

# LEARNS Work Groups Kick Off

# LEARNS Act

**LEARNS stands for Literacy, Empowerment, Accountability, Readiness, Networking, and Safety.** On Jan. 11, 2023, Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders signed the LEARNS Executive Order, which calls for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) to conduct an analysis of key aspects of the state's education system and produce corresponding reports.

On March 8, 2023, the LEARNS Act was signed into law, signaling the start of the largest overhaul of education in the state's history.

After completing these analyses called for in the LEARNS Executive Order, **ADE is eager to engage stakeholders as implementation of the LEARNS commitments begins.**



# Work Group Purpose

The Arkansas Department of Education is convening work groups around key areas of LEARNS for external stakeholders to **provide ideas, expertise, and feedback to ADE as they develop rules and policies.**

- School Safety
- Early Learning
- Parental Empowerment
- Teaching and Learning
- Educator Workforce
- Career Readiness



# Meeting Norms

## Prior to Meeting

- ADE will send out agenda and materials at least 3 business days in advance of each meeting.
- Members review all materials and come prepared to share feedback.

## During Meeting

- Mute yourself when not speaking.
- Keep feedback centered on topic at hand.
- Stay engaged (e.g., actively participate and use the chat function).
- Be mindful of how much “air time” each member receives.
- All ideas are valued.

***Materials (notes, slides) will be posted after the meeting for members who can not attend.***



# Increase the number of quality schools by paving the way for strong charter operators to thrive in Arkansas.

- Streamline charter application processes:** Create more transparent charter approval and renewal processes through streamlined applications and a standard performance agreement that codifies expectations.
- Improve charter policies:** Work with the State Board of Education to revise charter policy to codify the more transparent charter application process, tie charter renewal and expansion decisions to performance criteria, and remove barriers for high quality out-of-state charter operators to open in Arkansas.

Engagement from this group and other stakeholders is essential to ensure that Charter School policies are representative of the perspectives of all part of the state's Charter system.



# Legislative Intent

**Universal Citation:** [AR Code § 6-23-102 \(2020\)](#)

It is the intent of the General Assembly, by this chapter, to provide opportunities for teachers, parents, pupils, and community members to establish and maintain public schools that operate independently from the existing structure of local school districts as a method to accomplish the following:

- (1) Improve student learning;
- (2) Increase learning opportunities for all students, with special emphasis on expanded learning experiences for students who are identified as low-achieving;
- (3) Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (4) Create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site;
- (5) Provide parents and pupils with expanded choices in the types of educational opportunities that are available within the public school system; and
- (6) Hold the schools established under this chapter accountable for meeting measurable student achievement standards.



# Charter School Background

## Resources

- [Charter School Web page - DESE](#)
- [Public Charter Schools Rules.docx \(arkansas.gov\)](#)
- [Arkansas Charter SOP](#)
- [Arkansas Charter Performance Compact](#)
- [Review of Arkansas Charter School policies compared to best practices](#)

# Next Steps

- Review current rules and procedures for Arkansas Charter Schools
- Review current state of existing Charter Schools in Arkansas
- Guiding questions for the next meeting
  - How would you define a quality charter?
  - How would you ensure that the state supports quality charters?



# Scope and Sequence

**To accomplish the timeline outlined in LEARNS, this group will meet 3 times in September and discuss the following topics.** Adjustments may be made later based on the pace and timing of work group meetings.

Date	Anticipated Topics
8/29/2023	Introduction and Scope of Work
9/7/2023	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm >> Define Quality Charter Schools/Systems
9/14/2023	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm >> TBA
9/28/2023	3:00 pm – 4:30 pm >> TBA