

Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program Act

Title 6 Education

Subtitle 2. Elementary And Secondary Education Generally

Chapter 15 Educational Standards and Quality Generally

Subchapter 4 -- Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program Act

**6-15-401. Title.**

This subchapter shall be known as and may be cited as the "Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program Act".

**6-15-402. Purpose.**

**(a) (1) (A)** The purpose of this subchapter is to provide the statutory framework necessary to ensure that all students in the public schools of this state have an equal opportunity to demonstrate grade-level academic proficiency through the application of knowledge and skills in core academic subjects consistent with state curriculum frameworks, performance standards, and assessments.

**(B) (i)** The State of Arkansas recognizes and declares that students who are not performing at grade-level standards of academic proficiency are especially harmed by social promotion because they are not equipped with the necessary academic skills to be successful and productive members of society.

**(ii)** For this reason, the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program will emphasize point-in-time intervention and remediation upon the discovery that any student is not performing at grade level.

**(C)** The state is committed to all students having the opportunity to perform at their age-appropriate grade level and beyond.

**(2) (A)** This subchapter is constructed around a system that includes statewide indicators, individual school improvement indicators, and a locally generated school accountability narrative.

**(B)** The total program shall be applied to each school in the state public school system.

**(3)** This subchapter is designed to be a multiyear commitment to assess the academic progress and performance of Arkansas's public school students, classrooms, schools, and school districts.

**(4) (A)** It shall also be the purpose of this subchapter to:

**(i)** Provide information needed to improve the public schools by measuring annual learning gains of all students through longitudinal tracking and analysis of value-added computations of student gains against a national cohort to inform parents of the educational progress of their public school children; and

**(ii)** Inform the public of the performance of schools.

**(B)** The program shall be designed to:

**(i)** Assess the annual learning gains of each student toward achieving the academic content standards appropriate for the student's grade level;

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**(ii)** Provide data for building effective staff development programs and school accountability and recognition;

**(iii)** Identify the educational strengths and weaknesses of students and help the teacher tailor instruction to the needs of the individual student;

**(iv)** Assess how well academic goals and performance standards are met at the classroom, school, school district, and state levels;

**(v)** Provide information to aid in the evaluation and development of educational programs and policies;

**(vi)** Provide information on the performance of Arkansas students compared with other students from across the United States; and

**(vii)** Identify best practices and schools that are in need of improving their practices.

**(b)** The purposes of the assessment and accountability program developed under this subchapter shall be to:

**(1)** Improve student learning and classroom instruction;

**(2)** Provide public accountability by:

**(A)** Mandating expected achievement levels;

**(B)** Reporting on school and school district performance; and

**(C)** Applying a framework for state action for a school or school district that fails expected achievement levels as defined in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program rules and regulations; and

**(3)** Provide evaluation data of school and school district performance in order to assist policymakers at all levels in decision making.

**(c)** The priorities of the assessment and accountability program developed pursuant to the provisions of this subchapter shall include:

**(1)** All students to have an opportunity to demonstrate increased learning and completion at all levels, to graduate from high school, and to enter postsecondary education or the workforce without remediation;

**(2)** Students to demonstrate that they meet the expected academic standards consistently at all levels of their education;

**(3)** Academic standards for every level of the grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) education system to be aligned and education financial resources to be aligned with student performance expectations at each level of the grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) education system; and

**(4)** The quality of educational leadership at all levels of grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) education to be improved.

**6-15-403. Authority of State Board of Education.**

(a) The State Board of Education through the Department of Education shall:

(1) Develop a single comprehensive testing, assessment, and accountability program which utilizes the most current and effective testing, evaluation, and assessment research information designed to achieve the following purposes set forth in this subchapter:

- (A) Set clear academic standards that are periodically reviewed and revised;
- (B) Establish professional development;
- (C) Establish expected achievement levels;
- (D) Report on student achievement and other indicators;
- (E) Provide evaluation data;
- (F) Recognize academic excellence and failure;
- (G) Apply awards and sanctions; and
- (H) Comply with current federal and state law and state board rules and regulations;

(2) Promulgate rules and regulations as may be necessary to develop and implement the comprehensive testing, assessment, and accountability program;

(3) Employ staff and enter into contracts as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this subchapter;

(4) Classify school services, designate the licensure subject areas, establish competencies, including the use of technology to enhance student learning and licensure requirements for all school-based personnel, and prescribe rules in accordance with initial, standard, and provisional licenses;

(5) Identify critical teacher shortage areas; and

(6) Collect and maintain the management information databases for all components of the public kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) education system.

(b) To transition to and implement the Common Core State Standards, the State Board of Education may:

(1) Modify curriculum and assessment requirements;

(2) Adopt new curriculum and assessment requirements; and

(3) Direct the Department of Education to:

(A) Propose to the state board rules and procedures; and

(B) Develop the professional development needed to train educators on the transition and implementation.

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#### **6-15-404. Program implementation.**

- (a) (1)** The State Board of Education shall establish clear, specific, and challenging academic content standards which define what students shall know and be able to do in each content area.
- (2)** Instruction in all public schools shall be based on these academic content standards.
- (b)** The state board shall establish a schedule for periodic review and revision of academic content standards to ensure that Arkansas academic content standards are rigorous and equip students to compete in the global workforce.
- (c)** The state board shall include the following elements in the periodic review and revision of Arkansas academic content standards:
- (1)** External review by outside content standards experts;
- (2)** Review and input by higher education, workforce education, and community members;
- (3)** Study and consideration of academic content standards from across the nation and the international level as appropriate;
- (4)** Study and consideration of evaluation from national groups or organizations as appropriate;
- (5)** Revisions by committees of Arkansas teachers and instructional supervisor personnel from public schools, assisted by teachers from institutions of higher education; and
- (6)** Public dissemination of revised academic content standards at the state board meeting and Department of Education website.
- (d)** The state board shall establish a clear, concise system of reporting the academic performance of each school on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments that conforms with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.
- (e) (1)** The state board shall develop and the department shall implement a developmentally appropriate uniform school readiness screening to validate a child's school readiness as part of a comprehensive evaluation design.
- (2)** Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, the department shall require that all school districts administer the uniform school readiness screening to each kindergarten student in the school district school system upon the student's entry into kindergarten.
- (3)** Children who enter public school for the first time in first grade must be administered the uniform school readiness screening developed for use in the first grade.
- (f) (1)** The department shall select a developmentally appropriate assessment to be administered to all students in first grade and second grade in reading and mathematics.
- (2)** Professional development activities shall be tied to the comprehensive school improvement plan and designed to increase student learning and achievement.

**(3)** Longitudinal and trend data collection shall be maintained for the purposes of improving student and school performance.

**(4) (A)** A public school or public school district classified as in "school improvement" shall develop and file with the department a comprehensive school improvement plan designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on all portions of state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments.

**(B)** The comprehensive school improvement plan shall include strategies to address the achievement gap existing for any identifiable group or subgroup as identified in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program and the gap of that subgroup from the academic standard.

**(g) (1)** The department shall develop and implement an augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessment program that is valid, reliable, externally linked to a national norm, and vertically scaled for public school students in grades three through eight (3-8), which measures application of knowledge and skills in reading and writing literacy and mathematics.

**(2)** Science, civics, and government shall be measured on a schedule as determined by the state board.

**(h) (1)** The State of Arkansas shall participate in the administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress examinations.

**(2) (A)** Any student failing to achieve the established standard on the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations shall be evaluated by school personnel, who shall jointly develop with the student's parents an academic improvement plan to assist the student in achieving the expected standard in subject areas in which performance is deficient.

**(B)** The academic improvement plan shall describe the parent's role and responsibilities as well as the consequences for the student's failure to participate in the plan.

**(i) (1)** Each school shall develop one (1) comprehensive, long-range school improvement plan focused on student achievement which shall be reported to the public.

**(2) (A) (i)** Any school that fails to achieve expected levels of student performance on the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations and related indicators, as defined in this subchapter, shall participate in a school improvement plan accepted by the department.

**(ii)** This improvement plan shall assist those students performing below grade level in achieving the expected standard.

**(B)** Progress on improved achievement shall be included as part of the school's annual report and the school district's annual report to the public.

**(j) (1)** The department and the local school districts shall annually compile and disseminate to the public results of all required examinations.

**(2)** The results of end-of-course testing shall become a part of each student's transcript or permanent record and shall be recorded on these documents in a manner prescribed by the state board.

**(k) (1)** Parents, students, families, educational institutions, and communities are collaborative partners in education, and

each plays an important role in the success of individual students. Therefore, the State of Arkansas cannot be the guarantor of each individual student's success.

(2) The goals of Arkansas's grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) educational system are not guarantees that each individual student will succeed or that each individual school will perform at the level indicated in the goals.

**6-15-405. [Repealed.]**

**6-15-406. Assessment of basic skills.**

The comprehensive testing, assessment, and accountability program to be developed by the Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education shall include, but is not limited to, the following components or characteristics:

- (1) Assessment of academic achievement at grade levels selected to be tested by the department;
- (2) Longitudinal and trend data collection for the purposes of improving student and school performance;
- (3) A variety of assessment methods;
- (4) Construction of a database composed of academic performance indicators that shall apply to every school and school district in the state that will allow the department, over time, to identify those schools and school districts that are performing at or below proficient levels established under this subchapter;
- (5) Meaningful comparisons of Arkansas students with those of other states, regions, and the nation through the National Assessment of Educational Progress Examination and norm-referenced examinations; and
- (6) Review and assistance to the department in developing the comprehensive testing, assessment, and accountability program by a panel of external psychometric experts.

**6-15-407. Basic competency tests generally.**

(a) The "Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program" means a system of measurement and reporting designed to ensure that all students in the public schools of this state demonstrate academic achievement through the application of knowledge and skills in core academic subjects consistent with state curriculum frameworks and performance standards.

(b) Neither the program nor any other assessment or testing procedure used in the public schools shall test or assess students' religious beliefs, political beliefs, ethics, attitudes, or values.

(c) Public school testing or assessment of student self-esteem, mental health, emotional health, or home or family life shall not be permitted.

(d) The nonacademic assessment of student conduct for the purpose of encouraging good behavior and decorum at school shall be permitted.

**6-15-408 -- 6-15-413. [Repealed.]**

**6-15-414. Testing additional grade levels.**

At the direction of the State Board of Education, the Department of Education shall cause assessment instruments to be administered at additional grade levels as may be necessary to measure educational achievement in the public schools of this state.

**6-15-415. Public availability of test instruments and scores.**

(a) Any material containing the identifiable scores of individual students on any test taken pursuant to the provisions of this subchapter shall not be considered a public record within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq., and shall not be disseminated or otherwise made available to the public by any member of the State Board of Education, any employee of the Department of Education, any member of the board of directors of a school district, any employee of a school district, or any other person, except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g.

(b) All analyses, reports, and compilations of test scores which do not contain personal and identifiable education information shall be considered a public record within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act of 1967, § 25-19-101 et seq.

(c) In order to protect the validity and reliability of the basic competency tests, the test instruments shall not be made available to the general public.

**6-15-416 -- 6-15-418. [Repealed.]**

**6-15-419. Definitions.**

The following definitions shall apply in this subchapter and in § 6-15-2001 et seq., § 6-15-2101 et seq., §§ 6-15-2301, 6-15-2401, and 6-18-227:

(1) "ACT" means the ACT assessment for college placement administered by ACT, Inc.;

(2) "Academic content standards" means standards that are approved by the State Board of Education and that set the skills to be taught and mastery level for each grade and content area;

(3) (A) "Academic improvement plan" means a plan detailing supplemental or intervention and remedial instruction, or both, in deficient academic areas for any student who is not proficient on a portion or portions of the state-mandated Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program.

(B) (i) Such a plan shall be created and implemented by appropriate teachers, counselors, and any other pertinent school personnel.

(ii) All academic improvement plans shall be reviewed annually and revised to ensure an opportunity for student demonstration of proficiency in the targeted academic areas on the next state-mandated Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program.

(iii) A cumulative review of all academic improvement plans shall be part of the data used by the school in creating and revising its comprehensive school improvement plan.

(iv) All academic improvement plans shall be subject to review by the Department of Education.

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**(C)** In any instance in which a student with disabilities identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has an individualized education program that already addresses any academic area or areas in which the student is not proficient on state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments, the individualized education program shall serve to meet the requirement of an academic improvement plan;

**(4)** "Adequate yearly progress" means the level of academic improvement required of public schools or school districts on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments and other indicators as required in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program, which shall comply with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001;

**(5)** "Advanced placement test" means the test administered by the College Board for a high-school-level preparatory course that incorporates the topics specified by the College Board on its standard syllabus for a given subject area and is approved by the College Board;

**(6)** "Annexation" means the joining of an affected school district or part of the school district with a receiving district under § 6-13-1401 et seq. or § 6-13-1601 et seq.;

**(7)** "Annual performance" means the level of academic achievement required of public schools or school districts as measured by assessments and other criteria required under the rules of the State Board of Education;

**(8)** "Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program" means the testing component of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program, which shall consist of:

**(A)** Developmentally appropriate augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), as determined by the state board;

**(B)** Any other assessments as required by the state board;

**(C)** Other assessments that are based on researched best practices as determined by qualified experts that would be in compliance with federal and state law; and

**(D)** End-of-course examinations for designated grades and content areas;

**(9)** "Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program" means a system of measurement and reporting designed to ensure that all students in the public schools of this state demonstrate academic achievement through the application of knowledge and skills in core academic subjects consistent with state curriculum frameworks and performance standards;

**(10)** "College and career readiness measurement" means a set of criterion-referenced measurements of a student's acquisition of the knowledge and skills the student needs to be successful in future endeavors, including credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution, such as a two-year or four-year college, trade school, or technical school, or to embark on a career;

**(11)** "Comprehensive school improvement plan" means the individual school's comprehensive plan based on priorities indicated by assessment and other pertinent data and designed to provide an opportunity for all students to demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program;

**(12)** "Consolidation" means the joining of two (2) or more school districts or parts of the school districts to create a new

single school district under § 6-13-1401 et seq. or § 6-13-1601 et seq.;

**(13) (A)** "District improvement plan" means a districtwide plan coordinating the actions of the various comprehensive school improvement plans within a school district.

**(B)** The main focus of the district improvement plan shall be to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program;

**(14) (A)** "Early intervention" means short-term, intensive, focused, individualized instruction developed from ongoing, daily, systematic diagnosis that occurs while a child is in the initial, kindergarten through grade one (K-1) stages of learning early reading, writing, and mathematical strategies to ensure acquisition of the basic skills and to prevent the child from developing poor problem-solving habits that become difficult to change.

**(B)** The goal is to maintain a student's ability to function proficiently at grade level;

**(15)** "End-of-course assessment" means a criterion-referenced assessment taken during a course of study set by the State Board of Education:

**(A)** To determine whether a student demonstrates, according to a requisite scale score established by rule of the state board, attainment of sufficient knowledge and skills to indicate a necessary and satisfactory mastery of the subject level content in that end-of-course assessment; and

**(B)** For which failure to meet that requisite scale score requires sufficient remediation before a student is entitled to receive full academic credit for the course;

**(16)** "Grade inflation rate" means the statistical gap between actual grades assigned for core classes at the secondary level and student performance on corresponding subjects on nationally normed college entrance exams such as the ACT;

**(17)** "Grade level" means performing at the proficient or advanced level on state-mandated Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program tests;

**(18)** "High school" means grades nine through twelve (9-12);

**(19)** "International Baccalaureate assessment" means an assessment administered by the International Baccalaureate Organization for a course offered under the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program;

**(20)** "Longitudinal tracking" means tracking individual student yearly academic achievement gains based on scheduled and annual assessments;

**(21)** "Middle level" means grades five through eight (5-8);

**(22)** "No Child Left Behind Act" means the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 signed into federal law on January 8, 2002;

**(23)** "Parent" means:

**(A)** A parent, parents, legal guardian, a person standing in loco parentis, or legal representative, as appropriate, of a student; or

**(B)** The student if the student is eighteen (18) years of age or older;

**(24)** "Point-in-time intervention and remediation" means intervention and remediation applied during the academic year upon the discovery that a student is not performing at grade level;

**(25)** "Primary" means kindergarten through grade four (K-4);

**(26)** "Public school" means those schools or school districts created pursuant to Title 6 of the Arkansas Code and subject to the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program except specifically excluding those schools or educational programs created by or receiving authority to exist under § 6-15-501, § 9-28-205, § 12-29-301 et seq., or other provisions of Arkansas law;

**(27)** "Public school in school improvement" or "school in need of immediate improvement" means any public school or public school district identified as failing to meet certain established levels of academic achievement on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments as required by the state board in the program;

**(28)** "Reconstitution" means a reorganization intervention in the administrative unit or governing body of a public school district, including without limitation the suspension, reassignment, replacement, or removal of a current superintendent or the suspension, removal, or replacement of some or all of the current school district board members, or both;

**(29) (A) (i)** "Remediation" means a process of using diagnostic instruments to provide corrective, specialized, supplemental instruction to help a student in grades two through four (2-4) overcome academic deficiencies.

**(ii)** For students in grades five through twelve (5-12), remediation shall be a detailed, sequential set of instructional strategies implemented to remedy any academic deficiencies indicated by below-basic or basic performance on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments.

**(B)** Remediation shall not interfere with or inhibit student mastery of current grade level academic learning expectations;

**(30)** "SAT" means the college entrance examination known as the "Scholastic Assessment Test" administered by the College Board;

**(31)** "School or school district in academic distress" means any public school or school district failing to meet the minimum level of academic achievement on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments as required by the state board in the program;

**(32)** "School improvement plan" means the individual school's comprehensive plan based on priorities indicated by assessment and other pertinent data and designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations;

**(33)** "Social promotion" means the passage or promotion from one (1) grade to the next of a student who has not demonstrated knowledge or skills required for grade-level academic proficiency;

**(34)** "Uniform school readiness screening" means uniform, objective evaluation procedures that are geared to either kindergarten or first grade, as appropriate, and developed by the state board and specifically formulated for children entering public school for the first time; and

**(35)** "Value-added computations of student gains" means the statistical analyses of the educational impact of the school's instructional delivery system on individual student learning, using a comparison of previous and posttest student achievement gains against a national cohort.

#### **6-15-420. Remediation and intervention.**

**(a)** In order for students to be academically prepared to achieve proficiency in English language arts and mathematics, the Department of Education shall require each public school serving students in kindergarten through grade four (K-4) to develop, select, and implement ongoing, informal assessments corresponding to the Common Core State Standards.

**(b) (1) (A)** Any student in kindergarten through grade one (K-1) failing to perform at the proficient level in reading and writing literacy or mathematics shall be evaluated as early as possible within each of the kindergarten through grade one (K-1) academic years.

**(B)** Those students shall be evaluated by personnel with expertise in reading and writing literacy or mathematics who shall develop and implement an academic improvement plan, using early intervention strategies sanctioned by the department, to assist the student in achieving the expected standard.

**(2)** Any student in grades two through four (2-4) failing to perform at the proficient level in reading and writing literacy or mathematics shall be evaluated by personnel with expertise in reading and writing literacy or mathematics who shall develop and implement an academic improvement plan, using remediation strategies sanctioned by the department, to assist the student in achieving the expected standard.

**(c) (1)** Upon completion of the intervention and remediation plans in subdivisions (b)(1) and (2) of this section, those schools that fail to achieve expected levels of student performance at the primary level on augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments, as defined in this subchapter, shall participate in a comprehensive school improvement plan accepted by the department.

**(2) (A)** This plan shall be part of each school's long-range comprehensive school improvement plan and shall be reported to the public.

**(B)** Progress on improved achievement shall be included as part of the school and school district's annual report to the public.

**(d) (1)** As part of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program, the department shall ensure that each school and school district establishes a plan to assess whether children in the middle-level and high school grades are performing at proficient levels in reading and writing literacy, mathematics, and, as funds are available, other core academic subjects.

**(2)** Each school and school district shall use multiple assessment measures, which shall include, but not be limited to, state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments.

**(e)** Any student failing to demonstrate a proficient level of achievement in reading and writing literacy, mathematics, or, as funds are available, other core academic subjects shall participate in an individual academic improvement plan specifically designed to achieve proficient-level performance standards in these areas.

#### **6-15-421. Awards and sanctions.**

**(a)** The Department of Education is authorized to develop and implement, contingent upon appropriation and funding being provided by the General Assembly, a program of rewards to recognize individual schools that demonstrate exceptional performance in levels of student achievement and to recognize schools that demonstrate significant improvement in student achievement.

**(b) (1) (A)** Each school that does not attain the expected levels of student performance on state-mandated indicators and individual school improvement indicators shall be designated by one (1) of several levels of sanction.

**(B)** Each level of sanction shall determine specific interventions to be provided to the students of public schools or public school districts by the department.

**(2)** The levels of sanction developed under Acts 2003, No. 1467 shall be incorporated into the existing comprehensive school improvement plan.

**(c)** The State Board of Education shall develop a clear, concise system of reporting the academic performance of each public school on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments, developmentally appropriate assessments for grades kindergarten through two (K-2), benchmark examinations, and end-of-course examinations, which conforms with current state and federal law.

**(d) (1) (A)** Within thirty (30) days of a student's completing a course for which the state board has adopted an end-of-course assessment, the school district shall provide the Division of Public School Accountability of the Department of Education with each student's name, identification number, and grade in the course.

**(B)** The division shall:

**(i)** Match each student's end-of-course test score with the letter grade received in the corresponding course;

**(ii)** Report each student's end-of-course test score matched with the letter grade the student received in the corresponding course to the school district;

**(iii)** Create a report of the percentage of students who received a letter grade of "B" or above in the corresponding course and passed the end-of-course assessment on his or her first attempt; and

**(iv)** Create a report of the percentage of students who received a letter grade of "B" or above in the corresponding course and did not pass the end-of-course assessment on the first attempt.

**(2) (A)** No later than December 1 of each year, the division shall report to the state board and the General Assembly the name, address, and superintendent of any high school in which more than twenty percent (20%) of the students received a letter grade of "B" or above but did not pass the end-of-course assessment on the first attempt.

**(B)** The report shall indicate by high school the number of students receiving a letter grade of "B" or above in the corresponding course who did not pass the end-of-course assessment on the first attempt, provided such disclosure is not in conflict with applicable federal or state law.

**(3)** The department shall:

**(A)** Investigate the classroom practices of any school district in which more than twenty percent (20%) of the students received a letter grade of "B" or above but did not pass the end-of-course assessment on the first attempt; and

**(B)** Make in written form to the superintendent and local school district board of directors any recommendations or changes that would improve classroom instruction and student performance on end-of-course assessments.

**(4)** As a part of the school improvement plan pursuant to § 6-15-2201, the state board shall ensure that each school

district and high school develops strategies to improve student readiness for the public postsecondary level based on annual analysis of the feedback report data.

(5) The department shall biennially recommend to the General Assembly statutory changes to reduce the incidence of postsecondary remediation in mathematics, reading, and writing for recent high school graduates who enroll in an institution of higher education.

(e) The state board, through the department, is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this subchapter.

**6-15-422. Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program progress report.**

The Department of Education shall report to the members of the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education on the progress of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program. The report shall be due on September 1, 1999, and annually thereafter.

**6-15-423. [Repealed.]**

**6-15-424. Rules and regulations.**

The State Board of Education shall establish rules as may be necessary to require the Department of Education to implement a program for identifying, evaluating, assisting, and addressing public schools or public school districts failing to meet established levels of academic achievement on the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments as required in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program.

**6-15-425. School improvement or academic distress.**

A public school or school district identified by the Department of Education as failing to meet established levels of academic achievement shall be classified as being in:

(1) School improvement as required by the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program, § 6-15-401 et seq., rules and regulations;

(2) Academic distress as required under §§ 6-15-428 -- 6-15-431; or

(3) Both, as required by the applicable program rules and regulations.

**6-15-426. School improvement.**

(a) The State Board of Education shall develop a single comprehensive testing, assessment, and accountability program which shall identify and address all public schools or public school districts in school improvement or academic distress and shall be incorporated into the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program rules and regulations which shall comply with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

(b) The school district board president and the superintendent of a public school or school district identified by the Department of Education as being classified as in school improvement shall be notified of the classification in writing by the department via certified mail, return receipt requested, and the school district shall have a right of appeal pursuant to the program rules and regulations which shall comply with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**(c)** The program shall require that any public school or school district in school improvement that fails to make adequate yearly progress as required in the program may, after being afforded all due process rights and in a timely manner required under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 be advanced by the state board to the corrective action or restructuring phase of the program adopted in the program rules and regulations.

**(d)** Any public school or school district classified in school improvement shall comply with all requirements placed on a public school or school district under the program rules and regulations as required by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

**(e)** Each public school or school district shall develop and file with the department a comprehensive school improvement plan which shall be reviewed by the department and shall be designed to ensure that all students have an opportunity to obtain an adequate education and demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments.

**(f)** The comprehensive school improvement plan shall:

**(1)** Be based on an analysis of student performance data and other relevant data that provide a plan of action to address deficiencies in student performance and any academic achievement gap evidenced in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program; and

**(2)** Include the public school or school district's use of categorical funding for:

**(A)** Alternative learning environments;

**(B)** Professional development;

**(C)** English-language learners; and

**(D)** National school lunch students, as defined by § 6-20-2303(12)(A).

**(g)** Any public school or school district classified as in school improvement under § 6-15-425 shall develop and file with the department a revised comprehensive school improvement plan meeting the requirements of this section and containing any additional requirements determined necessary by the department to ensure that all students in the public school or school district have an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated assessments.

**(h)** At the end of each school year, the school district shall assess the effectiveness of an intervention or other action included in the comprehensive school improvement plan in improving student performance and include the assessment in the comprehensive school improvement plan for the following school year.

**(i) (1)** The department shall monitor each public school's and school district's compliance regarding its comprehensive school improvement plan, including without limitation:

**(A)** The use of public school funding under the Public School Funding Act of 2003, § 6-20-2301 et seq., for the following:

**(i)** Instructional facilitators as that term is defined by the state board; and

**(ii)** Alternative learning environments, professional development, English-language learners, and national school lunch students identifying specific:

(a) Educational strategies;

(b) Resources used, including tutors, teachers' aides, counselors, social workers, and nurses; and

(c) Expenditures made from categorical funds provided under § 6-20-2305(b); and

(B) The implementation of programs for students whose academic achievement is below proficient.

(2) As part of the monitoring process under this subsection, the department shall evaluate the research cited by the public school or school district in its comprehensive school improvement plan in support of the proposed interventions and actions to assess its independence and empirical support for the effectiveness of the program.

(3) The department shall use the information obtained through monitoring comprehensive school improvement plans under this section to:

(A) Determine the compliance of the public school or school district with this subchapter;

(B) Evaluate whether the assessment conducted by the public school or school district under subsection (h) of this section was conducted properly; and

(C) Assess the areas in which the public school or school district needs to revise its plan.

(j) The state board shall incorporate the provisions of subsections (f)-(i) of this section into its rules for comprehensive school improvement plans and may amend those rules in the same manner as provided by law for other rules established by the state board.

#### **6-15-427. School district testing programs.**

(a) Each school district board of directors shall annually provide a written evaluation of student performance and achievement within each school of the school district.

(b) This evaluation and suggested measures to improve performance shall be presented in a public hearing in the same locality as the school district and submitted with comments made at the public hearing to the Department of Education.

#### **6-15-428. Academic distress identification, notification, classification, and appeal.**

(a) The school district board president and superintendent of a school district in which the school district or a public school is identified by the Department of Education as being in academic distress shall be notified in writing by the department via certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall have a right of appeal to the State Board of Education.

(b) Any school district identified or in which a public school is identified in academic distress may appeal to the state board by filing a written appeal with the Commissioner of Education via certified mail, return receipt requested, within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the written notice of academic distress status from the department.

(c) (1) The state board shall hear the appeal of the school district within sixty (60) days of receipt of the written appeal in the commissioner's office.

(2) The state board's determination shall be final except that a school district may appeal to Pulaski County Circuit Court under the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

(d) A school district or public school identified by the department as being in academic distress shall be classified as a school district or public school in academic distress upon final determination by the state board.

**6-15-429. Academic distress -- Required action.**

(a) Except as provided under subdivision (b)(3)(B) of this section and § 6-15-430(d), a public school or school district identified as in "academic distress" shall have no more than five (5) consecutive school years from the date of classification of academic distress status to be removed from academic distress status.

(b) (1) The State Board of Education may at any time take enforcement action on any school district in academic distress status, including without limitation annexation, consolidation, or reconstitution of a school district pursuant to § 6-13-1401 et seq. and the authority of this subchapter.

(2) The state board may take enforcement action at any time on a public school in academic distress under this subchapter.

(3) (A) Except as provided under subdivision (b)(3)(B) of this section and § 6-15-430(d), a public school or school district shall not be allowed to remain in academic distress status for a time period greater than five (5) consecutive school years from the date of classification of academic distress status.

(B) The state board may grant additional time for a public school or school district to remove itself from academic distress by issuing a written finding supported by a majority of the state board explaining in detail that the public school or school district could not remove itself from academic distress during the relevant time period due to impossibility caused by external forces beyond the control of the public school or school district.

(c) If a public school or school district classified as being in academic distress fails to be removed from academic distress status within the allowed five-year time period and has not been granted additional time under subdivision (b)(3)(B) of this section, the state board shall annex, consolidate, or reconstitute the public school or school district before July 1 of the next school year.

**6-15-430. State Board of Education authority over a public school or school district in academic distress.**

(a) If a school district is classified as being in academic distress, the State Board of Education may:

(1) Remove permanently, reassign, or suspend on a temporary basis the superintendent of the school district and:

(A) Appoint an individual in place of the superintendent to administratively operate the school district under the supervision and approval of the Commissioner of Education; and

(B) Compensate from school district funds the individual appointed to operate the school district;

(2) Suspend or remove some or all of the current board of directors and call for the election of a new board of directors for the school district, in which case the school district shall reimburse the county board of election commissioners for election costs as otherwise required by law;

(3) Require the school district to operate without a board of directors under the supervision of the superintendent or an individual or panel appointed by the Commissioner of Education;

(4) Waive the application of Arkansas law, with the exception of The Teacher Fair Dismissal Act of 1983, § 6-17-1501 et seq., and the Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act, § 6-17-1701 et seq., or the corresponding state board rules and regulations;

(5) Require the annexation, consolidation, or reconstitution of the school district;

(6) In the absence of a board of directors, direct the commissioner to assume all authority of the board of directors as may be necessary for the day-to-day governance of the school district;

(7) Return the administration of the school district to the former board of directors or to a newly elected board of directors if:

(A) The Department of Education certifies in writing to the state board and to the school district that the school district has corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress; and

(B) The state board determines that the school district has corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress; and

(8) Take any other necessary and proper action, as determined by the state board, that is allowed by law.

(b) If a public school is classified as being in academic distress, the state board may:

(1) Require the reorganization of the public school or reassignment of the administrative, instructional, or support staff of the public school;

(2) Require the public school to institute and fully implement a student curriculum and professional development for teachers and administrators that are based on state academic content and achievement standards, with the cost to be paid by the school district in which the public school is located;

(3) Require the principal of the public school to relinquish all authority with respect to the public school;

(4) Waive the application of Arkansas law or the corresponding state board rules, with the exception of:

(A) The Teacher Fair Dismissal Act of 1983, § 6-17-1501 et seq.; and

(B) The Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act, § 6-17-1701 et seq.;

(5) Under The Teacher Fair Dismissal Act of 1983, § 6-17-1501 et seq., reassign or remove some or all of the licensed personnel of the public school and replace them with licensed personnel assigned or hired under the supervision of the commissioner;

(6) Remove the public school from the jurisdiction of the school district in which the public school is located and establish alternative public governance and supervision of the public school;

(7) Require closure or dissolution of the public school;

(8) (A) Remove permanently, reassign, or suspend on a temporary basis the superintendent of the school district in which the public school is located.

**(B)** If the state board takes an action under subdivision (b)(8)(A) of this section, it may appoint an individual in place of the superintendent to administratively operate the school district under the supervision and approval of the commissioner and compensate the appointed individual;

**(9)** Take one (1) or more of the actions under subsection (a) of this section concerning the public school district where the school is located;

**(10)** Return the administration of the school district to the former board of directors or to a newly elected board of directors if:

**(A)** The department certifies in writing to the state board and to the school district that the public school has corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress and that no public school within the school district is classified as being in academic distress; and

**(B)** The state board determines the public school has corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress and that no public school within the school district is classified as being in academic distress; and

**(11)** Take any other appropriate action allowed by law that the state board determines is needed to assist and address a public school classified as being in academic distress.

**(c) (1)** A student attending a public school or school district classified as being in academic distress is automatically eligible and entitled pursuant to the Public School Choice Act of 2013, § 6-18-1901 et seq., or the Arkansas Opportunity Public School Choice Act of 2004, § 6-18-227, to transfer to another public school or public school district not in academic distress during the time period that the resident public school or public school district is classified as being in academic distress.

**(2)** The cost of transporting the student from the resident district to the nonresident district shall be the cost of the resident district under the Arkansas Opportunity Public School Choice Act of 2004, § 6-18-227.

**(d)** If the state board or the commissioner assumes authority over a public school district in academic distress under subsection (a) or subsection (b) of this section, the state board may pursue the following process for returning a public school district to the local control of its residents:

**(1)** During the second school year following a public school's or school district's classification of academic distress status, the state board shall determine the extent of the public school's or school district's progress toward correcting all criteria for being classified as in academic distress;

**(2) (A)** If the state board determines that sufficient progress has been made by a public school or school district in academic distress toward correcting all issues that caused the classification of academic distress, but the public school or school district has not yet resolved all issues that caused the classification of academic distress, the commissioner, with the approval of the state board, may appoint a community advisory board of either five (5) or seven (7) members to serve under the supervision and direction of the commissioner.

**(B)** The members of the community advisory board shall be residents of the school district and shall serve on a voluntary basis without compensation.

**(C)** The department shall cause to be provided to the community advisory board technical assistance and training in, at a minimum, the areas required in § 6-13-629.

**(D)** The duties of a community advisory board include without limitation:

\*\*\* Legislation is current through the 2013 Regular Session and updates \*\*\*  
\*\*\* received from the Arkansas Code Revision Commission through \*\*\*  
\*\*\* November 15, 2013. \*\*\*

(i) Meeting monthly during a regularly scheduled public meeting with the state-appointed administrator regarding the progress of the public school or school district toward correcting all issues that caused the classification of academic distress;

(ii) Seeking community input from the residents of the school district regarding the progress of the public school or school district toward correcting all issues that caused the classification of academic distress;

(iii) Conducting hearings and making recommendations to the commissioner regarding personnel and student discipline matters under the appropriate district policies;

(iv) Working to build community capacity for the continued support of the school district; and

(v) Submitting quarterly reports to the commissioner and the state board regarding the progress of the public school or school district toward correcting all issues that caused the classification of academic distress.

(E) The members of the community advisory board shall serve at the pleasure of the commissioner until:

(i) The school district is returned to local control and a permanent board of directors is elected and qualified; or

(ii) The state board annexes, consolidates, or reconstitutes the school district under this section or under another provision of law;

(3) (A) By April 1 of each year following the appointment of a community advisory board under subdivision (d)(2) of this section, the state board shall determine the extent of the public school's or school district's progress toward correcting all issues that caused the classification of academic distress and shall:

(i) Allow the community advisory board to remain in place for one (1) additional year;

(ii) Return the school district to local control by calling for the election of a newly elected board of directors if:

(a) The department certifies in writing to the state board and to the school district that the public school or school district has corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress and that no public school within the school district is classified as being in academic distress; and

(b) The state board determines the public school or school district has corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress and that no public school within the school district is classified as being in academic distress; or

(iii) Annex, consolidate, or reconstitute the school district pursuant to this title.

(B) If the state board calls for an election of a new school district board of directors, the school district shall reimburse the county board of election commissioners for election costs as otherwise required by law.

(4) (A) If the state board calls for an election of a new school district board of directors pursuant to subdivision (d)(3)(A)(ii) of this section, the commissioner, with the approval of the state board, may appoint an interim board of directors to govern the school district until a permanent school district board of directors is elected and qualified.

(B) The interim board of directors shall consist of either five (5) or seven (7) members.

(C) The members of the interim board of directors shall be residents of the school and otherwise eligible to serve as school district board members under applicable law.

(D) The members of the interim board of directors shall serve on a voluntary basis without compensation.

(e) (1) If, by the end of the fifth school year following the public school's or school district's classification of academic distress status, the public school or school district in academic distress has not corrected all issues that caused the classification of academic distress, the state board, after a public hearing, shall consolidate, annex, or reconstitute the school district under this section.

(2) The state board may grant additional time for a public school or school district to remove itself from academic distress by issuing a written finding supported by a majority of the state board explaining in detail that the public school or school district could not remove itself from academic distress during the relevant time period due to impossibility caused by external forces beyond the control of the public school or school district.

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the department or the state board from taking any of the actions listed in this section at any time to address public schools and school districts in academic distress.

**6-15-431. Academic distress rules and regulations.**

(a) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations as necessary to identify, evaluate, assist, and address public schools and school districts determined to be in academic distress.

(b) The academic distress rules and regulations shall be incorporated as part of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program rules and regulations.

**6-15-432. Unsafe school choice program.**

(a) Any student that becomes the victim of a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of an Arkansas public elementary, secondary, or public charter school or who is attending a persistently dangerous public school shall be allowed to attend a safe public school within the local educational agency pursuant to rules and regulations established by the State Board of Education and the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq..

(b) The state board shall promulgate rules and regulations, as necessary, to administer this section.

**6-15-433. Statewide assessment program.**

(a) Upon approval by the State Board of Education or as required by law, the Department of Education shall implement a statewide program of educational assessment that provides information for the improvement of the operation and management of the public schools and tests the requisite knowledge and skills of students.

(b) Pursuant to the statewide assessment program, the department shall:

(1) Determine and designate the appropriate offices within the department which shall report to the state board and shall be responsible for determining each school's improvement and performance levels;

(2) Develop and implement a uniform system of indicators to describe the performance of public school students and the characteristics of the public school districts and the public schools; and

**(3) (A)** Implement student achievement assessment as part of the statewide assessment program, to be administered annually to measure English language arts and mathematics, and includes:

**(i)** Developmentally appropriate measurements or assessments for grades kindergarten through two (K-2);

**(ii)** Either:

**(a)** Developmentally appropriate augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments in kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12), as determined by the state board and as required by law; or

**(b)** Other assessments that are based on researched best practices as determined by qualified experts that would be in compliance with federal and state law;

**(iii)** College and career readiness measurements in English language arts and mathematics as determined by state board rules;

**(iv)** End-of-course assessments administered for other content course subject areas as determined by state board rule; and

**(v)** Any other assessments required by the state board.

**(B)** Science, civics, and government shall be measured on a schedule as determined by the state board.

**(c)** The testing program shall be designed so that:

**(1) (A) (i)** The tests measure student skills and competencies adopted by the state board as specified in § 6-15-404(a).

**(ii)** The tests shall measure and report student achievement levels in reading, writing, and mathematics, including longitudinal tracking of the same students, as well as an analysis of value-added computations of student achievement gains against a national cohort.

**(B)** The department shall provide for the tests to be obtained or developed, as appropriate, through contracts and project agreements;

**(2) (A)** The testing program, as determined by the state board, shall consist of augmented, criterion-referenced, or norm-referenced assessments or other assessments as defined in subdivision (b)(3)(A)(ii)(b) of this section.

**(B)** Questions shall require the student to produce information and perform tasks in such a way that the skills and competencies he or she uses can be measured in a statistically reliable and valid manner;

**(3) (A) (i)** Each testing program, whether at the elementary beginning at grade three (3), middle school, or high school level, shall include to the fullest extent possible a test of writing in which students are required to produce writings that are then scored by appropriate analytic methods that ensure overall test validity and reliability, including inter-rater reliability.

**(ii)** Writing test results shall be scored and returned for school district and school use no later than July 1 of each year beginning in 2005-2006 and each year thereafter.

**(B)** For end-of-course exams, the department may extend the July 1 deadline under subdivision (c)(3)(A) of this section

to August 1 if the department finds, based on the request for proposals, that:

- (i) The cost of administration of the end-of-course exam will be substantially more because of the earlier deadline; or
- (ii) The validity of the end-of-course exam results will be compromised because of the earlier deadline;

(4) For each subject area tested, a score shall be designated that will be the required level of proficiency below which score a student's performance is deemed inadequate;

(5) Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, students in grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) who do not demonstrate proficiency on the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations shall participate in an intense remediation program specific to identified deficiencies;

(6) The state board shall designate, based on valid and reliable statistical models, the proficiency levels for each part of the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations;

(7) (A) (i) Participation in the testing program is mandatory for all students attending public school except as otherwise prescribed by the state board.

(ii) If a student does not participate in the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations, the school district shall notify the student's parent or guardian and provide the parent or guardian with information regarding the reasons for and implications of such nonparticipation.

(B) The state board shall:

(i) Adopt rules in compliance with federal and state law, based upon recommendations of the department, for the provision of test accommodations and modifications of procedures as necessary for students in exceptional education programs and for limited-English proficient students; and

(ii) Not make accommodations that negate the validity of a statewide assessment or interpretations or implementations which result in less than ninety-five percent (95%) of all students attending public school participating in the testing program;

(8) The department shall implement student testing programs for any grade level and subject area necessary to effectively monitor educational achievement in the state and shall provide data access to any unit within the department or contracted firm or firms for the purpose of analyzing value-added computations and posting school, school district, and state student achievement, provided such disclosures are not in conflict with applicable federal and state law;

(9) (A) Each school district shall ensure that educators in that school district provide instruction to prepare students to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and competencies necessary for successful grade-to-grade progression and high school graduation.

(B) The department shall verify that the required skills and competencies are part of the school district instructional programs;

(10) Conduct ongoing research to develop improved statistically reliable and valid methods of assessing student performance, including without limitation the:

(A) Use of technology to administer, score, or report the results of tests; and

**(B)** Use of electronic transfer of data;

**(11)** Conduct or contract with a provider to conduct ongoing research and analysis of individual student, classroom, school, school district, and state achievement data, including without limitation monitoring value-added trends in individual student, school, school district, and state achievement, identifying school programs that are successful, and analyzing correlates of school achievement; and

**(12)** Provide technical assistance to school districts in the implementation of state and school district testing programs and the use of the data produced pursuant to such programs, including longitudinal tracking data.

**6-15-434. School testing programs.**

**(a)** Student performance data shall be analyzed and reported to parents, the community, and the state, provided such disclosures are not in conflict with applicable federal and state law.

**(b)** Student performance trend data shall be one (1) of the components used in developing objectives of the school improvement plan, internal evaluations of instructional and administrative personnel, assignment of staff, allocation of resources, acquisition of instructional materials and technology, performance-based budgeting, and assignment of students into educational programs of the local school district.

**6-15-435. Required analyses.**

The Department of Education shall provide, at a minimum, for the following analyses of data produced by the student achievement testing program:

**(1)** The statistical system for the annual assessments shall use the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations and other valid and reliable measures of student learning deemed appropriate by the State Board of Education to determine classroom, school, and school district statistical distributions that shall measure the differences in a student's previous year's achievement compared to the current year's achievement for the purposes of improving student achievement, accountability, and recognition;

**(2) (A)** The statistical system shall provide the best estimates of classroom, school, and school district effects on student progress based on established, value-added longitudinal calculations.

**(B)** The approach used by the department shall be approved by the state board before implementation; and

**(3) (A) (i)** The approach used by the department shall be in alignment with federal statutes and be piloted in the 2004-2005 school year to collect data to allow research and evaluation of student achievement growth models.

**(ii)** The approach shall include the following:

**(a)** Value-added longitudinal calculations;

**(b)** Sufficient transparency in the models' conception and operation to allow others in the field to validate or replicate the results; and

**(c)** An assessment of the models' accurateness in relation to other models.

(iii) A team of relevant technical experts in student assessment and the state board shall review and approve the cost effectiveness of the model in terms of actual and in-kind costs before implementation.

(B) The department shall establish a schedule for the administration of the statewide assessments.

(C) (i) Beginning in the 2005-2006 school year and each subsequent year thereafter, in establishing such a schedule, the department is charged with the duty to accomplish the latest possible administration of the statewide assessments and the earliest possible provision, but no later than July 1, of the results to the school districts.

(ii) For end-of-course exams, the department may extend the July 1 deadline under subdivision (3)(C)(i) of this section to August 1 if the department finds, based on the request for proposals, that:

(a) The cost of administration of the end-of-course exam will be substantially more because of the earlier deadline;  
or

(b) The validity of the end-of-course exam results will be compromised because of the earlier deadline.

(D) School district boards of directors shall not establish school calendars that jeopardize or limit the valid testing and comparison of student learning gains.

#### **6-15-436. Local assessments.**

(a) School districts may elect to measure the learning gains of students in subjects and at grade levels in addition to those required for the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program examinations.

(b) Measurement of the learning gains of students in all subjects and grade levels other than subjects and grade levels required for the program is the responsibility of the school districts.

(c) The results of these assessments shall be provided to the Department of Education upon request of the Commissioner of Education.

#### **6-15-437. Rules.**

The State Board of Education shall adopt any rules necessary to implement this subchapter under the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act, § 25-15-201 et seq.

#### **6-15-438. Test security and confidentiality.**

(a) Violation of the security or confidential integrity of any test or assessment is prohibited.

(b) (1) The State Board of Education shall sanction a person who engages in conduct prohibited by this section.

(2) Additionally, the state board may sanction a school district or school, or both, in which conduct prohibited in this section occurs.

(3) Sanctions imposed by the state board may include without limitation one (1) or more of the following:

(A) Revocation, suspension, or probation of an individual's license;

- (B) Issuance of a letter of reprimand to a licensed individual to be placed in his or her state personnel file;
  - (C) Additional training or professional development to be completed by a licensed individual within the time specified;
  - (D) Additional professional development to be administered by the school district to all licensed school district personnel involved in test administration within the time specified;
  - (E) Issuance of a letter of warning to the school district; and
  - (F) Establishment of a school district plan containing strict test security guidelines that will implement procedures to ensure the security and confidential integrity of all assessment instruments.
- (4) Professional development required pursuant to subsection (b)(3) of this section as a result of violating test security or confidentiality may be in addition to professional development required for licensure.
- (c) (1) Procedures for maintaining the security and confidential integrity of all testing and assessment instruments and procedures shall be specified in the appropriate test or assessment administration instructions.
- (2) "Conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of a test or assessment" means any departure from either the requirements established by the Commissioner of Education for the administration of the assessment or from the procedures specified in the applicable test administration materials.
- (3) "Conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of a test or assessment" may include, but is not limited to, the following acts and omissions:
- (A) Viewing secure assessment materials;
  - (B) Duplicating secure assessment materials;
  - (C) Disclosing the contents of any portion of secure assessment materials;
  - (D) Providing, suggesting, or indicating to an examinee a response or answer to any secure assessment items;
  - (E) Aiding or assisting an examinee with a response or answer to any secure assessment item;
  - (F) Changing or altering any response or answer of an examinee to a secure assessment item;
  - (G) Failing to follow the specified testing procedures or to proctor students;
  - (H) Failing to administer the assessment on the designated testing dates;
  - (I) Encouraging or assisting an individual to engage in the conduct described in this subsection;
  - (J) Failing to report to the appropriate authority that an individual has engaged in conduct set forth in this section;
  - (K) Failing to follow the specified procedures and required criteria for alternate assessments; or
  - (L) Failing to return the secured test booklets to the testing company in a timely manner.

**6-15-439. Reporting of assessment scores for the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts.**

(a) The assessment scores under the Arkansas Comprehensive, Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program for assessments taken by students attending the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts of the University of Arkansas System shall be sent to the public school district the student attended immediately prior to transferring to the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, with copies made available to the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, and shall be included on the reports of the school district the student attended immediately prior to transferring to the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts.

(b) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations as necessary for the proper implementation of this section.

**6-15-440. Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program.**

(a) (1) There is created the Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program through which the Arkansas Leadership Academy in collaboration with the Department of Education and other leadership groups shall provide support to schools or school districts designated by the Department of Education as being in school improvement and other school districts who opt to participate.

(2) The program shall be designed, developed, and administered by the academy created under § 6-15-1007.

(b) The program shall:

(1) Build the leadership capacity of the school and school district personnel;

(2) Train a diverse school leadership team, including, but not limited to, superintendents, school principals, and teachers;

(3) Provide a cadre of highly experienced, trained performance coaches to work in the school or school district on a regular basis;

(4) Work with the school and school district staff, school district board members, parents, community members, and other stakeholders as necessary to provide a comprehensive support network that can continue the school's progress and improvement after completion of the academy's formal intervention and support;

(5) Ensure access to training programs and leadership skills development;

(6) Develop incentive programs for institutions and program participants;

(7) Assist in the development of partnerships between university leadership programs and school districts; and

(8) Work closely with the School Leadership Coordinating Council, the Department of Education, the Department of Higher Education, and the Department of Career Education to coordinate cohesive leadership goals.

(c) (1) The Department of Education and the academy shall develop criteria for selection of schools or school districts to participate in the program.

(2) Any school district that is in school improvement shall be eligible to participate in the program as provided in the rules of the State Board of Education.

(3) The academy and participating schools shall commit to continue participation in the school support program for no fewer than three (3) consecutive school years.

(d) (1) The number of schools participating in the program shall be determined by the amount of funding available for the program.

(2) The state board or the Department of Education may require a school district to fund a portion of the cost of the school's or school district's participation in the school support program if the Commissioner of Education determines that such participation is in the best interest of the students served by the participating school or school district.

(3) Subject to the approval of the state board, the commissioner shall determine the portion of the school district's financial obligation for participation in the program, if any.

(e) The state board shall promulgate rules as necessary to implement the requirements of this section.

(f) (1) The state board shall have the authority to issue requests for proposals if the state board should determine to change the operator or the location of the academy.

(2) The academy shall maintain one (1) main office and, as needed, satellite offices partnered with institutions of higher education that have approved leadership programs and are strategically located in areas of the state identified by the Department of Education as having the greatest need for school leadership support.

#### **6-15-441. Arkansas College and Career Readiness Planning Program.**

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "College and career readiness" means the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to be successful in future endeavors, including:

(A) Successfully completing credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution; and

(B) Embarking on a chosen career;

(2) "College and career readiness assessment" means a test that measures student readiness for postsecondary learning and is:

(A) Administered under this section; or

(B) Used by an institution of higher education as part of its admissions, placement, and scholarship processes;

(3) "EXPLORE" means the pre-ACT assessment designed by ACT, Inc. to help students in grade eight (8) explore a broad range of options for their future and focus not only on high school coursework but also on post-high school choices;

(4) "PLAN" means the pre-ACT assessment for students in grade ten (10) used to help a student focus attention on improved academic achievement, career preparation, and planning for post-high school years; and

(5) "PSAT" means the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test that provides practice for the SAT Reasoning Test and gives students feedback on individual strengths and weaknesses on college readiness skills.

**(b) (1) (A)** A public school that serves students in grade eight (8) shall administer EXPLORE to each student enrolled in grade eight (8) at the public school.

**(B)** A public school that serves students in grade ten (10) shall administer PLAN or the PSAT to each student enrolled in grade ten (10) at the public school.

**(2)** Funding for the college and career readiness assessments listed in subdivision (b)(1) of this section may be paid by using Department of Education at-risk funding.

**(3) (A)** The department may designate alternative assessments other than EXPLORE, PLAN, or PSAT to satisfy the purposes of this section.

**(B)** The alternative assessments may include without limitation next-generation assessments as approved by the State Board of Education.

**(c) (1)** Each public school administering the college and career readiness assessments under this section shall use the college and career readiness assessments to:

**(A)** Assist students with college and career readiness skills, course selection in high school, and improved academic achievement; and

**(B)** Provide the basis for the counseling under § 6-16-603 concerning postsecondary preparatory programs.

**(2)** Each public school shall fully incorporate the results from college and career readiness assessments listed in subsection (b) of this section into the college and career planning process for each student.

**(d)** Data collection shall be maintained by the Department of Education for the purpose of:

**(1)** Increasing college and career readiness skills;

**(2)** Improving instruction;

**(3)** Enhancing school improvement plans;

**(4)** Reducing the college remediation rates of students; and

**(5)** Developing and implementing postsecondary preparatory programs under § 6-16-601 et seq.

**(e) (1)** The department shall report to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education no later than December 31 of each year on the:

**(A)** Implementation and effectiveness of the Arkansas College and Career Readiness Planning Program; and

**(B)** Statistical analysis of postsecondary preparatory programs under § 6-16-601 et seq. for each postsecondary preparatory program.

**(2)** The report may be posted on the department's website with a notification to the committees.

(f) The State Board of Education may promulgate rules to implement this section and shall monitor the use of college and career readiness assessments administered under this section to ensure public school compliance.