

**Executive Summary**

As part of the review of the K-12 accountability system, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) commits to transparency for parents. School and district report cards can elevate the information families care about most while continuing to allow for deeper data exploration. In particular, the state could make public each district’s curricular choices, as currently only one-third of districts make this information available online.

Overview of LEARNNS Executive Order	1
Survey Results: Curriculum Transparency in Arkansas	1
Conclusion	2
Appendix A	3

**Overview of LEARNNS Executive Order**

On January 11th, 2023, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders published the Executive Order to prioritize Literacy, Empowerment, Accountability, Readiness, Networking, and School Safety (LEARNNS) in Arkansas. Included in this Executive Order is a call for the Secretary of the Department of Education to empower parents by reviewing the extent to which school districts provide parents and the public access to information about classroom curriculum, required reading materials and books, and classroom assessments in every public school and public classroom in Arkansas.

This report reviews the results of a survey completed by district leaders across the state and presents a set of commitments for the State Board of Education and Arkansas Department of Education to consider as they work to improve curriculum transparency for parents and the public.

**Survey Results: Curriculum Transparency in Arkansas**

Each district in Arkansas was asked to answer the following questions in an online survey:

- Do parents have access to information about classroom curriculum, required reading materials, and books? If yes, please provide a link to where parents can access this information.
- Do parents have input on curriculum selection committees?
- Does the school allow alternate assignments if requested by parent or guardian?
- Do parents have online access to the list of books in the school library?
- Additional Comments (If Any)

224 traditional public school districts, charter LEAs, and alternative schools submitted a completed survey. Six districts submitted partial responses that are included in this summary. 35 districts did not submit a survey.

These initial survey responses illuminated three key findings:

1. Parent access to information about classroom curriculum, required reading materials, and books is inconsistent statewide.
2. Few Arkansas districts provide parents with visibility into curriculum selection processes.
3. Most Arkansas districts provide parents with the option to request alternate assignments.

**Limited Access to Information:** 35 percent of districts responded that parents have online access to information about classroom curriculum, required reading materials, and books. An additional 25 percent of districts provide some access to this information, but barriers may still exist. For example:

## A Review of Curriculum Transparency in Arkansas

- In 16 percent of responding districts, parents can only access this information if they actively request it from their child's teacher or school.
- In six percent of responding districts, this information is only available in a hard copy (e.g., a class syllabus) and not online.
- In three percent of responding districts, access to this information is dependent on individual teachers and varies from classroom to classroom.

See Appendix A for more information about how these results were synthesized.

Additionally, just about half of districts provide a full list of the books available for students in school libraries. Some districts are currently working to digitize a list of library books.

**Limited Visibility into Curriculum Selection Processes:** 40 percent of Arkansas districts reported that parents have input on curriculum selection committees. In some cases, for the districts that do not include parents in curriculum selection committees, this is because they do not have a formal structure for curriculum selection (e.g., no written policy regarding curriculum selection committees).

**Alternate Assignments:** 90 percent of Arkansas districts reported that they allow alternate assignments if requested by a parent or guardian.

### Conclusion

Arkansas school districts can increase the tools and information needed by parents to ensure their children learn in safe, standards-aligned settings. Arkansas aims to empower parents by increasing transparency around the curricula, reading materials, and books their students interact with every day.

Appendix A

Response Category	Number and Percent of Responses	Criteria
Available online.	79 (35%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● District included a link leading to a public webpage with curriculum materials listed; and/or,</li> <li>● District provided evidence in comments that parents may access curriculum materials via Google Classroom or other school-specific sites.</li> </ul>
Available by request only.	35 (16%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● District indicated that parents can request curriculum materials from building or district staff; and/or,</li> <li>● District indicated that parents can set up an appointment with school or district staff to review materials.</li> </ul>
Available by hard copy only.	14 (6%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● District indicated that teachers provide curriculum resources in syllabi shared at the beginning of a semester; and/or</li> <li>● District indicated that curriculum lists are provided, but are not currently available online.</li> </ul>
Teacher-dependent.	6 (3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● District indicated that some, but not all, teachers may provide access to curriculum materials for parents.</li> </ul>
Not available at all.	90 (40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● District did not provide a link to curriculum materials; or,</li> <li>● District did not provide any other evidence that parents have access to curriculum materials; or,</li> <li>● District provided a link, but that link did not include curriculum materials.</li> </ul>