



**ARKANSAS  
DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION**

# **SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION GUIDELINES**

## **STATE OF ARKANSAS ACT 601 OF 2013**

The primary purpose of the Schools of Innovation plan is to give schools a new or creative alternative to the existing instructional and administrative practices that is intended to improve academic performance and learning for all students.

The eligible employees of each proposed school of innovation shall vote on whether the school shall be designated a school of innovation. A minimum of sixty percent (60%) of the eligible employees voting in support of the school's designation as a school of innovation is required.

In developing the plan a school council of innovation must be in place consisting of individuals from a current or aspiring school of innovation composed of teachers, classified employees, the building-level principal or his or her designee, parents, community members, a minimum of two (2) students from the school of innovation, and other interested parties selected by the council to participate. Schools with a ten percent (10%) or greater minority student population shall have minority representation on the council.

## **Plan Requirements:**

### **School Of Innovation's Vision and Mission**

Describe the district's vision and mission statements or educational philosophy. Explain how the goals and performance standards in your plan help to re-invent or transform current models of student learning in ways that produce students better prepared for next generation learning. How do the transformations prepare students for dynamic and rigorous standards for college- and career readiness? Describe how the proposed plan reflects a commitment to change process/agenda and explain how proposed innovation "fits in" with current district wide reforms.

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### **Goals and Performance Targets**

Identify the goals and performance targets for the School of Innovation. Please be specific. Identify the innovation practices. Goals are to be specific and measurable. Tell what level of performance is expected. Give the tool or method used to measure the goal. This tool or method will also be used to set a baseline. The ADE will need to be able to review the growth annually.

Goals may include but are not limited to:

- Reducing the achievement gap among one (1) or more groups of students by accelerating learning experiences for academically low- achieving students while increasing student learning through the implementation of highly rigorous standards for student performance;
- Increasing student participation in curriculum options;
- Exploring new avenues for expanding students' college and career readiness;
- Motivating students by exploring innovative teaching and learning choices;

- Transforming a school's culture and climate in a manner that will lead to transformative teaching and learning;
- Describing changes needed in the school that will lead to better prepared students for success in life and career
- Detailing innovative practices to be used in the school of innovation.

### Evidence

Describe in detail and provide evidence as to how the School of Innovation will do the following:

- Engage parents, community and school employees;
- Provide opportunities for teacher collaboration and shared leadership responsibility;
- Outline and describe specific professional development plan/strategies that will be used to prepare faculty and staff for the proposed innovation;
  - Explain how the professional development will increase the level of success in student learning and innovation.
  - Describe how the proposed professional development will lead to greater district-wide reform beyond the participating school.
- Determine capacity for the proposed changes; and
- Monitor progress toward goals and performance targets.

### Requested Waiver

A school of innovation plan may request exemptions from local policies and specific laws and rules approved for exemption or modification by the State Board, to include

- Any provision of law or rule governing public school districts which is required to implement or to support the Plan of Innovation

Identify each law and rule the School of Innovation is requesting exemption from as deemed necessary by the Innovation Plan. Please provide specific rationale for the waiver.

### Additional Required Documentation

Please provide the following documentation:

- Detailed budget and related financial information
- References for research-based practices
- Statement of
- Other information if requested by the Commissioner
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### Mandatory Compliance With Existing Law

An approved school of innovation shall:

- Ensure that the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements are in place as those that apply to all other public schools
- Ensure that the high school curriculum offered meets or exceeds the minimum high school graduation requirements adopted by the State Board of Education
- Adhere to financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements adopted by the state board for public school districts
- Require criminal background checks for school employees and volunteers as required by law for public school districts;
- Comply with open records and open meeting requirements
- Comply with purchasing limitations and requirements
- Provide instructional time that:
  - Meets or exceeds the instructional time requirement adopted by the state board unless granted an exception by the Commissioner of Education.
  - Instructional time may include on-site instruction, distance or virtual learning, and work-based learning on nontraditional school days or hours;
- Provide data requested by the Department of Education to generate reports
- Adhere to the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act, § 6-17-1501 et seq

## **Designation and Revocation**

The Commissioner of Education may approve and designate a public school as a school of innovation for the purpose of transforming and improving teaching and learning. A school of innovation shall be approved and designated for a period of four (4) years and may be renewed for four-year periods thereafter, at the Commissioner's discretion.

The Commissioner will notify the applicant in writing whether the Plan is approved or denied. If the Commissioner denies the application and declines to designate the applicant as a school of innovation, the Commissioner will include the reasons for the denial.

The Commissioner may revoke the school of innovation designation if a school fails to

- Substantially fulfill the school's innovation plan;
- Meet goals and performance targets; or
- Comply with applicable laws or rules.

A revocation of the Commissioner's designation of a school of innovation may be made at any time. The Commissioner's decision to approve or deny an application, or to revoke a school's designation shall be a final decision. The Commissioner's decision cannot be appealed.