

LEARNS Work Group: Teacher Effectiveness

July 20, 2023

Meeting Norms

Prior to Meeting

- DESE 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

- Keep feedback centered on topic at hand.
- 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.

Teacher Effectiveness Work Group Charge

This work group is focused on teacher effectiveness. LEARNS calls for updated policy or guidance on:

- Incentivizing teaching where we most need great teachers
 - The LEARNS-mandated **Merit Teacher Incentive Fund**
- Celebrating and supporting great teachers and leaders
 - The use of **teacher effectiveness data** in personnel decisions
 - **Value-added growth model** calculations and reporting

Engagement from this group and other stakeholders is essential and ensures that policies and guidance on teacher effectiveness are representative of perspectives from across the State's education



Agenda: July 20, 2023

Today the work group is focused on:

- **Celebrating and supporting great teachers and leaders**
 - **Use of teacher effectiveness data in personnel decisions**
 - Review draft definition for outstanding growth
 - Review draft policy language on TESS and the use of student growth measures
 - Review key aspects of Arkansas's value-added growth model's methodology
- **Incentivizing teaching where we most need great teachers**
 - **Merit Teacher Incentive Fund framework for awards**
 - Provide feedback on draft regulations.
 - Provide feedback on a updated model for awarding Merit Teacher Incentive Funds



Materials: July 20, 2023

Today, the work group will reference the following materials:

- **Incentivizing teaching where we most need great teachers**
 - **Merit Teacher Incentive Fund framework for awards**
 - Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Framework and [Model](#)
 - [Draft policy language](#) on the Merit Teacher Incentive Fund
- **Celebrating and supporting great teachers and leaders**
 - **Use of teacher effectiveness data in personnel decisions**
 - [Draft policy language](#) on TESS and the use of student growth measures



Teacher Effectiveness Discussion

Legal Provisions: Teacher Effectiveness

The LEARNS Act requires that teacher effectiveness and, in some cases, value-added growth model scores, serve as the basis for certain personnel decisions. This includes:

- Reductions in force
- Merit Teacher Incentive Fund eligibility
- Eligibility to serve as a Literacy Coach
- Student assignments in English language arts and mathematics

Teacher Effectiveness: Definition

“Outstanding Performance Growth” means a teacher growth in the top quartile as defined using the state approved growth model.

Teacher Effectiveness VAM Methodology

Arkansas's value-added growth model is designed to answer the question: *How much did my student grow this year compared to how much we thought he/she would grow based on what we know about his/her achievement in prior years (the student's score history)?*

Teacher Effectiveness: Draft Policy

Please take three minutes to review the [draft policy language](#) on TESS and the use of student growth measures

As you review the draft policy, consider the following discussion questions:

1. What information in rules should be further clarified?
2. Are there additional contexts that the rules should be considered or specify?
3. What remaining questions are there?

Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Discussion

Legal Provisions: Merit Teacher Incentive Fund

Under the LEARNS Act the Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Program rewards eligible teachers with annual bonuses of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to teachers that have outstanding growth in student performance, mentor teachers, teachers in residencies, and teachers instructing in critical shortage areas.

Incentives are based on factors such as poverty levels, school performance ratings, and a teacher's status under the Teacher Excellence and Support System.

To reference the full statute see the appendix.



Merit Teacher Incentive Fund: Draft Policy

Please take three minutes to review the [draft policy language](#) on the Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Program.

As you review the draft policy, consider the following discussion questions:

1. What information in rules should be further clarified?
2. What remaining questions are there?

Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Model

Please take three minutes to review the updated [Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Scorecard and Model](#). Then jot your thoughts on each proposed scenario on the following [Jamboard](#).

This scorecard would be completed by teachers, verified by a district leader, and submitted to the ADE for further verification and payment.

As you review the scorecard and models, consider the following discussion questions:

1. What are the pros and cons of each scenario?
2. What scenario for the release of funds would you advise? Why?
3. If a teacher is on intensive support plan for Science of Reading should they be included in merit pay?
4. What remaining questions are there?

Appendix: LEARNS Requirements

Teacher Effectiveness Framework (1 of 3)

To better align teachers' summative ratings to requirements in LEARNS and to enable to use of value-added growth model data in TESS, consider the following framework:

- Evaluators must take student growth data into consideration when finalizing a teacher's summative rating.
- Growth data must include value-added growth model data, when available, and may include other sources of student performance data, as defined in ADE 005.16, *Rules Governing Educator Support and Development*.

Teacher Effectiveness Framework (2 of 3)

When calculating an educator's summative rating:

- A teacher with value-added growth model data in the **top quartile** shall not receive a rating below "effective"
- A teacher with value-added growth model data in the **bottom quartile** shall not receive a "highly effective" summative rating

Evaluators may use student growth data to:

- Adjust the TESS summative evaluation designation within one level.

Example: An evaluator chooses to assign a rating of Highly Effective to a teacher whose observations yielded a score of Effective but whose value-added growth model data is top quartile.

The evaluator may use other sources of growth data to establish a year of growth for students and to inform any adjustment - within one level - of the teacher's summative rating.

Teacher Effectiveness Framework (3 of 3)

In some cases, law specifies that teachers must achieve “**outstanding growth**,” which will be defined as teachers who have received value-added growth data in the top-quartile. This is consistent with student assignment provisions.



LEARNS Key Components for Kids

✓ **Unified early childhood system**

Local early childhood lead organizations will build plans to address the local early childhood needs

- Arkansas will launch a new early childhood accountability system

✓ **Early Literacy**

- Every K-3 student not reading proficiently will:
 - Have an individual reading plan
 - Receive targeted reading interventions
 - Be eligible for a \$500 literacy tutoring grant
- Third grade students not reading proficiently will not advance to fourth grade

✓ **Numeracy**

- Students not yet proficient in math (grades 3 to 8) will receive individual math intervention plans

✓ **Tutoring**

- Arkansas high-dosage tutoring will be piloted and scaled across the state

✓ **High school pathways**

- Students can graduate with career ready diploma pathways
- Student success plans start in 8th grade for all students
- Students can access any course through course choice
- Students participate in 75 hours of community service to graduate
- Students will receive college credit for AP, IB, CLEP, etc courses

LEARNS Key Components for Schools

✓ **School Turnaround**

- Local school boards can contract with charter school/others to run campuses at risk of state takeover

✓ **Celebrate and support great teachers and leaders**

- Minimum \$50K salary
- Bonuses of up to \$10K for excellent teachers
- 12 weeks of paid maternity leave
- Repeal the teacher fair dismissal act
- School and district performance targets required in superintendent contracts

✓ **Improved teacher training**

- Offer four year scholarships to cover tuition, fees, and a teaching license exam
- Literacy coaches for K-3 teachers
- Train all teachers in crisis response, mental health awareness, youth mental health first aid

✓ **Incentivize teaching where we most need great teachers**

- Up to \$6K in loan forgiveness for teachers in critical shortage areas (up to three years)

✓ **Transportation**

- Modernize transportation for schools with innovation grants



L E A R N S

In 2022 one in 10 educators exited Arkansas's workforce.

Every student deserves to be taught by a talented, committed educator, and every educator deserves to be supported to grow in their profession.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- ✓ **Celebrate and support great teachers and leaders**
 - Minimum \$50K salary and published salary schedule
 - Bonuses of up to \$10K for excellent teachers
 - 12 weeks of paid maternity leave
 - Repeal the teacher fair dismissal act and update personnel policies (e.g., reductions in force)
 - School and district performance targets required in superintendent contracts
- ✓ **Improved teacher training**
 - Offer four year scholarships to cover tuition, room and board, and a teaching license exam
 - One-year residencies with experienced mentors
- ✓ **Incentivize teaching where we most need great teachers**
 - Up to \$6K in loan forgiveness for teachers in shortage areas (up to three years)

LEARNS Act Requirements

Teacher Effectiveness

- Merit Teacher Incentive Fund: Reward eligible teachers with annual bonuses of up to \$10,000. Eligible teachers include those who demonstrate outstanding growth, serve as mentors, or teach in a critical shortage area or subject. Value-added growth model must be included. Aspiring teachers participating in yearlong residencies will also be eligible. This fund will replace the Incentives for Teacher Recruitment and Retention in High-Priority Districts fund.

Human Resources

- The minimum base salary for full-time teachers will be \$50,000. Base salaries will no longer increase by years of experience or for advanced degrees
- All full-time school personnel will be eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, with half the cost paid by the state and districts agreeing to pay the other half.
- By 2023, school district superintendents will have school and district performance targets and school boards will submit superintendent contracts to the commissioner of ADE.
- School districts will hire school personnel including teachers and will make employment decisions based on performance, effectiveness, and qualifications.
- Repeals the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act.

Educator Preparation

- All teachers will participate in a one-year residency alongside a skilled mentor by 2027 (per LEARNS Executive Order).
- Through the Teacher Academy Scholarship Program, students at eligible postsecondary institutions who enter the teaching profession and commit to teaching in a critical shortage subject or geographical area can receive a scholarship to cover tuition and fees for up to four academic years and the cost of a teaching license exam.
- The State Teacher Education Program will provide a maximum of three years of loan forgiveness for teachers: \$6,000 for licensed teachers who graduate from a teacher education program and teach in a critical shortage area. This doubles the amounts previously provided under this program.

Ensure the teaching profession in Arkansas is attractive and competitive.

In the LEARNS Executive Order Report for Educator Workforce ADE committed to:

- Launch teacher residencies:** Ensure all of Arkansas's teacher candidates complete a one-year teaching residency alongside a skilled mentor by 2027.
- Waive initial licensing fees for first-time teachers:** Recommend the State Board of Education waive initial licensing fees for first-time teachers from May 1 to August 31, 2023.
- Increase licensing transparency and efficiency:** Make teacher certification processes more efficient and transparent, ultimately saving time and money.
- Update workforce management provisions:** Support local school boards and school districts as they update workforce management policies and practices.



Legal Provisions: Merit Teacher Incentive Fund

The Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Program is hereby created to recognize and reward excellent teachers across the State of Arkansas.

(b) A teacher deemed eligible under the program shall be rewarded with annual bonuses of no more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(c) The State Board of Education may promulgate rules for the implementation of this program, including without limitation:

- (1) The administration and methods of distribution of funds under the program;*
- (2) Eligibility requirements; and*
- (3) Timelines and processes for identifying eligible teachers.*



Legal Provisions: Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Eligibility

LEARNS defines eligibility for an award from the merit teacher incentive fund as:

(a) Eligibility for an award from the Merit Teacher Incentive Fund Program shall include without limitation:

- (1)(A) A teacher who demonstrates outstanding growth in student performance, as determined by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.*
- (2) Teachers serving as mentors to aspiring teachers;*
- (3) Aspiring teachers participating in yearlong residencies;*
- (4) Teachers instructing in subject areas or geographical areas identified as experiencing a critical shortage of teachers, including public schools that have historically been understaffed, as determined by the division; and*
- (5) Other categories as defined by the state board.*

(b) In determining distribution of funds to a teacher under this section, the division shall consider factors that include without limitation:

- (1) The poverty level of the school as factored under § 6-17-413; and*
- (2) The designated performance rating of the school under the school rating system, § 6-15-2101 et seq.*

(c) A teacher who is given intensive support status under the Teacher Excellence and Support System, § 6-17-2801 et seq., is ineligible for receipt of funds under the program for the school year.

LEARNS Background: Value-Added Growth Model

LEARNS requires:

In determining whether a teacher has demonstrated outstanding growth in student performance, the division shall calculate a value-added growth model score for grades and subjects, where possible.

- (ii) The division shall develop rules to establish the process and procedure for public school districts to annually report data related to value-added models that includes without limitation:
 - (a) Student test scores; and
 - (b) Prior student performance by subject and school

LEARNS Background: Value-Added Growth Model

LEARNS requires:

That as part of math and literacy intervention plans students who are not performing at or above grade level must be assigned to a teacher with a value-added model score in the top quartile statewide in math/ELA for the previous three (3) years or, if a public school district or open-enrollment public charter school is unable to find a teacher with a value-added model score in the top quartile statewide in math for the previous three (3) years, assignment to teacher: then the student may be assigned to a teacher with a highly-effective rating or with a Master Professional Educator designation;