

LEARNS Work Group: Educator Preparation

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.

Educator Preparation Work Group Charge

This work group is focused on Educator Preparation. The LEARNS Act and Executive Order call for updated policy or guidance on:

→ **Improved teacher training**

- ◆ One-year residencies for teacher preparation candidates
- ◆ Experienced mentors
- ◆ Science of Reading: Audits of Teacher Preparation Programs
- ◆ Teacher Academy Scholarship Program

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:

- **Improved teacher training**
 - **The transition to one-year residencies for teacher candidates with experienced mentors**
 - Providing feedback a draft policy for what constitutes a “one-year residency”
 - Feedback on Residency transition support for EPPs
 - Updated expectations for mentor training
 - **Science of Reading: Audits of Teacher Preparation Programs**
 - Update about on-site review process and criteria
 - **Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Fund**
 - Providing feedback on draft rules, the proposed application process, and criteria for receiving scholarship funds as an eligible postsecondary institution

Materials: July 20, 2023

Today, the work group will reference the following materials:

- [Draft Policy](#) on One-Year Residencies with Experienced Mentors
- [Draft Policy](#) for the Teacher Academy Scholarship Program

One-Year Residencies

One-year Supervised Residency means an experience in a school setting alongside a residency mentor not to exceed one academic year or two consecutive semesters.

Aspiring Teacher Permit means up to one year only permit issued to an intern or resident that meets eligibility requirements for a residency in a traditional educator preparation program allowing the recipient to assume the role of a Teacher of Record under the supervision of a residency mentor

As you review consider the following discussion questions:

1. Are there ways that the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) could improve these definitions and rules?
2. What questions are remaining?

One-Year Residencies Support for EPPs

As EPPs transition to the one-year Supervised Residency model they may need additional support in the following areas:

1. Support to update and potentially reorganize the curriculum to account for the one-year residency, which involves working with faculty to set a vision, develop changes, etc. and
2. Support to strengthen and potentially reorganize field experiences.

As you review consider the following discussion questions:

1. For those that have started implementing, what types of support would have been useful? What challenges did you experience?
2. How can ADE help to support deep intentional partnerships between EPPs and school systems on teacher residencies?
3. What additional supports may EPPs need? How does this differ between traditional and alternative programs?
4. What questions are remaining?

Experienced Mentors

- Minimum three (3) years of teaching experience
- Standard Arkansas teaching license
- Master/Lead designation (Preferred)
- Documented training in a DESE approved coaching model
- Evidence of an effective or higher evaluation in the last three years.
- High Impact Teacher

As you review consider the following discussion questions:

1. What qualifications should an experienced mentor possess?
2. What questions are remaining?

Science of Reading

ADE has applied for a grant to support Science of Reading Audits. This would start in the spring of 2024 and be completed in a two year cycle.

As you review consider the following discussion questions:

1. What questions are remaining?

LEARNS Background: Teacher Academy (1 of 3)

Definitions in LEARNS:

"Academy attendee" means an individual who is enrolled in an Arkansas Teacher Academy at an eligible postsecondary institution who is a: (A) Current teacher; (B) Teacher who has graduated from an Arkansas Teacher Academy at an eligible postsecondary institution; or (C) Current student;

"Eligible postsecondary institution" means a public or private two-year or four-year institution of higher education that: (A) Offers a post baccalaureate program that leads to teacher certification; and (B) Has entered into an agreement with the Division of Higher Education for purposes of the Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Program;

LEARNS Background: Teacher Academy (2 of 3)

LEARNS requires that:

The Division of Higher Education, in consultation with public and private postsecondary institutions, shall develop and implement a centralized administrative process for each Arkansas Teacher Academy, including:

- (1) A marketing and promotion plan to recruit academy attendees for an Arkansas Teacher Academy;
- (2) Data collection and reporting;
- (3) Tracking of post graduation service requirements;
- (4) Coordination of induction services;
- (5) Distribution of moneys in the Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Program Fund between eligible postsecondary institutions;
- (6) Collection of reimbursements from individuals who fail to meet the service requirements under this subchapter;
- (7) A process for assessing an academy attendee's ability to repay financial assistance received under this subchapter if the academy attendee who receives financial assistance under this subchapter is physically or mentally unable to fulfill the requirements of an Arkansas Teacher Academy program; and
- (8) A process for deferring service or repayment required by this subchapter based on factors adopted by the division.

LEARNS Background: Teacher Academy (3 of 3)

LEARNS requires that:

(a) An Arkansas Teacher Academy may include without limitation a new or existing teacher preparation program that utilizes proven, research-based models of best practices that are already being implemented in similar program pathways.

(b) An eligible postsecondary institution may:

- (1) Develop a portfolio of teacher preparation programs to offer as part of its Arkansas Teacher Academy;
- (2)(A) Give priority to students in grades eleven (11) and twelve (12). (B) However, an eligible postsecondary institution shall not exclude students in grades nine (9) and ten (10) from its Arkansas Teacher Academy; and
- (3)(A) Use scholarship funds that exceed the cost of tuition and fees at the eligible postsecondary institution to support its Arkansas Teacher Academy costs. (B) However, if a scholarship awarded to an academy attendee under this subchapter does not cover the eligible postsecondary institution's tuition and fees after an academy attendee receives all other financial gifts, financial aid, and grants, the eligible postsecondary institution shall not charge an academy attendee awarded a scholarship under this subchapter the remaining difference. (c)(1) An eligible postsecondary institution shall develop formal partnerships with Arkansas public schools to build commitments for teacher employment upon an academy attendee's completion of an Arkansas Teacher Academy program.

Arkansas Teacher Academy Scholarship Fund

Please take 5 minutes to review the [draft policy](#) for the Teacher Academy Scholarship Program.

Discuss remaining questions around:

- Timeline
- Application process
- Criteria for receiving scholarship funds

As you review consider the following discussion questions:

1. Are there ways that the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) could improve these definitions and rules?
2. What could communications on the field look like?
3. Who should be notified and on what timeline?
4. What questions are remaining?

Next Steps

- Karli will send draft materials in advance of next meeting
- Work group members review background materials
- Next Meeting: TBD

Appendix: LEARNS Requirements

Law: Mentor Teachers

LEARNS defines a mentor as “an individual who meets the requirements established by the State Board of Education to support aspiring teachers who are participating in yearlong residencies and determines that they will be eligible for Merit Teacher Incentive Funds.”



Executive Order: One-Year Residencies with Experienced Mentors

The LEARNS Executive Order requires that the Secretary of the Department of Education shall reward good teachers and create a strong pipeline by ensuring that **all graduates receiving a degree or alternate teacher training certificate from a state-approved educator preparation program in Spring 2027 and beyond have completed a one-year supervised residency alongside an experienced mentor teacher in a school setting.**



Law: Science of Reading

Under the LEARNS Act a state-approved educator preparation program, graduate program, or alternative preparation program that does not comply with the Right to Read Act's Science of Reading provisions may have their approval status revoked.

To ensure compliance with the Right to Read Act DESE will audit each program at least once every three years.

To reference the full statute see the appendix.



Law: Science of Reading

LEARNS requires:

(2)(A) A provider of a state-approved educator preparation program, graduate program, or alternative preparation program that does not comply with the requirements of this section [§ 6-17-429(i)(2)] may be subject to penalties up to and including having the provider's approval status revoked.

(B) The division shall audit each program under subdivision (i)(2)(A) of this section at least one (1) time every three (3) years to verify compliance with this section.



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.

