
Update ForwARd Arkansas

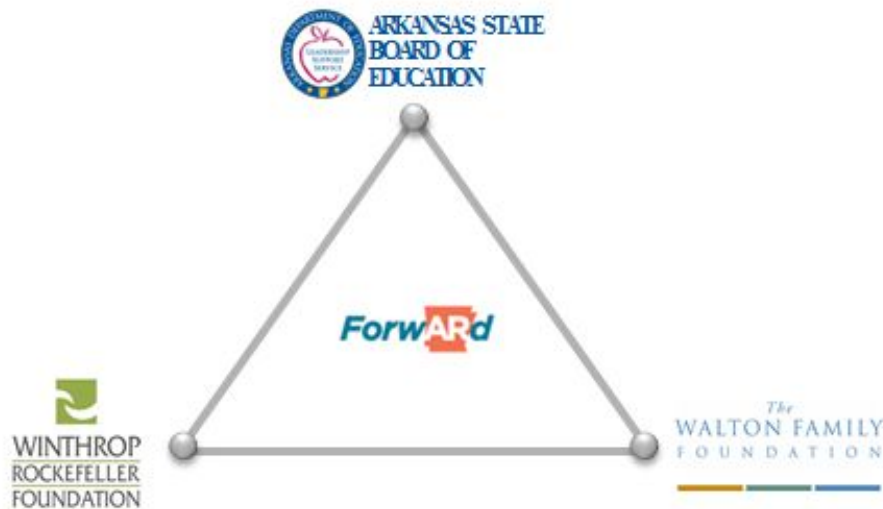
General Assembly: Joint Education Committee
November 2, 2015

Topics for Discussion

- **Our Process**
- **Vision and Aspirations**
- **What's next**
- **Q & A**

ForwARd is the pathway for making Arkansas a leader in 21st century preparedness

An aligned, diverse leadership group



- Diverse coalition of business leaders, state government, educators, community leaders, philanthropy
- Representing all parts of the state, urban, suburban, and rural
- All 28 voting members approved the plan

A plan for 21st century students

Equip Arkansas students with the skills they need to succeed by:

- Expanding rigorous workforce training w/ concurrent college credit
- Supporting educators in learning to teach new skills and content
- Making Arkansas a national leader in measuring "21st century" skills
- Attracting top talent to high-need subjects (e.g., STEM) by improving incentives

Make 21st century preparedness available to all students by:

- Turning around our lowest performing schools
- Providing nutrition and healthcare to students in high-needs schools
- Improving the quality of pre-k for students from low-income families

ForwARd steering committee members



ForwARd Steering Committee

- Ana Aguayo
- Deborah Coffman
- Toby Daughtery
- Marcy Doderer
- Matt Dozier
- Bob East
- Sen. Joyce Elliott
- Melanie Fox
- Diana Gonzales Worthen
- Lavina Grandon
- Ginny Kurrus
- Michele Linch
- John Riggs
- David Rainey
- Brenda Robinson
- Scott Shirey
- Ray Simon
- Kathy Smith
- Ladonna Spain
- Joy Springer
- Sherece West-Scantlebury
- Darrin Williams
- Shane Broadway
- Leandro Braslavsky Soldi
- Bill Dillard III
- Hugh McDonald
- Justin Minkel
- Kenya Williams

What We've Done

8,000
surveys



550

focus group participants



100

hours of
expert interviews



28

volunteer committee
members

7
areas
of focus



2 goals



One vision



Progress Has Been Made

ACCESS

Arkansas has improved access to education and increased participation in higher-level educational activities

- **Pre-K access:** Top 20 nationally
- **High school graduation rate:** Above nat'l avg
- **AP exams and ACT:** Very large recent increase in participating students
- **College-going rate:** Top 20 nationally

From State of Education in Arkansas report, released Jan 2015

STANDARDS

Arkansas has established policies & standards that should support student outcomes

- **Common core:** Arkansas is in 4th year of implementation of college-ready standards
- **Principal and teacher licensure and training:** Arkansas has been recognized as a leader in developing standards
- **Per-pupil expenditure:** Per-pupil expenditure has increased in recent years and is near national average

ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Despite recent gains, gap is still significant

- **Minority and FRL-eligible students:** Perform below other students on national tests, although the gap has narrowed
- **Regional achievement:** Southeast has lowest average but largest gains; Central has largest disparity and concentration of academically distressed schools
- **Pockets of performance:** Across Arkansas, there are pockets of excellence and low performance suggesting opportunity to spread what already works well statewide

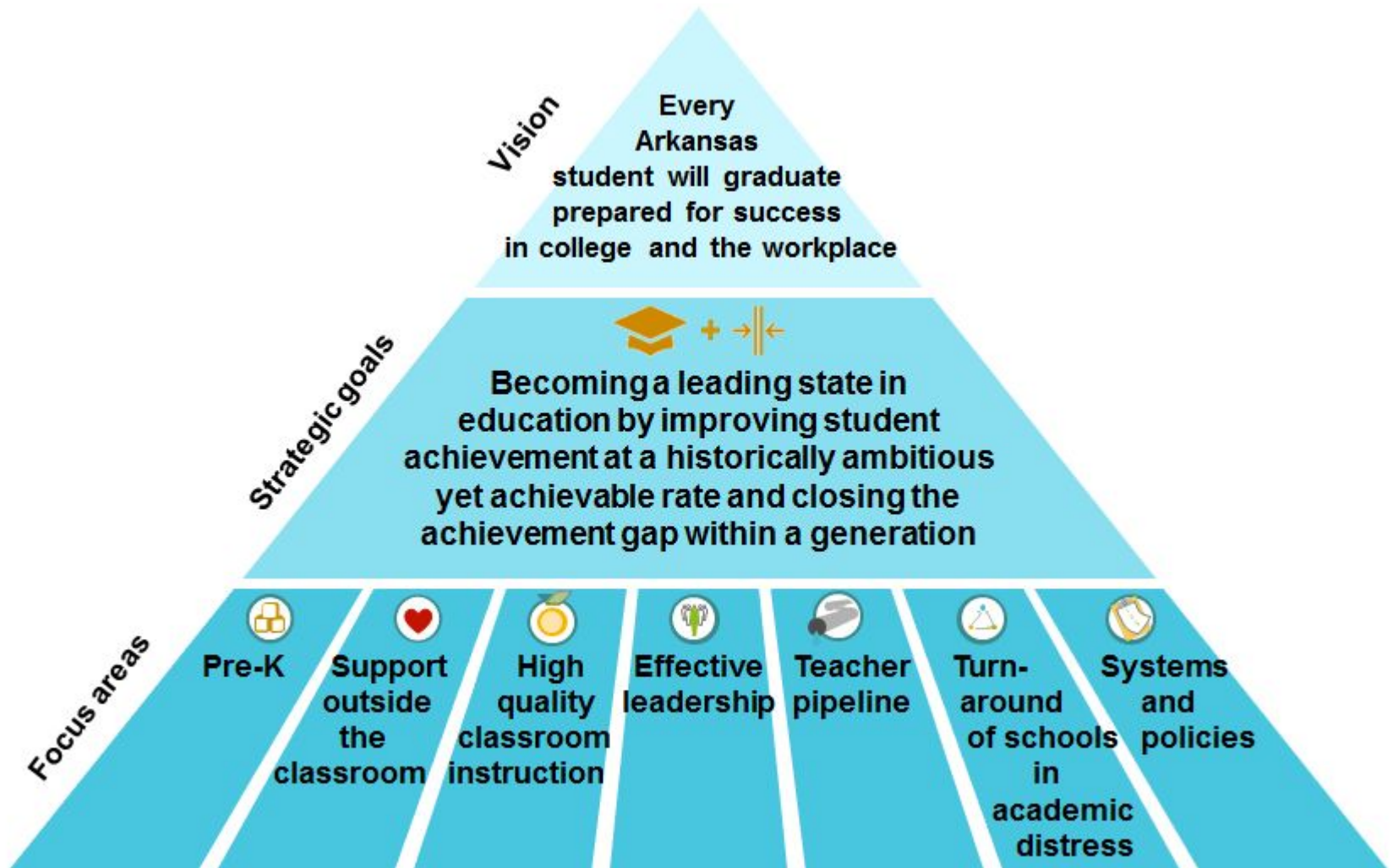


OUTCOMES

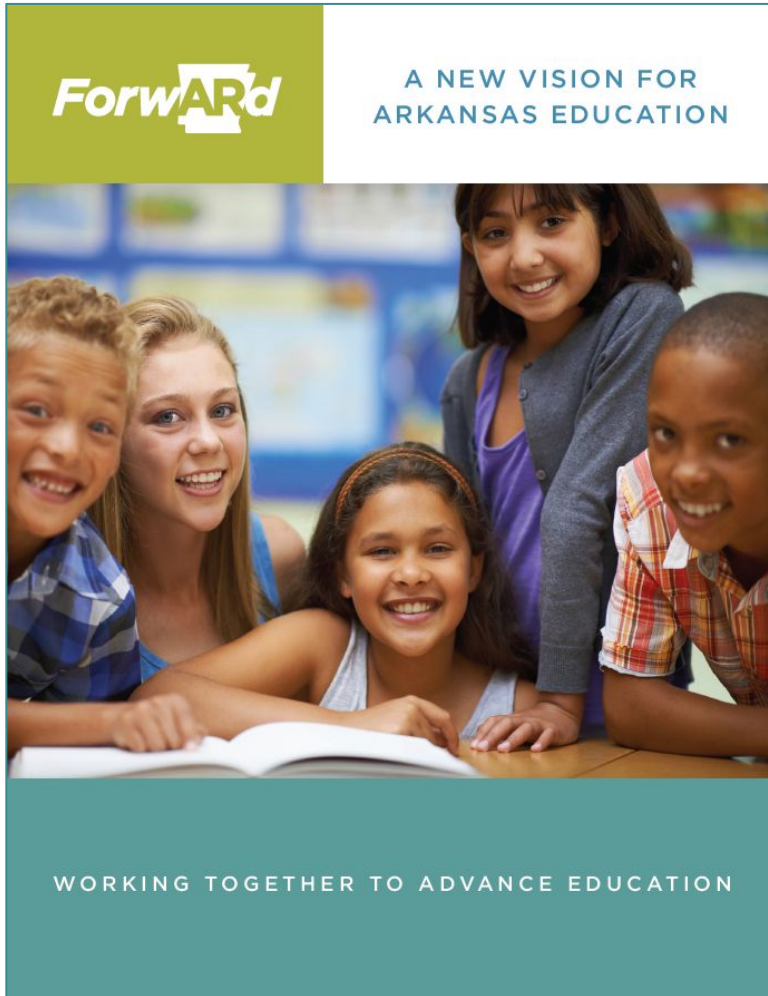
Student outcomes are still low and far below aspirations across the state, suggesting opportunity to improve

- **FRL students:** Only 20% who attended pre-K are considered “developed” in all 6 areas tested before kindergarten
- **Math and literacy:** Bottom 20 nationally in 4th and 8th grade test scores—and that rank has dropped since 2005
- **College grad rate:** 39% (48th in US)

ForwARd sets an ambitious vision for public education in Arkansas



Announcement of ForwARd's vision



**Download at
www.forwardarkansas.org**

ForwARd Summary (1/3)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Pre-K

All students, starting with those in highest need, have access to high quality early childhood learning opportunities so they arrive at Kindergarten ready to learn



Support beyond the classroom

All students and families, starting with those in highest need, have access to and support in accessing the nutritional and health resources needed to come to school ready to learn



Teaching and learning

Each student is supported in developing the full range of knowledge and skills s/he needs to be successful in college and career
All schools have a culture of mutual respect, high expectations for all, teamwork, and continuous growth

ForwARd Summary (2/3)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Leadership

All education leaders put students at the center of their decisions, work tirelessly to build and support a team, deploy resources effectively, and hold themselves and their team accountable for enabling all children to be successful



Teacher pipeline

All schools, especially those in high need areas, have access to talented educators who have been rigorously prepared



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

ForwARd Summary (3/3)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Systems and policies

All school districts have sufficient funding and use resources in a way that most effectively supports student success

Policies enable the implementation of recommendations needed for Arkansas to become a leading state in education

Announcement of ForwARd's vision

WEDNESDAY

Pope details annulment rules
Changes make dissolving marriages easier, faster, cheaper. — International, 6A



Mind is a terrible thing to waste
For developing teenagers, the brain is a work in progress. — Style, 4E

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

ARKANSAS' NEWSPAPER

Copyright © 2015, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Inc.

Printed at Little Rock • September 9, 2015

ArkansasOnline.com

46 Pages • 7 Sections \$1.00

In the news

Vicki Gardner, the woman who was shot in the back but survived the on-air attack by Victor Flanagan that killed TV journalists Adam Ward and Alison Parker, has been released from Carlisle Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Virginia, where doctors removed a kidney and part of her colon.

Michael Claude, 19, of Laurel, Del., was charged with third-degree burglary, criminal mischief and theft after police say he broke into a middle school, got stuck on an elevator and called 911 for help.

Kathleen Creighton, a rear admiral with the U.S. Navy, said at a U.S. military-sponsored earthquake-quake exercise drill in Manila, Philippines, that military budget constraints are unlikely to affect America's response to natural disasters and humanitarian crises in Asia.

Randi Jones, owner of the Bremerton Bug Museum in Washington state, said firefighters pried a 10-foot python off the leg of a museum employee it bit while the woman was trying to feed the snake in a back room.

Ray Tensing, a former University of Cincinnati police officer who fatally shot Samuel DuBois, whose vehicle Tensing pulled over for a missing front license plate, had his murder trial postponed with no new start date scheduled.

Justin Daniels, 42, said he was paddling his surfboard out to sea when a 6-foot shark attacked the board off Shelley Beach, 40 miles north of Sydney, leaving a single tooth puncture on the back of Daniels' left hand.

John Interval, the Washington, Pa., owner of Barbette, which advertises itself as a high-end gentlemen's barbershop that offers complimentary beers and sports, was fined \$750 for gender discrimination by the state's Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs after he refused to cut a woman's hair because it "intrudes" on his shop's environment.

Harold "Hal" Miller, 38, who is well-known in Camden, N.J., for his work with two organizations that help the city's homeless population, was arrested and charged with running a drug market that sold heroin and crack cocaine.

Andrew Cuomo, the governor of New York, said

National Guardsman buried at Arlington



APRIL/17 KATZ

Meghan Florich, widow of Army Staff Sgt. Thomas Florich III, holds her baby Tuesday during a burial service at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. Shepher Florich, Thomas Florich's father, stands next to her. Thomas Florich of the Louisiana Army National Guard was among four guardsmen and seven Marines killed when their helicopter crashed in March off the coast of Florida. The Army originally said Florich didn't meet burial requirements because he was on active duty for training, but an exception was made.

4 Democrats for Iran deal, easing its way

Tally enough to avoid vote

COMPILED BY DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE STAFF FROM WIRE SERVICES
WASHINGTON — Democrats clinched the crucial Senate votes Tuesday to block passage of a disapproval resolution against the Iran nuclear accord.

Four Senate Democrats previously undecided on the issue — Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, Ron Wyden of Oregon, Gary Peters of Michigan and Maria Cantwell of Washington state — announced their support for the international agreement in a coordinated burst. That pushed supporters to a 45-vote total, one more than necessary to block a GOP disapproval resolution with a filibuster, preventing a final vote.

"There is no better deal available now," declared Blumenthal, announcing his support for a accord that is strongly opposed by Israeli leaders as well as Republican senators. "This agreement with the duplicitous and un-



APRIL/17 MARTINEZ MONSIVIS

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said of the Senate battle over a resolution on the Iran nuclear accord: "The Republicans are treating the Senate as their own back yard, on their own back, trustworthy Iranian regime falls short of what I had envisioned, however I have decided the alternatives are even more dangerous." See **IRAN**, Page 5A

Cotton: Israelis want assurance

He favors U.S. signal to Iran

SARAH D. WHEE
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

WASHINGTON — Israeli officials want Congress to pass legislation demonstrating that the U.S. still has a close relationship with Israel, in the event that the Iran nuclear deal is approved, U.S. Sen. Tom Cotton said Tuesday. Cotton made his remarks after a weeklong trip to meet with Israeli government officials.

"While the nuclear consequences are grave and make the deal bad enough, the immediate consequences of empowering Iranian aggression and terror is something

pose the nuclear-arms deal with Iran, in part because they think the billions of dollars Iran, will get when sanctions are lifted will increase Iranian support for groups such as Hamas that have attacked Israel. "Israel truly feels like they are in a ring of fire from Iran and the consequences of the Iranian deal," Cotton said.

"The Republican from Arkansas said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israelis he spoke with continue to uniformly op-

ARKANSAS TIMES

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« UPDATE: Main Street Bridge reopens,...

The open line. Plus, Lockheed protes... »

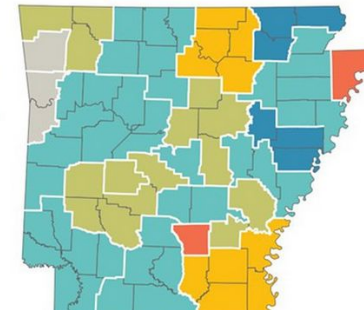
ForwARd Arkansas releases recommendations for school system. It's a compromise document.

Posted by Benjamin Hardy on Tue, Sep 8, 2015 at 12:47 PM

click to enlarge

Percentage of 4-year-old FRL students covered by ABC or Head Start pre-K⁵

- <50%
- 50-60%
- 60-70%
- 70-80%
- 80-90%
- 90-100%



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Our Progress

Baseline current state

*The State of
Education in
Arkansas*

Statewide engagement to create a new vision for education

- ✓ Set vision
- ✓ Set areas of focus
- ✓ Set strategic goals
- ✓ Engage diverse set of stakeholders
- ✓ Draft ideas for each focus area
- ✓ Agree on the vision, focus areas, and recommendations

Build a Statewide Movement

- Build public support for ForwARd
- Mobilize residents and communities around ForwARd's vision
- Set early implementation priorities
- Begin implementation

What might ForwARd mean for the ADE?

Potential areas of focus

Support schools & communities in academic distress

- Invest in a single, empowered, ADE unit staffed by highest-quality talent to manage the entire academic distress process and be held accountable for school outcomes
- Create a clear and consistent process for academic distress

Enable educators to focus on teaching & learning

- Streamline regulations, paperwork, and processes that do not add value
 - Differentiate based on risk; no one-size-fits-all
- Improve testing to inform teaching and continuous learning, and measure student progress holistically (including "21st century" skills)

Provide targeted, valuable support to schools and districts

- Build, support, and assess effectiveness of support infrastructure across the state
- Support attracting, developing, and retaining top talent in Arkansas

Redefine the goals, capabilities, structure, and culture of the ADE

- Shift balance of resources from compliance to support
- Change policies needed to attract top talent
- Build a support-oriented culture

What's happening next

- **Continued leadership of the Implementation Working Group**
- **Design of ForwARd communities**
- **Development of additional staffing support**
- **Updates quarterly to the State Board of Education**

Q and A

For Additional Information

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Facebook: facebook.com/ForwARdArkansas

Appendix

ForwARd Recommendations

Appendix (1/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Pre-K

All students, starting with those in highest need, have access to high quality early childhood learning opportunities so they arrive at Kindergarten ready to learn

Foundational

- P1. Set clear standard for what high quality means in Arkansas based on established research and improve all AR Pre-K seats to meet new high-quality standards**
- P2. Improve longitudinal tracking of student performance, trace outcomes back to specific programs, and actively collect data on barriers faced by families preventing higher enrollment**
- P3. After all current seats meet high quality standards, increase number of seats in areas with shortages so all eligible students can attend ABC or Head Start (maximizing use of federal funds e.g., Head Start, funds allocated to daycare, TANF...)**

Quick wins

- P4. Develop or select strong K-readiness indicators**
- P5. Tightly align ABC and Head Start curricula with strategic goal of kindergarten readiness**
- P6. Develop marketing program to educate and communicate value of Pre-K to parents**

Other

- P7. Move towards goal of ensuring all Pre-K teachers have a BA degree and specialized ECE training**
- P8. Conduct analysis to determine if there is need to expand 200% FPL threshold for guaranteed pre-K seats**

Appendix (2/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Support beyond the classroom

All students and families, starting with those in highest need, have access to and support in accessing the nutritional and health resources needed to come to school ready to learn

Foundational

- O1. Implement healthy breakfast as part of school day and provide all children nutritious snacks/dinner at afterschool and summer programs in high-need schools**
- O2. Coordinate school-based resources information so high-risk children and families receive support, access to quality health care resources, and the effective communication they need**
- O3. Expand high quality afterschool and summer programs for all children P-12 by securing dedicated revenue stream including state support**

Quick wins

- O4. Encourage all eligible schools and districts to sign-up for Community Eligibility Program which provides all students in a school free breakfast and lunch**
- O5. Encourage regular, convenient, two-way parental and caregiver communication during and out of the school year. To achieve this, schools and districts should rigorously implement best practices highlighted by leading advocacy organizations (e.g., providing ESL parents night classes on English, coaching parents to assist their children at home with class assignments...)**

Other

- O6. Use telemedicine to cost-effectively deliver common health services to students**

Appendix (3/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Teaching and learning

Each student is supported in developing the full range of knowledge and skills s/he needs to be successful in college and career

All schools have a culture of mutual respect, high expectations for all, teamwork, and continuous growth

Foundational

C1. Schools should embed meaningful teacher collaboration time into the school day (e.g., 3 hours / week) and **provide support to teachers to use this time effectively**

C2. Districts should assess effectiveness of current PD; For less effective PD, **reinvest time and funds toward more district teacher-driven PD, observations, and coaching**

C3. Improve testing for students, teachers, and schools. The emerging assessment approach should **maintain academic rigor, use classroom time thoughtfully** (by eliminating redundant or low priority tests), **inform teaching and continuous learning**, and **measure student progress holistically** (including "21st century" higher order cognitive skills and non-cognitive skills)

C4. Establish workforce education pathways across the state that enable students to earn college credit in high school and **pursue career opportunities while preserving options** to pursue higher education. For example, through an advanced manufacturing pathway, a student would have the option to get an advanced manufacturing job after high school, pursue a community college degree, or pursue a bachelors degree and beyond. Pathways should be developed with consideration of job opportunities in the state and beyond

C5. Offer adequate broadband access for all schools, meeting national standards for throughput (e.g., 100 kbps / student as of 2015). Adequate broadband will enable students and teachers to access online resources and improve teaching and learning

Appendix (4/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Teaching and learning

Each student is supported in developing the full range of knowledge and skills s/he needs to be successful in college and career

All schools have a culture of mutual respect, high expectations for all, teamwork, and continuous growth

Quick wins

C6. Introduce more flexibility at state and district levels for what can count toward PD hours (e.g., allow National Board Certified Teachers a degree of flexibility about their hours)

C7. Reduce and streamline teachers' tasks to enable them to focus on instruction. Begin with an investigation of current teacher tasks and streamlining opportunities

Other

C8. Support the rigorous implementation of standards (e.g., Common Core State Standards) through **continued professional development** provided by the state, co-ops, and districts

C9. Offering competitive funding for school and district proposals to **implement structural innovations**. Research-based structural innovations to consider include implementing a **year-round calendar**, **extending learning time** (school day and/or year, with a proportional increase in staff pay), and **looping classrooms** (having same teacher teach same students for more than one school year)

Appendix (5/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Leadership

All education leaders put students at the center of their decisions, work tirelessly to build and support a team, deploy resources effectively, and hold themselves and their team accountable for enabling all children to be successful

Foundational

- L1.** In the long term, support additional investment to **pay school leaders more**. Align compensation increases with evidence of effectiveness
- L2.** Develop alternative pathways that will enable effective educators to become effective school leaders
- L3.** Prepare principals to be effective in their role by establishing and supporting existing **highly rigorous principal preparation programs** and by **ensuring novice principals are mentored by highly effective principals**
- L4.** Implement **principal support strategies** by providing incentives and support for interested schools. Strategies may include 1) creating a **school administration manager role** to support operations, 2) creating a **principal supervisor role** to support principals with external needs, and/or 3) developing **teacher leader positions** for teachers to share leadership responsibilities
- L5.** Empower principals to partner with school staff in developing a **shared vision** for instruction in their school and to **manage resources important to achieving this vision**, including the ability to 1) **hire and place staff**, 2) **remove low-performing staff while ensuring due process**, and 3) **deploy instructional support resources** to meet the school's unique needs
- L6.** Support the ongoing implementation of a **rigorous administrator evaluation system** (e.g., the Leader Excellence and Development System). Monitor the implementation to make sure system leaders use the evaluation system effectively to **provide developmental support** and **hold administrators accountable** for their effectiveness and outcomes
- L7.** Expose Arkansas's education leaders to the **highest performing schools** inside and outside the state and provide them a **clear point of reference for what outstanding schools look like**

Appendix (6/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Leadership

All education leaders put students at the center of their decisions, work tirelessly to build and support a team, deploy resources effectively, and hold themselves and their team accountable for enabling all children to be successful

Quick wins

L8. Streamline current paperwork and regulatory requirements for administrators. Begin with an investigation of current practices

Other

L9. Attract and retain top leadership talent to work in high need schools by **offering districts flexibility to pay school leaders more** and by **improving the incentives** offered¹

L10. Support state efforts to **measure administrator preparation program effectiveness**. In addition, encourage the state to **hold programs accountable for outcomes**

L11. Establish new and support existing **highly effective administrator professional development programs** (e.g., programs that emphasize ongoing, job-embedded, cohort-based, and/or school team-based PD)

L12. Change the timing of school board elections to coincide with state or district elections

L13. Revamp current school board training and offer high quality PD focused on how to govern instead of micromanage, on hiring, supporting, and evaluating superintendents, and on budget

L14. Invest in a **state-funded mentor to support superintendents and school boards** in districts with priority schools on effective board governance

Appendix (7/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Teacher pipeline

All schools, especially those in high need areas, have access to talented educators who have been rigorously prepared

Foundational

- T1.** Support the introduction and expansion of programs that **encourage talented, local high school students to pursue a teaching credential and enter the teaching profession** (e.g., The Teacher Cadet Program offers top high school students an opportunity to learn about teaching and get classroom experience with teacher supervision)
- T2.** **Attract top talent to teach in high-need subjects** (e.g., STEM, special ed, ESL) **and high-need schools by offering districts flexibility to pay these teachers more** than stipulated by the salary schedule and by **improving the incentives** offered. Ensure high-need subjects can be defined locally to account for geographical variation
- T3.** Support expansion of **effective alternative educator pathways and subject expert pathways** for non-traditional talent to enter the teaching profession without sacrificing quality. Explore additional innovative models from traditional and alternative providers to address the need for talent in high need subjects and high need schools
- T4.** **Enable both traditional and alternative educator preparation programs to innovate** and improve by **reviewing and streamlining regulations** that do not drive outcomes. More regulatory flexibility could allow, for example, programs with experiential / competency-based learning elements, and 3+1 programs where teachers have paid yearlong internships
- T5.** Support state efforts to **measure and report the performance of educator preparation programs** including the inclusion of multiple outcome measures such as the student growth of graduates. In addition, encourage the state to hold traditional and alternative **educator preparation programs, accountable for their completers/graduates impact on student learning.**

Appendix (8/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Teacher pipeline

All schools, especially those in high need areas, have access to talented educators who have been rigorously prepared

Quick wins

T6. Establish centralized educator recruitment resources for potential educators across Arkansas. Develop a **state-of-the-art website** in order to attract and recruit potential teachers from across the state and beyond

Other

L9. Attract and retain top leadership talent to work in high need schools by **offering districts flexibility to pay school leaders more** and by **improving the incentives** offered¹

L10. Support state efforts to measure administrator preparation program effectiveness. In addition, encourage the state to **hold programs accountable for outcomes**

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Appendix (9/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category	Recommendation
Process: Before AD	<p>The state should clearly explain how the "A-F report card" and ESEA "focus" and "priority" schools relate to AD classifications in order to communicate more clearly with districts and communities</p> <p>The state should create a Pre-Academic Distress ("Pre-AD") zone to identify schools and districts that are on a path to academic distress</p> <p>The Pre-AD zone should be composed of schools in the lowest-performing 5% not already in academic distress in order to concentrate focus and resources</p>

Appendix (10/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category	Recommendation
Process: Before AD	<p>All Pre-AD and AD schools should participate in a comprehensive evaluation process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Each comprehensive evaluation should provide Pre-AD and AD schools with specific recommendations of programs, interventions, and strategies that improve student outcomes particularly those necessary to increase performance in the areas causing the Pre-AD and AD designations <p>The comprehensive evaluation process, should result in "binding recommendations" (i.e., mandated actions) created with significant input from school leaders</p> <p>The results of the comprehensive evaluation and "binding recommendations" should be shared with school and district leadership, the school board, and the community</p> <p>Pre-AD schools that do not follow "binding recommendations" and do not demonstrate student achievement gains can be moved to AD classification</p>

Appendix (11/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category

Recommendation

Process: Exiting
AD

The "academic distress" label should just be a classification and should end as soon as a school rises above the agreed-upon performance threshold signaling academic distress (e.g. a school should not continue to be considered academically distressed after its performance has risen above the original threshold)

Support and binding recommendations associated with academic distress should continue until a school demonstrates that it can sustain turnaround (i.e., support associated with academic distress should not necessarily end as soon as a school rises above the agreed-upon performance threshold)

The decision to "exit" schools from state control should be made on a "case by case" basis but should occur as soon as the school has met the agreed-upon performance threshold and demonstrated sustained progress implementing the recommendations in its comprehensive evaluation

Appendix (12/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All schools in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category

Recommendation

Support during AD

In order to fund the specific supports recommended to schools in their comprehensive evaluation, the state should work with AD and Pre-AD schools to:

- Supplement existing funds from a dedicated state funding pool for AD school support, when current sources (including districts, co-ops, and ADE) are insufficient to fund recommendations
- Reallocate existing funds from lower impact programs where possible
- Leverage all additional funds available to AD schools (e.g. 1003g grants)

Create a “turnaround academy” to train teachers and leaders (including those currently in AD schools) in specific skills needed to be successful in turnaround environments and provide financial and non-financial incentives to graduates who work in academically distressed schools

- The “turnaround academy” should be made accessible to participants living throughout the state
- The “turnaround academy” should include a track for school-support personnel including those in ADE, districts, and co-ops
- The “turnaround academy” curriculum should be built from national best practices and include application of theory in the classroom in addition to theory-based learning

School boards of districts with schools in AD or Pre-AD must participate in special trainings on the academic distress process

Appendix (13/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category

Recommendation

Interventions during AD

Decisions to remove leadership and/or assume state control should be "case dependent" and should be made if leadership (including principal, superintendent, and/or board) demonstrates an inability to implement the plan and make improvements (as evidenced by changes in students' actions)

- The state should consider removal of leadership and/or assuming control if in-depth evaluation finds leadership does not have reasonable probability of implementing the plan and improving if given support
- After initial evaluation, leadership should continue to lead turnaround process if they consistently demonstrate progress implementing their plan and improvement in the classroom throughout their time in academic distress

Appendix (14/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All schools in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category

Recommendation

Evaluation

Progress in AD and Pre-AD schools should be measured using a balanced set of metrics, not just test scores. Specifically evaluation should include:

- Progress implementing recommendations following timeline outlined in initial comprehensive evaluation (assessed through site visits)
- Student achievement growth
- Leading indicators of achievement (e.g. attendance, tardiness, retention)
- Educator and community input (e.g. survey, focus groups, interviews)
- Analysis of contextual factors which may be contributing to or inhibiting progress in implementing interventions for contextual factors identified in the comprehensive evaluation, including:
 - Academic supports available as compared with high-achieving schools (see example of academic supports in appendix)
 - Other important context including but not limited to demographic and enrollment trends and external risk factors (e.g. safety, housing, healthy food options, public transportation, green spaces)

The results of ongoing evaluation should be clearly communicated to families and the community

A new ADE team will be created to support the creation and implementation of the evaluation process (see ADE capacity). This team will be distinct from the team providing support to schools

Appendix (15/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category

Recommendation

Community

Family and community members are an important part of whatever happens in each AD and Pre-AD school, and should have a say in a school's overall direction. During the AD and Pre-AD process, communities need relevant and frequent communications and engagement such that they are well-informed about the situation and plan to improve. Specifically:

- AD and Pre-AD schools should be required to have a community-chosen community advisory body which will take an active role advising the management of AD and Pre-AD schools
- Struggling schools' academic standing (Pre-AD and AD) should be clearly communicated to the community
- AD and Pre-AD schools' ongoing evaluation results (e.g. quarterly reports) should be shared with community in a public-friendly format
- Regular and effective parent and community engagement should be part of the accountability framework for AD and Pre-AD schools
- Community input should be part of AD and Pre-AD schools' evaluation process
- Community input should be part of AD and Pre-AD school leaders' evaluation process

A new ADE team will be created to empower schools to build their own capacity to support their communities and hold schools accountable for effectively engaging with their communities in partnership with the evaluation teams (see ADE capacity recommendation)

Appendix (16/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category	Recommendation
ADE Capacity: Management of AD process	<p>There should be a single unit, internal to the ADE, responsible for managing the entire AD and Pre-AD Process</p> <p>The unit should be responsible for providing or coordinating the provision of the comprehensive evaluation, support, accountability, intervention and all other actions outlined in prior AD process, support, and intervention recommendations</p>
ADE Capacity: Size and organization of ADE Unit	<p>The single unit should be led by a direct report to the Commissioner</p> <p>School-support personnel should maintain a 3:1 ratio of AD and Pre-AD schools to support personnel</p> <p>New teams with specialized capabilities (incremental to school-support personnel), should be created inside the ADE unit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community engagement team (2-4 incremental FTE): Made up of "community-engagement specialists" and designed to empower schools to build their own capacity to support their communities and to hold schools accountable for effectively engaging their communities• Ongoing evaluation team (1-2 incremental FTE): designed to create, pilot, and implement the new AD evaluation process

Appendix (17/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category

Recommendation

**ADE Capacity:
Skills and
capabilities**

School-support personnel should have experience leading in turnaround environments and demonstrate the ability to coach leaders in development of turnaround skills (e.g. competencies for turnaround success) in addition to existing job description

**ADE Capacity:
Recruiting and
retention**

Recruiting highly-skilled, highly-qualified personnel to internal ADE unit must be a top priority for ADE

- ADE should be allowed hiring flexibility to staff team more efficiently (including waivers from mandated salary ranges, job posting duration requirements, and hiring timeline)

Salaries for school-support positions must be competitive with comparable positions in school districts

"Turnaround Academy" should include a track for school-support personnel including those in ADE, districts, and co-ops

Appendix (18/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Turnaround of schools in academic distress

All school in academic distress and pre-academic distress receive support and interventions that enable them to transform their school cultures, dramatically improve student achievement, and sustain their improvement over time

Category	Recommendation
ADE Capacity: Empowerment and accountability	<p>ADE unit should be held accountable for the success of schools in AD and Pre-AD</p> <p>Evaluations of school-support personnel should be aligned with the way in which schools are evaluated (see page 12). The team evaluating schools should be separate from the school-support team</p> <p>The State Board of Education should continually evaluate the effectiveness of the internal ADE unit and after five years should conduct a formal review to decide if it should continue, end, or change this approach to school turnaround</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The results of the Board's evaluations and reviews should be presented to the Joint Legislative Committee on Education

Appendix (19/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Systems and policies

All school districts have sufficient funding and use resources in a way that most effectively supports student success

Policies enable the implementation of recommendations needed for Arkansas to become a leading state in education

- 1 Arkansas's schools are not sufficiently resourced to perform at the aspired level of educational excellence. Invest in additional funding to support educational excellence. This funding should prioritize ForwARd's recommendations, be increased in increments, and additional funding should be tied to evidence that existing resources are being effectively used to improve student achievement**
- 2 Currently NSL funding is provided to districts based on tiers of % FRL, so that a district with 69% FRL students gets roughly half the funds of a 70% FRL district. Smooth out the step-wise function used for NSL to reduce funding differences between similar % FRL districts**
- 3 Current English Language Learner (ELL) funding is insufficient compared to the need – invest in greater categorical funding for ELL students. Funding should be used in ways that best provide additional support to ELL students (e.g., additional high quality academic support)**

Appendix (20/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Systems and policies

All school districts have sufficient funding and use resources in a way that most effectively supports student success

Policies enable the implementation of recommendations needed for Arkansas to become a leading state in education

- 4 Tie a portion of ELL and NSL funding to evidence of district effectiveness in supporting ELL and NSL students**
- 5 Current Pre-K funding is insufficient compared to the need – invest in greater funding for Pre-K; improving quality will require ~\$70-100M/ yr, then subsequently increasing access will require an incremental ~\$20-80M/ yr**
- 6 Current staffing and budget rules governing ADE constrain ADE from hiring the best personnel for the job (e.g., each ADE division is required to have a specified number of personnel from each salary schedule). Revise staffing and budget rules to offer more hiring autonomy to ADE leadership**
- 7 Increase compensation in ADE staff salary schedule to be at least as competitive as districts, in order to attract strong educator talent to ADE**

Appendix (21/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Systems and policies

All school districts have sufficient funding and use resources in a way that most effectively supports student success

Policies enable the implementation of recommendations needed for Arkansas to become a leading state in education

- 8 Drive greater efficiency of district spending without compromising outcomes. Form regional and/or state-wide 'communities of practice' around resource use in specific, high-value / high-inefficiency areas (e.g., school staffing/class size, use of instructional coaches, purchasing, special education). Create or leverage an existing state-wide public-private partnership to oversee these 'communities of practice'**
- Enable best practice sharing, collective problem solving, and drive long term improvement
 - Identify metrics to measure improvement and success
 - Build political will by convening key stakeholders from multiple sectors and across the state (e.g., districts, co-ops, industry leaders)
 - In areas where clear best practices are established, the state may then codify the practices into law or regulation (e.g., state-wide purchasing practices)
- 9 ADE should hold each co-op accountable for providing high-quality services that support student achievement and effective use of resources at the school and district levels**
- This effort should build and improve upon ADE's existing evaluation of co-ops as required by legislation in 2012. Refinements to consider include introducing greater rigor, requiring an independent evaluator, making formal evaluations more frequent, and introducing yearly reporting on progress
 - The state should also consider structural changes (e.g., governance, funding, support) for underperforming co-ops to ensure all districts have access to a consistent set of high-quality services

Appendix (22/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Systems and policies

All school districts have sufficient funding and use resources in a way that most effectively supports student success

Policies enable the implementation of recommendations needed for Arkansas to become a leading state in education

- 10 Streamline the regulatory burden for educators at all levels (including ADE) to reduce complexity, encourage a shift from a compliance to a performance-driven mindset, and enable educators to focus on their most important roles. Gather input from educators to inform specific changes. Focus regulations and related support on the highest risk situations where compliance activities could be most helpful (e.g., struggling schools)**
- 11 Develop state-wide district efficiency metrics to support spending transparency. For districts that are underperforming (e.g., classified as Pre-Academically Distressed or Academically Distressed), efficiency targets should be set and intensive support should be provided to improve how funds are spent**
 - Metrics should be carefully developed with input from districts to mitigate unintended consequences (e.g., sending misleading messages, adding bureaucratic requirements, encouraging changes not in best interest of student achievement)
 - Consider implementing as part of current performance measurements and action plans so this does not add a new burden for districts
 - While any metrics should be the product of a fresh review, they might build on existing law established in Act 35 of the 2nd Extraordinary Session of 2003

Appendix (23/23)

Recommendations to enable Arkansas to become a leader in 21st century preparedness



Systems and policies

All school districts have sufficient funding and use resources in a way that most effectively supports student success

Policies enable the implementation of recommendations needed for Arkansas to become a leading state in education

- 12** Districts, co-ops, ADE, and other education stakeholders should make decisions based on educational value (i.e. how much student impact is achieved with funds, instead of how resources were allocated in previous years). Support districts and other entities in building this capability
- 13** Continue to build alignment across Arkansas's school performance designations to enhance clarity. Furthermore, improve communication of the designations to educators and communities
- 14** A school's effectiveness should be evaluated based on both absolute performance and student growth (i.e. student achievement growth from the beginning to the end of the school year)
- 15** As a general principle, education laws should be kept as simple as possible. In that spirit, ForwARd recommends implementing legislative changes only when department policy changes are insufficient to drive the change needed.