

LEARNS Work
Groups Kick Off:
Teacher
Effectiveness

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

- 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.



FOIA Made Simple

Legislative Intent:

- To ensure that public business is performed in an open and public manner so that the electors shall be advised of the performance of public officials and of the decisions that are reached in public activity and in making public policy

FOIA Made Simple

Who is subject to FOIA?

- All government entities
- Private entities that receive public funds and are intertwined with government activities

FOIA Made Simple: Public Records

Definitions:

- **Writings, sounds, electronic info, or videos** that (a) are kept and (b) constitute a **record of performance or lack of performance** of official functions

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



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.



Teacher Effectiveness Work Group Charge

This work group is focused on teacher effectiveness. LEARNS calls for new rules or policy on:

- Merit teacher incentive fund framework
- Value-added growth model calculations, reporting, and evaluation framework
- Use of teacher effectiveness determinations in personnel decisions

Engagement from this group and other stakeholders is essential to ensure that the policies on teacher effectiveness are representative of the perspectives of perspectives of all levels of the state's education system.

LEARNS Background: Merit Teacher Incentive

LEARNS creates:

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.



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

Workgroup Scope & Sequence

	Date	Key Topics
1	Week of May 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Objectives and structures for the Work Group• Background/Current state
2	Week of June 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Merit teacher incentive fund framework• TESS updates, if any• Merit teacher guidance• Value-added growth model business rules/roster verification
3	Week	
4	Week	
5	Week	
6	Week	

Next Steps

- DESE will send draft materials in advance of next meeting
- Work group members review background materials
 - [Act 237](#)
 - [Educator Workforce Executive Order Report](#)
 - [Teacher Workforce and Shortage](#)

Appendix

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;