

LEARNS Work Meeting #3

June 19th, 2023

Meeting Objectives and Process Update

Today's objectives

- ▶ High-level timeline update (10 minutes)
- ▶ Handbook & website reactions and discussion (20 minutes)
- ▶ Solicit your feedback and questions on accountability standards (25 minutes)
- ▶ Preview long-term topics for future Work Group discussion (5 minutes)

Timeline update

EFA's are "live"

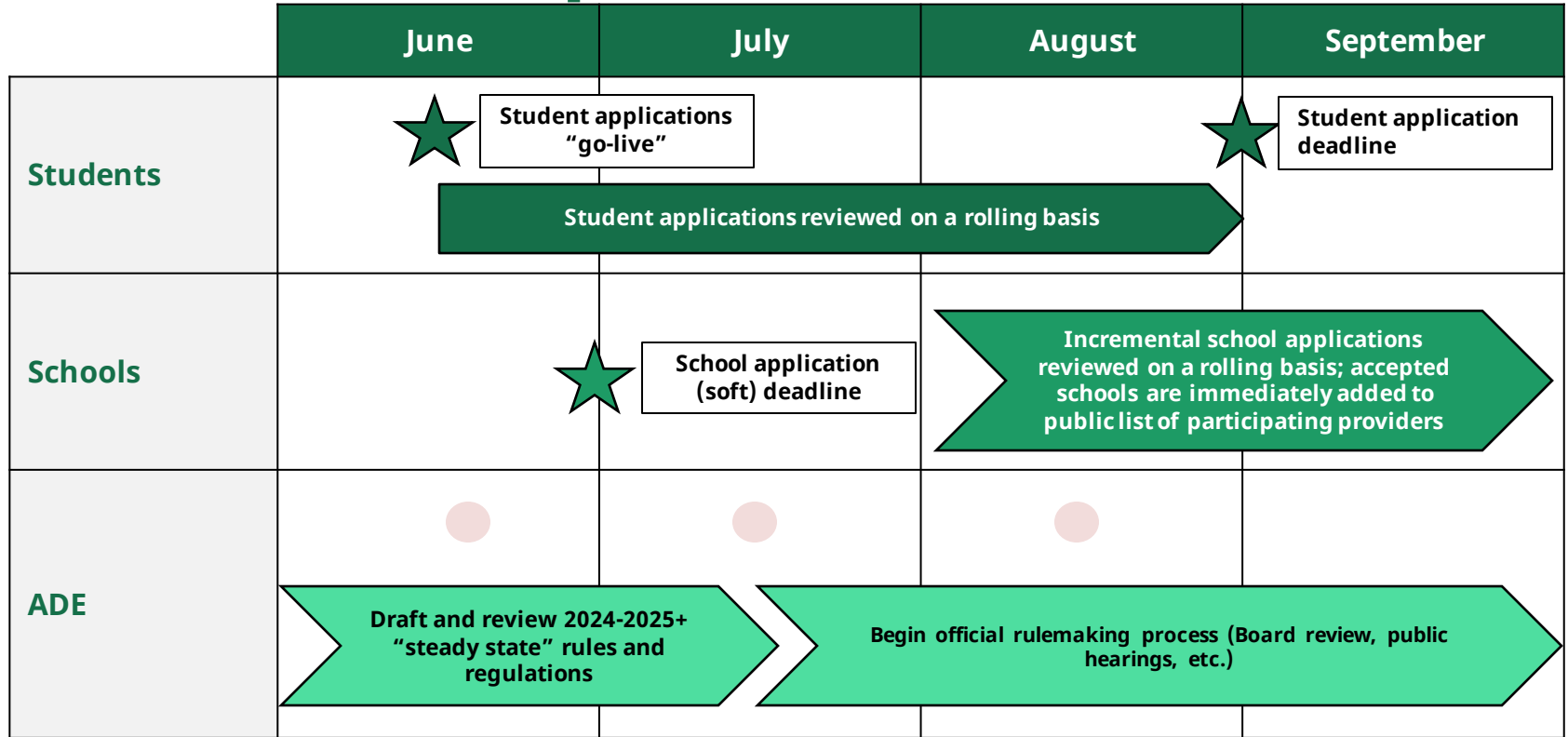
- ▶ ADE has launched EFAs
- ▶ Families may apply for EFA funds through ADE's turnkey portal
- ▶ Schools may apply using the application form available through ADE's website, and should email their submitted applications to EFA@ade.arkansas.gov

Next steps

- ▶ ADE is in the process of onboarding participating private schools
- ▶ Over the next few weeks, ADE will begin to develop a crystalized set of 2023-2024+ "steady state" rules

ADE will continue to engage this work group in the development of future program guidelines, rules, and processes

EFA Rollout: Updated timeline



 Work group meeting (tentative)

Detailed Timeline and Key Dates

Deadlines for participating families and schools have been finalized through the first quarterly payment in September:

	Deadline category	Revised dates
Students	Application “go-live”	June 16 th
	Application deadline	August 1 st
Schools	Succeed Scholarship school participation confirmation	June 30 th
	School application deadline	June 30 th
Enrollment / tuition	Family’s confirm enrollment in private school (with ADE)	August 4 th
	Schools invoice parents	August 9 th
	Families submit first tuition expenses	August 18 th
	School confirms enrolled students (with ADE)	August 18 th
	First payment to schools	Early September

Reflection on EFA handbooks / website

- 1 What questions or feedback do you have on the **handbooks**?
- 2 Which parts of the handbooks are unclear to you?
- 3 What questions or feedback do you have on the **website**?
- 4 Which parts of the **website** are unclear to you?
- 5 Is there any information not included in the materials that you would have liked to see?

Introduction to “Long Term” Topics

“Long Term” Topics For Steady State Rulemaking

1

Accountability

- ▶ How do the current accountability mechanisms in-statute compare to those of peer EFA states?
- ▶ What additional requirements may ADE enforce within published rules to bolster EFA accountability?
- ▶ What is the correct balance of accountability and flexibility?

Topic for this session

2

Homeschooling

- ▶ What kinds of homeschooling currently exist in Arkansas and how are they considered in-statute?
- ▶ How do peer EFA states handle homeschooling?
- ▶ What additional oversight measures, if any, may ADE consider enforcing for homeschoolers?

3

Service Providers

- ▶ What is the role of non-school service providers in EFA?
- ▶ What requirements (e.g., accreditation) are in place within peer EFA states to properly vet and govern service providers?
- ▶ How should individuals (e.g., tutors) be evaluated compared to facilities or businesses?







4

Tuition Increases

- ▶ How have private schools adjusted tuition post-EFA roll-out in peer states? Do schools tend to artificially inflate tuition?
- ▶ What is the spectrum of options for addressing and preventing unreasonable tuition increases in a post-EFA Arkansas?

Topics for future sessions

Accountability in Other States

	 Arizona	 New Hampshire	 Florida
Require testing for participating students¹			
Who is responsible for providing tests?	--	Parents	Schools
Testing performance requirements	--	None	None
Detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Arizona does not maintain a testing requirement for program participants ▶ Requirements to teach core subjects do not have a clear enforcement mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Parents provide the scholarship organization with annual record of educational attainment (normed test scores or portfolio) ▶ The scholarship organization reports aggregated scores to NH DoE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Participating schools must report scores of all participating students to a state university ▶ The state university must then annually report to the DoE on the testing performance of participating students

1. Non-homeschool students

Source: State statutes and regulations

Accountability under LEARNS Act

Owner	Key accountability measure
ADE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Conduct annual audits of individual accounts, participating service providers, and participating schools ▶ Create an anonymous fraud reporting hotline ▶ Conduct a parent satisfaction survey soliciting feedback on the 2023-2024 school year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Opening no later than February 1st, 2024, and closing no sooner than March 31, 2024 ▶ Submit an annual written report that outlines student participation / enrollment metrics, retention rates, parental satisfaction survey results, fund usage, test result data, and a complete list of participating schools and service providers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Submitted no later than September 30th of each year to the Arkansas Legislative Council, Senate Committee on Education, and House Committee on Education
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Administer (annually) a nationally recognized norm referenced test or statewide assessment (note that portfolios or alternate assessments for students qualifying for a testing exemption are allowed) ▶ Adhere to baseline eligibility requirements (accreditation, fiscal soundness, anti-discrimination, etc.) ▶ Annually report a list of participating students with their test scores or alternate assessments, AP scores, and an indication of if they graduated that year ▶ Do not unreasonably inflate tuition
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Homeschool parents must agree to provide an education for their child in at least the subjects of English language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science



The LEARNS act outlines a more robust set of accountability standards than many peer states with comparable EFA programs



Reflection on Accountability (today)

1 Do our state's accountability measures as outlined feel sufficient to you? Where do you have feedback or questions? Would you consider adding any other rules/accountability measures?

2 What types of topics would you wish to solicit feedback on from parents in a parent satisfaction survey?

3 The statute requires that students (with the exception of those that are exempt from testing) are tested and that schools will report the data to the ADE. Should schools be held accountable for student performance or progress?

What could that look like in practice?