

State of Arkansas  
93rd General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2021

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 77

By: Senator L. Eads  
By: Representative C. Fite

## For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE  
CONCERNING EDUCATION RENEWAL ZONES; AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES.

## Subtitle

TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE  
CONCERNING EDUCATION RENEWAL ZONES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2501 is amended to read as follows:

6-15-2501. ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ Office of Education  
Renewal Zones – Creation.

(a) There is created the ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ Office of  
Education Renewal Zones.

(b) The ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ office shall be under the  
supervision of the ~~State Board of Education~~ Division of Elementary and  
Secondary Education.

(c)(1) The ~~state board~~ Division of Elementary and Secondary Education  
shall select an individual to serve as the ~~Director of the Division of~~  
~~Education Renewal Zones~~ Director of the Office of Education Renewal Zones.

(2) With guidance and approval from the ~~state board~~ Division of  
Elementary and Secondary Education, the ~~Director of the Division of Education~~  
~~Renewal Zones~~ Director of the Office of Education Renewal Zones shall be  
responsible for hiring all employees of the ~~Division of Education Renewal~~  
~~Zones~~ office.



(3) The Director of the Division of Higher Education shall assign one (1) individual from the staff of the Division of Higher Education to serve as a liaison to the ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ office.

(d) The ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ office shall be responsible for developing guidelines for the approval of education renewal zone strategic plans and for the ~~evaluation and reporting~~ evaluation, reporting, and coordination of education renewal zone activities.

(e) The ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ office shall approve ~~any all~~ all education renewal zone strategic ~~plan~~ plans developed by the education renewal zones before the disbursement or annual renewal of funds to participating institutions of higher education.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2502(c) and (d), concerning the establishment, purpose, and organization of education renewal zones, are amended to read as follows:

(c) The purpose of an education renewal zone shall ~~be to~~ include:

(1) ~~Identify and implement~~ Identifying and implementing education and management strategies designed specifically to improve public school performance and student academic achievement throughout the State of Arkansas, with special focus on the public schools in need of the specialized support and services provided by education renewal zones;

(2) ~~Provide~~ Providing for collaboration among the state's smaller schools and school districts in order to achieve some of the advantages of economies of scale in providing educational and related activities;

(3) ~~Maximize~~ Maximizing benefits and outcomes of public schooling by ~~concentrating and~~ coordinating the available resources of Arkansas's higher education institutions, the expertise of the regional education service cooperatives, and the technical assistance of other service providers to improve public school performance and student academic achievement through a collaborative, statewide effort; and

(4) ~~Enable~~ Enabling small, rural, and low wealth schools to make the best use of the latest cost-effective distance learning technology to enhance curricula and professional development opportunities through two-way interactive learning environments.

(d) Each education renewal zone shall consist of the following:

(1)(A) A higher education partner.

(B) ~~The Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ Office of Education Renewal Zones shall develop, publish, and disseminate guidelines for establishing an education renewal zone, including a process for selecting a qualified higher education partner in the education service cooperative areas in the state and in Pulaski County.

(C)(i) A qualified higher education partner shall:

(a) Be a school with a department of education or a comprehensive four-year teacher preparation program; and

(b) Be capable of demonstrating a willingness and flexibility to restructure its programs and services to meet the needs of the participating grades kindergarten through twelve (K-12) schools and school districts.

(ii) ~~The Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ office shall give preference to qualified four-year higher education institutions located within the education service cooperative area.

(D) If there is no qualified four-year higher education institution located within the education service cooperative area, the ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ office may select:

(i) A two-year higher education institution that in collaboration with a qualified four-year education institution located in another education service cooperative area provides a comprehensive four-year teacher preparation program; or

(ii) A qualified higher education institution located in another education service cooperative area.

(E) An institution of higher education may serve as the higher education partner for more than one (1) ~~educational~~ education service cooperative area;

(2)(A) An education service cooperative.

(B) ~~The education service cooperative shall be a full partner in planning, implementing, and evaluating the education renewal zone in its respective service area and shall provide direct services as called for in the education renewal zone plan~~ The education service cooperative shall be a partner to support schools in student achievement and school improvement;

(3)(A) Public schools.

~~(B)(i) Public schools may participate in an education renewal zone upon successful application by the public school district of which the school is a part.~~

~~(ii)(B)(i) A public school district classified identified by the State Board of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education as being in need of Level 5—Intensive the specialized support and services provided by education renewal zones shall participate in an education renewal zone if requested to do so by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the division.~~

~~(ii) The Division of Education Renewal Zones office working with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall establish priorities of establishing education renewal zones for those schools provide a priority for education renewal zone participation the schools described in subdivision (d)(3)(B)(i) of this section, which shall be contingent on the appropriation availability of funding for the renewal education zones.~~

~~(iii) Acceptance or rejection of the application by a school for admittance to an education renewal zone shall be the responsibility of the Division of Education Renewal Zones, with consultation from the higher education partner.~~

~~(iv) The Division of Education Renewal Zones may include within an education renewal zone any school within the education service cooperative area provided that no more than ten (10) schools may participate in any single education renewal zone.~~

~~(v) The Division of Education Renewal Zones may designate up to a maximum of three (3) education renewal zones within any single education service cooperative area.~~

~~(C) In designating education renewal zones and selecting schools for participation in a particular zone, the Division of Education Renewal Zones shall give priority to schools that meet one (1) or more of the following criteria:~~

~~(i) The school is identified as a school at risk for meeting school performance indicators for all students or for any one (1) identified subpopulation under the Arkansas state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95;~~

~~(ii) The school lies within a school district~~

~~classified by the state board as in need of Level 5—Intensive support under the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act, § 6-15-2901 et seq.;~~

~~(iii) The school demonstrates an inability to provide the minimum number of course offerings as determined by the state through the conventional hiring of qualified teachers;~~

~~(iv) The school is within a school district with an average daily membership of fewer than one thousand five hundred (1,500) students; or~~

~~(v) The school serves a student population that exceeds the statewide average rate of participation in free or reduced price lunch programs; and~~

(4)(A) A local advisory group.

(B) Each education renewal zone shall form a local advisory group composed of a representative of the following groups:

(i) The higher education partner;

(ii) The education service cooperative ~~which that~~ includes the area in which the education renewal zone is located;

(iii) ~~The~~ Each public school or school district participating in the education renewal zone; and

~~(iv) Two (2) parents who have children attending a public school participating in the education renewal zone; and~~ Parents or community members, or both.

~~(v) Each community in which there is a school participating in the education renewal zone.~~

~~(C) The Division of Education Renewal Zones may designate up to a maximum of three (3) education renewal zones within any single education service cooperative area.~~

~~(D)(C)~~ The membership and staff of local advisory groups shall be reflective of the diversity of the population ~~being served by the education renewal zone~~ of the state.; ~~and~~

~~(5)(A) A technical assistance provider.~~

~~(B) Any two year community or technical college, technical support organization, or other entity may participate in the education renewal zone at the discretion of the Division of Education Renewal Zones and in collaboration with a designated higher education partner and a designated education service cooperative.~~

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2503 is amended to read as follows:  
6-15-2503. Inclusion of schools within designated education renewal zone.

(a)(1) ~~The Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ Office of Education Renewal Zones, ~~the State Board of Education~~ Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the local school districts shall exercise due diligence to assure, to the extent that funds are available, that each school identified as a school in need of the specialized support and services provided by education renewal zones under the Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114-95, is included in a designated education renewal zone.

(2) ~~The state board~~ State Board of Education may promulgate rules establishing criteria for the placement of schools in ~~need of support in a designated~~ education renewal ~~zone~~ zones if insufficient funds exist to place all schools in need of the specialized support and services provided by education renewal zones in a designated education renewal zone.

(b) At its discretion, the ~~division office~~ office may include any school ~~regardless of its eligibility under the criteria in § 6-15-2502(d)(3)(C)(i)-~~ ~~(v)~~ if ~~it~~ the office determines, on the basis of location, characteristics of ~~its~~ the school's faculty or leadership, needs of the students, or other factors, that the inclusion of ~~such a~~ the school ~~significantly strengthens the prospect of the education renewal zone in meeting its school improvement goals~~ would support the school's continuous improvement goals.

(c) At its discretion, the ~~division office~~ office may change participating schools within each education renewal zone.

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2504 is amended to read as follows:  
6-15-2504. School-level improvement ~~plans—Development—Provisions—~~ Implementation plan implementation.

(a) Each school participating in an education renewal zone shall ~~develop and implement a~~ include in its school-level improvement plan required in § 6-15-2914 the following:-

~~(b) Each school-level improvement plan shall at a minimum include the following:-~~

- (1) Goals for improving student achievement;
- (2) Measurable benchmarks for achieving student improvement

goals;

(3) A timeline for reaching goals in improving student achievement; and

(4) Requirements for services to be provided by the education renewal zone partners.

~~(e)~~(b) The partners within a specific education renewal zone shall develop a strategic plan that is responsive to the needs of the individual ~~school~~ school-level improvement plans.

~~(d)~~(c) The education renewal zone strategic plan shall at a minimum provide for the following:

(1) Collaboration between and among the higher education institution partners, education service cooperatives, schools, and ~~communities~~ parents or community members, or both, participating in the education renewal zone, including the academic departments ~~within~~ of the higher education institution partners;

(2)(A) A comprehensive program of professional development to assure the practical knowledge base of pre-service and in-service teachers with respect to pedagogical practice, content knowledge, and competent use of distance learning technology.

(B) Funds received by school districts ~~for~~ from the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Public School Fund Account for professional development may be used to provide funding for the professional development required under subdivision (c)(2)(A) of this section ~~requirements of the education renewal zone school district partners;~~

~~(3) Enhancement and expansion of local school curricula offerings through the use of two-way interactive television to include advanced placement, dual credit, and advanced high school courses;~~

~~(4) The sharing of faculty for core course offerings when schools are unable to hire highly qualified teachers in core subject areas required for college entrance or teachers necessary to meet state accreditation standards;~~

~~(5)~~(3) A strategy to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers ~~with particular focus on hard-to-staff schools;~~ by:

(A) Providing opportunities and support for teacher profession growth; and

(B) Providing opportunities for collaboration;

(4) Evidence-based practices to support schools in providing student-focused education;

~~(6) A system for mentoring teachers with three (3) or fewer years of professional service;~~

~~(7) Active participation of the community in the work of the school;~~

~~(8)~~(5) Active involvement of parents in the academic work of the student; and

~~(9)~~(6) A means of collecting the data necessary to evaluate the progress of each participating public school and the education renewal zone in its entirety.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2505 is amended to read as follows:

6-15-2505. Annual report.

(a) Each education renewal zone, using guidelines and indicators set by the ~~Division of Education Renewal Zones~~ Office of Education Renewal Zones, shall prepare an annual report to the ~~division~~ office describing the progress toward accomplishing the goals of the education renewal zone.

(b) The ~~division~~ office shall prepare an annual report ~~to~~ for the Governor, the General Assembly, and the State Board of Education describing the progress toward accomplishing the goals of the individual education renewal zones and the overall education renewal zone program.

(c) The ~~division~~ office shall establish a website, accessible by the public, to provide for broad dissemination of both the education renewal zone plans and strategies and the results of the annual reports on progress toward accomplishing the goals of the individual education renewal zones and the overall education renewal zone program.

**APPROVED: 2/23/21**