



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner*

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## News Release

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### **US Department of Education Approval Allows State to Concentrate on Improving Struggling Schools**

LITTLE ROCK — The US Department of Education announced today that Arkansas is one of five more states to be granted flexibility from some long-standing requirements of No Child Left Behind.

Under the ruling, Arkansas will reward some schools for exemplary performance and improvement and distribute targeted resources to help persistently struggling schools. The state's plan for flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) runs parallel with the implementation of college and career ready learning standards and efforts to strengthen educator evaluation.

Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell is grateful for the flexibility Secretary Duncan has given the state to provide stronger tools to improve schools.

“This flexibility allows Arkansas to evaluate schools in terms of performance, growth and graduation rate,” said Kimbrell. “We are not turning our back on accountability. With our new system of accountability, support and intervention, we will focus on specific problems unique to each public school in Arkansas.”

The new accountability system is anchored in college and career readiness for all students. Like previous models, it continues annual

public reporting of student outcome measures in math and literacy to assess school performance. However, this more robust system also includes student achievement growth measures and high school graduation rates. The new system holds all schools and districts accountable for improving student performance and creates five performance classifications that determine consequences and guide interventions and supports.

The state's goal is to ensure all students graduate from high school ready for success in college or a career. This flexibility is one step closer to fulfilling the goal of a better educated workforce.

Arkansas's application and related documents can be found [here](#).

Click [here](#) for key points in Arkansas's flexibility plan.

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