

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1938

By: Representative Joey Carr

By: Senator J. English

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
CONCERNING THE CREATION OF DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLANS
AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND PROVISIONS OF THE ARKANSAS CODE
CONCERNING THE CREATION OF DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLANS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION.

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 6-15-1702(a), concerning the requirement that each public school and public school district establish a parental involvement plan, is amended to read as follows:

(a) Each public school ~~district and each public school within its boundaries~~, in collaboration with parents, shall establish a parental involvement plan within its school-level improvement plan required under § 6-15-2914, including programs and practices that enhance parent and family engagement and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2904 is amended to read as follows:
6-15-2904. Responsibility of Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall develop and



implement a comprehensive accountability system for Arkansas public schools and school districts that:

- (1) Establishes clear academic standards that are periodically reviewed and revised;
 - (2) Maintains a statewide student assessment system that includes a variety of assessment measures;
 - (3) Assesses whether all students have ~~equitable~~ access to excellent educators;
 - (4) Establishes levels of support for public school districts;
- and
- (5) Maintains information systems composed of performance indicators that allow the division to identify levels of public school district support and generate reports for the public.

SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 6-15-2914 is amended to read as follows:
6-15-2914. School-level improvement plans – School district support plans.

(a) The General Assembly finds that it is the responsibility of:

(1) The state and educational service cooperatives to support ~~its~~ their public school districts; and

(2) A public school district to support its schools.

(b)(1)(A) ~~Beginning on May 1, 2018, and by~~ By May 1 ~~annually thereafter of each school year~~, a public school shall submit to its public school district a school-level improvement plan for approval by the public school district and public school district board of directors for implementation in the following school year.

(B)(i) A public school ~~district~~ and an open-enrollment public charter school shall include a literacy plan in the annual school-level improvement plan required under subdivision (b)(1)(A) of this section.

(ii) The literacy plan required under subdivision (b)(1)(B)(i) of this section shall include without limitation a curriculum program and a professional development program that are:

(a) Aligned with the literacy needs of the public school ~~district~~; and

(b) Based on the science of reading as defined by ~~§ 6-17-429(k)(1)~~ § 6-17-429.

(C) A public school and an open-enrollment public charter school shall include a parental involvement plan, as required under § 6-15-1702, in its annual school-level improvement plan required under subdivision (b)(1)(A) of this section.

(2) School-level improvement plans shall be posted on the ~~public school district's~~ school's or open-enrollment public charter school's website by August 1 of each year.

(c) School-level improvement plans shall be:

(1) Monitored by the public school district or open-enrollment public charter school for implementation fidelity and progress throughout the year; and

(2) Evaluated annually by the public school district or open-enrollment public charter school for goal progress and accomplishment.

~~(d)(1) Annually by September 1, a public school district receiving Level 2—Collaborative, Level 3—Coordinated, Level 4—Directed, or Level 5—Intensive support shall submit to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education a public school district support plan in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education.~~

~~(2) A public school district's support plan shall be posted on the public school district's website no later than ten (10) days after submission to the division.~~

~~(3)(A) A public school district in which forty percent (40%) or more of the public school district's students scored "in need of support" on the state's prior year summative assessment for reading shall develop a literacy plan as part of the public school district support plan required under this section.~~

~~(B) The public school district literacy plan shall include:~~

~~(i) Goals for improving reading achievement throughout the public school district; and~~

~~(ii) Information regarding the prioritization of funding, including without limitation Enhanced Student Achievement Funding received under § 6-20-2305, for strategies to improve reading achievement throughout the public school district.~~

~~(e) Public school district support plans shall include without limitation the support the public school district will provide to public~~

~~schools identified as in need of targeted or comprehensive support, or both, pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95.~~

SECTION 4. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15, Subchapter 29, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-15-2919. District strategic plans – Unified application system.

(a) Annually by June 30, each public school district and open-enrollment public charter school shall submit a district strategic plan to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education for review for the upcoming school year.

(b) A district strategic plan required by subsection (a) of this section shall include without limitation:

(1) A literacy and mathematics plan that addresses student supports and acceleration opportunities based on student data and outcomes;

(2) Information regarding the prioritization and intended use of funding, including without limitation Enhanced Student Achievement Funding received under § 6-20-2305; and

(3) The support the public school district and open-enrollment public charter school will provide to public schools within the public school district or the open-enrollment public charter school identified as in need of targeted or comprehensive support, or both, pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95, as it existed on January 1, 2025.

(c)(1) An educational service cooperative shall annually review and monitor the implementation of a district strategic plan for each public school district and open-enrollment public charter school that is a member of the educational service cooperative.

(2) The division shall collaborate with each educational service cooperative to annually review each district strategic plan and approve the proposed use of funding.

(d) Each public school district and open-enrollment public charter school shall post its approved district strategic plan on its website by October 1 of each year.

(e)(1) To promote efficiency, eliminate duplication, and assist public school districts and open-enrollment public charter schools in implementing district strategic plans, the division shall create a unified application system that includes required state plans and federal funding applications.

(2) The unified application system required under subdivision (e)(1) of this section shall include without limitation the following program components and applications:

(A) Federal title funds;

(B) The parent and family engagement plan required under § 6-15-1702;

(C) The health and wellness plan required under § 20-7-135;

(D) Enhanced Student Achievement Funding requirements under § 6-20-2305;

(E) Alternative learning environment funding requirements under § 6-48-102; and

(F) Gifted and talented programs under § 6-42-109.

SECTION 5. Arkansas Code § 6-20-2305(b)(4)(C) and (D) are amended to read as follows:

(C)(i)(a) A school district shall expend funds allocated under this subdivision (b)(4) in accordance with the rules developed by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide the following supports and resources:

(1) If the school district meets the teacher compensation requirements according to the minimum salary schedule under § 6-17-2403 for teachers serving in positions required by the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts without using funds provided under this subdivision (b)(4):

(A) The hiring of additional teachers for core academic subject areas, as identified in the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Qualified Teacher Requirements, that are not required by the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts;

(B) The enhancement of teacher salaries for recruitment and retention purposes;

(C) Obtaining additional compensation for teachers who assume identified leadership roles; or

(D) Additional compensation for teachers who assume additional responsibilities that support student academic achievement;

(2) Academic supports and interventions, including without limitation curriculum specialists, facilitators, tutors, dyslexia interventions, and Response to Intervention;

(3) Social, emotional, and behavioral supports;

(4) Physical and mental health resources, including without limitation personnel;

(5) Early intervention resources, including without limitation prekindergarten programs, school tutoring programs that take place before or after school, and early literacy interventions; and

(6) Access to postsecondary opportunities, including without limitation access to career coaches, concurrent credit courses, college-entrance support, and career-readiness support.

~~(b)(1) By July 1, 2022, each public school district shall submit a three-year enhanced student achievement plan to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education describing the school district's intended and implemented strategies to enhance student achievement and how enhanced student achievement funds will be used to support the strategies of the school district as permitted by this subdivision (b)(4) and rules promulgated by the State Board of Education.~~

~~(2) A school district shall review annually the school district's enhanced student achievement plan and shall review the progress of the school district's enhanced student achievement plan.~~

~~(3) The enhanced student achievement plan of a school district shall be updated as necessary by the school district, and amendments to the enhanced student achievement plan shall be submitted annually to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education with the annual budget of the school district.~~

~~(4) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall monitor the implementation and progress of the enhanced student achievement plan of a school district.~~

~~(5) A school district that does not demonstrate progress toward the goals of the enhanced student achievement plan of the school district for three (3) consecutive years may be subject to one (1) or more of the following:~~

~~(A) Additional monitoring by the Division of Secondary and Elementary Education;~~

~~(B) An increased level of support as provided in § 6-15-2913; or~~

~~(C) A corrective action plan that shall be developed in collaboration with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.~~

~~(e) The list of approved programs established before July 24, 2019, by the State Board of Education under subdivision (b)(4)(C)(i)(a) of this section shall expire on June 30, 2022.~~

~~(d)(b)~~ The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules for the implementation of this subdivision (b)(4)(C)(i) that shall include without limitation:

(1) The process for submitting an enhanced student achievement plan;

(2) The process for monitoring the expenditure of funds allocated under this subdivision (b)(4); and

(3) The specific requirements, qualifications, and criteria for allowable supports and resources.

(ii)(a) A school district shall budget one hundred percent (100%) of funds allocated under this subdivision (b)(4) each year to provide the supports and resources described in subdivision (b)(4)(C)(i)(a) of this section.

(b) If a school district intends to transfer funds allocated under this subdivision (b)(4) to other programs, the school district shall provide justification for the transfer of funds to the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

(iii) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education determines that a school

district's expenditure of funds allocated under this subdivision (b)(4) would result in the school district's losing funding under any federal law, then the funds allocated to a school district under this subdivision (b)(4) may be expended for other academic programs or salaries.

(iv) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education may direct that a school district expend available funds on specified programs under subdivision (b)(4)(C)(i) of this section.

(v) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall develop appropriate forms for use by school districts to comply with this subdivision (b)(4)(C) and the rules of the State Board of Education.

~~(D)(i) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education shall provide a report on the progress of school districts in meeting plan goals to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education by October 1 of each odd-numbered year, beginning in 2023.~~

~~(ii) The report shall include information broken down by category as described in subdivision (b)(4)(A) of this section on:~~

~~(a) How school districts are spending funds provided under this subdivision (b)(4), including specific programs utilized by school districts;~~

~~(b) The amount of funds transferred to another categorical fund, including an explanation of why the funds were transferred; and~~

~~(c) The analysis of student achievement data evaluated in student achievement growth models as described in § 6-15-2908 shall be expanded to include the evaluation of the best estimates of classroom, school, and school district effects on enhancing student achievement, in addition to the examination of student progress based on established value-added longitudinal calculations.~~

~~(iii) The report shall be included in the General Assembly's biennial adequacy study to evaluate the adequacy of education in the state.~~

SECTION 6. Arkansas Code § 20-7-135(e), concerning nutrition and physical activity standards in public schools, is amended to read as follows:

(e) Every school district shall:

~~(1) Convene a school nutrition and physical activity advisory committee that shall include members from school district governing boards, school administrators, food service personnel, teacher organizations, parents, students, and professional groups such as nurses and community members to include health and wellness goals as part of the school district's district strategic plan required under § 6-15-2919, that address:~~

~~(A)(1) Help raise Raising awareness of the importance of nutrition and physical activity; and~~

~~(B)(2) Assist Assisting in the development of local policies that address issues and goals, including ~~but not limited to~~ without limitation the following:~~

~~(i)(A) Assisting with the implementation of nutrition and physical activity standards developed by the school nutrition and physical activity advisory committee with the approval of the division and the State Board of Health;~~

~~(ii)(B) Integrating nutrition and physical activity into the overall curriculum;~~

~~(iii)(C) Ensuring that professional development for staff includes nutrition and physical activity issues;~~

~~(iv)(D) Ensuring that students receive nutrition education and engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity; and~~

~~(v)(E) Improving the quality of physical education curricula and increasing training of physical education teachers;~~

~~(vi) Enforcing existing physical education requirements; and~~

~~(vii) Pursuing contracts that both encourage healthy eating by students and reduce school dependence on profits from the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value;~~

~~(2) Begin the implementation of standards developed by the Child Health Advisory Committee with the approval of the division and the State Board of Health; and~~

~~(3) Require that goals and objectives for nutrition and physical activity be incorporated into the annual school planning and reporting process.~~

APPROVED: 4/17/25