 through 2.6.4 illustrate the reports that teachers and administrators access from ADE reporting systems to understand the extent of students' growth as a result of prior year instruction.

- Figure 2.6.1 illustrates the performance of all groups, including ESEA subgroups, on growth outcomes used in accountability. Note that this is a private report and includes information to inform teachers and leaders about ESEA subgroup progress even when the group does not meet the minimum N for accountability. This is important information for teachers and leaders to use to identify patterns that may suggest alignment issues within instructional curriculum and assessment. The school and grade level reports also provide teachers and leaders with information that can help them look for patterns of vertical alignment expectations that may not be rigorous enough for students to achieve continued progress toward grade level standards.

School Overall

	Literacy			Math		
Subgroup	Total	Number Meeting Growth	Percent Meeting Growth	Total	Number Meeting Growth	Percent Meeting Growth
Combined Population	239	142	59%	239	176	74%
African American	75	38	51%	75	49	65%
Hispanic	12	6	50%	12	9	75%
Caucasian	146	94	64%	146	113	77%
Economically Disadvantaged	192	104	54%	192	136	71%
Limited English Proficient	7	5	71%	7	6	86%
Students with Disabilities	19	5	26%	19	8	42%

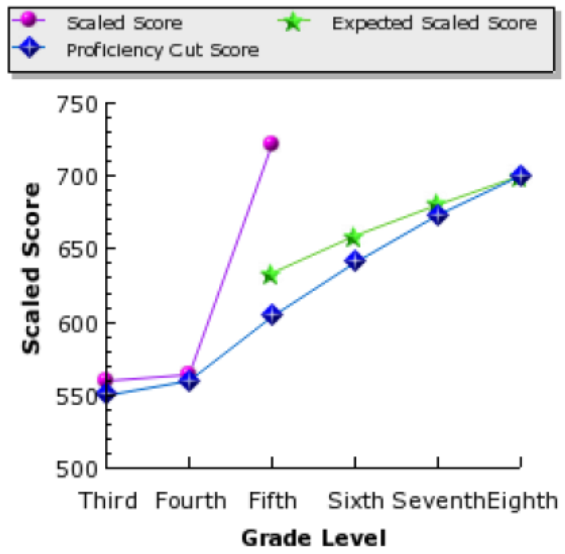
School By Grade Level

Grade=Fourth

	Literacy			Math		
Subgroup	Total	Number Meeting Growth	Percent Meeting Growth	Total	Number Meeting Growth	Percent Meeting Growth
Combined Population	42	22	52%	42	30	71%
African American	16	6	38%	16	12	75%
Hispanic	3	2	67%	3	3	100%
Caucasian	22	13	59%	22	14	64%
Economically Disadvantaged	36	17	47%	36	26	72%
Limited English Proficient	3	2	67%	3	3	100%
Students with Disabilities	7	2	29%	7	4	57%

Figure 2.6.1. School and grade level summary of growth outcomes for All Students and ESEA Subgroups for school and/or district needs analysis.

Figures 2.6.2 through 2.6.4 include examples of individual student growth reports to illustrate the information teachers, parents and students have to understand students' progress (purple line) relative to the expectations for grade level proficiency (blue line) and their expected Growth Trajectory (Figure 2.6.4) or Proficiency Threshold (Figures 2.6.2 and 2.6.3) as illustrated by the green line in each chart.

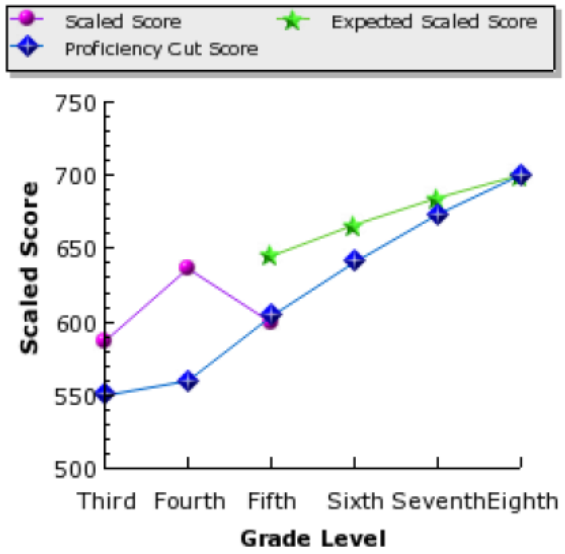


2008 Literacy Scaled Score:	560
2009 Literacy Scaled Score:	564
2010 Literacy Scaled Score:	722
2010 Literacy Proficiency Level:	Proficient
Met Growth Target?:	YES

PASSAGE TYPE	MC	OR	WRITING DOMAINS	POINTS
Literacy:	5/8	7/8	Writing:	4/8
Content:	3/8	5/8	Style:	5/8
Practical:	4/8	8/8	Sentence Form:	7.5/8
			Usage:	6.5/8
Writing:	8/8		Mechanics:	6.5/8

	Expected Scaled Score	Expected Growth
2010	633	32
2011	659	26
2012	681	22
2013	700	19

Figure 2.6.3. Individual student growth report illustrating a proficient student that was losing ground in Grade 4 and made up that loss in Grade 5.

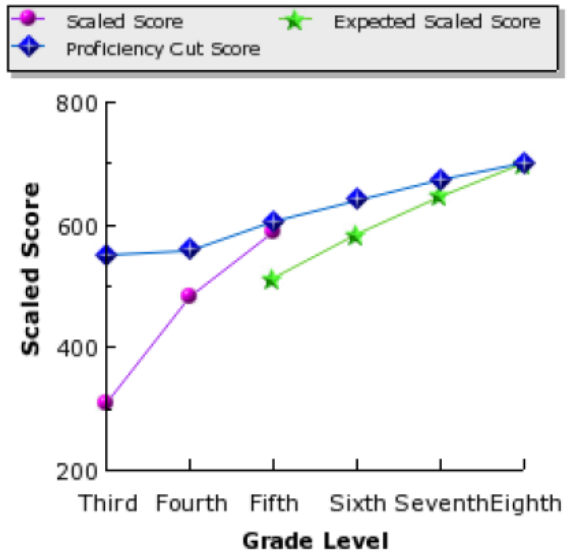


2008 Literacy Scaled Score:	587
2009 Literacy Scaled Score:	636
2010 Literacy Scaled Score:	599
2010 Literacy Proficiency Level:	Basic
Met Growth Target?:	NO

PASSAGE TYPE	MC	OR	WRITING DOMAINS	POINTS
Literacy:	3/8	7/8	Writing:	4/8
Content:	3/8	6/8	Style:	4/8
Practical:	3/8	3/8	Sentence Form:	6/8
			Usage:	6.5/8
Writing:	4/8		Mechanics:	7.5/8

	Expected Scaled Score	Expected Growth
2010	645	25
2011	666	21
2012	684	18
2013	700	15

Figure 2.6.4. Individual student growth report illustrating a high performing student that maintained high performance in Grade 4 and has lost significant ground in Grade 5 and is no longer Proficient.



2008 Literacy Scaled Score:	310
2009 Literacy Scaled Score:	483
2010 Literacy Scaled Score:	590
2010 Literacy Proficiency Level:	Basic
Met Growth Target?:	YES

PASSAGE TYPE	MC	OR	WRITING DOMAINS	POINTS
Literacy:	5/8	1/8	Writing:	4/8
Content:	4/8	4/8	Style:	4/8
Practical:	5/8	7/8	Sentence Form:	6/8
			Usage:	6/8
Writing:	3/8		Mechanics:	7/8

	Expected Scaled Score	Expected Growth
2010	513	88
2011	585	72
2012	647	62
2013	700	53

Figure 2.6.5. Individual student growth report illustrating a Below Basic student who has met their annual growth increment to maintain a path toward grade level proficiency through Grade 5.

- ADE recognizes that a small percentage of high performing schools may be labeled Achieving Schools when the schools meet the math and literacy performance AMOs for reducing the Proficiency Gap by 2017 for All Students and the TAGG, or when the schools meet the math and literacy Growth AMOs for reducing the Growth Gap by 2017 for All Students and the TAGG due to the high correlation between growth to standard and performance (0.86 and 0.73 for literacy and math, respectively). This may result in a small percentage of schools that are labeled Achieving for math and literacy performance, but have lower growth in one or both of these subjects. Six percent of schools with 75% or more students Proficient/Advanced have less than 75% of students meeting Growth in literacy. For math, due to differences in variance of the math score distribution, 41% of schools have 75% of students Proficient/Advanced and less than 75% meeting growth for math. To provide safeguards in the event a school meets for Performance but doesn't meet for Growth, ADE proposes further differentiating required interventions and continuous improvement planning among Achieving schools that meet both math and literacy AMOs through either Performance or Growth, but do not meet for both Performance and Growth.
    - Schools that meet AMOS for both subjects and for Performance and Growth will enter a three-year cycle for continuous improvement planning. Specifically, these schools will 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 will be 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 will have to 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 will occur 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 will be 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 will 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.
- 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 addresses several USDE considerations. Through DARTSS, Achieving Schools will 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 will be 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 will be 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.

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 identified 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. ADE proposes to report, as indicated in Figure 2.6, and later in Figure 2.14, the specific areas where a school or district fails to meet AMOs to increase the transparency for educators and stakeholders.

As illustrated in Figure 2.6, and later in Figure 2.14, ADE will report the progress of All Students, the TAGG, *and* all ESEA subgroups with 10 or more students as compared to their AMOs. Schools will be 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 will engage in deeper analysis of areas identified through DARTSS as failing to meet AMOs, and will identify evidence-based practices or interventions to serve the needs identified in analysis. The school and district ACSIP will need 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 will review 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 CRTs 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 http://arkansased.org/testing/performance_report.html. 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.

Multi-tiered Support System: Incentives, Interventions and Supports

The proposed DARTSS will result in determinations for all schools and districts as Achieving or Needs Improvement, and in particular Exemplary, Focus and Priority Schools. Accountability determinations will 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, Needs Improvement Focus Schools and Needs Improvement Priority Schools will be identified 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. This flexibility request 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. Currently, the Statewide System of Support is spread too thinly to have the intended impacts. 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 will 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 the obscure and confusing labels to communicate school or district needs. DARTSS provides a blueprint to accomplish this by aligning recognition, supports, engagement and interventions based on the degree of needs revealed through accountability measures. ADE will constantly monitor 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;
  - High district autonomy;
- Needs Improvement Schools:
  - Low to moderate ADE SSOS engagement differentiated based on degree of identified needs;
  - 1-year ACSIP cycle with ADE review and approval of plan;
  - Low to high engagement of regional support center staff and resources for local, customized support;
  - 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 School Improvement Specialist (SIS) approval of Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) and resource/funds allocation,
  - 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;
    - 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 SIS or optionally an external provider to monitor,
        - External provider required if lack of progress after 1 year,
        - 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:
    - 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;
        - External provider required to build capacity and support implementation, or optionally a CMO or EMO,
        - 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 will be incentivized to support their lowest performing schools in their improvement efforts to achieve the greatest autonomy.

Re-conceptualizing Arkansas's Statewide System of Support (SSOS) is a fundamental factor in the development of this multi-tiered system of support. The ensuing plans for identifying, supporting and/or intervening in schools based on accountability determinations require the ADE adopt 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 will continue to review and approve (where appropriate) all ACSIP*. However, the level of engagement by ADE in the needs assessment and planning process will vary based on schools' and districts' degree of need for support or intervention. 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, 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 that this Flexibility would bring allows 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 will facilitate 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 designed to be 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 will 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 will enhance the ADE's capacity to meet the support and monitoring needs of all schools. The following general timeline would guide the transition to the aforementioned system if this flexibility Flexibility request is granted.

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 (Given Flexibility Request is granted)

- Exemplary, Priority and Focus Schools determined using 2011 CRT results and other indicators as approved by USDE in the Flexibility request process.
    - 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.
    - 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
        - Meet proficiency gap AMOs (prior year or 3 year proficiency rate)—All Students and TAGG, or
        - Meet growth gap AMOs—All Students and TAGG (will include high schools once PARCC assessments are fully implemented)
        - High Schools meet proficiency gap AMOs ***and*** graduation rate gap AMOs—All Students and TAGG.
        - 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.
        - Report progress toward meeting proficiency gap AMOs (prior year or 3 year proficiency rate)—All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups.
        - Report progress toward meeting growth AMOs— All Students, TAGG, and ESEA subgroups.
        - 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.
    - Every three years for Exemplary and Achieving schools that maintain an Achieving status during that period.
    - 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.
- Systemic intervention and support for Priority Schools (Section 2.D.).
- Focused intervention and support for Focus Schools (Section 2.E.).

NCLB and concurrent initiatives to support NCLB, such as state longitudinal data systems, provide the requisite infrastructure to support a data-informed culture at all levels of Arkansas's educational system (P-20+). The Arkansas Department of Education (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 federal Pilot Growth and Differentiated Accountability models in its efforts to refine the state's ability to impact all students. These pilot initiatives have provided valuable information as Arkansas seeks to refine further its accountability system through this flexibility request. The proposed elements in this request 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

The timeline provided in Figure 2.1 indicates the transition of Arkansas's assessment system and the use of student achievement scores in accountability proposed under this request. Arkansas's

Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) includes 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 requires all students to complete End of Course Exams in Algebra, Geometry and Biology, as well as a Grade 11 Literacy Exam. 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 an alternate portfolio assessment approved by USDE for use in NCLB accountability. Arkansas' approved Adequate Yearly Progress Workbook specifies the use of math and literacy exams in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for identifying schools' and districts' School Improvement status. Arkansas will transition to full implementation of PARCC assessments for reading/language arts and mathematics by 2014-2015 as indicated in the timeline. Additional subject area exams will be considered for inclusion in accountability determinations as the PARCC assessments evolve and additional subject areas become available.

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. (Attachment 8)

Method for Calculating Proficiency and Growth AMOs

Assessment results from the 2011 Augmented Benchmark Exams for Grades 3 through 8 math and literacy, Grade 11Literacy Exam and End of Course Exams for Algebra and Geometry were used to calculate AMOs for schools. AMOs were calculated 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)

AMOs were calculated for TAGG and all ESEA subgroups to model the impact of using the TAGG to identify schools for accountability purposes including identification of Focus Schools. The proposed TAGG includes 66.7 percent of Arkansas students based on students' membership in the following historically underperforming subgroups and/or at risk subgroups: economically disadvantaged, ELs and SWD. Using these criteria, 98 percent of schools have a TAGG that meets the minimum N of 25 for the school. In approximately one tenth of schools, the TAGG is inclusive of all students in the school due to the high poverty rates in these schools.

Proficiency AMOs

Baseline performance for determining AMOs using Option C was calculated as follows. The percentages of students not meeting the proficient cut score in math and literacy in 2011 were calculated at the school, district and state level for All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroups. Math and literacy AMOs were calculated separately. The percentage of students *Not Proficient* represents the *Proficiency Gap* for each group within the school, district and the state. Under Option C, ADE has chosen to reduce the *Proficiency Gap* by half by 2017. Table 2.5 provides an example of the calculations within a school for All Students and the TAGG. ESEA subgroups were also calculated for all schools, districts and the state using the same procedure.

Table 2.5.

Sample Proficiency Gap and Annual Measurable Objective Calculations

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

Growth AMOs

The percentages of students not meeting the growth in math and literacy for Grades 3 through 8 in 2011 were calculated at the school, district and state levels for All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroups. Math and literacy AMOs were calculated separately. The percentage of students *Not Meeting Growth* represents the *Growth Gap* for each group within the school, district and the state. Under Option C, the *Growth Gap* must be reduced by half by 2017. Table 2.6 provides an example of the calculations within a school for All Students and the TAGG. ESEA subgroups were also calculated for all schools, districts and the state using the same procedure.

Table 2.6.

Sample Growth Gap and Annual Measurable Objective Calculations

All Students' Growth AMOs	TAGG's Growth AMOs
88% Met Growth = 12% Growth Gap	52% Met Growth = 48% Growth Gap
6% = Growth Gap (12) ÷ 2	24% = Growth Gap (48) ÷ 2
1 Percentage Point = Annual Increase (6% ÷ 6)	4 Percentage Points = Annual Increase (24% ÷ 6)
2012 AMO = 88 + 1 = 89% Meeting Growth 2013 AMO = 89 + 1 = 90% Meeting Growth 2014 AMO = 90 + 1 = 91% Meeting Growth 2015 AMO = 91 + 1 = 92% Meeting Growth 2016 AMO = 92 + 1 = 93% Meeting Growth 2017 AMO = 93 + 1 = 94% Meeting Growth	2012 AMO = 52 + 4 = 56% Meeting Growth 2013 AMO = 56 + 4 = 60% Meeting Growth 2014 AMO = 60 + 4 = 64% Meeting Growth 2015 AMO = 64 + 4 = 68% Meeting Growth 2016 AMO = 68 + 4 = 72% Meeting Growth 2017 AMO = 72 + 4 = 76% Meeting Growth

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 2.7 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 2.7.

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

Arkansas has elected to set individualized AMOs for each school, district and the state based on 2011 performance and growth consistent with Option C. This option ensures schools that are furthest behind must make the largest gains. This option also addresses 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.

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

The distributions of schools' percentages in mathematics and literacy for proficiency (percentage of students proficient) and growth (percentage of students meeting annual growth) and graduation rate are illustrated in Figures 2.7 through 2.11.

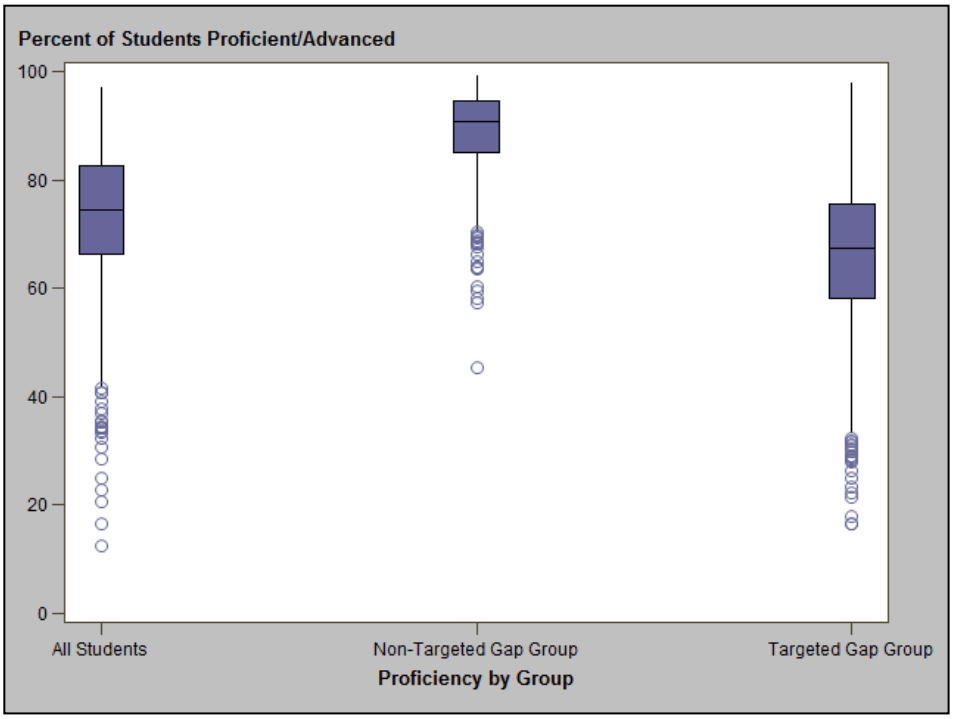


Figure 2.7. Literacy Performance for All Students and Targeted and Non-Targeted Achievement Gap Group.

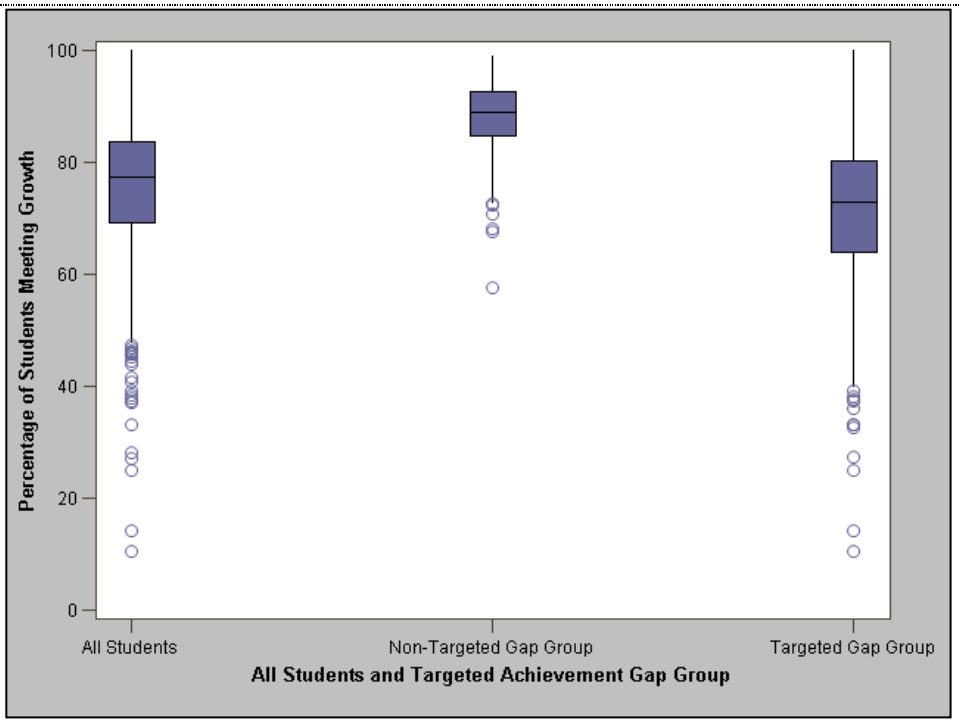


Figure 2.8. Literacy Growth for All Students and Targeted and Non-Targeted Achievement Gap Group.

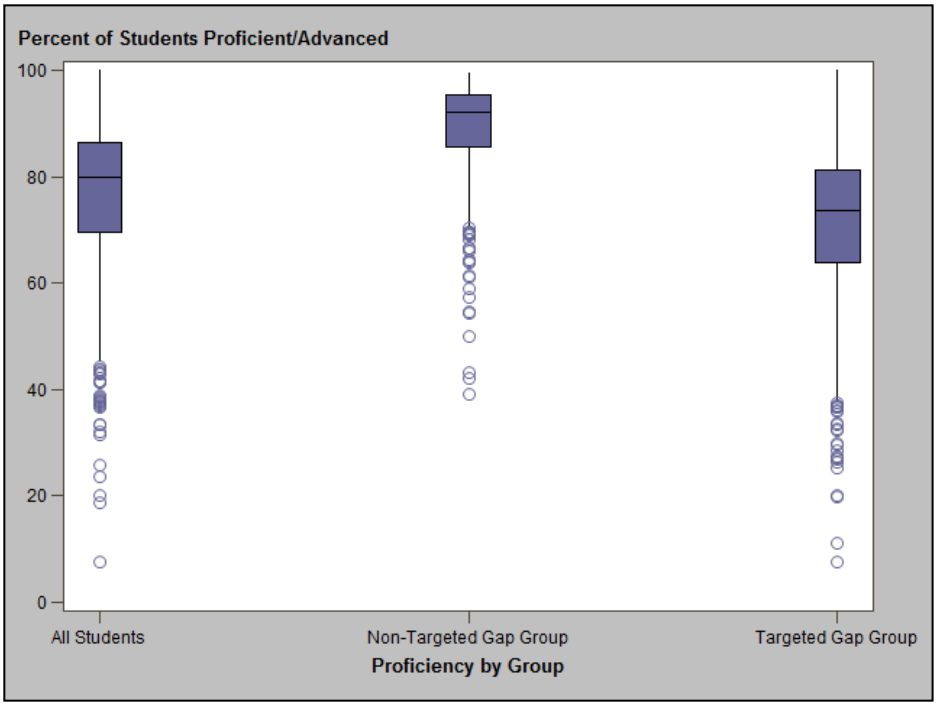


Figure 2.9. Math Performance for All Students and Targeted and Non-Targeted Achievement Gap Group.

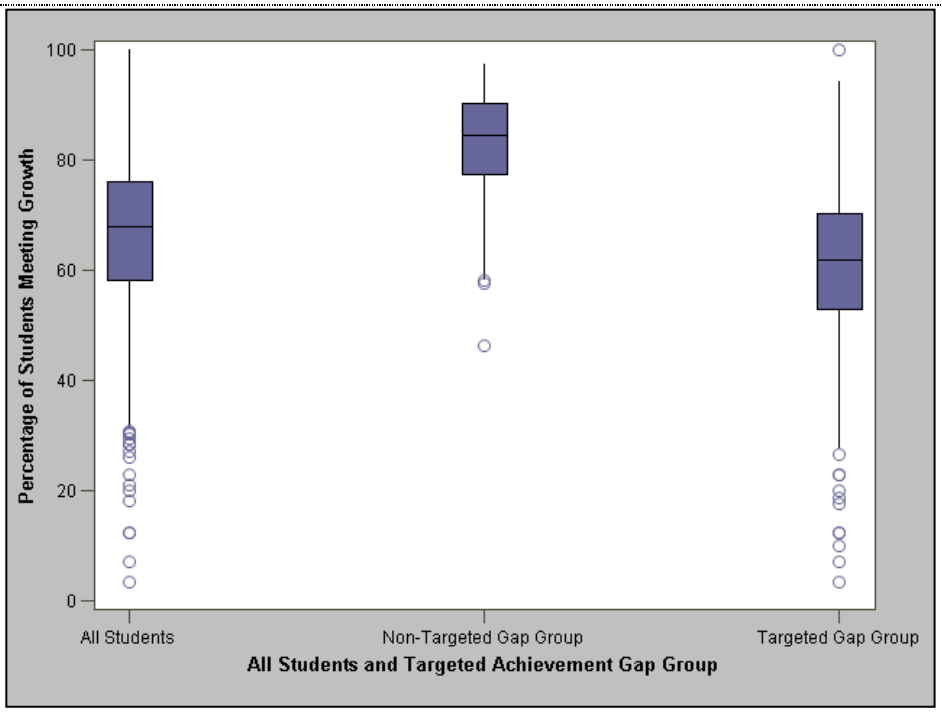


Figure 2.10. Math Growth for All Students and Targeted and Non-Targeted Achievement Gap Group.

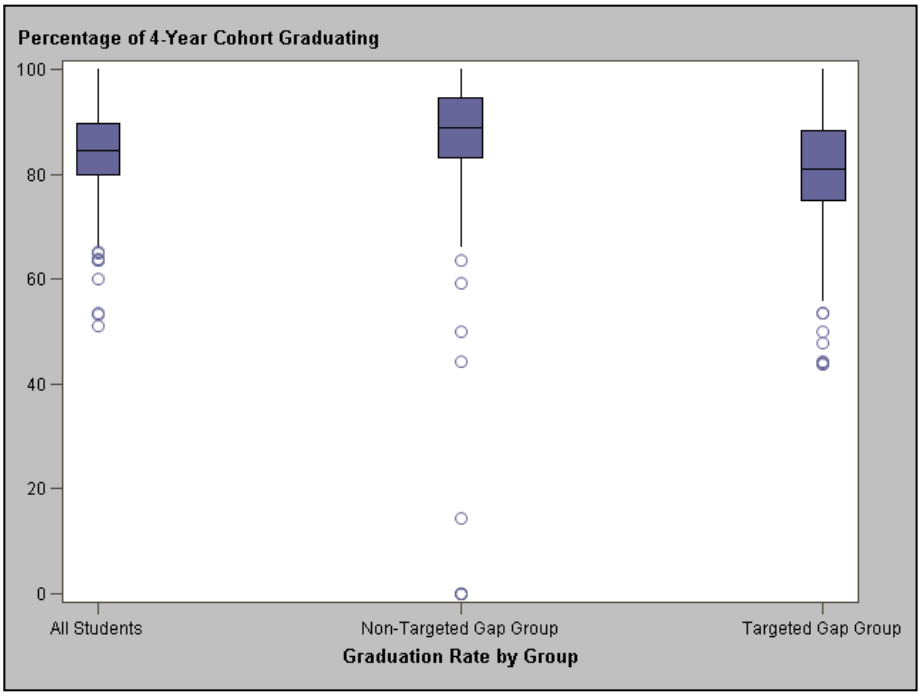


Figure 2.11. Graduation Rate for All Students and Targeted and Non-Targeted Achievement Gap Group.

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 give schools and districts full credit for meeting a particular AMO when the Performance, Growth and/or Graduation Rate meets or exceeds 94%. This allows ADE to implement an important safeguard for schools or districts whose performance, growth and/or graduation rate are among the highest in the state. Tables 2.7.1 through 2.7.3 provide the percentile rank of the school-level distribution at which 94 percent of students are Proficient/Advanced, 94 percent of students are Meeting Growth and 94 percent of students are Graduating for All Students, TAGG and all ESEA subgroups. Ninety-four percent is at or above the 90th percentile rank of the school distribution for all groups. 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.

- The annual school performance report is available at http://arkansased.org/testing/performance_report.html
- Average statewide proficiency based on all grades in literacy and math for All Students, the TAGG and ESEA subgroups are as follows.

Table 2.7.1

Percentile Ranks for Distribution of Schools' Proficiency for All Students, TAGG and ESEA Subgroups for Literacy and Math

Group or Subgroup	State Percentile Rank of School-Level 94% or Higher Proficient/Advanced for Literacy	State Percentile Rank of School-Level 94% or Higher Proficient/Advanced for Math
All Students	99th	95th
TAGG	99th	95th
African American	99th	99th
Hispanic	99th	95th
White	95th	90th
FRLP	99th	95th
EL	99th	99th
SWD	99th	99th

The percentile ranks of the school-level distribution at which 94 percent Proficient or Advanced are located for All Students, the TAGG and all ESEA subgroups are provided in Table 2.7.1. Note the request for schools to be granted status as meeting their AMO when their math or literacy performance is 94 percent or higher is equivalent to being at the 99th percentile for all groups except white students (95th percentile for white students) in literacy and at the 95th to 99th percentile rank in math except for white students (90th percentile for white students).

Table 2.7.2

Percentile Ranks for Distribution of Schools' Percent of Students Meeting Growth for All Students, TAGG and ESEA Subgroups for Literacy and Math

Group or Subgroup	State Percentile Rank of School-Level 94% or Higher Meeting Growth for Literacy	State Percentile Rank of School-Level 94% or Higher Meeting Growth for Math
All Students	99th	99th
TAGG	99th	99th
African American	99th	99th
Hispanic	95th	99th
White	95th	99th
FRLP	99th	99th
EL	95th	99th
SWD	99th	99th

The percentile ranks of the school-level distribution at which 94 percent Meeting Growth are located for All Students, the TAGG and all ESEA subgroups are provided in Table 2.7.2. Note the request for schools to be granted status as meeting their AMO when their math or literacy growth is 94 percent or higher is equivalent to being at the 99th percentile for all groups except white students (95th percentile for white, Hispanic and ELs) in literacy and at the 95th to 99th percentile rank in math.

Table 2.7.3

State Percentile Ranks for Graduation Rate for All Students, TAGG and ESEA Subgroups

Group or Subgroup	State Percentile Rank of 94% or Higher Graduation Rate
All Students	90th
TAGG	90th
African American	99th
Hispanic	95th
White	90th
FRLP	90th
EL	99th
SWD	99th

The percentile ranks of school-level distribution at which 94 percent of students meeting graduation rates are located for All Students, TAGG and ESEA subgroups are at or above the 90th percentile rank of the distributions.

School, District and State AMOs

The AMOs for proficiency and growth for mathematics and literacy based on 2011 results, and the AMOs for graduation rates based on 2010 results are available in separate electronic document.

District and State AMOs will also be available in a separate electronic document.

Table 2.7.4

Group	Literacy Percent Proficient or Advanced	Literacy N Tests Attempted	Math Percent Proficient or Advanced	Math N Tests Attempted
All Students	74.6	232,783	77.7	266,278
TAGG	65.9	147,486	70.1	167,213
Non-TAGG	89.7	85,297	90.5	99,065
African American	57.6	48,814	58.7	55,403
Hispanic	69.8	22,270	74.1	25,569
White	80.5	152,944	84.1	175,240
Economically Disadvantaged	66.8	139,967	70.6	158,993
English Learners	61.8	15,133	67.2	17,077
Students with Disabilities	31.5	25,944	44.9	27,578
Subgroups not included in AYP due to size of groups across Arkansas				
Native American	76.5	1,583	78.4	1,826
Asian	83.5	3,369	88.4	3,875
Pacific Islander	56.1	892	53.0	1,024
2 or More Races	79.5	2,856	81.0	3,262

- Grade level state performance is provided at

http://normessasweb.uark.edu/schoolperformance/State/SRCy3.php

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 represents an opportunity to move existing disparate State and NCLB accountability systems toward a unitary approach to differentiated recognition and accountability. State law poses 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). The process for identification of Exemplary Schools represents ADE's attempt to incorporate the intent of ACT 35 rating systems with flexibility that is attainable under the request. For example, the ACT 35 rating systems, the Gain Index and Status Index, recognize schools for high performance and for improvement in performance. The proposed 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 proposing 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. A two-thirds majority of disadvantaged students is currently used to identify 'Beating the Odds' schools for annual public recognition by the Office of Education Policy at the University of Arkansas. This criterion has face validity among educators and stakeholders in Arkansas. Also, this criterion will ensure a reasonable number of Title I schools will be designated Exemplary Schools.

To determine Exemplary Schools for high performance, high progress, high-TAGG performance and high-TAGG progress three years of Arkansas CRT results were used to calculate a three-year weighted average percentage of students Proficient for math and literacy combined for 2009 through 2011. 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.

Schools' progress was determined by comparing the three-year weighted average percent Proficient for 2008 through 2010 to the three-year weighted average percent Proficient for 2009 through 2011. This results in a change or progress score for each school. Schools were then classified into three groups for ranking: K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 ranges. Arkansas schools have many different grade configurations, thus schools were 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. 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) were 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 was

completed for high progress schools.

A further check of graduation rates for high schools was completed to ensure high schools included for Exemplary School Status were at or above the median Graduation Rate of 83.78. Graduation Rate gap distribution was 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. This resulted in only one high school being retained in the Exemplary Schools list for 2011. The Graduation Rate gaps for TAGG and ESEA subgroups are a new element for accountability for high schools as compared to existing AYP.

A final check of the 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress and 2011 NCLB School Improvement Status for the 2011 Exemplary Schools list was completed. All High Performance schools were also designated as Achieving under NCLB School Improvement status. High Progress schools were Achieving or Alert status indicated they met Adequate Yearly Progress or missed for only one year for one or more groups. It was anticipated that these schools may not meet the NCLB AMOs (lowest AMO was 73.41) for 2011 because they were ranked on progress, regardless of initial performance and three-year average performance ranged from 55.6 to 86.1 percent for High Progress schools with 11 to 20 percentage point gains from their initial performance. High TAGG/High Performing Schools were Achieving under 2011 NCLB School Improvement status. The four High TAGG/High Progress schools were also on the High Progress list when ranking among all the schools' progress. These schools have the same caveats mentioned above for High Progress Schools.

These additional constraints for Exemplary School eligibility were 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. This consideration has arisen through analysis of the data that indicates some schools that have engaged in intensive improvement efforts have demonstrated high progress. The question for the ADE and stakeholders is whether exiting status as Priority or Focus is sufficient, or whether it is appropriate to designate an additional category of schools for closing the gap or turning around performance.

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. Starting with 2012 AMOs, schools will be 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 proposed 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 will be retained for consideration.

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

Nineteen schools are eligible for Exemplary School designation. Fifteen of these schools are Title I schools.

High Performance. Fourteen Exemplary Schools met the criteria for designation based on high performance. Ten of these schools were Title I schools. For six of these high performing Title I schools at least 66.7 percent of all students tested were designated in the TAGG.

High Progress. Five Exemplary Schools met the criteria for designation based on high progress. All of these schools were Title I schools. For three of these high progress Title I schools at least 66.7 percent of all students tested were designated in the TAGG.

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 will be exempt from annual approval of ACSIP and will submit ACSIP plans on a 3-year cycle provided these schools continue to meet accountability requirements to be designated an Achieving School (pp.62-64). 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 reduce paperwork burden for these schools and recognize 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 will apply. Exemplary Schools will receive public recognition for their designation and serve a capacity building role in Arkansas as Model Schools that will 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 will 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 established in 2003 and detailed in Arkansas Annotated Code Section 6-15-2107 provides for financial awards to public schools achieving designation as 'schools exceeding standards' or 'schools of excellence' for performance or improvement. The ADE is working collaboratively with the Governor's office, legislators and

stakeholders that collaborated to develop the recognition legislation to determine how these financial rewards can be incorporated into a unitary system to award Exemplary Schools under this program.

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 were based on performance levels from Arkansas criterion-referenced assessments in 2009, 2010 and 2011 for Grades 3 through 8, Algebra and Geometry End of Course Exams, and Grade 11 Literacy Exams. Percentages included all students completing a full academic year, as well as students completing an alternate assessment. Five percent of the 803 Title I schools identified in 2010-11 result in a minimum of 40 Title I Priority Schools, inclusive of SIG schools, and 15 non-Title I schools with commensurate low performance. Priority Schools were identified from among all schools in 2010-2011, 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 was 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.

1. Schools were ranked on current performance based on 2011 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 2011. 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 2011. Each school was assigned a rank based on this order with 1 representing the highest ranked performance.
    c. An overall rank for 2011 academic achievement was obtained by summing the ranks for mathematics and literacy. Lowest performing schools in 2011 had the highest summed ranks.
2. Schools were ranked on progress by utilizing the added ranks method for 2009, 2010 and 2011 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 2009 and 2010 were obtained by summing the ranks for mathematics and literacy.
d. A 3-year progress ranking was obtained by summing the 2009, 2010 and 2011 overall rank values.

3. A final combined rank score was obtained by creating a weighted sum that included overall rank for performance in 2011 and the overall 3-year progress rank. Three-year progress was weighted 1.0 and 2011 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. A four-year review of completion rates (2007–2010) did not reveal any Title 1high schools or Title I-eligible high schools that demonstrated a persistently low graduation rate (less than 60 percent) over a number of years. Only one year of final four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates was available for analysis.

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.

The ADE proposes to require 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 proposed 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. The Scholastic Audit referenced in the timeline of interventions is a comprehensive needs assessment of the educational system that has been required of all schools designated in Corrective Action under Arkansas' current AYP workbook.

Scholastic Audit is a comprehensive review of the learning environment, organizational efficiency, and academic performance of schools and districts. Audit findings are used to determine the type and level of support necessary to continuously improve student academic performance in each school and district audited. A scholastic audit team evaluates schools and districts using documents developed by the Kentucky Department of Education that are supported by research-based strategies. These documents were revised by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) for use by the state of Arkansas with permission for revision granted by the Kentucky Department of Education. The audit process results in recommendations unique to each school and district to improve teaching and learning. Schools and districts are advised to incorporate these recommendations into their ACSIP. In accordance with Arkansas Annotated Code §6-15-2701, Arkansas Public Schools identified as chronically underperforminb (a school that does not meet adequate yearly proress under NCLB for 3 or more consecutive years) being in school improvement year three and beyond shall participate in a scholastic audit conducted by the ADE or its designees.

Under the Arkansas ESEA Flexibility proposal, Priority Schools will undergo a diagnostic analysis and needs assessment. The findings from this process will be used to develop a 3-year Priority Intervention Plan (PIP). The diagnostic analysis process will be 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 will be 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. Schools must commit to a minimum term of three years of collaboration with an external provider with dissolution allowed only with approval of the ADE. The level of involvement of the lead SI specialist will be deeper than in the prior differentiated accountability model, particularly in ensuring the schools are meeting their interim measurable objectives and intervening earlier to hold schools accountable for progress. Schools will be 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 will be 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) will provide 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 will be 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.

ADE proposes to provide greater specificity and rigor in its requirements and evaluation of external providers for Priority Schools. The ADE will focus 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 will 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 2012-2013 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)*
    - Review of prior Scholastic Audit findings or contract for Scholastic Audit required under state law to include a review of the following elements.
    - 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)*
    - 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.
  - School classroom management/student behavior management practices *(Turnaround Principle 6: School Environment)*
    - A positive behavior and instructional support system is evident and used to improve learning environment. *(Turnaround Principle 5: Collaborative Use of Data for Improvement)*
- 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)*

2012-2013
Year 1, Semester 2:

- ADE-approved external provider selected based on diagnostic needs analysis by district with oversight and guidance from ADE SIS.
  - A CMO or an EMO may apply to be an ADE-approved external provider and enter into a partnership with a district that has Priority School(s) to meet the requirements for intervention for Priority Schools.
- 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 external provider 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 124-125).

- 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)*
- 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)*
- External provider is present and working with staff on a weekly basis at the school site.
- External provider reports weekly progress to ADE oversight team through ADE SIS and to the district superintendent.
- External provider 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.

2013-2014
Year 2

- Priority Schools implement PIP including any changes in the following as specified in the PIP:
    - 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 external provider, school and district progress weekly based on the PIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- External provider 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)*
    - 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 external provider 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.
    - Consequence—ADE oversight of all state and/or categorical funds.

2014-2015
Year 3

- Priority Schools implement PIP including any changes in the following as specified in the PIP:
    - Participation of existing school leader in Arkansas's Master Principal Program.
- ADE SIS monitors external provider, school and district progress weekly based on the PIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- External provider 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 53 for additional details.
    - Consequence—ADE oversight of all state and/or categorical funds.

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 will include at a minimum 10 percent (80) of the Title I schools in Arkansas based on Title I program information from the 2010-2011 school year, 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 will 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. As indicated in the Principle 2 Overview, current NCLB accountability for subgroups and Arkansas's approved minimum N for accountability have resulted in many schools failing to be held accountable for students in underperforming at risk subgroups. Lowering the minimum N to 25 resulted in a small increase to the schools accountable for ESEA subgroups at risk of underperforming, but

not at the magnitude needed to identify schools contributing to Arkansas's persistent gap. Further, the same student may already be counted in multiple groups as mentioned previously in the overview. The ADE proposes to use 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 will be conducted to ensure the use of the TAGG did not mask larger gaps among ESEA subgroups within schools based on the minimum N. Three years of proficiency data were used to ensure Focus Schools were schools with the largest gaps over a persistent period of time.

The ADE proposes to use the TAGG in its calculations for classifying Focus Schools. Annual reporting to the public will include the TAGG and ESEA subgroup indicators, where the subgroup includes 10 ore 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 will be 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 2010 and 2011 graduation rates for Arkansas high schools were used to identify Focus Schools. Calculations were based on the size of the gap in proficiency levels from Arkansas CRTs in 2009, 2010 and 2011 for Grades 3 through 8 and high school for math and literacy End of Course Exams, and included all students completing a full academic year, as well as significantly cognitively disabled students completing an alternate assessment. Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates from 2010 and 2011 were also used as an additional indicator in identifying high schools as Focus Schools.

The magnitude of the achievement gaps for the Focus School determinations was 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 2009, 2010 and 2011 were summed and divided by the sum of the number of valid test scores for math and literacy

for 2009, 2010 and 2011. 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 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. 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. 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 will 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 proposes to engage 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, 27.7 percent of schools do not have a sufficient Non-TAGG population for gap calculation. The TAGG proficiency gap in these schools must be determined using a proxy for the Non-TAGG

population—the median proficiency of all schools' Non-TAGG. Many of these schools will be 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 will be 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 will be critical to provide the flexibility to meet specific low performing students' needs. The ADE proposes to require 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,
    - External provider required if lack of progress after 1 year,
    - 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 will have the option to partner with an external provider to develop and/or implement their TIP during the first year and subsequent years. If a Focus School does not make progress after the first year of implementation, the district will be required to contract with an external provider to ensure appropriate revisions of interventions and to monitor implementation. Focus Schools that fail to make progress after the second year of TIP implementation will be 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.

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 2012-2013

- 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 school improvement specialist, or optionally an external provider 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 external provider.
- The site-based school improvement specialist or external provider submits monthly 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?
    - Review of prior Scholastic Audit findings where applicable (Scholastic Audit required under state law for schools that have been in School Improvement Year 4 and beyond),
    - In the absence of a prior Scholastic Audit, must either contract for a Scholastic Audit or contract with an external provider to assist with a self-audit 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.

2012-2013
Year 1, Semester 1:

- District and school leadership teams work with ADE SIS and/or an ADE approved external provider 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 124-125).
- 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.

- If an external provider is selected to assist the Focus School(s) and district, the external provider will report weekly to ADE SST and SIS.
- The external provider will be expected to engage the school and district leadership team and school board in ongoing development/training to include regular community engagement opportunities.
- 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.

2013-2014
Year 2

- ADE SIS monitors external provider, or site-based school improvement leader school and district progress monthly based on the TIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- External provider reports monthly to ADE SIS and district superintendent detailing school's and district'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 external providers (where applicable) 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, an approved external provider will be required to facilitate the implementation of the TIP.

2014-2015
Year 3

- ADE SIS monitors external provider or site-based school improvement leader, school and district progress monthly based on the TIP and the interim measurable objectives.
- External provider reports monthly to ADE SIS and district superintendent detailing school's and district'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 and external providers (where applicable) 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, an approved external provider will be required 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.

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.

1. 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.
    a. 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.

b. 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.
c. 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.
d. 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.
e. 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.

2. 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. The Scholastic Audit revealed concerns with all three areas of Academic Performance and concerns with School Culture, specifically teacher beliefs and practices for high 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.
    a. 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.
    b. 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.
    c. 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.
    d. 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.
    e. 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.

f. Multidisciplinary teams participates in ELs and/or SWD professional development to differentiate cultural and linguistic differences from disabilities in special education.

g. Alternately, a district may elect to work with an approved 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 in that each school's AMOs are based on their 2011 proficiency and reducing the proficiency gap or growth gap in half by 2017. 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 of all ESEA subgroups toward meeting AMOs are reported provides schools with an incentive to investigate and address the factors contributing to achievement gaps across the full spectrum of each school's diversity.

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.

Total # of Title I schools in the State: ___803__
Total # of Title I-participating high schools in the State with graduation rates less than 60%: _____4_
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. Thirty-one of the Focus Schools are high schools with large TAGG/Non-TAGG and NCLB Subgroup achievement and graduation rate gaps.
Total # of Exemplary (Reward) Schools: 19 with a subset of 15 Title I Schools.
Total # of Priority Schools: 48 with a subset of 41 Title I Priority Schools.
Total # of Focus Schools: 110 with a subset of 83 Title I Focus Schools.

- Table 2 was constructed using the key from the USDE ESEA Flexibility Request document.

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**

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
DISTRICT 1	SCHOOL 1			C	
DISTRICT 2	SCHOOL 2			C	
DISTRICT 3	SCHOOL 3			C	
FORT SMITH SCHOOL DISTRICT	TRUSTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	050633000377		C, E	
DISTRICT 5	SCHOOL 5			C, D-2	
DISTRICT 6	SCHOOL 6			C	
DISTRICT 7	SCHOOL 7			C	
DISTRICT 8	SCHOOL 8			C	
DISTRICT 9	SCHOOL 9			C	
PULASKI CO. SPEC. SCHOOL DIST.	JACKSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	051185000919		C, D-2, E	
DISTRICT 9	SCHOOL 11			C	
DISTRICT 10	SCHOOL 12			C	
N. LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	ROSE CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL	051068000803		C, E	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	HALL HIGH SCHOOL	050900000616		C, E	
DISTRICT 11	SCHOOL 15			C	
DISTRICT 11	SCHOOL 16			C	
DISTRICT 11	SCHOOL 17			C	
DISTRICT 11	SCHOOL 18			C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	J.A. FAIR HIGH SCHOOL	050900001389		C, E	
DISTRICT 11	SCHOOL 20			C	
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT	CLOVERDALE AEROSPACE TECH	050900001387		C, E	
MARVEL SCHOOL DISTRICT	MARVELL HIGH SCHOOL	050951000520		C, E	
HELENA/W. HELENA SCHOOL DIST.	CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL	050768000476		C, E	
DISTRICT 14	SCHOOL 24			C	
OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT	OSCEOLA MIDDLE SCHOOL	051095000823		C, E	

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT	OSCEOLA HIGH SCHOOL	051095000825		C, E	
DISTRICT 15	SCHOOL 27			C	
DISTRICT 15	SCHOOL 28			C	
DISTRICT 16	SCHOOL 29			C	
DISTRICT 17	SCHOOL 30			C	
DISTRICT 17	SCHOOL 31			C	
DISTRICT 17	SCHOOL 32			C	
DISTRICT 18	SCHOOL 33			C	
DISTRICT 19	SCHOOL 34			C	
DISTRICT 20	SCHOOL 35			C	
DISTRICT 21	SCHOOL 36			C	
DISTRICT 22	SCHOOL 37			C	
DISTRICT 23	SCHOOL 38			C	
DISTRICT 24	SCHOOL 39			C	
DISTRICT 24	SCHOOL 40			C	
DOLLARWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT	DOLLARWAY HIGH SCHOOL	050541000235		C, E	
DISTRICT 25	SCHOOL 42			C	
DISTRICT 26	SCHOOL 43			C	
DISTRICT 27	SCHOOL 44			C	
DISTRICT 28	SCHOOL 45			C	
DISTRICT 29	SCHOOL 46			C	
DISTRICT 30	SCHOOL 47			C	
DISTRICT 31	SCHOOL 48			C	
DISTRICT 33	SCHOOL 49				F, G
DISTRICT 34	SCHOOL 50				F, G
DISTRICT 34	SCHOOL 51				F, G
DISTRICT 36	SCHOOL 52				F, G
DISTRICT 37	SCHOOL 53				F, G
DISTRICT 37	SCHOOL 54				F, G
DISTRICT 39	SCHOOL 55				F, G

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
DISTRICT 39	SCHOOL 56				F, G
DISTRICT 39	SCHOOL 57				F, G
DISTRICT 42	SCHOOL 58				F, G
DISTRICT 43	SCHOOL 59				F, G
DISTRICT 43	SCHOOL 60				F, G
DISTRICT 43	SCHOOL 61				F, G
DISTRICT 43	SCHOOL 62				F, G
DISTRICT 47	SCHOOL 63				F, G
DISTRICT 47	SCHOOL 64				F, G
DISTRICT 47	SCHOOL 65				F, G
DISTRICT 47	SCHOOL 66				F, G
DISTRICT 51	SCHOOL 67				F, G
DISTRICT 52	SCHOOL 68				F, G
DISTRICT 52	SCHOOL 69				F, G
DISTRICT 52	SCHOOL 70				F, G
DISTRICT 55	SCHOOL 71				F, G
DISTRICT 55	SCHOOL 72				F, G
DISTRICT 57	SCHOOL 73				F, G
DISTRICT 57	SCHOOL 74				F, G
DISTRICT 59	SCHOOL 75				F, G
DISTRICT 60	SCHOOL 76				F, G
DISTRICT 60	SCHOOL 77				F, G
DISTRICT 62	SCHOOL 78				F, G
DISTRICT 63	SCHOOL 79				F, G
DISTRICT 63	SCHOOL 80				F, G
DISTRICT 65	SCHOOL 81				F, G
DISTRICT 66	SCHOOL 82				F, G
DISTRICT 67	SCHOOL 83				F, G
DISTRICT 68	SCHOOL 84				F, G
DISTRICT 68	SCHOOL 85				F, G

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
DISTRICT 68	SCHOOL 86				F, G
DISTRICT 68	SCHOOL 87				F, G
DISTRICT 72	SCHOOL 88				F, G
DISTRICT 73	SCHOOL 89				F, G
DISTRICT 73	SCHOOL 90				F, G
DISTRICT 73	SCHOOL 91				F, G
DISTRICT 76	SCHOOL 92				F, G
DISTRICT 76	SCHOOL 93				F, G
DISTRICT 78	SCHOOL 94				F, G
DISTRICT 78	SCHOOL 95				F, G
DISTRICT 80	SCHOOL 96				F, G
DISTRICT 81	SCHOOL 97				F, G
DISTRICT 82	SCHOOL 98				F, G
DISTRICT 82	SCHOOL 99				F, G
DISTRICT 84	SCHOOL 100				F, G
DISTRICT 84	SCHOOL 101				F, G
DISTRICT 86	SCHOOL 102				F, G
DISTRICT 87	SCHOOL 103				F, G
DISTRICT 88	SCHOOL 104				F, G
DISTRICT 88	SCHOOL 105				F, G
DISTRICT 90	SCHOOL 106				F, G
DISTRICT 91	SCHOOL 107				F, G
DISTRICT 92	SCHOOL 108				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 109				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 110				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 111				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 112				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 113				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 114				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 115				F, G

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 116				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 117				F, G
DISTRICT 93	SCHOOL 118				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 119				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 120				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 121				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 122				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 123				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 124				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 125				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 126				F, G
DISTRICT 103	SCHOOL 127				F, G
DISTRICT 112	SCHOOL 128				F, G
DISTRICT 112	SCHOOL 129				F, G
DISTRICT 112	SCHOOL 130				F, G
DISTRICT 115	SCHOOL 131				F, G
DISTRICT 116	SCHOOL 132				F, G
DISTRICT 117	SCHOOL 133				F, G
DISTRICT 117	SCHOOL 134				F, G
DISTRICT 117	SCHOOL 135				F, G
DISTRICT 120	SCHOOL 136				F, G
DISTRICT 121	SCHOOL 137				F, G
DISTRICT 121	SCHOOL 138				F, G
DISTRICT 123	SCHOOL 139				F, G
DISTRICT 124	SCHOOL 140				F, G
DISTRICT 125	SCHOOL 141				F, G
DISTRICT 125	SCHOOL 142				F, G
DISTRICT 125	SCHOOL 143				F, G
DISTRICT 125	SCHOOL 144				F, G
DISTRICT 129	SCHOOL 145				F, G

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
DISTRICT 129	SCHOOL 146				F, G
DISTRICT 131	SCHOOL 147				F, G
DISTRICT 131	SCHOOL 148				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 149				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 150				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 151				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 152				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 153				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 154				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 155				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 156				F, G
DISTRICT 133	SCHOOL 157				F, G
DISTRICT 142	SCHOOL 158				F, G
DISTRICT 143	SCHOOL 159		A		
DISTRICT 144	SCHOOL 160		A		
DISTRICT 144	SCHOOL 161		A		
DISTRICT 146	SCHOOL 162		A		
DISTRICT 147	SCHOOL 163		A		
DISTRICT 148	SCHOOL 164		A		
DISTRICT 149	SCHOOL 165		A		
DISTRICT 150	SCHOOL 166		A		
DISTRICT 150	SCHOOL 167		A		
DISTRICT 152	SCHOOL 168		B		
DISTRICT 153	SCHOOL 169		B		
DISTRICT 154	SCHOOL 170		A		
DISTRICT 155	SCHOOL 171		A		
DISTRICT 156	SCHOOL 172		B		
DISTRICT 157	SCHOOL 173		A		
DISTRICT 158	SCHOOL 174		A		
DISTRICT 159	SCHOOL 175		B		

LEA Name	SCHOOL NAME	SCHOOL NCES ID#	REWARD SCHOOL	PRIORITY SCHOOL	FOCUS SCHOOL
DISTRICT 160	**SCHOOL 176**		**A**		
DISTRICT 161	**SCHOOL 177**		**B**		
Total # of Schools: 177					

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 ADE proposed 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. Arkansas begins this transition by infusing innovation where appropriate and maintaining important structures that will 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 the existing NCLB accountability workbook for all schools, and feedback from stakeholders received through the consultation process. This proposal includes an intentional re-conceptualization of accountability supports and interventions for all schools through the ADE's SSOS) and the ACSIP. This conception includes a transformation in ADE Learning Services Division's role as well.

The transformation begins 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 2.12). Concomitantly, ADE will focus 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. Currently, the SSOS is spread too thinly to have the intended impacts. 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 will 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 provides a blueprint to accomplish this by aligning recognition, supports, engagement and interventions based on the degree of needs revealed through accountability measures. ADE will constantly monitor 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:
  - Recognition and/or reward;
  - Very low engagement by ADE SSOS except to support/coordinate Model School activities;
  - 3-year ACSIP cycle; and
  - 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; and
  - 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; and
  - High district autonomy;
- Needs Improvement Schools:
  - Low to moderate ADE SSOS engagement differentiated based on degree of identified needs;
  - 1-year ACSIP cycle;
  - Low to high engagement of regional support center staff and resources for local, customized support;
  - 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 or optionally an external provider to monitor,
  - External provider required if lack of progress after 1 year,
  - 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;
    - External provider required to build capacity and support implementation, or optionally a CMO or EMO,
    - 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, as well as the Scholastic Audit process, provide structures and performance standards to guide effective education and continuous improvement to ground this work. The ACSIP handbook, available at http://acsip.state.ar.us/acsip_handbook_march2008.6.3.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 ESEAsubgroups to determine school improvement priorities for action.

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.

The Scholastic Audit process and 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. The Scholastic Audit is required for schools in Focus or Priority School designation because of its usefulness 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 Scholastic Audit 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. A self-assessment tool is available for all other schools (Needs Improvement and Achieving) to use to collect this valuable local data at
http://arkansased.org/programs/pdf/audit_sisi_051910.pdf

The Scholastic Audit self-assessment tool provides detailed performance descriptors and indicators for the school improvement process for districts and schools to gauge their level of effectiveness in nine standards grouped under three key areas.

- Academic Performance:
    - Curriculum

  - Instruction
  - Classroom Assessment/Evaluation
- Learning Environment
  - School Culture
  - Student, Family and Community Support
- Efficiency
  - Leadership
  - Organization, Structure and Resources
  - Comprehensive and Effective Planning

The self-assessment tool provides 88 indicators with examples of evidence to support ratings along a continuum from 1 (Little or No Development or Implementation) to 4 (Exemplary Level of Development or Implementation). The value of the Scholastic Audit as a tool to inform improvement has been established in the literature. In a recent study, Lyons and Barnett (2011) identified three common indicators from the Scholastic Audit that were significant in explaining the variance points or differences between schools that improved in academic achievement and those that failed to improve. These indicators were significant across all grade configurations of schools. They were

- teacher beliefs and practices for high achievement (school culture/effective learning community),
- teachers' care and concern for eliciting students' best work (school culture/effective learning community, and
- students' instructional assistance outside the classroom (student, family and community support).

The Scholastic Audit self-assessment tool is provided as Attachment 22.

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);
- Actions involving Scholastic Audit, if applicable, to address the findings of the audit and to include the Standard and Indicator number (may be an intervention, as well); 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.

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 proposal 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. The first step in this process is differentiating 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.

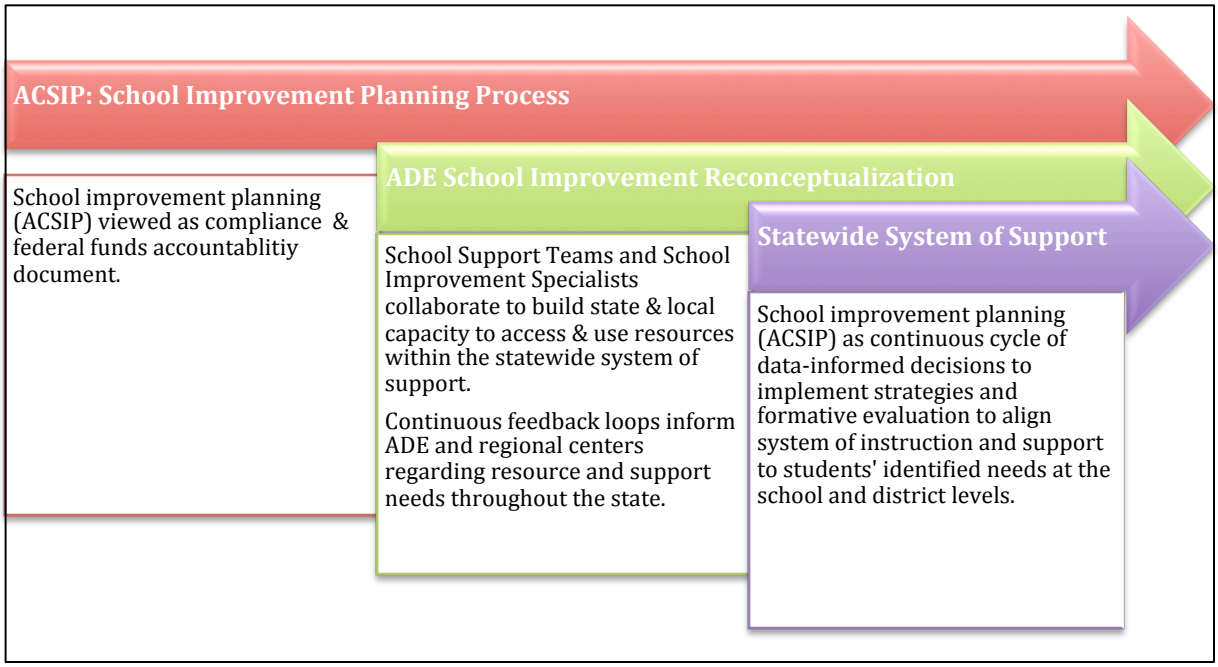


Figure 2.12. Re-conceptualizing the School Improvement Process and Statewide System of Support.

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 59.1 percent in six years (ADE, 2011). 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 will 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 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.

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 2.13 to ensure data will be available to move this re-conceptualization of SSOS from vision to action. The continuous feedback loops in the system will 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 will support 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.

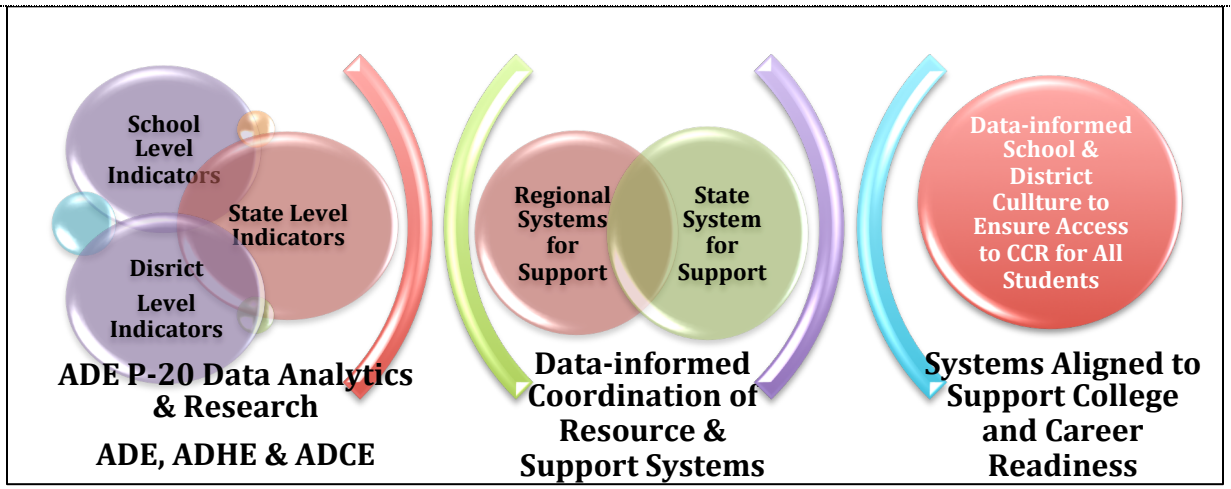


Figure 2.13. Ensuring congruence in level and diversity of need with level and diversity of support.

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.

For example, ADE can gauge the level of relative growth of schools or districts within the state using the Hive data visualizations and analytics system available at http://hive.arkansas.gov/home

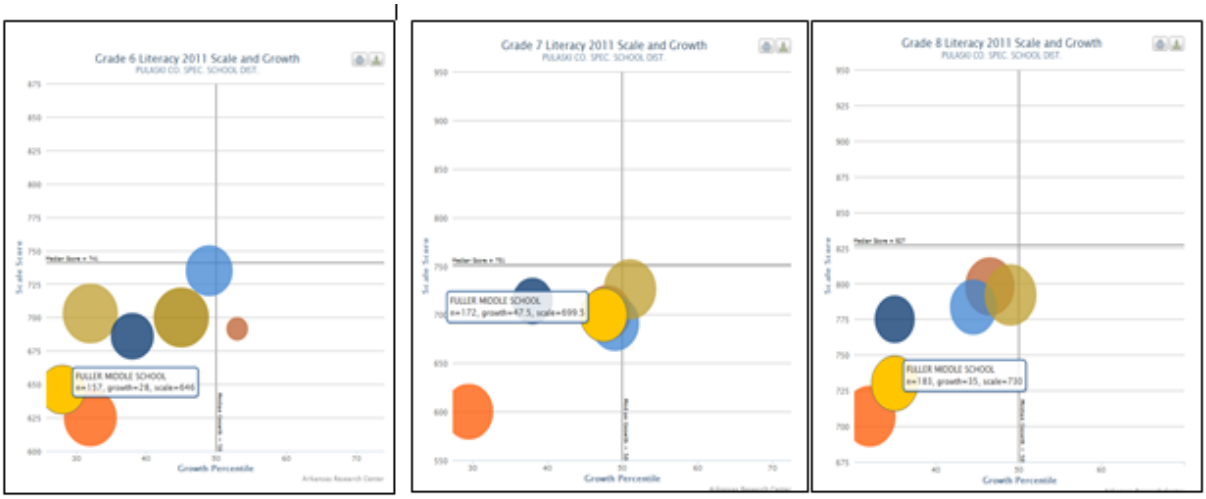


Figure 2.13.1. Median student growth percentiles for middle schools in a school district by grade.

Figure 2.13.1 Illustrates one type of summary information available to districts and schools for

local needs assessment in ACSIP and to ADE in monitoring SSOS relative to districts' and schools' needs. In this example, one year of relative student growth for Fuller Middle School is provided in literacy. Note that Grades 6 and 8 are at the lowest quartile for growth and the lowest quartile for performance relative to other students in the state. In contrast, Grade 7 growth is closer to median growth although performance is still lower than desired. This information is useful to schools in helping to direct local needs assessment. Why are Grades 6 and 8 relative growth so low? What factors are contributing to this? Curriculum alignment? Instructional alignment? Classroom assessment alignment? Classroom expectations for academic press? The information provides the local systems with a place to start digging deeper into the local issues that may be impacting student learning.

At the state level, broader analytics may 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 is incorporating 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 is working 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 will provide critical statewide support to teachers implementing the shift to using much a higher proportion of informational text in literacy instruction. This work will commence in the summer of 2012 with resources developed and released on an ongoing basis.

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 2.12 and 2.13) 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 is envisioning and working toward an enhanced, thematic reporting of critical indicators along the pathway to CCR. The ADE will report annual accountability designations, as well as progress on CCR relevant indicators based on schools' grade range. Color-coding will be 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.

An early concept version of a school accountability report page with color-coding is provided in Figure 2.14. This example was drafted based on elementary and middle level accountability elements. A high school report would include the graduation rate in place of or in addition to the growth columns. Some high schools include Grades 6, 7 and/or 8 and will have growth data. Others will not include these grades and will not have growth measures available until PARCC

assessments are in place. Note how the color-coding of the TAGG and ESEA subgroups immediately draws the eye to any areas of concern for performance. In both examples, these schools would be considered Needs Improvement Schools because AMOs were not met for both subjects, or for both subjects and Graduation Rate in the high school example.

2012 Arkansas School Performance Report

Dr. Going Places, Principal	Grades 6 – 8
On Track Middle School	Enrollment 450
9786 Quality Life Road	Attendance Rate 96.7%
Everytown, AR 99999	School Poverty Rate 58.2%

Achieving School in Literacy				
Literacy	Performance		Growth	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Combined Population	70.8	68.7	72.5	71.9
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	63.8	60.9	68.0	65.4
NCLB Subgroups				
African American	62.0	60.5	63.9	61.7
Hispanic	66.5	63.6	65.0	63.0
White	77.9	77.7	79.6	78.0
Economically Disadvantaged	62.3	60.5	70.0	66.0
English Learners	n < 10	n < 10	n < 10	n < 10
Students with Disabilities	35.4	27.3	49.7	44.0

Needs Improvement School in Math				
Math	Performance		Growth	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Combined Population	70.8	67.7	64.5	62.7
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	56.2	57.0	50.1	51.5
NCLB Subgroups				
African American	51.6	50.2	55.2	53.0
Hispanic	65.8	65.2	65.1	64.3
White	72.6	71.5	75.8	75.0
Economically Disadvantaged	60.7	57.8	60.0	55.0
English Learners	n < 10	n < 10	n < 10	n < 10
Students with Disabilities	10.0	15.9	24.3	25.0

2012 Arkansas School Performance Report

Dr. Fix It, Principal	Grades 9 - 12
Problem Gap High School	Enrollment 1500
5678 Improvement Road	Attendance Rate 96.7%
Everytown, AR 99999	School Poverty Rate 27.0%

Achieving School in Literacy Achieving School in Math				
	Literacy		Math	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
Combined Population	83.2	82.9	83.6	81.9
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	63.8	62.3	69.5	69.1
NCLB Subgroups				
African American	62.0	59.7	74.2	71.6
Hispanic	55.0	48.8	73.1	72.7
White	90.2	88.9	88.4	86.8
Economically Disadvantaged	65.4	63.2	73.8	71.0
English Learners	45.1	39.9	53.1	51.3
Students with Disabilities	47.9	45.8	62.4	61.8

Needs Improvement School Graduation Rate		
	Graduation Rate	
	Actual	Target
Combined Population	85.2	84.9
Targeted Achievement Gap Group	70.5	72.3
NCLB Subgroups		
African American	81.2	80.0
Hispanic	81.5	81.3
White	86.5	86.0
Economically Disadvantaged	68.2	70.3
English Learners	85.3	84.9
Students with Disabilities	76.2	74.8

Figure 2.14. Early conceptualization of school performance report cover page.

On the cover page of this draft school performance report, the link between the ESEA subgroup that did not meet its AMOs is evident as the contributor to the TAGG not meeting its AMO. The targets and the school's performance are readily available for comparison. In instances where the TAGG meets the AMO, but an ESEA subgroup does not, the ESEA subgroup scores will still reflect the red early warning color to draw attention to the needs of this group within the larger TAGG. Again, this is a critical enhancement of transparency of accountability and reporting that includes more schools in accountability for at risk students while providing important information that previously was not as visible because the ESEA subgroups' scores were accompanied by a designation of 'Not Applicable' when the number of students fell below the minimum N of 40.

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 2.12 and 2.13, 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 Scholastic Audit 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

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. Concomitantly, the PARCC will develop interim assessments aligned with the summative tests that will be better suited to inform instructional decisions. The results of these 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 would bring 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 will facilitate 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 will be 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 will be 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 will be 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 will 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 initial 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 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. (pp. 66 – 69), 2.E. (p. 102), 2.F. and (p. 119); 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 will demonstrate 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 will assist 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

Arkansas Annotated Code requires schools designated in need of immediate improvement for two consecutive years as defined under § 6.15.2103 to offer public school choice and/or SES (Arkansas Ann. Code § 6.15.2103(c)(1)(2)). The state accountability indices that result in identification for state-required SES have become outdated since initial standard setting was conducted. Thus, few schools are identified as 'in need of immediate improvement' under these measures. Specifically, the schools currently identified consist of seven Alternate Learning Environment schools and the specialty schools for deaf and blind students. Approval of the ESEA Flexibility proposal would result in incongruent accountability consequences. ADE will

seek changes to address this legislation during the Arkansas General Assembly of 2013, working with the community of stakeholders vested in aligning policies to ensure state efforts and resources identify and meet the needs of underperforming students. The goal is to align the state law to mirror the balance of accountability, ADE oversight and flexibility commensurate to that which is proposed in this ESEA Flexibility request and to achieve congruent systems of accountability and intervention.

ADE will work with these schools during this transition period to incorporate any required SES into their ACSIP in such a manner as to ensure alignment of resources to support state requirements as well as interventions aligned with their designation under the proposed DARTSS. For example, a school designated as Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Priority or Needs Improvement Focus would 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 will review 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

corresponding description and evidence, as appropriate, for the option selected.

Option A	**Option B**
☒ If the SEA has not already developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. the SEA's plan to develop and adopt guidelines for local teacher and principal evaluation and support systems by the end of the 2011–2012 school year; ii. a description of the process the SEA will use to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines; and iii. an assurance that the SEA will submit to the Department a copy of the guidelines that it will adopt by the end of the 2011–2012 school year (see Assurance 14).	☐ If the SEA has developed and adopted all of the guidelines consistent with Principle 3, provide: i. a copy of the guidelines the SEA has adopted (Attachment 10) and an explanation of how these guidelines are likely to lead to the development of evaluation and support systems that improve student achievement and the quality of instruction for students; ii. evidence of the adoption of the guidelines (Attachment 11); and iii. a description of the process the SEA used to involve teachers and principals in the development of these guidelines.

The way the state of Arkansas evaluates teacher effectiveness is changing. The state's new evaluation system requires principals to spend more time in the classrooms observing and analyzing instruction.

The old evaluation relied on a vague checklist of classroom practice. Teachers did not know 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. 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 performance. It requires more time of 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 TESS that defines a system to support high quality classroom instruction and high quality instructional leadership, i.e., effective teaching and leading in Arkansas's schools (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2802). The 2011 Arkansas General Assembly introduced and passed 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. TESS provides statutory direction for reform of teacher and leader evaluation systems. Rules and regulations promulgated as a result of this legislation will provide districts with a blueprint to operationalize a standardized, valid and reliable evaluation and support system focused on professional growth of educators as measured by professional practice as well as student growth and achievement. This evaluation and support system, coupled with Arkansas's longitudinal data system teacher/student link, will provide state, district and school educators with essential feedback to ensure CCR access and achievement for all Arkansas students.

As stated in Arkansas's Annotated Code Section 6-17-2802, the Arkansas General Assembly intended to promote the following objectives 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 intent of this legislation is to support effective instruction and leadership. The objectives are congruent with the requirements in Principle 3 of the ESEA Flexibility Request and provide 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. TESS is a significant part of a comprehensive and coherent differentiated system for accountability, recognition and tiered support. 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 is 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 (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2804).

Rules and regulations pursuant to Arkansas Code Annotated Section 6-17-2804 will serve as the guidelines required under Principle 3.A. of the ESEA Flexibility. The ADE and the Arkansas Board of Education are in the process of promulgating these rules and regulations. It is anticipated the process will be complete by the end of the 2011-2012 school year.

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 achievement. 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 14. Many of the recommendations from the task force were incorporated into TESS.

TESS represents a significant change for educator evaluation in Arkansas. Prior to TESS districts chose or designed their own teacher and administrator evaluation instruments. TESS establishes standards for a consistent and uniform evaluation system for the support and improvement of teacher effectiveness across Arkansas. TESS also specifies 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 must pilot the model created by the ADE or use a nationally recognized model that meets all the requirements of the law and is approved by the ADE by the 2013-2014 school year. The new system of teacher evaluation will be in place for all districts by the 2014-2015 school year. (See Attachment 5: Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-2802).

Rules Development, Stakeholder Input and Adoption Process

TESS includes an evaluation component and a complete support system to ensure evaluation is likely to result in improved practice and where appropriate, employment renewal decisions. TESS includes general requirements for educator evaluation and requires operational details be specified in rules. 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)
  - 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)
  - 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)
  - Representatives from postsecondary institutions' colleges of education and colleges of arts and sciences;
- Arkansas School Boards Association (ASBA)
  - Representatives for district boards of education and state policy development related to boards;
- Arkansas Rural Education Association (AREA)
  - Representatives for small rural and isolated schools' concerns;
- Walton Family Foundation (WFF)
  - Representatives of business and private sector foundations concerns;
- Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC)
  - 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 achievement, 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 achievement into the final 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.

One compelling concern of stakeholders communicated through the regional meetings and the rules committee regards the selection of an appropriate growth model for use in TESS. Constituents have expressed some agreement with the concept of using growth measures in TESS, and concomitantly expressed concerns about how to measure growth in a manner that is sensitive to the variations in demographics and prior achievement in classroom composition. A growth to standard model is currently used in AYP determinations, and a student growth percentile model is used to provide schools with data visualizations of relative student growth. These growth models have limitations and/or drawbacks that inhibit consensus for inclusion in TESS at the time of this proposal. The growth model used in NCLB AYP determinations is limited to use with the Grades 3 through 8 Arkansas CRTs. It is scale dependent and it leaves primary grades and high schools without a summative growth measure.

The student growth percentile model used in Arkansas's data visualization tool to inform students'

relative growth may be calculated across different tests and applied at all tested levels; however, administrators and teachers have raised concerns because of the normative measure of student growth. Further, some conceptions of evidence of student growth involve more qualitative interpretations of this component of TESS. The rules committee has heard these concerns and is deliberating how to include measures of growth in TESS, particularly as Arkansas transitions to PARCC assessments. The rules committee has acknowledged these disagreements are potential obstacles to implementing the law. Thus it is important to build consensus for what constitutes appropriate measures of student growth, and that these measures are congruent with what is valued and provide the best unbiased estimates of student growth compared to expected student growth.

Another concern the rules committee is deliberating is that of weighting student achievement and growth in the determination of an educators' overall performance level. Evidence of student growth is a significant part of TESS, and discussion has centered on the extent to which student achievement and growth outcomes were intended to be included in the system. Notes from rules committee meetings indicate the constituents have different interpretations of the intended weighting. As a result of these concerns, the rules committee has asked to incorporate modeling the impact of the inclusion of student achievement and growth measures at various weights within the 2012-2013 pilot implementation districts to identify and address the concerns that are contributing to these differing viewpoints of what constitutes evidence of growth.

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 proposes to use a threshold for expected growth that would act as a trigger for concerns and 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 ACTAAP assessments are expected to be used as external assessments in the determination of teachers' ratings. The ADE proposes 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 threshold will be determined prior to the start of 2012-2013 school year after ADE modeling of teacher level growth summary statistics using Growth to Standard (GS) and Student Growth Percentile (SGP) growth models. After modeling, the threshold information will be 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 Learning Plan (PLP) 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 will provide 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.

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 PLP 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 will 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 will allow administrators to take the pulse of implementation of recommended improvements in instructional strategies at the classroom level. Formative observations will be 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 will 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 will 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 will assist educators 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, will receive assistance to enhance their professional practice and to implement all aspects of CCSS. The differentiated support provided in the system will inform 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 achievement 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 PLP. 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 three 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 3.1 provides an overview of the differentiated support based on ratings.

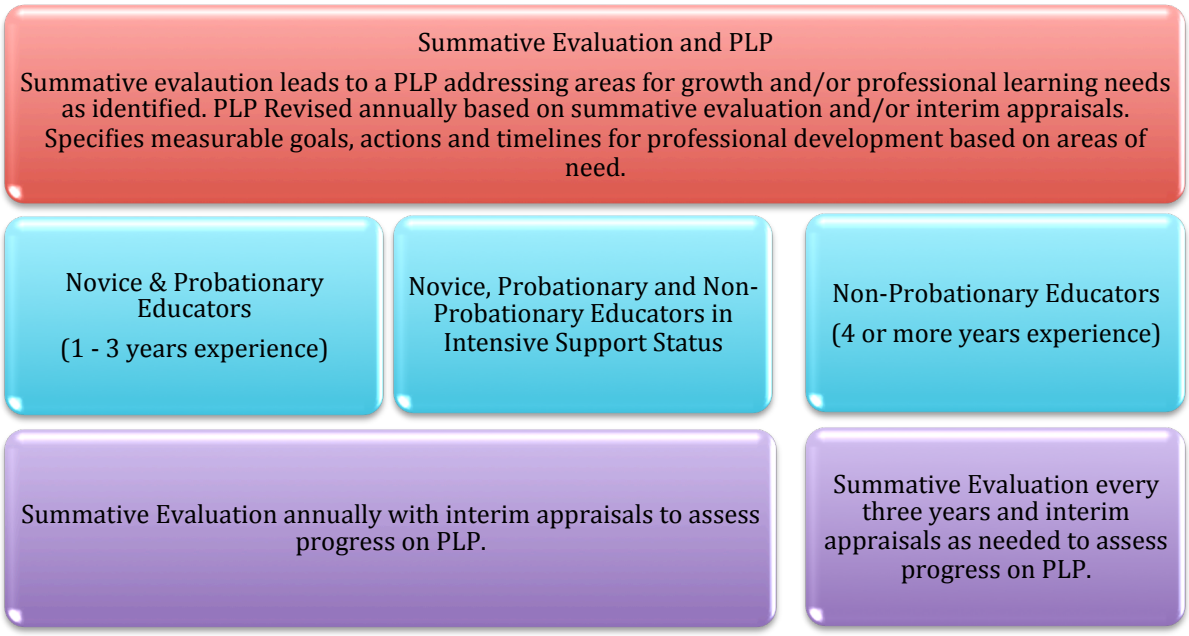

Figure 3.1. Overview of TESS and differentiated system of support.

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 PLP 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.

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 may be available include the GS growth model percentages, median SGP using the SGP model, and/or results from local district or school measures of achievement.

- GS statistics are available for Grades 4 to 8 in math and literacy using the ACTAAP CRT assessments.
- Median SGP are available for
    - Grades 1 – 9 for Reading and Math on ACTAAP NRT exams
    - Grades 3 – 8 for math and literacy on ACTAAP CRT exams
    - Grade 11 literacy, End of Course Algebra and End of Course Geometry on ACTAAP CRT exams
    - Grades 5 and 7 science on ACTAAP NRT or CRT exams and End of Course Biology ACTAAP CRT exams

The pending 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. These 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 pending 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 will achieve Proficient ratings in professional practice and at least moderate 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 proposes 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 ACTAAP assessments are expected to be used as external assessments in the determination of teachers' ratings. The ADE proposes 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 threshold will be determined prior to the start of 2012-2013 school year after ADE modeling of teacher level growth summary statistics using GS and SGP growth models. After modeling, the threshold information will be 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 PLP 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' PLP. The *Framework for Teaching's* detailed performance descriptors provide guidance to the educator and evaluator for formulating goals within the PLP, enhancing the understanding of evaluators and educators in the evidence required to demonstrate proficient and distinguished practice. Differentiated PLPs will reflect the differentiated professional growth needs of educators and allow districts and schools to provide resources and supports based on the differentiated PLPs. 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). For tested content areas, half of the artifacts must derive 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 the ADE through the final rules for TESS. Artifacts that provide clear, concise, evidentiary data to improve student achievement 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;
- State-level assessments including End-of-Course assessments, statewide assessments of student achievement and career and technical assessments; and
- National assessments including AP assessments, NRTs and career and technical assessments.

If the teacher and evaluator do not agree, the evaluator has the final decision regarding the external assessment measures to use in the evaluation, provided the measures meet the guidelines established in rule. An external assessment measure is defined as a measure of student achievement that is administered, developed and scored by a person or entity other than the teacher being evaluated, except that the assessment may be monitored by a licensed individual designated by the evaluator. The rules committee is deliberating the guidelines for inclusion in the rules for ensuring districts

select and use valid measures in the determination of performance ratings. Legislation states for non-tested areas, the type of artifact that may be used to satisfy the external assessment measure shall be determined in rule. The rules committee will outline an approved list of external measures in addition to the guidelines provided in the rules. Final approved measures and guidelines will be included in rules before the end of the 2011-2012 year.

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. The final rules will include the specific components that must be addressed for the specialty teachers' evaluation rubrics and external assessment measures to ensure valid and reliable performance ratings.

The statewide system will be deemed the standard evaluation process. However, school districts will have the option to develop a system of evaluation as long as it meets the states expectations for validity and reliability as specified in final 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 will 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 must have those in place during the 2012-2013 school year. Requests to use an alternate model must be submitted to ADE for review by December 31, 2012. ADE is developing the process and criteria for these reviews.

State assessments will be used for one measure of student growth in tested areas and grades. In addition, districts will be responsible for determining which non-state required measures should be used to rate educator impact on student learning, for example student portfolios, capstone projects and performance based assessments. What these district-determined measures will look like is still being defined. ADE will develop and disseminate guidance for their development, as well as guidance on how to use these measures within the evaluation framework. ADE guidance will be disseminated by July 2012.

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 learns through the 2012-2013 pilot districts' implementation strengths and challenges. Initial safeguards will include but not be limited to the following.

- Training provided during the summer of 2012 will enable evaluators to familiarize themselves with the Danielson framework and the rubrics for rating educators during summative, interim and formative evaluations.

- The TeachScape tool itself provides a standard structure for recording observations within the Danielson framework and rubric descriptions.
- Role-play and think-aloud modeling strategies employed during the evaluator trainings will 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 could be used to address concerns about this teacher's 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, this 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 will be no different. The ADE will analyze relevant evaluation data collected from districts to ensure the evaluation rule is being implemented effectively and with consistency statewide. During the pilot years, these analyses will be more frequent to allow for mid-course corrections and revision of guidance to ensure rapid movement toward statewide consistency. Once TESS implementation is more fully established within a district culture of continuous improvement, analyses may be conducted on an annual basis to ensure continued high consistency in implementation. Additionally, summary findings based on annual analyses will be publicly reported to ensure 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 is sponsoring a pilot for the principal evaluation system with ten school districts during the 2011-2012 school year. Dr. Kamm has 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 will be made to the framework, rubrics and forms for a statewide system of principal evaluation.

After final revisions are complete, ADE will support legislation in the 2013 legislative session to implement the principal evaluation system. If successful, ADE will promulgate rules with the same process as followed in the teacher evaluation rules. Training will be provided on the new principal evaluation system to all administrators in the summer of 2014. Districts must fully implement the new system in the 2014-2015 school year.

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 are some decisions to be made in promulgating rules. The State Board of Education will approve the rules for TESS by summer of 2012. During the 2012-2013 school year, the statewide professional development plan will ensure all teachers and administrators in the state receive training on the new teacher evaluation system. All administrators will receive training in the principal evaluation system during the summer of 2014. The teacher evaluation systems will be piloted statewide in the 2013-2014 school year and fully implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. The principal evaluation system will be implemented in 2014-2015. 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 will be inter-rater reliability. 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 will 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 is being 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 will provide resources and training to districts for implementation of the evaluation systems and ensure district ACSIP include appropriate resources and support for school level implementation. Once the final rules for TESS are approved, the ADE will work on guidance for districts to assist in planning and implementing TESS. This guidance will develop iteratively as ADE finalizes and implements professional development for evaluators and teachers, receives feedback from these 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 is restructuring the mentoring process for new teachers, principals and superintendents to align with the new evaluation systems.

The ADE will review the fidelity of implementation and outcome measures throughout the implementation of TESS. Arkansas's longitudinal data system will support a culture of effective data use across multiple agencies vested in the outcomes of the P-20 system. Continuous feedback within DARTSS will provide 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 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 will support local decision-making regarding teacher and leader effectiveness by providing appropriate reports linking student and adult performance.

TESS will become the vehicle to drive self-reflection, self-assessment and more objective measures to guide professional growth for educators. Performance ratings will 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 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 will continue to 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.

During the 2012-2013 school year, 11 schools were chosen to pilot TESS. Teachers and principals will provide ADE with feedback regarding the training provided prior to implementation, suggestions for additional assessment measures and the incorporation of student growth into the rubric. The National Office of Research, Measurement and Evaluation Systems (NORMES) will assist ADE in survey research and data analysis to determine if adjustments need to be made to the legislation or rules to better implement the system. All schools in the state will pilot the system in the 2013-2014 school year. ADE will continue to gather data during the statewide pilot. ADE will also form a technical advisory committee comprised of teachers, administrators, researchers and other stakeholders to review feedback and data and to recommend revisions to the system. The system will be fully implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. ADE will continue to gather data to evaluate the system.

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 in the law. Danielson's framework and the training provided to all administrators on the framework will provide LEAs with the support and guidance needed to ensure student growth is a significant factor in the summative evaluation. Arkansas law does not provide for the option of an overall percentage to be tied to a teacher's summative evaluation. TESS is designed to promote professional learning and professional growth. The framework will be the impetus for professional conversations and self-reflection not provided for in the current system.

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	Sep.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 16)	Many people in a short time period, cost factor, and delivery of training; certification test for evaluators; time spent away from districts by school personnel
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

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 new PARCC assessments
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		Any revisions needed will have to be completed in a very short turnaround before the start of the next year
Full implementation of TESS	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 PARCC assessments
Full implementation of Principal Evaluation	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 PARCC assessments