

# ARKANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT



**PART B**  
**INDICATOR 17: STATE**  
**SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT**  
**PLAN PHASE I**  
**FFY 2013-14**

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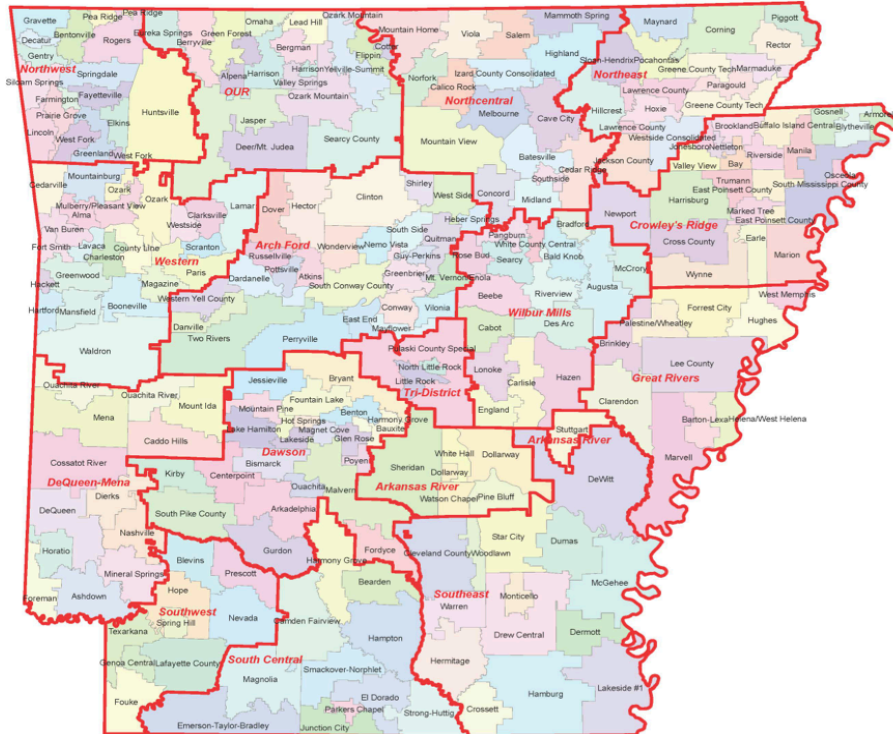
## Overview of Arkansas State Systemic Improvement Plan

Arkansas' current population is over 2,900,000. It has eight metropolitan areas that are composed of 12 of Arkansas' 75 counties. The remaining 63 counties are classified as non-metropolitan, and 21% of the state's residents live in rural communities (towns with population with less than 2,500). Economically, Arkansas' median household income is \$40,768 and 19.2% of Arkansas households have an income below the poverty level. Statewide the racial composition is 79.9% White, 15.6% Black or African American, 1.0% American Indian and Alaska native, 1.5% Asian, 0.3% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 1.9% two or more races.

There were 474,995 students in Arkansas public schools grades K-12 during 2013-2014, and 55,021 students were eligible for special education services (11.58% of the total student population). Over the past five years, Arkansas has served a relatively consistent number of SWD, showing only a very slight net increase from 54,826 students in 2009-2010. Over the past five years, Specific Learning Disability and Speech Impairment have remained the disability categories representing the most students. Specific Learning Disability remains the largest eligibility group accounting for 18,172 or 33% of SWD in the 2013-14 school year.

Arkansas has 257 Local Education Agencies (LEAs and Charter Schools) and 15 Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs). The ESCs (see Exhibit I-17.1) are regional service centers that support LEAs in (1) meeting or exceeding State Standards and equalizing education opportunities; (2) more effectively using educational resources through cooperation among school districts; and (3) promoting coordination between school districts and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).

Exhibit I-17.1: Arkansas School Districts and Educational Service Cooperatives



A Commissioner of Education leads the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) with support from a Deputy Commissioner. Five main divisions within the ADE structure the work: Fiscal and Administrative Services, Human Resources, Research and Technology, Public School Accountability, and Learning Services. The ADE-Special Education Unit (ADE-SEU) is under the Division of Learning Services.

The Arkansas Department of Education State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) will focus on increasing the literacy achievement of students with disabilities (SWD) in third through fifth grade. Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Reading is making meaning from print. It is a process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. An extensive data and infrastructure analysis was conducted in collaboration with multiple internal and external stakeholders in order to identify the focus on literacy.

The data analysis indicated concerns with the effectiveness, individualization, and differentiation of instruction, percentages of students educated within the general education classroom, and missed instruction due to disciplinary removals. This identification of contributing factors supported the development of strategies focused on response-to-intervention with an emphasis on literacy, behavior, and improving performance relative to least restrictive environment.

The infrastructure analysis identified multiple strengths and areas of need within the States infrastructure. The restructuring of ADE-SEU's monitoring to support a needs-based tiered system provides the resources and structure to shift from a primary focus on compliance to a more balanced approach, including a results-focused monitoring component. ADE-SEU's current online professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) system needs to be restructured to better support differentiated and targeted needs of LEAs. Also the ADE needs to make a concerted effort to build the internal capacity of personnel and align PD and TA efforts. These identified areas of need supported the development of a strategy that will focus on creating a special education system of PD and TA that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data.

The ADE-SEU's Theory of Action illustrates how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will increase the State's capacity, which will lead to meaningful change in LEAs. The rationale provided highlights the logical connection of achievable state-level actions to consequent actions of the LEAs and ultimately to the intended outcome of improved results for SWD.

Authentic stakeholder input was critical throughout Phase I. The SSIP has required the ADE-SEU to strengthen existing partnerships with internal and external groups involved in the education of SWD and as well as build new partnerships. ADE-SEU will continue its stakeholder engagement into Phase II of the SSIP.

**Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan  
Component - Baseline and Targets**

**Baseline Data**

FFY	2013
Data	45.65%

**FFY 2014 – FFY 2018 Targets**

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	47.25%	48.85%	50.46%	52.06%	53.65%

**Description of Measurement**

Description of Measure

Percent of students with disabilities (SWD) in grades 3- 5 who made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained a proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment.

Measurement Calculation

Number of SWD who had valid assessment results for current and previous year	620
B. Number of SWD who made gains toward proficiency reaching a level nearer to proficient	126
C. Number of SWD who made gains toward proficiency and reached a level of proficient	39
D. Number of SWD who were proficient in the previous year and maintained their level of proficient level	118
Percent of SWD in grades 3- 5 that made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment =  ((B+ C+D)/A)*100	45.65%

Background

In the past, Arkansas established annual improvement gains in student scale scores. The gain index per student growth was based upon changes in a student’s performance level, across two years, on tests included in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP)

For the purpose of the SSIP, Arkansas is using a modified version of the gain index. The modifications include the use of the alternate assessment and five gain index categories instead of eight. To measure gains the proficiency levels of the regular and alternate were split into subcategories. The sub-categories allow a more discrete look at student achievement and answers if gains are being made even if a student has not reached a level classified as proficient. Exhibit I-17.2 illustrates the gain index categories from the ACTAAP assessment levels.

**Exhibit I-17.2: Gain Index Categories Aligned to ACTAAP Assessment Levels.**

<b>Regular Assessment Levels</b>	<b>Alternate Assessment Levels</b>	<b>Gain Index Categories</b>	
Below Basic (BB)	Not Emerging & Emerging	BB1 (1)	BB2 (2)
Basic (Bas)	Substantial Independent	Bas1 (3)	Bas2 (4)
Proficient (Prof)	Functional Independent	Prof+ (5)	
Advanced (Adv)	Independent		

Methodology

To measure changes in student achievement for the Grade 3-5, a gain index is computed using the literacy scale scores of the statewide assessment. A student's literacy score is matched to his/her literacy score from the previous year. For example, a student in the fourth grade will have his/her fourth grade literacy score matched to his third grade literacy score. This only applies to students who are in the participating districts for both years.

Data sources for calculating the gain index include the previous year assessment scale scores for SWD in grades 3-5 and current year assessment scale scores for grades 4-6. While the focus of the SSIP is on grades 3-5, it is important to have the grade 6 scale scores to match back to the fifth grade scores. During the data analysis work the State found a drop in literacy scores between fifth and sixth grade and by measuring the gain index for between fifth and sixth provides insight on the strategies being implemented.

Once student matching is completed, each scale score is assigned to a sub-category with a gain index of 1-5. The subcategorizations are presented in Exhibit I-17.3: *Score Range for Student Performance Subcategories in Grades 3-8 for Regular Assessment* and Exhibit I-17.4: *Score Range for Student Performance Subcategories in Grades 3-8 for Alternate Assessment*.

**Exhibit I-17.3: Score Range for Student Performance Subcategories in Grades 3-8 for Regular Assessment**

<b>Scale Score Performance Sub-Categories for Literacy Regular Assessment</b>						
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>BB1 (1)</b>	<b>BB2 (2)</b>	<b>Bas1 (3)</b>	<b>Bas2 (4)</b>	<b>Prof+ (5)</b>
3	Lit	1-262	263	330	415	>499
4	Lit	1-292	293	354	456	>558
5	Lit	1-334	335	382	493	>603
6	Lit	1-361	362	417	529	>640

**Exhibit I-17.4: Score Range for Student Performance Subcategories in Grades 3-8 for Alternate Assessment**

Scale Score Performance Sub-Categories Literacy for Alternate Assessment						
Grade	Subject	BB1 (1)	BB2 (2)	Bas1 (3)	Bas2 (4)	Prof+ (5)
3	Lit	0-663	664	686	698	>710
4	Lit	0-672	673	693	702	>713
5	Lit	0-664	665	693	705	>718
6	Lit	0-637	638	685	697	>710

The difference between the previous year subcategory and the current year subcategory determines which measurement category (Indicator 17: B-D) a student is counted. Exhibit I-17.5 is a crosstab of the two years and the measurement categories for calculating the SIMR. For example, a student who had a gain index of 2 in the previous year and a gain index of 3 in the current year is counted in section B of the measurement calculation.

**Exhibit I-17.5: Example of Data Categorization**

		Current Year Subcategory: Gain Index				
		1	2	3	4	5
Previous Year Subcategory: Gain Index	1	-	B	B	B	C
	2	-	-	B	B	C
	3	-	-	-	B	C
	4	-	-	-	-	C
	5	-	-	-	-	D

For further clarification, Exhibit I-17.6 provides an example of matched student data and how a student's measurement classification is determined between the two years.

Example: **Student A** had a previous year rating of 2 which is the subcategory of *below basic 2* or BB2. In the most recent assessment results **Student A** had a rating of 4 or *basic 2* (Bas2) showing a gain of two sub-categories. While the student did not reach proficiency they did make gains and would be counted in B of the calculation.

**Exhibit I-17.6: Sample Student Data**

Student	Previous Year Rating	Current Year Rating	Calculation Category
A	2	4	B
B	3	5	C
C	5	3	-
D	3	3	-
E	5	5	D
F	5	5	D
G	4	5	C
H	5	4	-
I	1	1	-
J	1	1	-
K	2	2	-
L	2	2	-

Using the sample data from Exhibit I-17.6 to calculate the actual rate of gains for students in grades 3-5 the following elements, as seen in Exhibit I-17.7, will need to be compiled from the final matched data set.

**Exhibit I-17.7: Example of Calculation using Data from Exhibit 5**

A. Number of SWD who had valid assessment results for current and previous year	12
B. Number of SWD who made gains toward proficiency reaching a level nearer to proficient	1
C. Number of SWD who made gains toward proficiency and reached a level of proficient	2
D. Number of SWD who was proficient in the previous year and maintained their level of proficient level	2

In the example above, 41.67%  $\left(\frac{1+2+2}{12} \times 100\right)$  of SWD in grades 3- 5 made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained a proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment.



**Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input**

In establishing the targets for the SIMR Arkansas considered various methods. Once the SIMR measurement and calculation were developed with both internal and external stakeholders input the focus shifted setting the targets through FFY 2018. The IDEA Data & Research staff researched various strategies on target setting and meaningful difference between years. After sharing the target setting options with stakeholders the group decided to use the *Guide for Describing Meaningful Differences*, which was developed by John Carr at WestEd. The purpose of the tool is to describe differences in the percentages of achievement results. Using the table presented in Exhibit I-17.8 stakeholders selected to increase the targets by eight percentage point between FFY 2013 and FFY2018; the high end of the moderate percentage point difference for comparing 500+ students.

**Exhibit I-17.8: Guide for Describing Meaningful Differences**

Descriptive Difference	Total Number of Students being Compared			
	50	100	200	500+
	Percentage Point Difference			
None	0-12	0-8	0-5	0-3
Small	13-15	9-11	6-7	4-5
Moderate	16-19	12-14	8-10	6-8
Fairly Large	20-25	15-17	11-13	9-10
Large	26-29	18-24	14-19	11-15
Very Large	30+	25+	20+	16+

Although, the tool was not meant to set targets, it provided guidance in selecting a percentage point increase for the next five years that would be a meaningful difference. Arkansas selected the target growth rate of eight percentage points from the FFY 2013 baseline to FFY 2018, resulting in an annual growth rate of 1.6 percentage points. While the annual growth rate may seem small, as schools throughout the central and delta region are added to the implementation the number of students being measured will increase substantially.

The targets have been established to reflect a measurable improvement over the FFY 2013 baseline data. The initial targets are set using data for grades 3-5 from Little Rock School District’s 15 elementary schools. As schools are added through scale-up, the targets may need to be updated to reflect the changing population; however, the baseline will remain the same.

## Component #1 – Data Analysis

**1 (a) A description of how the State identified and analyzed key data, including data from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other data as applicable to determine the SIMR and the root causes contributing to low performance.**

### Overview of Process

Throughout the data analysis process, the ADE-SEU drew from the feedback of multiple external and internal stakeholders to identify, select, and analyze key data components. In collaboration with stakeholders, the ADE-SEU identified and analyzed significant quantitative data from a number of data sources including US census data, Arkansas' special education's State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SSP/APR) Indicator data, IDEA Section 618 and Section 616 data, as well as other educational data sets available from the ADE data center (e.g. school level accountability status).

The ADE-SEU began the data analysis process by providing an overview of all current SPP/APR indicator data to the State Special Education Advisory Panel (Advisory Council) at a working meeting in January of 2014. At that time the Advisory Council was introduced to the SSIP and their role in guiding its development. Based on their feedback and guidance from OSEP that the State-Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) must be related to a student level result indicator(s), the ADE-SEU narrowed the focus to four indicators: Indicator 1: Graduation Rates, Indicator 2: Drop Out Rate, Indicator 3C: Math and Literacy Assessment Proficiency, and Indicator 14: Post School Outcomes.

During the April, 2014 Advisory Council meeting, Council members collaboratively analyzed three years of statewide trend data for the key Indicators. The goal of this meeting was to gather data based on observations and to identify additional layers of data disaggregation for future analysis.

As seen in Exhibit I-17.1(a).1 below, the analysis revealed that there have been positive results for both Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate. Graduation Rate shows net gains in performance over the past three years from 76% to 79% in FFY2012. For Dropout Rate, performance has steadily improved with the rate declining from 3.06% to 2.62%, consistently achieving the target dropout rate of 4% or less. Similarly, the analysis shows positive results for Post School Outcomes; the State has either reached the established target or shown improvement in this indicator over the past three years

In contrast, Arkansas has seldom met the established targets for assessment proficiency and performance has declined. Over the past three years, the proficiency targets for mathematics and literacy have not been met. Further, assessment proficiency has declined over the last reporting year, down from 45% in FFY2011 to 42% in FFY2012 in mathematics and down from 36% in FFY2011 to 33% in FFY2012 in literacy.

**Exhibit I-17.1(a).1: Three Year Comparison of SPP/APR Indicators 1, 2, 3 c, and 14**

SPP/APR Indicator	Target for FFY 2010, FFY 2011, and FFY 2012*	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
	Targets	Actual	Actual	Actual
<b>Indicator 1: Graduation Rate</b>	85.00%	75.76%	75.31%	79.15%
<b>Indicator 2: Dropout Rate</b>	4.20%	3.06%	2.92%	2.62%
<b>Indicator 3 C: Assessment Proficiency</b>				
<b>Mathematics</b>	51.14%	44.86%	45.42%	42.09%
<b>Literacy</b>	45.22%	31.49%	36.06%	33.23%
<b>Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes</b>				
<b>A. Enrolled in Higher Education</b>	13.00%	14.54%	15.88%	18.42%
<b>B. Enrolled in Higher Education or Competitively Employed</b>	49.00%	49.52%	42.95%	43.88%
<b>C. Enrolled in Higher Education or Other Postsecondary Education or Training or Competitively Employed or in Some Other Employment</b>	60.00%	61.05%	55.92%	58.13%
*Note: Due to the extension of the SPP/APR package beyond the initial 6 years, OSEP permitted States to hold targets steady. Arkansas chose to hold targets steady for FFY 2010, FFY 2011, and FFY 2012.				

To encourage feedback, the ADE-SEU requested that during the meeting the Advisory Council members provide written responses to the following open-ended questions:

- What do you notice about these data (e.g. areas of high performance, areas of low performance)?
- What additional data might be helpful to review?
- What are some ways you would be interested in seeing these data drilled down further (e.g., disability group, gender, grade, or subset of schools)?
- What other questions do you have about these data?

The stakeholders expressed concern with the decline in Indicator 3C and indicated that math and literacy assessment proficiency were areas in need of more focused analysis. Based on the responses to the open ended questions, the ADE-SEU selected additional data elements to

disaggregate the assessment data. The disaggregation included regions of the state, test group (alternative assessment, regular assessment with accommodations, regular assessment without accommodations), and grade level. The broad analysis of this data as well as additional in-depth disaggregated data and analysis is discussed in detail in section 1(b) below.

Between August 2014 and January 2015, the ADE-SEU continued to engage a number of stakeholder groups in the data analysis process (see Stakeholder Participation Chart in the appendix on page 1). The stakeholder groups included the Advisory Council, Arkansas Association of Education Administrators, Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators, Teachers, Parents, and ADE personnel from multiple units. These diverse stakeholder groups provided valuable analysis and feedback that directly guided the ADE-SEU in a cyclical process of data identification, selection, and analysis.

### Identifying Root Causes

To identify root causes contributing to low assessment proficiency rates, the ADE-SEU used multiple sources. Quantitative data included the SPP/APR data, IDEA 618 data, ESEA accountability status data, demographic data, and local-level assessment data available through the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. In addition, feedback from targeted presentations, in-person meetings, online surveys, and small focus groups provided qualitative data from multiple stakeholder groups including the Advisory Council, Arkansas Association of Education Administrators, Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators, Teachers, Parents, and ADE personnel from multiple units (see Stakeholder Participation Chart in the appendix on page 1). In identifying root causes for low performance the State carefully considered all the stakeholder feedback gathered throughout the data and infrastructure analysis process. The details and findings of the root cause analysis are discussed in detail in section 1(b) below.

### **1 (b) – A description of how the data were disaggregated by multiple variables such as LEA, region, race/ethnicity, disability category, and placement, etc.**

#### Broad Data Disaggregation and Analysis

After identifying Indicator 3C: Assessment Proficiency as an area of concern the math and literacy data was cross referenced with additional data sets that included (see the July Data Analysis Handout for all data set in the appendix on pages 2 - 10):

- Percent proficient by grade level across the 16 regional Educational Service Cooperatives (ESCs) and 257 Local Education Agencies (Districts and Charter Schools).
- Number of Priority, Focus, Achieving, and Exemplary schools located within each congressional district and regional ESC.
- Statewide percent proficient for special education and general education by grade level.
- Statewide percent proficient by test accommodation type and grade.
- Percent Proficient by grade for special education and general education across the four congressional districts.

Under the Arkansas ESEA flexibility waiver (approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2012 and amended July 2013), the state's accountability system identifies schools in five categories: Exemplary, Achieving, Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Priority (lowest 5% in the state, referred to as Priority) and Needs Improvement Focus (lowest 30% for Targeted

Achievement Gap Group or TAGG which includes students with disabilities, referred to as Focus).

The analysis indicated that there are regions of the State that show greater need. For example, as shown in Exhibit I-17.1(b).1, the greatest concentration of Focus and Priority Schools are in the Delta and Central Regions with Great Rivers ESC, Arkansas Rivers ESC, Southeast ESC, South Central ESC, and Tri-District ESC all having 10 or more Focus and Priority Schools.

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).1: Summary of School improvement Classifications by Educational Cooperatives**

	<b>Priority Schools</b>	<b>Focus Schools</b>	<b>Achieving/Exemplary Schools</b>
<b>Arch Ford Educational Cooperative</b>	0	0	9
<b>Arkansas River Educational Cooperative</b>	8	3	5
<b>Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative</b>	5	8	13
<b>Dawson Educational Cooperative</b>	1	4	9
<b>DeQueen Mena Educational Cooperative</b>	0	7	9
<b>Great Rivers Educational Cooperative</b>	8	10	8
<b>North Central Educational Cooperative</b>	0	0	9
<b>Northeast Educational Cooperative</b>	0	0	0
<b>Northwest Educational Cooperative</b>	1	7	30
<b>Ozark Unlimited Resource Educational Service Cooperative</b>	0	2	6
<b>South Central Educational Cooperative</b>	2	15	3
<b>Southeast Educational Cooperative</b>	3	7	0
<b>Tri- District: Little Rock, North Little Rock, Pulaski County</b>	10	18	14
<b>Western Educational Cooperative</b>	2	4	16
<b>Wilbur Mills Educational Cooperative</b>	1	3	7

Looking specifically at proficiency, the analysis revealed that statewide literacy proficiency scores are lower than math proficiency scores and that a gap between general education and special education achievement is larger in literacy than in mathematics. Considering these findings, along with the State’s lack of progress towards the assessment literacy target in the SPP/APR, a focus specifically on literacy proficiency was determined.

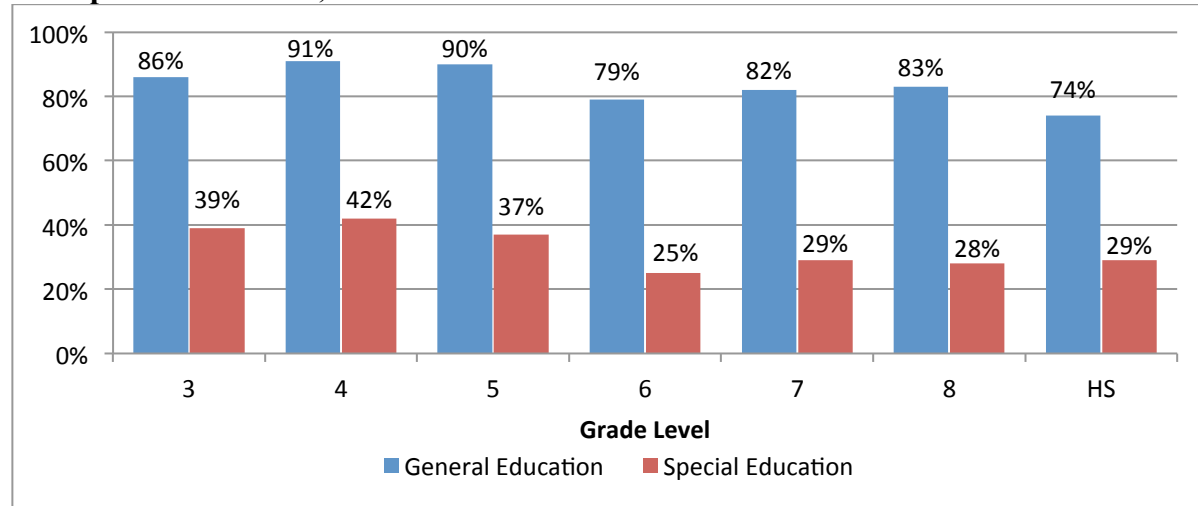
Exhibit I-17.1(b).2 illustrates that literacy achievement is an area of need across all Educational Service Cooperatives (ESCs). None of the ESCs reached the SPP/APR target of 45% proficient for SWD in the area of literacy. It also illustrates that there are important variations in literacy achievement across ESCs. The percent of SWD proficient in literacy range from a low of <25% in the Delta and Central Regions of the state (Southeast ESC and Tri-District ESC) to a high of 42% in the Northwest region of the state (Northwest ESC); thus revealing the regions with the greatest need.

<b>Exhibit I-17.1(b).2: Literacy Proficiency Rate for Students with Disabilities by Educational Cooperative</b>		
	<b>Average Percentage of SWD Proficient in Literacy</b>	<b>Total Number of Students with Disabilities Tested in Literacy 2012-13</b>
Arch Ford Educational Cooperative	39%	2,720
Arkansas River Educational Cooperative	25%	926
Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative	29%	2,497
Dawson Educational Cooperative	35%	2,497
DeQueen Mena Educational Cooperative	26%	668
Great Rivers Educational Cooperative	25%	947
North Central Educational Cooperative	38%	1,115
Northeast Educational Cooperative	27%	1,239
Northwest Educational Cooperative	42%	3,947
Ozark Unlimited Resource Educational Service Cooperative	33%	965
South Central Educational Cooperative	27%	697
Southeast Educational Cooperative	22%	897
Tri- District: (Little Rock, North Little Rock, Pulaski County)	24%	3,093
Western Educational Cooperative	34%	2,924
Wilbur Mills Educational Cooperative	35%	1,723

Further analysis indicated that no one grade level met the SPP/APR literacy target of 45%, as illustrated in Exhibit I-17.1(b).3, and that across all grade levels there is a large gap between the percent of SWD proficient in literacy as compared to their non-disabled peers. This gap increases as students move into upper elementary and middle school; a gap of 47 percentage points in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade increases to a gap of 55 percentage points in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

While low literacy performance exists across all grades, there is a considerable difference in performance across grades. As displayed in Exhibit I-14.1(b).3, the percent of SWD proficient in literacy ranged from a high of 42% in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade to a low of 25% in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. In grades 3-5, the percent proficient remains relatively steady (39% to 37%); however, there is a notable drop in the percent proficient between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (37% to 25%). The drop between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade was seen for all students. (special education and general education).

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).3: A Comparison of Literacy Proficiency Rates for General Education and Special Education, 2012-13**



Additionally, the analysis indicated that the percent of SWD proficient in literacy varies across all ESCs from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, with a large drop occurring at all ESCs between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (see Exhibit I-17.1(b).4).

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).4: Percent of Students with Disabilities Proficient in Literacy by Educational Cooperative and Grade Level, 2012-13**

Grade Level	3	4	5	6	7	8	HS
<b>Educational Cooperative</b>							
Arch Ford Educational Cooperative	48%	47%	<b>41%</b>	<b>35%</b>	35%	35%	30%
Arkansas River Educational Cooperative	29%	27%	<b>24%</b>	<b>22%</b>	21%	20%	31%
Crowley's Ridge Educational Cooperative	32%	46%	<b>34%</b>	<b>20%</b>	23%	20%	30%
Dawson Educational Cooperative	45%	44%	<b>42%</b>	<b>27%</b>	30%	28%	29%
DeQueen Mena Educational Cooperative	38%	40%	<b>29%</b>	<b>18%</b>	18%	18%	24%
Great Rivers Educational Cooperative	28%	37%	<b>32%</b>	<b>16%</b>	16%	21%	25%
North Central Educational Cooperative	50%	52%	<b>41%</b>	<b>30%</b>	26%	22%	42%
Northeast Educational Cooperative	35%	37%	<b>36%</b>	<b>20%</b>	19%	22%	21%
Northwest Educational Cooperative	46%	51%	<b>45%</b>	<b>34%</b>	44%	42%	35%
Ozark Unlimited Resource Educational Service Cooperative	45%	43%	<b>36%</b>	<b>19%</b>	30%	28%	28%
South Central Educational Cooperative	37%	40%	<b>34%</b>	<b>25%</b>	15%	10%	39%
Southeast Educational Cooperative	24%	30%	<b>26%</b>	<b>19%</b>	19%	10%	25%
Tri- District: (Little Rock, North Little Rock, Pulaski County)	32%	36%	<b>32%</b>	<b>14%</b>	18%	19%	19%
Western Educational Cooperative	40%	40%	<b>38%</b>	<b>24%</b>	30%	29%	34%
Wilbur Mills Educational Cooperative	32%	36%	<b>40%</b>	<b>29%</b>	33%	38%	31%
Arch Ford Educational Cooperative	48%	47%	<b>41%</b>	<b>35%</b>	35%	35%	30%

ADE-SEU also disaggregated data by test group. As displayed in Exhibit I-17.1(b).4, SWD taking the assessment with accommodations scored lower than those taking the assessment without accommodations. Across all grades, 10% to 29% of SWD taking the assessment with accommodations were proficient. In comparison, for SWD taking the assessment without accommodations, there is a large range of percent proficient across grades (decreasing from 70% in 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 17% in High School). A closer analysis revealed that of the SWD taking assessments without accommodations, there was a substantial drop from 66% proficient in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade to only 37% proficient in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).4: Percent of Students with Disabilities by Test Group, Proficiency Status, and Grade Level in Literacy, 2012-13**

Test Group	Grade Level Proficiency Status	3	4	5	6	7	8	HS
<b>Alternate Portfolio</b>	Non-Proficient	25%	28%	27%	30%	36%	36%	16%
	Proficient	75%	72%	73%	70%	64%	64%	84%
<b>Regular Assessment With Accommodations</b>	Non-Proficient	79%	71%	75%	86%	79%	81%	90%
	Proficient	21%	29%	25%	14%	21%	19%	10%
<b>Regular Assessment Without Accommodations</b>	Non-Proficient	37%	30%	34%	63%	62%	64%	83%
	Proficient	63%	70%	<b>66%</b>	<b>37%</b>	38%	36%	17%

This broad analysis shows that literacy achievement is an area of need across the state and that there are areas of specific need across the ESCs and grade levels. The analysis further revealed a notable drop in literacy proficiency between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade, with an especially large drop for SWD taking the regular assessment without accommodations. The ADE-SEU felt it was important to consider findings from the data and infrastructure analysis and stakeholder feedback in selecting a SIMR. After carefully considering information from these SSIP components, the State selected to focus on literacy achievement in the grades leading up to the observed drop in achievement (grades 3– 5).

In-Depth Data Analysis

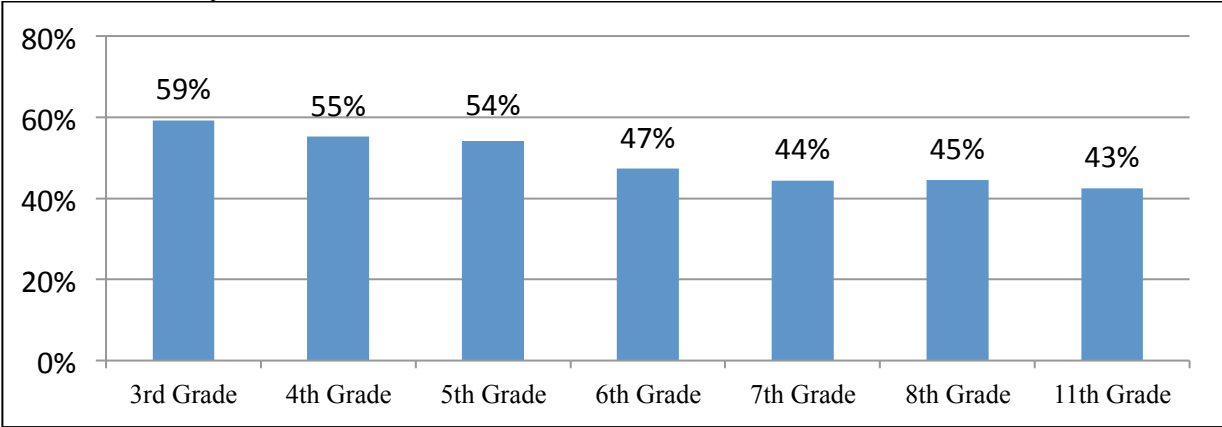
In consideration of stakeholder feedback from the broad data analysis, ADE-SEU focused solely on literacy proficiency for a more in-depth analysis. ADE-SEU began by conducting a second data disaggregation. Data was disaggregated by: race, disability category, subgroups (ELL, migrant, and homeless), discipline, and least restrictive environment (LRE). The goal of this data disaggregation was to explore additional areas of need and identify potential contributing factors. The disaggregation of literacy achievement across race, disability category and other subgroups (ELL, migrant, and homeless) did show some variations, but did not provide significant findings. However, an analysis of LRE, discipline, and disability categories did provide important insight into possible contributing factors.

An analysis of LRE and assessment proficiency levels (see Exhibit I-17.1(b).5), indicated that as grade level increases, the percent of SWDs spending most of their day in the general



education classroom decreases. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 59% of SWD spend most of their day in the general education classroom. In contrast, 43% of students in the 11th grade spend most of their day in the general education classroom. In addition, there is a notable drop in the percent of students spending most of their time in the general education classroom between 5th and 6th grade, from 54% to 47%, respectively. This drop mirrors the drop in literacy achievement between 5th and 6th grade.

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).5: Percent of Student with Disabilities in the Regular Classroom 80% or More of the Day, 2012-13**



The data analysis also indicated that there is a relationship between discipline (suspension/expulsion) and the level of proficiency in literacy. As seen in Exhibit I-17.1(b).6, SWD who had any disciplinary removals for one or more days had a literacy proficiency rate of 19% compared to 36% for SWD who had no disciplinary removals.

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).6: Literacy Proficiency for Students with Disability By Disciplinary Removal**

	Percent Proficient	Number Proficient	Total Number of Students
Students with any Disciplinary Removal	19.22%	867	4510
Students with no Disciplinary Removals	35.86%	8614	24,020

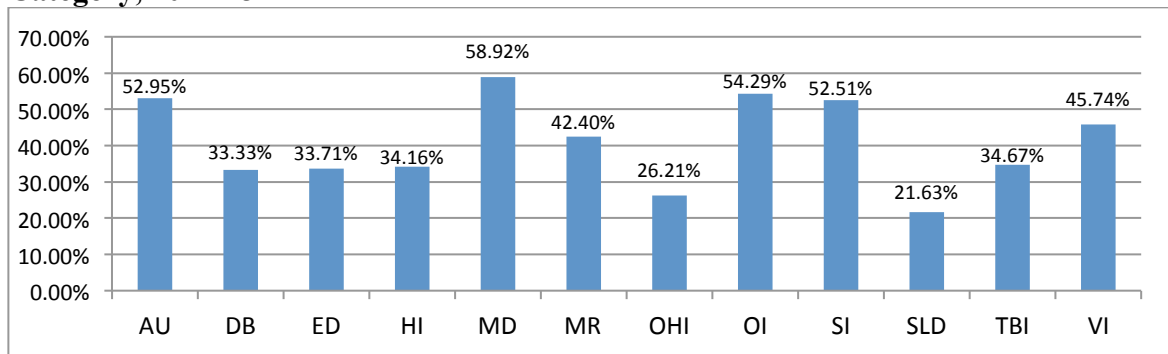
Additionally, a relationship between literacy proficiency and the length of disciplinary removals was identified. SWDs that were removed from the classroom for more than 10 days had the lowest levels of proficiency. Of the SWD who had 1-10 days of disciplinary removals, 20% were proficient in literacy compared to only 12% for SWD removed from the classroom for more than 10 days (see Exhibit I-17.1(b).7).

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).7: Literacy Proficiency for Students with Disability by Length of Disciplinary Removal**

	Percent Proficient	Number of Students Proficient	Total Number of Students
1 to 10 Days	20.24%	594	3923
> 10 Days	12.31%	72	585

Literacy achievement was also examined by disability categories. The examination revealed that students identified in the disability categories of Multiple Disabilities (59%), Speech Language Impairment (53%), and Autism (53%) had the highest proficiency rates across assessment test groups. While students identified in the disability categories of Specific Learning Disability (22%) and Other Health Impairments (26%) had the lowest proficiency rates (see Exhibit I-17.1(b).8 below).

**Exhibit I-17.1(b).8: Percent of Students with Disabilities Proficient in Literacy by Disability Category, 2012-13**



The in-depth disaggregation of literacy data across multiple variables was useful in identifying potential root causes contributing to low achievement. These findings, which are corroborated by stakeholder feedback, indicate that there is a relationship between literacy achievement and time in the general education classroom (LRE); amount of time spent out of school due to suspensions (discipline); and disability category.

District Level Data

In the statewide data analysis, ADE-SEU was able to identify geographic areas of high need (low literacy achievement) in the Delta and Central Regions of the state, which include the Great Rivers ESC, Arkansas Rivers ESC, Southeast ESC, and Tri-District ESC. After the completion of the statewide data analysis, further exploration was undertaken to help determine where to initially focus the SSIP work. Little Rock School District (LRSD), in the Central Region of Arkansas (Tri District ESC), is the most populated district (23,363 students) in the state and contains 5% of the state’s special education population (K-12 2013/14 Child Count 2,912). LRSD contains 7 Priority Schools, which make up 19% of the state’s Priority Schools, and 9 Focus Schools, which make up 11% of the states Focus Schools.

As a result of six schools classified in academic distress and pursuant to A.C.A. § 6-15-429 and § 6-15-430, on January 28, 2015, the State Board of Education removed the current Little Rock

School District Board, and the district was placed under the authority of the Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education. Close collaboration among the Little Rock Superintendent, the Commissioner, and others at the ADE has already begun.

Due to LRSD’s large student population, the districts identification as a high need LEA, and the close communication between the LRSD Superintendent, the Commissioner, and other leaders, the ADE has decided to initially focus its SIMR strategies in the Little Rock School District.

For a more detailed explanation of targeted SSIP LEAs and areas of the state see Section 3(c).

#### In-Depth Qualitative Analysis

In identifying potential root causes, ADE-SEU collected qualitative information from face-to-face meetings, small focus groups, and online surveys. Hundreds of responses from special education administrators, teachers, and parents were analyzed to identify patterns for possible root causes and strategies. Examples of questions asked of teachers and administrators are presented in Exhibit I-17.1(b).9.

#### **Exhibit I-17.1(b).9: Teachers’ and Administrators’ Survey Questions**

1. What factors do you feel are contributing to low performance in literacy for students with disabilities?
2. Why do you think the percent of students with disabilities proficient that took the regular assessment without accommodations was lower in 6 <sup>th</sup> grade than in 3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> grade?
3. Why do you think the percent of students with disabilities that spend 80% of their day in a general education classroom decreases as they move into middle and high school?
4. Why do you think literacy proficiency for students with disabilities drops between 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade and remains consistently low through high school?

The following are a few of the responses to these questions that provide valuable insight to potential root causes of low literacy performance:

- “Lack of exposure to the entire reading curriculum (resource pull out model slows the pace and expectations and does not cover entire curriculum)”
- “General ed teachers in older grades have a tendency to not work well with students with disabilities. General ed teachers don’t know how to teach reading. They are focused on subject material only.”
- “They [students with disabilities] are in more general classes and don’t always receive the individualized instruction that they need to be successful.”
- “The classwork gets more difficult and the students tend to fall more and more behind. More students are moved to resource classes in higher grades which accommodate their skill levels and reading levels.”
- “It’s more difficult to do inclusion in the secondary environment when you are a period/block scheduled day”
- “Because they did not get the proficiency in lower grades. If those foundational skills are not attained in younger grades, when the academic rigor gets harder and more demanding, the gap becomes more obvious because they keep falling farther and farther behind...”

Similar questions were sent to parents in an online survey; however, due to the small response rate, the interpretation of results and generalization of these results to the majority of parents is limited. Responses from the Parent Survey suggests that potential barriers that SWD face in improving their literacy skills include comprehension issues, retrieving information from what's being read, lack of accommodations for student's disability and the response "I don't think she is being pushed hard enough at school." The responses support the conclusions discussed below that instructional practices and materials are essential elements that have helped their children. Additionally, parents' responses indicated that instructional practices and materials are the most important supports provided to increase literacy achievement.

Responses from the Special Education Administrator and Teacher surveys identified concerns in teacher qualifications, instruction, time/scheduling, and class size/caseloads. Many of teacher and administrator concerns align with comments submitted by parents; particularly that child individuality and instructional practices were the main factors, which may contribute to low performance in literacy for SWD.

The results of the qualitative analysis showed that across all Educator groups – Special Education Administrators, ADE personnel, and Teachers – the areas of need with the most emphasis are instructional practices, including how teachers instruct; content and materials for the instruction; child variables, including individualized and differentiated instruction; and time or scheduling considerations. Additionally, responses indicated the need for professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) related to how to provide effective, individualized, and differentiated instruction.

These qualitative findings, in combination with results from the in-depth data and infrastructure analysis, indicate the primary root causes of low literacy achievement include:

- lack of effective, individualized, and differentiated instruction, and
- low percentages of students educated within the general education classroom.

A contributing factor that emerged is the lack of instruction due to disciplinary removals (suspensions/expulsions). The data analysis showed a relationship between discipline (suspension/expulsion) and the level of proficiency in literacy.

### **1c. A description of any concerns about the quality of the data and if so, how the State will address these concerns.**

While conducting the broad and in-depth data analysis, the ADE-SEU carefully considered any potential data quality issues and none were identified. The State attributes this to its comprehensive data system, the statewide information system (SIS) that collects data through nine cycles throughout the year. The SIS includes established business rules and built in edit checks at the time of submission. In addition, the ADE-SEU provides additional data quality tools to LEAs including automated error reports, as well as periods of verification and self-correction. On behalf of the ADE, the IDEA Data & Research office provides ongoing in person trainings for new data entry staff, as well as data cycle refresher webinars. The IDEA Data & Research Office also host a bi-annual special education data summit that focuses on best practices for collecting, reporting, and analyzing special education data. The Arkansas Public

School Computer Network (APSCN) office hosts an annual state data reporting conference each August in which special education administrators and data entry staff participate.

**1d. A description of how the State considered compliance data and whether those data present potential barriers to improvement.**

As a part of the data analysis process, ADE-SEU considered how compliance data could impact literacy performance by creating barriers to student success. In consideration of potential barriers to improvement, ADE-SEU reviewed SPP/APR compliance indicators, State monitoring data, and issues that were identified through the state's dispute resolution system. The State has had a history of high levels of compliance (over 95%) on Indicators 4B, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 over the past 5 years; therefore non-compliance of SPP/APR indicators is not a factor and the indicators did not provide insight to barriers.

Through an analysis of findings from monitoring and dispute resolution, ADE-SEU determined that the findings were isolated, have been corrected, and no direct impact on literacy could be established.

**1e. If additional data are needed, a description of the methods and timelines to collect and analyze the additional data.**

The State has decided to focus initial SSIP work on the Little Rock School District (LRSD). While a significant amount of LRSD data has been analyzed, the State will need to identify and analyze additional school level data. As the work of implementing SSIP specific strategies begins it will be necessary to identify new data elements and specific supports for targeted schools. To have the most current data, this analysis is projected to occur in July of 2015 and will be reported in phase 2 of the SSIP. Similarly, as the ADE-SEU scales-up to focus on additional ESCs in subsequent years, further data will be necessary.

**1f. A description of stakeholder involvement in the data analysis.**

As noted throughout the SSIP, stakeholders have been an integral part of its development. A large component of the early work was focused on increasing the knowledge and buy-in of key stakeholders that would be critical to the in-depth analysis and implementation of the SSIP. General SSIP information was shared with the Special Education State Advisory Council, ADE-SEU staff, ADE School Improvement Unit, ADE Federal Programs Unit, Parent Training and Information Center, Arkansas Association of Education Association (AAEA), and the Arkansas Association of Special Education Association (AASEA). Follow up meetings were set with each group to further discuss SSIP information once a broad focus was established. See Stakeholder Representation in the appendix pages 11 - 14.

Likewise, the ADE-SEU collaborated with multiple internal and external stakeholders throughout the data analysis process. As a part of the SSIP data analysis process, a diverse group of stakeholders supported the analysis, guided the selection of additional layers of data disaggregation, and provided valuable feedback and qualitative data related to potential root causes. Throughout the data analysis process, stakeholder participation was paramount to an authentic and meaningful analysis-feedback loop.

## **Component #2: Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity**

### **2a. A description of how the State analyzed the capacity of its current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities.**

The ADE-SEU engaged in a systematic process to analyze the capacity of its current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to improve results for students with disabilities. The process involved meetings and surveys with multiple internal and external stakeholders. In collaboration with stakeholders, the ADE-SEU completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis and needs assessment to identify strengths of the system and to determine overall needs for improvement. Initiative inventories were also completed in order to determine existing initiatives in Arkansas. Feedback from hundreds of general and special education administrators and teachers, multiple state education associations, parents, and ADE personnel was obtained through an infrastructure needs assessment.

The work between the data and infrastructure analysis occurred simultaneously and was closely aligned. This alignment was important because in order to effectively improve outcomes for SWD, ADE's infrastructure must have the capacity to provide support to LEAs in the areas of low performance identified through the data analysis.

#### Broad Infrastructure Analysis

In April, 2014 the ADE-SEU completed a SWOT analysis that focused on the areas of governance, accountability, data, PD, quality standards, and finance. The analysis provided a big picture summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the 7 domain areas.

As part of the SWOT analysis, the SSIP coordinator met with grant consultant group coordinators to discuss goals of their grants, targeted recipients, services provided, data collected, alignment to SPP/APR Indicators, and how data is used to plan grant activities and evaluate outcomes. An analysis of meeting results indicated the extensive experience and expertise of the grant consultants and the wealth of resources and supports the grants provide to LEAs. It also indicated that more consistent communication as well as data collection and analysis is needed between groups.

Based on the results of the SWOT, ADE-SEU felt it was important to complete an internal needs assessment that focused on 6 basic functions a state department of special education. The needs assessment was an adaptation of the SSOS Self-Assessment Inventory developed by the Center on Innovation & Improvement. The 6 basic areas of functions were: (1) provide information; (2) set standards; (3) distribute resources; (4) monitor compliance; (5) assist with district and school improvement; and (6) intervene to correct deficiencies. The needs assessment measured ADE-SEU's capacity and effectiveness in each of the 6 areas. The combination of the SWOT and needs assessment resulted in broad identification of strengths and areas of need. For a summary of the SWOT and need assessment results see section 2(c).

Based on input and feedback from the Advisory Council in April of 2014, the ADE-SEU

completed an initiative inventory that outlined statewide initiatives or programs that are unique to literacy and math achievement, and graduation rate. The inventory outlined the initiative name, contact person, expected outcomes, target population, scale of implementation; whether it was a mandatory activity, the financial commitment, level of success, and the evidence of outcomes. The results of the initiative inventory indicated that there are many initiatives in the areas of literacy, math and graduation rate, but the initiatives are supported by a single ADE unit or focus on a single student population (e.g. SWD, English language learners, migrant students, homeless). Based on the inventory analysis by the Advisory Council in July 2014, it was apparent that the ADE has extensive resources and supports in the area of literacy that could be utilized, aligned and scaled-up to support literacy achievement for students in Arkansas. It was also evident that additional PD and TA will need to be created in order to meet the needs of educators that support SWD. Key initiatives or programs that were identified in the literacy inventory that directly support the SIMR are outlined in section 2(d).

The broad infrastructure analysis showed that there are many initiatives in the areas of literacy, but the initiatives are supported by a single ADE unit or focus on a certain student population. It is important to build the state-level capacity through the alignment and coordination of existing efforts and systems in order to support LEAs capability to implement evidence based practices, which will lead to improved outcomes for SWD. The data analysis indicated literacy achievement is an area of need; therefore, increasing literacy achievement became the broad focus for additional analysis. The ADE-SEU felt it was important to consider findings from both the data and infrastructure analysis in selecting a SIMR focus area. Therefore, the focus of the SIMR was not based on the infrastructure analysis alone, but rather was supported by the data analysis and stakeholder feedback. After carefully reviewing information from all of these SSIP components, the State selected literacy achievement in grades 3rd - 5th as the broad focus for the SIMR.

#### In-Depth Infrastructure Analysis Process

Following the identification of the SIMR focus, ADE-SEU hosted multiple meetings from August - January 2015 to solicit feedback from educators and interested community members. These face-to-face meetings afforded opportunities to share information about the SSIP and engage in meaningful dialogue about potential root causes of low literacy performance for student with disabilities. Although parents and teachers were represented in the face-to-face meetings, the Advisory Council and ADE personnel felt it was important to engage a larger population of parents and teachers so a statewide survey was disseminated in December 2014.

Qualitative data was gathered by asking a series of infrastructure related questions, and an extensive qualitative analysis was conducted on the responses to the questions in order to discern patterns of responses within and across stakeholder groups. One of the primary purposes of this analysis was to explore strengths of the system that could be leveraged to improve results and to identify opportunities for improvement in the state infrastructure related to literacy. See Key Infrastructure Questions asked during stakeholder meeting in the appendix on pages 15 - 16.

The findings of the in-depth qualitative analysis identified numerous strengths and areas of need in relation to increasing the literacy achievement of students with disabilities. Many of the finding supported improvement strategies within the domain areas of Governance, PD, TA and

Accountability. Detailed findings of the qualitative infrastructure analysis can be found in section 2(c).

**2b. A description of the State’s systems infrastructure (at a minimum the governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring).**

The ADE-SEU analyzed all systems within its infrastructure related to increasing the literacy achievement for students with disabilities. The areas of analysis included: governance, fiscal, quality standards, PD, data, TA, monitoring, and accountability. Within the analysis particular importance was placed on how the State’s infrastructure can build capability of LEAs to achieve the SIMR.

Governance

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is lead by the Commissioner of Education, Johnny Key, which was appointed by the governor and approve by the State Board of Education in March, 2015. Mr. Key is charged with overseeing the ADE and is supported by the Deputy Commissioner. Five main divisions within the ADE structure the work: Fiscal and Administrative Services, Human Resources, Research and Technology, Public School Accountability, and Learning Services. The ADE-Special Education Unit (ADE-SEU) is under the Division of Learning Services. The ADE-SEU is directly under the leadership of the Assistant Commissioner of the Divisor of Learning Services, Dr. Debbie Jones. See the ADE Organizational Chart in the appendix on page 17.

The ADE-SEU supports local school districts in the provision of special education services for SWD (ages 3 to 21) in an effort to ensure that all SWD in Arkansas receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The ADE-SEU staff works in partnership with the Associate Director in designing and/or conducting activities associated with initiatives undertaken to fulfill State and Federal regulations and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

The ADE-SEU is composed of the following six sections:

- The Curriculum and Assessment section provides guidance to LEAs on special education curriculum development and statewide assessment guidelines.
- The Data and Research section provides quality data management, analysis, TA, and research for the enhancement of the ADE's general supervision of local education agencies' special education programs by ensuring accurate, valid, and timely data to meet all state and federal reporting.
- The Dispute Resolution section helps connect parents to a student's teacher, principal, early childhood coordinator, or the school age supervisor and provides resources and administrative remedies that encourage parents and school districts to work together to resolve issues regarding the educational services.
- The Funding and Finance section provides oversight for finances and data related to the provision of special education, related services by traditional and non-traditional programs, and accurate and timely submission of required federal reports.



- The Monitoring and Program Effectiveness (MPE) section is responsible for ensuring that a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is available and provided to all SWD (ages 3-21) in Arkansas. The MPE section monitors special education programs for compliance with state and federal regulations and provides TA for program improvement.
- The State Program Development section assists public agencies such as schools, institutions of higher education, state and private agencies in the development of programs and PD and TA to improve services for SWD.

The Associate Director of Special Education and staff coordinate regularly with multiple Units within the Division of Learning Services, Fiscal and Administrative Services, Research and Technology, and Public School Accountability. The ADE-SEU understands the importance of leveraging resources and the expertise of multiple ADE Units to provide effective and timely services for LEAs. Only by leveraging these resources from the Units across the ADE including Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Federal Programs, PD, School Based Health, and School Improvement, will the ADE-SEU be able to achieve the SIMR.

A crucial resource within Arkansas is the 15 regional Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs); the ADE works directly with ESCs to provide services and resources to LEAs across the State. Education Service Cooperatives are multicounty intermediate service units charged to support LEAs in (1) meeting or exceeding State Standards and equalizing education opportunities; (2) more effectively using educational resources through cooperation among school districts; and (3) promoting coordination between school districts and the ADE. The ESCs support educational priorities of the state as established by the General Assembly or the State Board of Education (Arkansas Code Annotated (A.C.A.) § 6-13-1002). The ADE also promulgates rules governing ESCs. Arkansas LEAs may choose not to participate in an ESC, as is the case with the largest LEA, the Little Rock School District (LRSD). The LRSD provides the majority of its education support services internally, but does utilize some PD offerings from the ADE.

#### Fiscal

The ADE-SEU Funding and Finance section provides oversight for fiscal procedures and data collections and reporting related to the provision of special education and related services by traditional and non-traditional programs. This section ensures accurate and timely submission of required federal reports.

ADE-SEU is responsible for the 2014-2015 biennial expenditure of over \$49 million in state General Appropriation Funds and over \$128 million in Federal Funds.

Part B administrative funds are used by the state to administer IDEA Part B Grants, coordinate activities under Part B and provide TA to, other programs that provide services to children with disabilities. Through the use of discretionary funds, the ADE-SEU supports grant consultant groups that provide services and supports to LEAs across the State.

The Part B Federal discretionary funds are used by the state for the following activities:

- monitoring, enforcement and complaint investigation;
- establish and implement the mediation process required by 20 U.S.C. 1415(e);
- provide support and direct services, including TA and PD;
- assist LEAs in providing positive behavior interventions and supports;

- support capacity building activities and improve the delivery of services by LEAs to improve results for SWD;
- assist LEAs in meeting personnel shortages; to improve the use of technology in the classroom by children with disabilities to enhance learning;
- support the use of technology, including technology with universal design principles and assistive technology devices to maximize accessibility to the general education curriculum for children with disabilities;
- development and implementation of transition programs;
- alternative programming for students who have been expelled from school; and to provide services for children with disabilities in correctional facilities, children enrolled in State-operated programs, and children with disabilities in Charter Schools.

### Quality Standards

The vision of the ADE is to provide an innovative, comprehensive education system focused on outcomes that ensures every student in Arkansas is prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and careers. To assist in achieving this vision, the adoption and implementation of Common Core State Standards (referred to as the Arkansas State Standards) in October, 2012 and membership in the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) has played an integral role.

The college and career readiness expectations set forth by the adoption of the Arkansas State Standards require Arkansas educators to focus on all students, including those who do not speak English as a first language and those with special learning needs. Arkansas' vision sets high standards for Arkansas students and forces educators to examine the practices used each day in classrooms to ensure all students experience learning at high level.

Arkansas has simultaneously implemented the new Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) to support high quality classroom instruction and instructional leadership in Arkansas' schools. TESS supports a system focused on the professional growth of educators as measured by professional practice as well as student growth and achievement. The TESS directly focuses on areas of teachers' professional growth that directly impact instructional planning and application, classroom management and professionalism.

In order to support the adoption of the Arkansas State Standards, in September 2013, all Individual Education Programs (IEPs) are standards-based to ensure the instruction received by SWD through their special education program is aligned with College and Career Ready Standards.

The resources and supports these initiatives provide will be critical to leverage in supporting the SIMR. An outcome of all these initiatives support an increased focused on high quality, individualized and differentiated curriculum and instruction to increase student achievement.

### Professional Development

The statewide system of PD creation and dissemination is coordinated through the ADE Professional Development Unit. The ADE Professional Development Unit works with numerous stakeholders to provide quality professional learning opportunities for Arkansas educators. The ADE PD Unit supports a blending learning model and has invested in creating online PD. The

online portal, Arkansas Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools (IDEAS, <http://ideas.aetn.org>), connects K-12 educators with quality, ADE-approved online PD and educational opportunities.

ADE utilizes a regional approach to customize support available to schools and districts that allows them to utilize some of their resources within ESCs to meet PD and other systemic capacity building needs. In collaboration with partner organizations such as regional STEM centers and Education Renewal Zones, ESCs support schools and districts in self-assessment and planning, developing effective leadership and instructional practices, and provide training, modeling, and facilitation of the use of ADE resources and tools to support improvements. LEAs have a strong incentive to participate in ESC activities because they add value and needed capacity, provide customized PD and other supports, and serve as an avenue for networking, particularly in Arkansas' rural communities. This collaborative relationship between districts and the ESCs builds trust and a climate of support. Superintendents participate in governance of ESCs as members that constitute their boards of directors.

As part of the infrastructure analysis, ADE-SEU identified several components within the PD system that align specifically with the SIMR of improving literacy proficiency for grades 3-5. These components include regional literacy specialists, the Comprehensive Literacy Framework, the State Personnel Development Grant, the AR Co-teaching program, and regional behavior consultants.

The PD Unit currently employs 51 K-12 literacy specialists that are housed at the ADE, ESCs or the University of Arkansas in Little Rock. The literacy specialists are currently redesigning Arkansas' Comprehensive Literacy Framework that will offer PD opportunities that provide guidance and support in building and sustaining a comprehensive literacy system at the local level. As a whole, the modules within the comprehensive framework serve as a complete course of study for reading and writing teachers in the following grade bands: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8. Each of the modules focuses on key components of a comprehensive system.

The overarching goals of implementing a Comprehensive Literacy Framework are to enable K-8 educators to:

- Deepen their understanding of the essential elements of reading, writing, speaking, and listening instruction.
- Apply knowledge of the Arkansas State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in the disciplines to appropriate grade-level content in the appropriate grade-level classroom context.
- Analyze the data generated from student assessments to guide and adjust instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Select the most appropriate evidence-based instructional strategies and practices to support diverse student populations.

The PD Unit supports grades 6-12 through the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC). LDC is designed to make literacy instruction the foundation of the core subjects and offers a planning approach in which literacy is a venue for learning content. In LDC, teachers use a systematic

framework for developing reading, writing, and thinking skills within various disciplines. The LDC tools embed the Common Core Literacy Standards for ELA/Literacy into content-area instruction.

Relative to the ADE-SEU PD supports, multiple ADE-SEU grant consultant groups provide PD that directly supports educators that serve SWD. These consultant groups assist in meeting the challenges of providing 21st century special education services. ADE-SEU's PD mission is to promote sound research-based building and classroom educational practices to achieve the educational results required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the ADE. Consultants respond to statewide needs as well as those of individual LEAs. The statewide PD system is designed to build the capacity of local special education personnel and, to the extent appropriate, that of general educational professionals that have students with disabilities in their classrooms. The state's PD system is focused on increasing online and blended learning opportunities to ensure PD meets the needs of all educators. See a Summary of Special Education Consultant Groups PD and TA in the appendix on pages 18 - 20.

A few ADE-SEU Grant consultant groups that will directly support the achievement of the SIMR are:

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), employs curriculum and instruction experts to provide PD and TA for teachers focusing on the specific learning styles and the instructional level relative to the academic achievement of students. This training is designed to increase the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the need for pre-assessment, data analysis, flexible student groupings, curricular decisions based on student needs, formative assessment, and progress monitoring. The SPDG staff has particular expertise in Literacy and the Arkansas State Standards. The SPDG also contains supports to systematically guide an LEA in the implementation of positive behavior supports.

The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project is designed to provide support to schools interested in implementing a new co-teaching program or improving an existing one. Support is provided through comprehensive training, TA and information resources. Professional development includes a yearlong combination of traditional and "hands on" guided practice trainings, online support, and onsite coaching visits.

The State behavior consultants support schools in meeting the needs of SWD with intense behavioral needs. These consultants provide individual student assistance; including assistance with behavior plan development and classroom/building/district level program development to meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.

### Data

Arkansas has a single student management system (SMS) that is web-based. Nine times a year LEAs submit data to the state information system (SIS) from the SMS, which is the base for the Arkansas state longitudinal data system (SLDS). Furthermore, Arkansas was one of the first states to meet the Data Quality Campaigns 10 essential elements. Arkansas has made significant advances in its SLDS and has expanded their interagency partnerships (public and private) which enabled cross-agency data sharing. Through the entity resolution protocol data matching can be conducted across organizations for enriched research and data driven decision making for the

State and particularly at LEAs. The partnerships with vendors utilized by LEAs allow uploads to the data warehouse that can be used to populate components of the LEA dashboards. The combination of data from the SMS, SIS and outside sources provides administrators and classroom teachers' access to more information about their students than ever before.

In 2013 the ADE Research and Technology Division rolled out the Arkansas studentGPS Dashboards that were designed to help teachers, campuses, districts, regional leaders, and ESCs across the State. The Arkansas studentGPS Dashboards allows educators to utilize education data in practical and powerful ways and enable data-driven decision-making. The goal of the system is to develop academic dashboards with early warning systems that will help teachers and administrators ensure every student reaches his/her potential. The dashboards aggregate data from existing sources to show a comprehensive view of each student (including items such as student demographic information, schedule, attendance, assessment data, grades, and discipline) as well as roll-up views of the data for classrooms, schools and districts. The dashboards serve as a valuable instructional tool at the classroom, building, and district levels and there is no cost to the district to take advantage of the dashboard. This dashboard is an invaluable data based problem-solving tool that schools can use to analyze literacy and behavior data.

The ADE-SEU IDEA Data & Research Office will be the lead in the SIMR data collection and analysis that will determine whether or not the State is meeting its SIMR targets. The ADE-SEU IDEA Data & Research Office provides quality data management, analysis, TA, and research for the enhancement of the ADE's general supervision mandate. Working in conjunction with the ADE-SEU Funding and Finance Section, the IDEA Data & Research Office ensures standardized data collection procedures for federal reporting, state and district level data analysis, and public dissemination of program effectiveness data including school district and early childhood program profiles, Significant Disproportionality-Coordinated Early Intervening Services Profiles, the State Performance Plan, and the Annual Performance Report.

#### Technical Assistance

Professional development and TA activities are closely aligned within different ADE Units. The ADE literacy specialists in the PD Unit build follow-up coaching and TA support in all PD developed and disseminated across the state. This will ensure that targeted SSIP LEAs get the support needed to fully implement an evidence-based comprehensive literacy framework.

The ADE-SEU provides TA to LEAs around compliance, and performance indicators through a variety of mechanisms. The monitoring and program effectiveness section provides TA specific to compliance and program improvement based on monitoring findings, desk audits, APR Determinations and referrals from the ADE School Improvement Unit. There has been and will continue to be a concerted effort placed on TA that supports results indicators for SWD. PD and TA that is currently being developed will support:

- standards based IEP development to ensure IEPs are aligned with the Arkansas State Standards and supports and services are in place to enable the student to progress in the general education curriculum.
- appropriate placement of SWD in the least restrict environment, and
- the inclusion of results-focused monitoring.

Various special education grant groups also provide TA around student specific issues and program improvement in an effort to build capacity within the LEA. An online referral system is used; Central Intake and Referral/Consultant Unified Intervention Team (CIRCUIT), and consultants are assigned based on the referral needs. A central entity receives referrals and the case is assigned within 48 hours of referral. Evidence-based practices based on current literature review are used in the provision of TA and each consultant participates in ongoing approved PD to improve skills and knowledge base. Memorandums of Understanding outline required skills and functions of each consultant group. Technical Assistance activities are logged in monthly activity report and reviewed by the administrative team in the special education unit. This system will be restructured to support the collaboration and sharing of information between ADE-SEU grants groups and other ADE TA providers. This restructured CIRCUIT system will be key in managing supports and services targeted SSIP LEAs and well as LEAs across the state are receiving. See a summary of Special Education Consultant Groups PD and TA in the appendix on pages 18 - 20.

### Monitoring

The ADE-SEU monitors LEAs for procedural compliance on regulatory issues and provides TA to support their efforts toward improving results for SWD and their families.

The ADE-SEU utilizes a four-year rotational monitoring system. One-fourth of LEA special education programs, as well as state-operated and state-supported programs providing special education and related services to SWD, are monitored each year. However, the ADE-SEU reserves the right to schedule additional, off-cycle monitoring of any program at any time should conditions warrant.

ADE-SEU is transitioning to a need-based tiered monitoring system that will integrate special education compliance and performance indicators relating them to a results-driven system for students with disabilities. Self-Monitoring is the newest component of this process. Under the new Self-Monitoring process, LEA file reviews require the LEA to examine their local policies, practices, procedures and paperwork. LEAs are accountable for all Special Education Monitoring and Compliance Indicators and if noncompliant practices are determined, the local LEA is responsible to self-correct issues at that level thus giving them buy-in and ownership.

To ensure the accuracy of LEAs self-monitoring data, the ADE-SEU will:

- continue to monitor district special education data submitted through the student management system and financial management system.
- continue to investigate State Complaints and Due Process Hearings.
- review APR/SPP indicator data reported through the student management system virtually
- request additional file reviews and documentation when noncompliance is indicated.
- randomly select and check LEA's onsite for compliance.
- provide feedback of compliance and noncompliance to each LEA Supervisor after Self-Monitoring Cycle ends.
- be available to provide TA to Districts with findings.

LEAs will participate in Self-Monitoring activities. The ADE-SEU will verify correction of all self-identified noncompliance in addition to random verification of self-reported compliant practices. A comprehensive on-site monitoring is completed for LEAs with substantial noncompliance in multiple areas, comprehensive long-term area of need, or systemic issues that hinder student progress. Activities are intense and require ongoing interaction between the LEA and ADE-SEU.

The ADE-SEU will pilot a Results-driven monitoring process in the spring of 2015 that will involve a comprehensive monitoring/TA effort to improve literacy results for students with disabilities. The ADE-SEU will be partnering with the SPDG, and the office of School Improvement to assist targeted LEAs in examining their programs in relation to student outcomes in the area of literacy. Barriers will be identified, including any compliance issues, and an improvement plan will be developed with ongoing support from the ADE-SEU and other partners across the agency.

### Accountability

Over recent decades, federal and state statutes have led to a current context in public education of increasing focus on accountability. This has created heightened awareness and understanding within the ADE of the need to effectively support LEAs to implement and sustain evidence-based systems and practices that yield desired student outcomes. Significant to Arkansas, the current school accountability system (ESEA Flexibility approved by the U.S. Department of Education in 2012, and amended July 2013) is driving changes not only for LEAs, but also for the ADE.

Under the Arkansas ESEA flexibility, the state's accountability system identifies schools in five categories: Exemplary, Achieving, Needs Improvement, Needs Improvement Priority (lowest 5% in the state, referred to as Priority) and Needs Improvement Focus (lowest 30% for Targeted Achievement Gap Group or TAGG, which includes students with disabilities, referred to as Focus). Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) for each school are used to measure proficiency and growth in literacy and math, with graduation rates also considered for high schools.

The five designations support the use of relevant data to inform school improvement strategies. Schools are also provided with additional financial and/or TA resources to move proficiency forward. Of the approximately 1,064 elementary and secondary schools in Arkansas, 37 are identified as Priority Schools, and 85 are identified as Focus Schools (ADE Data Center). See a Map of Priority and Focus Schools within Arkansas in the appendix on page 21.

Recognizing that a school's low enrollment of English language learners (ELLs), economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities (SWD) kept the performance data for one or more these groups from being reported, Arkansas was approved to compile and report performance for these three groups of students collectively as the TAGG. Overall, students are not achieving at sufficient rates in either Priority or Focus Schools.

### Summary

Considering the many systems in the State infrastructure, it is clear to the ADE-SEU that achieving the SIMR will require systematic and intentional collaboration. It will be especially

important that ADE-SEU collaborate with the systems, personnel and resources related most directly to the SIMR that include:

- The alignment and coordination of exiting resources, systems and initiatives focused on supporting LEAs within ADE and Educational Service Cooperatives
- The funding of key personnel and grant projects that can provide services to targeted SSIP LEAs
- The initiatives related to supporting Arkansas State Standards, evaluation systems that support the implementation of the Standards, and the ADE-SEU strategies that specifically support educators that teach SWD
- The statewide PD and TA initiatives and personnel that focus on literacy, behavior or increasing the percent of SWD in the general education classroom
- The State data systems that support data based problem solving that schools can use to analyze literacy and behavior data
- A needs-based tiered monitoring system that will integrate special education compliance and performance indicators relating them to a results-driven system for SWD
- The statewide accountability system that differentiates the needs for schools based on improvement categories and the ADE school improvement specialists that provide direct support to Priority and Focus Schools

## **2c. A description of the current strengths, the extent the systems are coordinated, and areas for improvement within and across the systems.**

The ADE-SEU, in collaboration with the Advisory Council, ADE-SEU staff and consultants, and State Educational Associations, spent a considerable amount of time synthesizing the results of the SWOT Analysis, needs assessment, initiative inventories and qualitative analysis results. These analyses led to the identification of current strengths and areas of improvement within and across the State.

### State Identified Relevant Strengths

#### **1. Infrastructure to support the dissemination of PD and TA across the State.**

Arkansas has 15 ESCs, which are regional centers that support educational priorities of the ADE. The ESCs house critical personnel that support statewide literacy and behavioral initiatives across the state. It is vital that the ADE and ESCs network and collaborate in the services and supports that will be provided to targeted SSIP LEAs.

**2. Focus on improving core instruction for all students and decreasing the achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.** The ADE is focusing on targeted ways to respond to LEAs needs, to provide State-level support that makes a difference, and to address barriers with meaningful and functional policies, services and assistance. The following actions have been taken to support higher standards and move student achievement forward:

- The Divisions within and across the ADE (Learning Services and Public School Accountability) are collaborating and aligning resources and initiatives to better support LEAs and drive student achievement forward.



- The Arkansas State Board of Education has adopted the Common Core State Standards (October 25, 2012).
- The State Education Agency is participating in PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career) as a governing member, providing input in development as well as leadership in its implementation in Arkansas.
- As of September 2013, all Individual Education Programs (IEPs) are standards-based to ensure the instruction received SWD through their special education program is aligned with College and Career Ready Standards.

**3. ADE-SEU Personnel that provide services and supports for LEAs.** Multiple ADE-SEU consultant groups provide PD and TA that directly supports educators that serve SWD. The State behavior consultants support schools in meeting the needs of SWD with intense behavioral needs. The State's consultant for students with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) supports teachers of students with TBI. The AR Deaf-Blind Grant, Children and Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI), directly supports educators who work with students with multiple sensory disabilities. Arkansas Easter Seals Outreach and Technology and Curriculum Access Center, and Educational Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI), work collaboratively with CAYSI staff in providing services to eligible students and families across the state. The Arkansas Co-Teaching coordinator supports LEAs in implementing an evidence based co-teaching model. These grants can be utilized to support SSIP targeted schools.

**4. Statewide PD and TA materials focused on a Comprehensive Literacy Framework.** The PD Unit currently employs 51 K-12 literacy specialists that are currently redesigning Arkansas' Comprehensive Literacy Framework. This Framework will offer PD and TA opportunities that provide guidance and support in building and sustaining a comprehensive literacy system at the local level. The ADE-SEU is coordinating with the PD unit to ensure this PD and TA can support the unique needs of educators who work with SWD.

**5. State data systems focused on supporting LEAs.** The ADE has secured personnel highly skilled in data collection, analysis and reporting. The State data management system allows for the analysis of student level data. The ADE has created the Arkansas studentGPS Dashboards that allow educators to utilize education data in practical and powerful ways and enable data-driven decision-making. This is an invaluable free tool that LEAs can use to analysis data this is critical to literacy and behavioral success.

**6. Shift from a total focus on compliance to a results-focused monitoring system.** The ADE-SEU is transitioning to a need-based tiered monitoring system that will integrate special education compliance and performance indicators relating them to a results-driven system for SWD. A component of the tiered monitoring system will focus on results-driven monitoring that will involve a comprehensive monitoring/TA effort to improve literacy results for SWD. The ADE-SEU will be partnering with the SPDG and the ADE School Improvement Unit to assist targeted LEAs in examining their programs and how they contribute to student outcomes in the area of literacy. Barriers will be identified, including any compliance issues, and an improvement plan will be developed with ongoing support from the ADE-SEU and other partners across the agency.

## State Identified Relevant Areas of Improvement

**1. Building state-level capacity through the alignment and coordination of existing efforts/systems.** Findings from the qualitative data analysis showed Governance was an important area of focus for building the internal capacity of the ADE to communicate among themselves as well as to LEAs in an established and consistent manner. Governance also emerged as an area needing development in order to establish, maintain, and increase coordinated and collaborative partnerships within the ADE.

**2. Creating Results Focused Supports for LEAs.** The ADE-SEU monitoring and program effectiveness section efficiently communicates and provides resources for LEAs on Federal and State regulation and policies. There is also staff and systems in place that ensure LEAs document and follow compliant practices. Procedures are in place to address LEAs deficiencies and apply corrective actions for LEAs not meeting Federal and State statutes, policies and program requirements.

The ADE-SEU needs to develop a system that communicates to LEAs expectations that go beyond compliance and provide services that focus on results. Supports need to be restructured or developed in determining gaps between the State expectations/standards and measuring LEAs' implementation fidelity of effectiveness and performance outcomes related to special education. ADE-SEU services need to be aligned to consistently train and coach LEAs special and general education staff to improve their skills and knowledge to meet and exceed operational standards and performance outcomes.

**3. Restructure ADE's online system that supports PD and TA for LEAs.** The CIRCUIT system needs to be restructured to allow for the cross collaboration of ADE-SEU's staff and consultants with other ADE PD and TA providers. The sharing of LEA information, data and outcomes will allow for the ADE to more effectively target and support LEA needs so that they have the capacity to implement evidence based systems and practices.

**4. Need for an integrated approach to improving literacy and behavioral outcomes.** The SSIP data and infrastructure analysis has determined a compelling need to restructure Arkansas' statewide Response-to-Intervention (RTI) Model that builds upon current research of implementation and scaling-up of large-scale initiatives. The RTI Model needs to establish an evidence-based PD/TA system at the state, regional or district level to support sustained implementation of RTI. As part of this system, the implementation of evidence-based competencies in literacy and behavior instruction at the regional, district, and school level is critical.

**5. Need for literacy professional development for educators that teach students with disabilities.** A finding from the qualitative infrastructure analysis was that PD must include both general and special educators learning together to apply knowledge and skills of evidence-based literacy practices while also increasing educators' skills for addressing the individual needs of SWD. Professional development and TA is needed on evidence-based literacy practices that focus on instructional practices, content, materials and curriculum used for instruction, and the individual needs of SWD for consistent, individualized, and differentiated instruction.

Stakeholders indicated the need for “professional development on reading interventions,” “workshops that provide proven effective teaching of materials to students with disabilities,” “more time for reading instruction and more training in teaching reading at the upper levels,” and “training in differentiation and knowing the disabilities and how to deliver correct instructional differentiation.” Educators want “more time for instruction and collaboration with general education teachers,” “up to date research, knowledge and strategies for reading disabilities,” and “administration support.”

**6. Need for structured literacy instructional time.** A finding from the qualitative infrastructure analysis was that LEAs need guidance on how to schedule effective literacy time and content. Guidance is also needed on how to schedule SWD into literacy activities while simultaneously addressing the IEP goals in the least restrictive environment. Examples of these needs are demonstrated by responses such as “services are more period specific and less individual,” “block scheduling,” “because of middle school and high school schedules,” and “less time spent on literacy (literacy only taught 45-90 minutes a day), the students are unable to keep up.”

**2d. The identification of current State-level improvement plans and initiatives, including special and general education improvement plans and initiatives and the extent to which they are aligned, and how they are, or could be, integrated with the SSIP.**

The ADE-SEU has identified multiple, general and special education State-level improvement plans and initiatives that are or can be aligned and integrated with the SSIP. The SSIP will support the Arkansas accountability framework under the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility and the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS). Further, the SSIP is aligned with and supports the re-structuring of the emergent state RTI Framework that is driven by state statute and ADE priorities, the Arkansas SPDG, Arkansas’ Comprehensive Literacy Framework, and the AR Co-Teaching Project.

ESEA Flexibility

The ESEA Flexibility seeks to support every school where students continue to struggle. The state has created a system focused on college and career readiness that incentivizes continuous improvement. The SSIP will target districts with identified Priority and Focus Schools and bring together the resources and supports of the ADE. Of the approximately 1,064 elementary and secondary schools in Arkansas, 37 are identified as Priority Schools, and 85 are identified as Focus Schools (ADE Data Center). See a Map of Priority and Focus Schools within Arkansas in the appendix on page 21. Based on SSIP and ESEA data, targeted districts are within Central Arkansas, Great Rivers, Arkansas River and Southeast ESCs. See sections 1(b) for rationale behind selecting targeted areas of the state. The SSIP strategies will provide the support necessary to implement many of the targeted supports outlined in the ESEA Flexibility that focus on improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities. For more detail about ESEA Flexibility see section 2(b).

TESS

Embedded within the accountability system, the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) were developed to support high quality classroom instruction and high quality instructional leadership in Arkansas schools. TESS provides a support system, focused on the professional

growth of educators as measured by professional practice as well as student growth and achievement. This reflects a theory of change that quality instructional outcomes result from a process of continuous improvement through experience, targeted PD, and insights and direction gained through thoughtful, objective feedback. The SSIP SIMR and improvement strategies will support targeted LEA personnel with evidence-based PD and TA that supports the four domains being evaluated within TESS (Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities and Instruction) and the professional growth plans for teachers.

#### AR RTI Initiative

The General Assembly has enacted a statute designed to provide early identification and intervention for struggling readers (Act 1294 of 2013). Due in part to this act, the ADE Assistant Commissioner, Division of Learning Services prioritized efforts to support schools to improve instruction through RTI. The SSIP will build upon this ongoing effort and enhance it through the carefully articulated and implemented SPDG PD and TA system for multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS)/RTI. The SPDG was submitted to OSEP for consideration of funding in February 2015. The ADE is committed to the implementation of an evidence-based RTI system.

#### AR SPDG

The proposed AR SPDG was submitted to OSEP and is currently pending approval in April 2015. The AR SPDG will provide systemic, ongoing support and personnel to targeted SSIP districts. The AR SPDG proposal was developed through collaborative planning across multiple ADE units including Special Education, Curriculum and Assessment, Professional Development, School Improvement, and School Health Services. This collaborative process resulted in a program design supported across the ADE and a commitment to leverage resources and adhere to common PD and implementation standards throughout the initiative. Thus, the AR SPDG will rely on unified efforts to braid existing programs and resources. This will improve the efficacy of integrating and aligning practices and/or initiatives that have shared components and/or parallel processes.

The priority focus areas for the AR SPDG will provide the personnel and structure needed to implement many of the improvement strategies within the SSIP. The primary goals within the SPDG are:

- implement effective and efficient delivery of PD;
- increase the use of evidence-based PD practices that will increase implementation of evidence-based practices and result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities;
- provide ongoing assistance to personnel receiving SPDG-supported PD that supports the implementation of evidence-based practices with fidelity; and
- use technology to more efficiently and effectively provide on-going professional PD to personnel, including to personnel in rural areas and to other populations, such as urban or high-need LEAs.

#### Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy Framework

Arkansas' Comprehensive Literacy Framework will offer PD opportunities that provide guidance and support in building and sustaining a comprehensive literacy system at the local level. The goals for the Comprehensive Framework (see section 2(b)) will provide the necessary literacy PD and TA to support targeted SSIP schools.

### Arkansas Co-Teaching Project

The AR Co-Teaching Project is designed to provide support to schools interested in implementing a new co-teaching program or improving an existing one. Support is provided through compressive training, TA and information resources. This project will provide support to SSIP targeted schools.

### **2e. A list of representatives (e.g. offices, agencies, positions, individuals, and other stakeholders) who were involved in the development of Phase I and will be involved in the development and implementation of Phase II of the SSIP.**

The ADE-SEU has developed meaningful partnerships that are ongoing and impactful throughout Phase I of the SSIP. The representatives outlined below are committed to supporting the implementation of Phase II of the SSIP. See Stakeholder Participation Chart in the appendix on page 1 and the Stakeholder Representation on pages 11 - 14.

- Special Education Advisory Council
- Parent Training and Information Center
- Community Parent Resource Center
- AR Education Service Cooperatives
- Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators
- Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators
- LEA Special Education Administrators
- ADE Special Education Unit Staff
- ADE Assistant Commissioner of Learning Services
- ADE Professional Development Unit
- ADE Curriculum and Instruction
- ADE Federal Programs Unit
- ADE School Health Services Unit
- ADE Assessment Unit
- ADE Public School Accountability Division
- ADE School Improvement Unit
- Parent across Arkansas
- Teachers across Arkansas
- ADE-SEU Consultant Groups
- IDEA Data & Research

### **2f. A description of stakeholder involvement in the analysis of the State's infrastructure.**

Multiple internal and external stakeholders were involved in the analysis of the Sates infrastructure. The SSIP has allowed the ADE-SEU to strengthen existing partnerships with internal and external groups involved in the education of SWD as well as build new partnerships.

A large part of the early work in the SSIP, focused on increasing the knowledge and buy-in of key stakeholders that would be critical to the in-depth analysis and implementation of the SSIP. General SSIP information was shared with the Special Education State Advisory Council, ADE-

SEU staff, ADE School Improvement Unit, ADE Federal Programs Unit, Parent Training and Information Center, AR Association of Education Association (AAEA), and the AR Association of Special Education Association (AASEA). Follow up meetings were set with each group to further discuss SSIP information once a broad focus was established.

Authentic stakeholder input guided the analysis and was critical in the identification of opportunities for improvement related to literacy. Please refer to 2(a) for a detailed explanation of how stakeholders were involved in the analysis. ADE-SEU will continue its stakeholder engagement into Phase II of the SSIP. For a summary of stakeholder engagement through Phase I. See Stakeholder Participation Chart in the appendix page 1.

### **Component #3: SIMR**

#### **3(a) The State has a SIMR and the SIMR is aligned to an SPP/APR indicator or a component of an SPP/APR indicator.**

ADE-SEU has selected a SIMR that is aligned to Indicator 3: Assessment and particularly to Indicator 3C: Proficiency. The SIMR will measure the percent of SWD in grades 3- 5 who made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained a proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment. ADE-SEU believes it is not only important to recognize students who are proficient but also students who are making gains toward proficiency. By examining data of students who are not proficient, targeted PD can be provided to teachers, in participating schools, which can help move student literacy scores upward. It is also essential to ensure that students who have already reached a proficient score in literacy stay proficient as they matriculate through school.

#### **3(b) The SIMR is clearly based on the data and State infrastructure analyses.**

The State engaged in a systematic process to select the SIMR by conducting extensive quantitative and qualitative data collections and analyses. The process began with a review of APR indicator data with the Special Education Advisory Council. Their initial input provided critical guidance for the process applied across stakeholder groups (internal and external) in the development of the SIMR.

##### Data Analysis

The data revealed that over the past eight years of the SPP/APR, literacy scores in Arkansas for students with disabilities have increased slightly every year except in 2013-14; however, the gain made was minimal compared to the expected rates outlined in the SPP targets. The examination of grade level assessment data revealed a significant decline in literacy proficiency scores between fifth and sixth grade. When stakeholders were asked why they thought this drop occurred a initial statement was that the State assessment for sixth grade students had different metrics (new cut scores) than the assessment for students in grades 3-5. However, when diverse groups of stakeholders were asked why they thought this drop occurred they expressed the common concern that it was due to lack of effective, individualized, and differentiated instruction. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis of the survey of teachers, administrators, ADE personnel, and parents found that many believe that SWD are not receiving quality instruction; they lack exposure to the full curriculum that aligns with the correlational findings on least restrictive environment (LRE) and discipline with assessment proficiency levels.

A more distinctive difference in assessment data was found as the analysis drilled into regions of the state. School districts in the Central Region and the southeast quarter of the state (aka Delta Region) have the lowest performing SWD on the statewide literacy test. These two regions represent 21.35% of SWD participating in the statewide literacy test and 5.12% of the state's proficient literacy scores. Only 24% of the SWD in these regions have proficient literacy scores.

Once the regions of the state were identified for the SSIPs implementation, Little Rock School District (LRSD) was selected as the initial focus for SIMR strategies. The LRSD is located in the

Central Region and is Arkansas' largest school district. Besides having the largest special education enrollment, they also have seven Focus and nine Priority Schools.

### Infrastructure Analysis

The infrastructure analysis provided critical information for the selection of the SIMR. The infrastructure analysis process included internal and external stakeholders participating in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis that focused on governance, accountability, data, PD, quality standards, and finance. An internal needs assessment was also conducted focusing on 6 basic functions of the ADE-SEU: (1) provide information; (2) set standards; (3) distribute resources; (4) monitor compliance; (5) assist with district and school improvement; and (6) intervene to correct deficiencies. The needs assessment measured the ADE-SEU capacity and effectiveness in the 6 functions. A large part of the early work with external stakeholders focused on increasing their knowledge, which will be critical for implementation of the SSIP.

An in-depth infrastructure analysis was conducted to define root causes of areas of low performance in literacy for SWD. The process engaged multiple stakeholder groups in a comprehensive approach that included a number of strategies to seek input into the primary areas and reasons of low literacy performance for SWD. The qualitative data gathered during these meetings and through surveys were analyzed to discern patterns across stakeholder groups.

Based on the information gathered from internal and external stakeholders across the state, the SIMR was developed: *Percent of SWD in grades 3- 5 who made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained a proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment*. Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Reading is making meaning from print. It is a process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation.

### State Initiatives

The ADE-SEU has identified multiple, general and special education State-level improvement plans and initiatives that are or can be aligned and integrated with the SSIP. The SSIP will support the Arkansas accountability framework under the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility and the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS). Further, the SSIP is aligned with and supports the re-structuring of the emergent state RTI Framework that is driven by state statute and ADE priorities, the Arkansas SPDG, the Arkansas' Comprehensive Literacy Framework, and the AR Co-Teaching Project. See section 2(d) for more detailed information on these initiatives.

### **3(c) The SIMR is a child-level outcome in contrast to a process outcome.**

ADE-SEU's SIMR is a child-level outcome that measures the changes in a student's literacy achievement between two school years using the literacy scale scores of the statewide assessment. A student's literacy score is matched to his/her literacy score from the previous year. For example, a student in the fourth grade will have his/her fourth grade literacy score matched to his/her third grade literacy score. This only applies to students who are in the participating districts for both years.



The SIMR will have an impact on improving results for students with disabilities within the State as it is implemented and scaled-up over the next five years. Arkansas believes that improving child-level results includes students who are proficient and those who are making gains toward proficiency. By examining data of students who are not proficient, targeted PD can be provided to teachers in participating schools, which can help move student literacy scores upward. It is also essential to ensure that students who have already reached a proficient score in literacy stay proficient as they matriculate through school.

ADE-SEU has selected to focus on the central and Delta region of the state. In these two regions only 24% of the SWD have proficient literacy scores. Little Rock School District (LRSD) has been selected as the initial focus for SIMR strategies. The LRSD is located in the Central Region is Arkansas’ largest school district. Besides having the largest special education enrollment, they also have seven Focus and nine Priority Schools. Over the implementation years of the SIMR, other districts will be added from the central and Delta regions. The scale-up districts from these regions will be selected based on quantitative and qualitative data, as well as priority and focus status. Exhibit I-17.3(c).1 provides information on districts located in the central and Delta region.

**Exhibit I-17.3(c).1: Districts in the Central and Southeast Region of Arkansas**

<b>District Name</b>	<b>Child Count in Grades 3-5</b>	<b>Number of Focus Schools</b>	<b>Number of Priority Schools</b>
AR School For The Blind	20		
AR School For The Deaf	23		
Barton-Lexa School District	14		
Cleveland County School District	27		
Crossett School District	48		
Dermott School District	15		1
Dewitt School District	30	1	
Dollarway School District	23		2
Drew Central School District	30		
Dumas School District	27	2	
E-Stem Charter Public School	27		
Forrest City School District	86	3	2
Genoa Central School District	18		
Hamburg School District	50	1	
Helena/ W. Helena School District	34		1
Hermitage School District	10	2	
Hughes School District	7	1	1
Jacksonville Lighthouse Charter School	16		
KIPP Delta College Prep School	25		
Lakeside School District (Chicot)	30	1	
Lee County School District	37		3
Little Rock Preparatory Academy Charter School	13		
Little Rock School District	779	9	7

Marvell School District	20		
McGehee School District	34		
Monticello School District	37	1	
N. Little Rock School District	190	5	
Palestine-Wheatley Sch. District	19	2	
Pine Bluff School District	147		4
Pinebluff Lighthouse Charter School	17		
Pulaski Co. Spec. School District	547	3	3
Quest Middle School Of Pinebluff	2		
Sheridan School District	82		
Star City School District	37		
Stuttgart School District	50	2	
Warren School District	25		
Watson Chapel School District	72	1	
West Memphis School District	161	1	1
White Hall School District	74		
Woodlawn School District	20		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,923</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>25</b>

As noted above, the State has selected a SIMR that focuses on improving literacy achievement for a subset of the state. Since the number of students obtaining a level of proficient is lower in the central and Delta region as compared to other areas of the state, by improving literacy achievement scores in these two regions, the state's literacy proficient rate will yield an overall increase. The increase in literacy scores will also impact other curriculum areas. As stated in the article *How Important is Teaching Literacy in All Content Areas?* by Rebecca Adler of Edutopia Consulting the ultimate goal of literacy instruction is to build a student's comprehension, writing skills, and overall skills in communication. Literacy skills are a predictor for success in other curriculum areas, especially for third grade students. Research has shown that literacy skills in third grade are a strong predictor of graduation.

**3(d) The State provided a description of stakeholder involvement in the selection of the SIMR.**

The SIMR was developed with internal and external stakeholder involvement. Once literacy was determined to be the area of focus for the SSIP, Arkansas worked with multiple stakeholder groups to select the SIMR. See Stakeholder Representation in the appendix on page 1. Multiple measurements were discussed, including:

- a composite set of scores to measure grade level literacy for students in K-5 to establish a rate, since K-2 is not part of the statewide assessment;
- percent of SWD meeting the state's growth model in grades 3-5;
- percent of SWD proficient or above on the statewide literacy assessment in grades 3-5 (same of Indicator 3C);
- percent of SWD on grade level as determined by using the DIBELS in grades K-5; and,

- percent of SWD in grades 3- 5 who made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained a proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment.

The pros and cons of each measurement were extensively discussed. While the initial preferred option was using the DIBELS data, as it would provide a repeated measurement throughout the school year (fall, mid-year, end of year) and allow teachers to make modifications to instruction during the year, it was later discovered that the DIBELS data was not readily available.

The Director of the Data & Research Office contacted the Office of Innovation at the University of Arkansas (the state’s contractor for AMO) to discuss additional measurement options and the possibility of using a gain index was presented. In the recent past, Arkansas calculated a student gain index and the Office of Innovation provided the IDEA Data & Research Office with documents on how the State had calculated the gain index using scale scores of the statewide assessment. The measurement option was presented to the leadership of the ADE-SEU and the decision was made to present the option to stakeholders for their feedback. Stakeholders supported using the gain index and indicated they especially liked the idea of measuring gains on students who are moving toward proficiency and those who reach or maintain a proficient level. The stakeholders relayed their feeling that the gain index method of measurement would provide the data needed to measure the successful implementation of the improvement strategies in the SSIP targeted schools.

**3(e) The State provided baseline data and targets that are measurable and rigorous (expressed as percentages) for each of the five years from FFY 2014 through FFY 2018, with the FFY 2018 target reflecting measurable improvement over the FFY 2013 baseline data.**

Targets have been established to reflect a measurable improvement over the FFY 2013 baseline data. The initial targets were set using data for grades 3-5 from Little Rock School District’s 15 elementary schools. As schools are added through scale-up, the targets may need to be updated to reflect the changing population. Targets are measurable and rigorous through FFY 2018.

<b>FFY 2013 Baseline</b>	<b>FFY 2014</b>	<b>FFY 2015</b>	<b>FFY 2016</b>	<b>FFY 2017</b>	<b>FFY 2018</b>
45.65%	47.25%	48.85%	50.46%	52.06%	53.65%

A. Number of SWD who had valid assessment results for current and previous year	620
B. Number of SWD who made gains toward proficiency reaching a level nearer to proficient	126
C. Number of SWD who made gains toward proficiency and reached a level of proficient	39
D. Number of SWD who were proficient in the previous year and maintained their level of proficient level	118
<b>Percent of SWD in grades 3- 5 that made gains towards reaching a proficient score or maintained proficient score on the statewide literacy assessment = ((B+ C+D)/A)*100</b>	<b>45.65%</b>

The growth of targets from the baseline year was established using the *Guide for Describing Meaningful Differences*, which was developed by John Carr at WestEd. The purpose of the tool is to describe differences in the percentages of achievement results. Using the table presented in Exhibit I-17.3(e).1 Arkansas selected the high end of moderate growth over the next five years.

**Exhibit I-17.3(e).1: *Guide for Describing Meaningful Differences***

Descriptive Difference	Total Number of Students being Compared			
	50	100	200	500+
	Percentage Point Difference			
None	0-12	0-8	0-5	0-3
Small	13-15	9-11	6-7	4-5
Moderate	16-19	12-14	8-10	6-8
Fairly Large	20-25	15-17	11-13	9-10
Large	26-29	18-24	14-19	11-15
Very Large	30+	25+	20+	16+

Although, the tool was not meant to set targets, it provided guidance in selecting a percentage point increase for the next five years that would be meaningful. Arkansas selected a growth rate of eight percentage points from FFY 2013 baseline to FFY 2018, resulting in an annual growth rate of 1.6 percentage points. While the annual growth rate may seem small, as schools throughout the central and Delta region are added to the implementation, the number of students being measured will increase substantially.

## **Component #4: Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies**

### **4(a) A description that demonstrates how the improvement strategies were selected and will lead to a measurable improvement in the State-identified result(s).**

The ADE-SEU, in collaboration with stakeholders, selected improvement strategies based on an extensive data and infrastructure analysis. The ADE-SEU strategically engaged the Advisory Council, Arkansas Education Associations, Administrators, teachers, parents and ADE personnel in identifying infrastructure needs and contributing factors of low performance of literacy achievement for SWD. Based on this analysis, ambitious but achievable improvement strategies were developed that the ADE will have the capacity to support. The improvement strategies selected focus on a combination of State-level and LEA-level capability building components. It is important to the ADE that the strategies identified focus on building the capacity of the State personnel while simultaneously providing targeted supports to build the capacity of LEAs to implement evidence based practices. Since capacity building and student outcomes are priorities across all the selected improvement strategies, it is essential that some of the strategies build the structures and systems necessary to identify and manage supports while the others focus on the PD and TA being provided. This purposeful selection between system strategies and content strategies is what differentiates the SSIP strategies from previously implemented improvement efforts and will ensure student outcomes are achieved.

The data analysis indicated concerns with the effectiveness, individualization, and differentiation of instruction, percentages of students educated within the general education classroom, and missed instruction due to disciplinary removals. This identification of contributing factors supported the development of strategies focused on RTI with an emphasis on literacy, behavior, and improving performance relative to least restrictive environment.

The infrastructure analysis identified multiple strengths and areas of need within the States infrastructure. While the restructuring of ADE-SEU's monitoring system to support a needs-based tiered system provides the resources and structure to shift from a total focus on compliance to a more balanced system that includes a focus on results, there remain several important needs. ADE-SEU's current online PD and TA system will be restructured to better support differentiated and targeted needs of LEAs. In addition, a concerted effort will be made within the ADE to build the internal capacity of personnel and align PD and TA efforts. These identified areas of need supported the development of a strategy that will focus on creating a special education system of PD and TA that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data.

For a list of strategies and a detailed explanation of how they align with the data and infrastructure analysis see section 4(b) and 4(c).

### **4(b) A description that demonstrates how the improvement strategies are sound, logical, and aligned.**

In order for the SSIP improvement strategies to be sound and logical it is important they align with the SIMR and current state initiatives. An extensive initiative inventory was developed in

order to identify the current interventions and programs ADE is supporting. The explanation below outlines how each strategy is sound, logical, and aligns with the SIMR and state initiatives.

**Strategy # 1: Redesign a tiered state monitoring system that includes a focus on results with an emphasis on literacy and is aligned to other ADE monitoring systems.**

This strategy is logical and sound because it will provide the critical structure and supports necessary to differentiate and target PD and TA services and supports for LEA. Similar to OSEP's Results Driven Accountability initiative that differentiates services and support for states, the ADE-SEU, with the support of stakeholders, acknowledged the importance of this strategy. The tiered monitoring system will not only have a focus on the entitlements under the law, but an increased emphasis on results for students with disabilities. While local school districts are working on school improvement strategies, ADE is focusing on ways to respond to district needs, to provide state-level support that makes a difference, and addresses barriers with meaningful and functional policies, services and assistance. A goal of the ADE-SEU in transforming the monitoring system is to build the capacity of LEA to take ownership of their own programs, and use their data to build capacity for maintaining compliance and improving services for SWD.

By partnering with the SPDG and the School Improvement Unit, ADE-SEU will leverage resources and provide strategic supports to LEAs. The coordination between ADE Units and the goal of supporting a monitoring system that focuses on compliance and results indicators is what differentiates this improvement strategy from past state initiatives. This system will be utilized to identify targeted SSIP LEAs in future years.

Current state initiatives that were considered in developing this strategy were the goals outlined in the ESEA Flexibility relative to improving results for SWD and the other monitoring systems ADE currently requires through the Public Schools and Accountability Division and Federal Programs.

**Strategy #2 Create a special education system of professional development and technical assistance that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data.**

The system will allow the essential cross collaboration of ADE-SEU's staff and consultants with other ADE personnel. The sharing of LEA information, data and outcomes will allow for the ADE to more effectively leverage resources and increase the reach and impact of its work, which will increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to implement evidence based services and supports for SWD. The purposeful inclusion of stakeholder feedback, coordination between ADE Units, and the access to personnel that build a system that will coordinate collaboration between consultants is what differentiates this improvement strategy from the current state system.

This strategy will lead to a measurable improvement in the SIMR by providing the necessary transparency of State services and supports stakeholders have requested. In order to meet the targets identified in the SIMR and scale-up the amount of targeted SSIP LEAs, it is critical that a structure is in place that manages and coordinates state-level PD and TA providers' communications and outcomes.

Current state initiatives that were considered in developing this strategy were the ESEA Flexibility and TESS. This system can be utilized to provide the support necessary to implement provisions outlined in the ESEA Flexibility with a focus on improving educational outcomes for SWD. It can also provide the necessary resources to support LEAs with evidence-based PD and TA that supports the four domains being evaluated within TESS (Planning and Preparation, The Classroom Environment, Professional Responsibilities and Instruction) and the professional growth plans for teachers.

**Strategy #3: In collaboration with other ADE Units, Restructure Arkansas' Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model using evidence based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy.**

This strategy will support the restructuring of Arkansas' RTI Model. This strategy is based on sound research, which validates the interactive nature between literacy and behavior, and states a combined approach to support and enhance student success academically and behaviorally. There is a documented connection between low academic skills and problem behavior that increases over time (Fleming, Harachi, Cortes, Abbott, & Catalano, 2004; Morrison, Anthony, Storino, & Dillon, 2001; Nelson, Benner, Lane, & Smith, 2004). Further, students facing challenges in both areas are at higher risk for poor school outcomes (McIntosh, Flannery, Sugai, Braun & Cochrane, 2008).

This strategy will provide the overall structure, systems, and essential components that will allow for Strategies 4, 5, and 6 to be implemented with fidelity. Additionally, it is closely aligned with the goals of the AR SPDG that was submitted to OSEP for consideration of funding in February, 2015. The AR SPDG will work directly with SSIP targeted schools to provide the systemic support needed to achieve the intended outcomes of the SIMR and the statewide RTI Initiative. The SPDG will support the restructuring by using evidence-based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics. The focus will be on state, regional and district level implementation teams and evidence-based practices will provide sustainability over time to improve outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities. The collaboration and coordination of multiple ADE units and ESCs, purposeful inclusion of implementation science scale up components, and the development of high quality research based RTI PD and TA is what differentiates this improvement strategy from past RTI state initiatives.

This strategy will lead to a measurable improvement in the SIMR by providing the framework to organize and assess LEAs academic and behavior services and support. Based on LEA needs, high quality, evidence based PD and TA will be provided. The development of literacy, behavior, and LRE PD and TA will be critical to developing the capacity of ADE and ESC staff to support LEAs in these areas. The PD and TA will also help develop a statewide literacy and behavior system of supports for students with disabilities.

Current state initiatives that were considered in developing this strategy were the AR SPDG, the Arkansas RTI Initiative, and the ESEA Flexibility. This strategy will provide the structure, systems, and essential components that will support implementation fidelity of strategies 4, 5, and 6. This will allow ADE to increase its ability to support LEAs capacity to implement evidence based systems and practices and align effective resources available to support

differentiated and individualized, evidence based practices for all SWD. This strategies will directly support goals within the AR SPDG and Arkansas RTI Initiative. It will also provide systemic support needed to support Priority and Focus Schools. This will improve the efficacy of integrating and aligning practices and/or initiatives that have shared components and/or parallel processes (Adelman & Taylor, 2003; McLaughlin & Mitra, 2001).

**Strategy # 4 As a part of the restructuring of RTI, design and implement evidence based literacy PD and TA for educators of students with disabilities in collaboration with other ADE Units.**

The literacy PD and TA developed will directly support Arkansas' RTI Initiative (Strategy #3). This strategy will provide the literacy PD and TA necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs and provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD, which directly aligns with the SIMR. This strategy is based on sound research noted in Strategy 3 above in section 3(c) and the data and infrastructure findings noted below in section 4(c).

The AR SPDG in collaboration with the American Institute of Research (<http://www.air.org/>) and the ADE PD unit will provide the necessary structure to ensure capacity building at the state, regional, district and school-level within targeted SSIP districts. Arkansas' Comprehensive Literacy Framework will provide the necessary literacy PD and TA to support targeted SSIP schools. ADE-SEU grant consultants will also develop and support PD and TA modules around "access" for all students, especially SWD to enhance RTI implementation in participating LEAs, as well as be a resource statewide. Additionally, PD modules specific to meeting the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities will be developed to support literacy achievement. The coordination between ADE Units, the leveraging of personnel, and literacy resources is what differentiates this improvement strategy from past literacy state initiatives.

This strategy will lead to a measurable improvement in the SIMR by providing the literacy services and supports necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD. It will also increase ADE's ability to support LEA capacity to implement evidence based literacy practices.

Current state initiatives that were considered in developing this strategy were the Arkansas Comprehensive Literacy Framework, the AR SPDG, the Arkansas RTI Initiative, and the ESEA Flexibility. The literacy PD and TA developed in connection with the Comprehensive Framework, will directly support the goals within the AR SPDG and Arkansas RTI Initiative. It will also provide PD and TA Priority and Focus Schools can access to build the capacity to implement evidence based literacy frameworks and practices that align with effective resources available to support differentiated and individualized, evidence based practices for all SWD.

**Strategy #5 As a part of the restructuring of RTI, design and implement evidence based behavior PD and TA for educators of students with disabilities in collaboration with other ADE Units.**

The behavior PD and TA developed will directly support the Arkansas' RTI Initiative (Strategy 3). This strategy will provide the behavior PD and TA necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs and provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD, which directly supports outcomes identified in the SIMR. Research identified in Strategy 3 and PBIS implementation research from the National PBIS Center indicate the positive effects of the



integration of a school wide positive behavior support approach on academic achievement. The AR SPDG in collaboration with the National PBIS TA Center will provide the necessary structure to ensure capacity building at the state, regional, district and school-level within targeted SSIP districts. The State behavior consultants who support schools in meeting the needs of SWD with intense behavioral concerns, will work collaboratively with new AR SPDG staff to align efforts in common schools. They will also develop PD and TA to support a continuum of behavioral support for schools. The coordination between ADE Units, the leveraging of personnel, and behavioral resources is what differentiates this improvement strategy from past behavioral state initiatives.

This strategy will lead to a measurable improvement in the SIMR by providing the behavioral services and supports necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD. It will also increase ADE's ability to support LEA capacity to implement an evidence based Positive Behavior Supports framework.

Current state initiatives that were considered in developing this strategy were the Arkansas SPDG, the Arkansas RTI Initiative and the ESEA Flexibility. The behavior PD and TA developed through this strategy will directly support the goals within the AR SPDG and Arkansas RTI Initiative. It will also provide PD and TA Priority and Focus Schools can access to build the capacity of personnel to implement an evidence based school wide positive behavioral supports framework and strategies.

**Strategy #6 As a part of the restructuring of RTI, design and implement evidence based PD and TA that targets increasing the percentage of students educated within the general education environment.**

The LRE PD and TA supports developed will directly align with the Arkansas' RTI Initiative (Strategy #3). This strategy will provide the services and supports necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to provide strategies that will increase the amount of time SWD spend in the general education classroom and support LEAs in scheduling literacy instruction. Research has shown that students, who have access to the general curriculum in the regular general education classroom, have greater success academically and socially. Arkansas' own analysis of its LRE and assessment data revealed that SWD who are in more restrictive environments tend to perform lower on statewide assessments. Students who have access to the general education curriculum in the most appropriate least restrictive educational setting make positive strides in their academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs. The coordination between ADE-SEU grant consultants and the purposeful review of LRE as part of Results Focused Monitoring is what will make this strategy successful.

This strategy will lead to a measurable improvement in the SIMR by providing LEAs the strategies that will increase the amount of time SWD spend in the general education classroom, support LEAs in scheduling literacy instruction, and support teachers with an effective Co-Teaching model.

One current state initiative that was considered in developing this strategy is the AR Co-Teaching Project. The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project will provide a comprehensive model which supports a PD package that includes a yearlong combination of traditional and "hands on" guided

practice trainings, online support, and onsite coaching visits. The ADE-SEU consultants will also provide targeted and differentiated services around LRE to SSIP targeted schools.

**4(c) A description of how implementation of improvement strategies will address identified root causes for low performance and ultimately build capacity to achieve the SIMR for children with disabilities.**

The development of the improvement strategies took place after the in-depth data and infrastructure analysis occurred and root causes of low performance in literacy were identified. In order to sustain and scale-up the strategies it was important to the ADE-SEU and stakeholders that the strategies support root cause findings and State-level initiatives such as RTI and a statewide tiered monitoring system. Below in Exhibit I-17.4(c)1 is an explanation of how the strategies will address root cause findings and systemic change. A detailed explanation of how the improvement strategies are based on implementation frameworks and will support systemic change can also be found in section 4(b) and 4(d).

**Exhibit I-17.4(c)1. How Strategies Will Address Root Causes**

Strategy #1	<b>Redesign a tiered state monitoring system that includes a focus on results with an emphasis on literacy and is aligned to other ADE monitoring systems.</b>
Root Causes and Systemic Change	<p>A tiered monitoring system will provide the structure and supports to differentiate and target PD and TA services and supports for LEA. The system will also provide LEAs with the knowledge and skills they need to take ownership of their own programs, and use their data to build capacity for maintaining compliance and improving services for SWD. This tiered system will support the areas of need listed below.</p> <p><b>Areas of Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish, maintain, and increase coordinated and collaborative partnerships within the ADE. Supports improvement focus number one in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Communicate to LEAs expectations that go beyond compliance and provide services that focus on results. Supports improvement focus number two in the Section (2c)</li> </ul>
Strategy #2	<b>Strategy #2 Create a special education system of professional development and technical assistance that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data.</b>
Root Causes and Systemic Change	<p>This system will allow the essential cross collaboration of ADE-SEU’s staff and consultants with other ADE personnel. The sharing of LEA information, data, and outcomes will allow the ADE to effectively leverage resources and increase the reach and impact of its work, which will increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to implement evidence based services and supports for SWD. This</p>

	<p>system will support the areas of need listed below.</p> <p><b>Area of Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restructure ADE-SEUs online system that supports PD and TA for LEAs. Supports improvement focus number three in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Establish, maintain, and increase coordinated and collaborative partnerships within the ADE. Supports improvement focus number one in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Determine gaps between state expectations/standards and measure LEAs implementation fidelity of effectiveness and performance outcomes related to special education. Supports improvement focus number two in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Align ADE-SEU grant consultant services to consistently train and coach LEA special education with general education staff to improve their skills and knowledge to meet and exceed operational standards and performance outcomes. Supports improvement focus number two in the Section (2c)</li> </ul>
<p>Strategy #3</p>	<p><b>In collaboration with other ADE Units, restructure Arkansas' Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model using evidence based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy.</b></p>
<p>Root Causes and Systemic Change</p>	<p>The restructuring of Arkansas' RTI Model will provide the framework to organize and assess LEAs academic and behavior services and supports. This strategy will provide the structure, systems, and essential components that will support implementation fidelity of strategies 4, 5, and 6. This will allow ADE to increase its ability to support LEAs capacity to implement evidence-based systems and practices and align effective resources to support differentiated and individualized, evidence based practices for all SWD. The RTI Model will support the areas of need listed below.</p> <p><b>Area of Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated approach to improving literacy and behavioral outcomes. Supports improvement focus number four in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Established evidence-based PD/TA system at the state, regional or district level to support sustained implementation of RTI for literacy and behavior. Supports improvement focus number four in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Consistent implementation of research-based RTI at the regional or district levels in Arkansas. Supports improvement focus number four in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• School level implementation and support, for evidence-based</li> </ul>

	<p>competencies in literacy and behavior instruction and supports. Supports improvement focus number four, five, and six in the Section (2c)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective, individualized, and differentiated instruction. Supports improvement focus number five and six in the Section (2c)</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy #4</b>	<b>As a part of the restructuring of RTI, design and implement evidence based literacy PD and TA for educators of students with disabilities in collaboration with other ADE Units.</b>
<b>Root Causes and Systemic Change</b>	<p>Designing and implementing evidence based literacy PD and TA will provide the literacy services and supports necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD. It will also increase ADE’s ability to support LEA capacity to implement evidence based literacy practices. The Literacy PD and TA will support the areas of need listed below.</p> <p><b>Areas of Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated approach to improving literacy and behavioral outcomes. Supports improvement focus number four in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• PD and TA in evidence-based literacy practices that focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ instructional practices,</li> <li>○ content, materials and curriculum used for instruction,</li> <li>○ the individual needs of SWD for consistent, individualized, and differentiated instruction, and</li> <li>○ the amount of time and method of scheduling literacy instruction.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Supports improvement focus number four and five in the Section (2c)</p>
<b>Strategy #5</b>	<b>As a part of the restructuring of RTI, design and implement evidence based behavior PD and TA for educators of students with disabilities in collaboration with other ADE Units.</b>
<b>Root Causes and Systemic Change</b>	<p>Designing and implementing evidence based behavior PD and TA will provide the behavior services and supports necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs to provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD. It will also increase ADE’s ability to support LEA capacity to implement evidence based behavioral practices. The Behavior PD and TA will support the areas of need listed below.</p> <p><b>Areas of Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated approach to improving literacy and behavioral outcomes. Supports improvement focus number four in the Section (2c)</li> <li>• Low performance is connected to the lack of instruction due to disciplinary removals. Supports root cause finding outlined in</li> </ul>

Data Section (1b)	
Strategy #6	<b>As a part of the restructuring of RTI, design and implement evidence based PD and TA that targets increasing the percentage of students educated within the general education environment.</b>
Root Causes and Systemic Change	<p>This strategy will provide the LRE services and supports necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs utilize the strategies that will increase the amount of time SWD spend in the general education classroom, support LEAs in scheduling literacy instruction and support teachers with a Co-teaching Model.</p> <p><b>Areas of Need</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low percentages of students educated within the general education classroom. Supports root cause finding outlined in Data Section (1b)</li> <li>• Low performance is connected to the lack of time in the general education environment. Supports improvement focus number six in the Section (2c)</li> </ul>

**4(d) A description of how the selection of coherent improvement strategies include the strategies, identified through the data and State infrastructure analyses, that are needed to improve the State infrastructure and to support LEA implementation of evidence-based practices to improve the State-identified measurable result(s) for children with disabilities.**

The ADE –SEU improvement strategies will address areas of need as evidenced in section 4(c) and build the capacity of the State, Educational Service Cooperatives, Districts and Schools.

The tiered monitoring system (Strategy 1) and the Special Education PD and TA system (Strategy 2) will provide the necessary structures for **how LEA services and support will be identified, managed, and differentiated** at the State-level. These systems will be critical in building state-level capacity through the alignment and coordination of existing resources and initiatives. The focus within these two strategies is more effective leveraging of resources to improve services for SWD and increasing the reach and impact of ADE’s work with LEAs.

The restructuring of Arkansas RTI model (Strategy 3) with a focus in literacy (Strategy 4), behavior (Strategy 5) and LRE (Strategy 6) is **what will be provided to LEAs**. The RTI Model will provide the framework to organize and assess LEAs academic and behavior services and supports. Based on LEA needs, high quality, evidence based PD and TA will be provided. The development of literacy, behavior, and LRE PD and TA will be critical to developing the capacity of ADE and ESC staff to support LEAs in these areas. The PD and TA will also help develop a statewide literacy and behavior system of supports for students with disabilities.

When developing, adapting, and disseminating PD and TA the ADE will utilize a clearly articulated system of evidence-based PD standards and practices that will support state, regional, and district level implementation of selected evidence-based practices. (Gulamhussein, A. (2013), Guskey, T.R. (2000). Trivette, et al. 2009). The system will provide a framework for

implementation from the state through regional and district levels, building upon stages of and drivers for implementation (Fixsen, et al., 2005; Fixsen et al., 2008). ADE will be braiding behavior and literacy evidence-based practices across and within a multi-tiered system of supports (Bohanon, H., Goodman, S., & McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh, Horner, & Sugai, 2009).

Subsequently, with attention to this research and related evidence-based practices, ADE will utilize the following design features with targeted SSIP LEAs:

- An emphasis on developing state, regional, and district implementation capacity;
- An emphasis on attending to organizational supports that are required at each level and making necessary adjustments at each level of the system;
- Developing partnerships across the system, among the state, regional and district levels;
- A focus on stages of implementation, rather than rigid training sequences;
- Developing communication feedback loops, where participants inform and impact the delivery of PD, supports and assistance; and
- Attention to the delivery of PD that emphasizes fidelity in adherence to standards and protocols.

These features will ensure that the State in partnership with ESCs, have the capacity to scale-up the improvement strategies across the State and meet the SIMR targets for the selected SSIP focused LEAs.

#### **4e. A description of stakeholder involvement in the selection of coherent improvement strategies.**

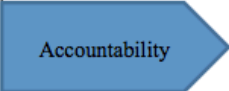
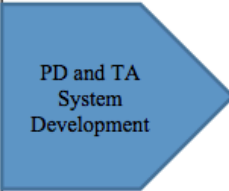
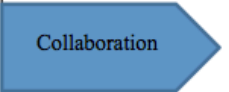
Multiple internal and external stakeholders were involved in the analysis of the States infrastructure and data, which lead first to the identification of areas of need and factors contributing to low performance and then to the identification of aligned improvement strategies. The SSIP has allowed the ADE-SEU to strengthen existing partnerships with internal and external groups involved in the education of SWD and as well as build new partnerships. Authentic stakeholder input supported the ADE-SEU in the identification of strategies. ADE-SEU will continue its stakeholder engagement into Phase II of the SSIP as a detailed implementation plan is developed for each strategy. For a summary of stakeholder engagement through Phase I. See the Stakeholder Participation Chart in the appendix on page 1.

## Component #5: Theory of Action

**5(a) A graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will increase the State’s capacity to lead to meaningful change in LEAs.**

The ADE-SEU has developed a Theory of Action that shows the rationale of how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will increase the State’s capacity to lead to meaningful change in LEAs.

### Exhibit I-17.5(a).1: Arkansas SSIP Theory of Action

<b>Vision: To provide an innovative, comprehensive education system focused on outcomes that ensures every student in Arkansas is prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and careers.</b>				
<b>Strands of Action</b>	<b>If ADE</b>	<b>Then</b>	<b>Then</b>	<b>Then</b>
	Redesigns a tiered state monitoring system that focuses on results with an emphasis on literacy and is aligned to other ADE monitoring systems (Strategy 1)	...LEAs will take ownership of their own programs, and use their data to build capacity for maintaining compliance and improving services for SWD	... LEAs will have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide high quality, evidence based services and supports for SWD by accessing resources, PD, and TA from the ADE	...All students with disabilities will receive individualized services in the least restrictive environment and demonstrate improved educational results and functional outcomes
	Creates a special education system of professional development and technical assistance that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data. (Strategy 2)	... ADE will leverage existing resources to improve services for SWD ... ADE will more effectively manage, coordinate, and disseminate State Level PD and TA ...LEAs will receive timely and responsive PD and TA differentiated to meet their needs		
	Collaborates across all ADE Units to restructure its Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model using evidence based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy and education within the general education classroom (Strategies 3-6)	... ADE will have aligned and effective resources available to support LEAs in differentiated and individualized evidence based practices for all SWD ... ADE will increase its ability to support LEAs capacity to implement evidence based systems and practices		

The rationale provided by the Arkansas Theory of Action highlights the logical connection of achievable state-level actions to consequent actions of the LEAs and ultimately to the intended outcome of improved results for SWD.

The Arkansas Theory of Action identifies three key strands of actions that ADE will take to impact outcomes for students with disabilities:

- **Accountability:** ADE will redesign its tiered State monitoring system to focus on results with an emphasis on literacy and alignment (Strategy 1)

- PD and TA Development and Dissemination: ADE will create a special education system of PD and TA that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data (Strategy 2)
- Collaboration: In collaboration with other ADE Units, ADE will restructure its Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model using evidence based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy and LRE (Strategy 3, 4, 5, & 6)

In the graphic illustration of the Theory of Action, ADE-SEU highlights the relationship between six specific improvement strategies and their intended outcomes through a series of logical If... Then... statements. The illustration also uses If...Then... statements to describe and align state actions, consequent LEA actions, and the ultimate outcome of improved results for SWD. The Theory of Action provides an important framework for connecting State strands of actions to improvement strategies implemented at the State-level and LEA level to achieve the desired outcomes for SWDs.

**5(b) A description of how the graphic illustration shows the rationale of how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will lead to the achievement of improved results for children with disabilities.**

The Arkansas Theory of Action shows the rationale of how implementing a coherent set of improvement strategies will lead to the achievement of improved results for students with disabilities. More specifically, the implementation of the coherent improvement strategies will lead to improved results in the State SIMR. As displayed in Exhibit I-17.5(b).1, three Strands of Action are aligned with specific strategies. This coherent set of improvement strategies was developed to address root causes that were identified in the data and infrastructure analysis process and are directly related to the State’s SIMR of improving literacy achievement for SWD in grades 3-5.

The tiered monitoring system (Strategy 1) and the Special Education PD and TA system (Strategy 2) will provide the necessary structures for **how LEA services and supports will be identified, managed and differentiated at the State-level**. These systems will be critical in building state-level capacity through the alignment and coordination of existing resources and initiatives. The collaborative restructuring of Arkansas’ statewide RTI model (Strategy 3) with a focus in literacy, behavior, and LRE (Strategies 4, 5, and 6) addresses identified contributing factors of low literacy achievement and describes **what will be provided to LEAs**. The RTI Model will provide the framework to organize and assess LEA needs for services and support. Based on LEA needs, high quality, evidence based PD and TA will be provided.

**Exhibit I-17.5(b)1.**

Strand of Action	Coherent Improvement Strategies	Improved Results for Students with Disabilities
Accountability	Redesign a tiered state monitoring system that includes a focus on results with an emphasis on literacy and is aligned to	An increased emphasis on results will encourage improved outcomes for SWD, including improved literacy



	other ADE monitoring systems (Strategy 1).	achievement in grades 3-5.
PD and TA System Development	Create a special education system of professional development and technical assistance that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs needs as evidenced by data (Strategy 2)	LEAs will receive timely and responsive PD and TA differentiated to meet their needs in serving SWD, including the needs of SWD that are struggling in literacy in grades 3-5.
Collaboration	In collaboration with other ADE Units, restructure Response-to-Intervention (RTI) model using evidence based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy and education within the general education classroom (Strategies 3-6).	Provides an overall structure and system for LEAs to implement research-based supports that target the root causes of low literacy achievement. This strategy will provide the PD and TA necessary to increase the knowledge and skills of LEAs, which directly supports outcomes identified in the SIMR and will lead to improved literacy achievement for SWD in grades 3-5.

**5(c) The State describes involvement of multiple internal and external stakeholders in development of the Theory of Action.**

ADE-SEU involved multiple internal and external stakeholders in development of the Theory of Action. In each of the meetings outlined below, stakeholders were presented with general information on role of the Theory of Action in connecting ADE and LEA actions to coherent strategies that improve student outcomes. Stakeholders were also encouraged to provide feedback and their comments were incorporated into further development of the Theory of Action.

- In April of 2014, ADE-SEU introduced the goals and purpose of the Theory of Action in a meeting with the State Special Education Advisory Council.
- In October of 2014, ADE-SEU met with several separate stakeholder groups to provide an overview of the goals and purpose of creating a Theory of Action. These stakeholder groups included the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators Board, the Arkansas Association for Special Education Board, and ADE staff from several different units. In October of 2014, ADE-SEU also presented information on the development of a State Theory of Action at a statewide conference for district level special education administrators and other personnel. In each of these meetings, ADE-SEU gathered feedback on the development of the Arkansas Theory of Action.
- January of 2015, the State Special Education Advisory Council (Advisory Council) participated in a meeting where they reviewed the purpose of the Theory of Action and provided feedback on a draft version of ADE’s Theory of Action.

- In February and March of 2015, ADE-SEU presented the Theory of Action to the Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators Board and ADE personnel and made revisions incorporating all stakeholder feedback to date.

# **SSIP APPENDIX**

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# Stakeholder Participation Chart

- Special Education Advisory Council
- Parent Stakeholder Groups
- State Education Associations, LEA Administrators, and Teacher Stakeholder Groups
- ADE Personnel

Theory of Action

Coherent Improvement Strategies

Broad State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR) Focus

Final SIMR Focus

Broad Infrastructure Analysis

In-depth Infrastructure Analysis

Broad Data Analysis

In-depth Data Analysis

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

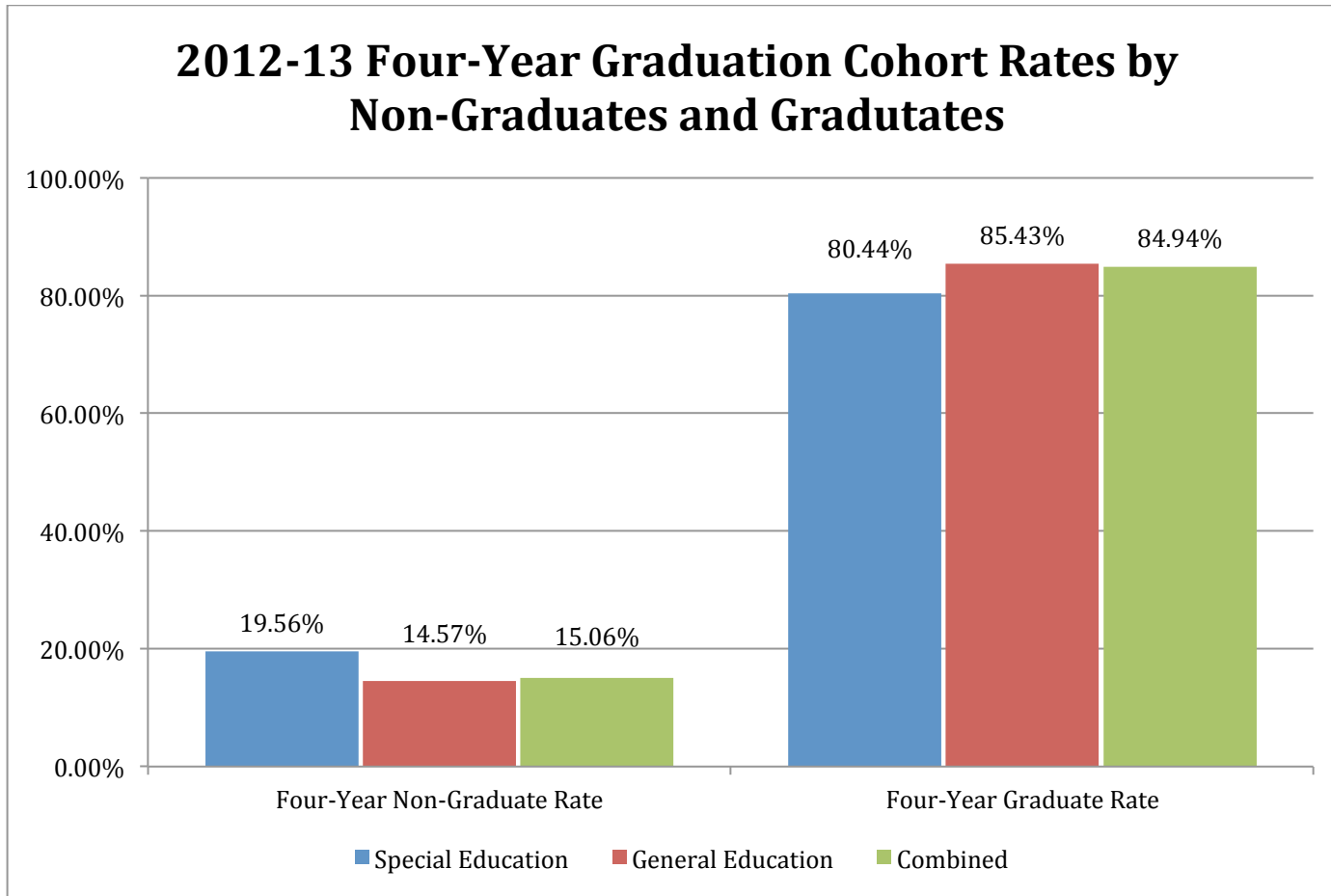
1-23-14 Overview of indicators, SSIP and potential areas of need  
 4-24-14 Broad data analysis and future data needs  
 7-31-14 Broad data and infrastructure analysis for graduation rate, literacy and math achievement, broad SIMR identification  
 10-30-14 In-depth literacy data and infrastructure analysis  
 1-29-15 In-depth literacy data analysis, SIMR, improvement strategies, and Theory of Action

12-5-14 Statewide dissemination of literacy data and infrastructure survey for parents

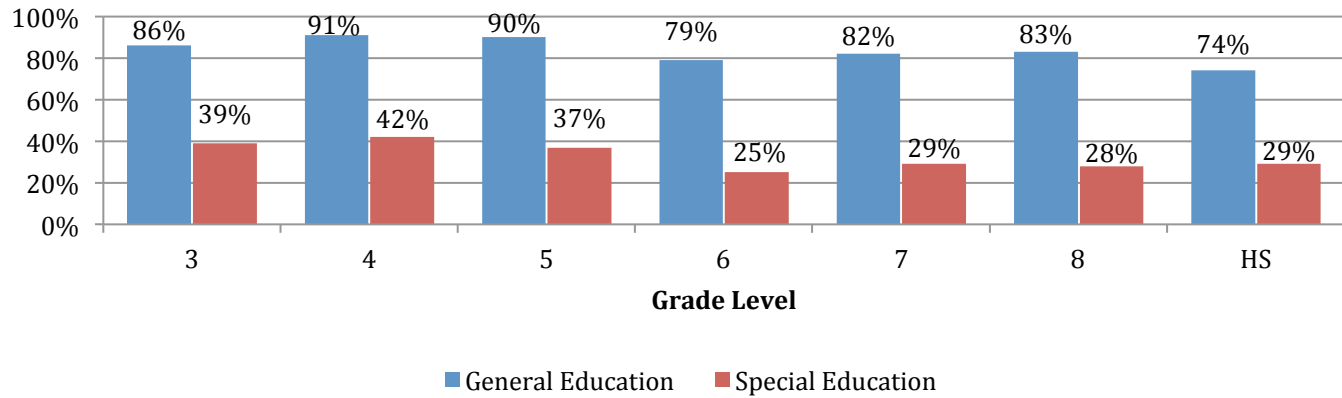
8-19-14 Overview of SSIP for Arkansas Association for Educational Administrators (AAEA) President  
 9-24-15 Overview of SSIP for AAEA Board  
 9-30-14 SSIP in-depth literacy data and infrastructure analysis with Arkansas Association for Special Educational Administrators (AASEA) Board  
 10-20-14 In-depth literacy data and infrastructure analysis with special education administrators  
 10-31-14 In-depth literacy data and infrastructure analysis for ADE Federal Programs Advisory Council  
 11-15-14 Statewide dissemination of literacy data and infrastructure survey for teachers  
 2-19-15 Analysis of in-depth SiMR, improvement strategies and Theory of Action with AASEA

2-7-14 Overview of SSIP for Special Education Unit (SEU) staff  
 8-13-14 Broad data and infrastructure analysis with SEU staff  
 9-30-14 Overview of SSIP, in-depth literacy data and infrastructure analysis, and broad SIMR with ADE personnel from multiple units  
 10-1-14 In-depth literacy data analysis with SEU staff and ADE personnel  
 11-5-14 In-depth infrastructure analysis with SEU staff and ADE personnel  
 12-3-14 Development of SSIP improvement strategies with SEU staff and ADE personnel  
 2-4-15 Discussion of SSIP in-depth SIMR and improvement strategies  
 3-11-15 Discussion of SIMR, improvements strategies and Theory of Action with SEU staff and ADE personnel

**Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council  
State Systemic Improvement Plan Data Analysis  
July 31, 2014**



## Literacy Statewide Assessment 2012-13 Percent Proficient



### Statewide Percentage of Students Proficient and Non-Proficient by Test Type and Grade Level in Literacy

Statewide	Student Participation	Performance Level	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th - 12th
General Education	Without Accommodations	Non-Proficient	14%	9%	10%	21%	18%	17%	26%
		Proficient	86%	91%	90%	79%	82%	83%	74%
Special Education	Alternate Portfolio	Non-Proficient	25%	28%	27%	30%	36%	36%	16%
		Proficient	75%	72%	73%	70%	64%	64%	84%
	With Accommodations	Non-Proficient	79%	71%	75%	86%	79%	81%	90%
		Proficient	21%	29%	25%	14%	21%	19%	10%
	Without Accommodations	Non-Proficient	37%	30%	34%	63%	62%	64%	83%
		Proficient	63%	70%	66%	37%	38%	36%	17%

**Percent of Students Proficient by Grade Level in Literacy  
by Congressional District**

Congressional District	Student Sub-Population	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9-12th
One	General Education	86%	91%	89%	79%	80%	83%	72%
	Special Education	35%	40%	36%	21%	23%	22%	29%
Two	General Education	85%	90%	90%	76%	80%	81%	75%
	Special Education	39%	42%	36%	24%	29%	29%	26%
Three	General Education	89%	93%	93%	86%	89%	88%	80%
	Special Education	72%	74%	78%	55%	51%	54%	35%
Four	General Education	84%	90%	89%	77%	80%	82%	71%
	Special Education	35%	38%	32%	22%	22%	21%	28%

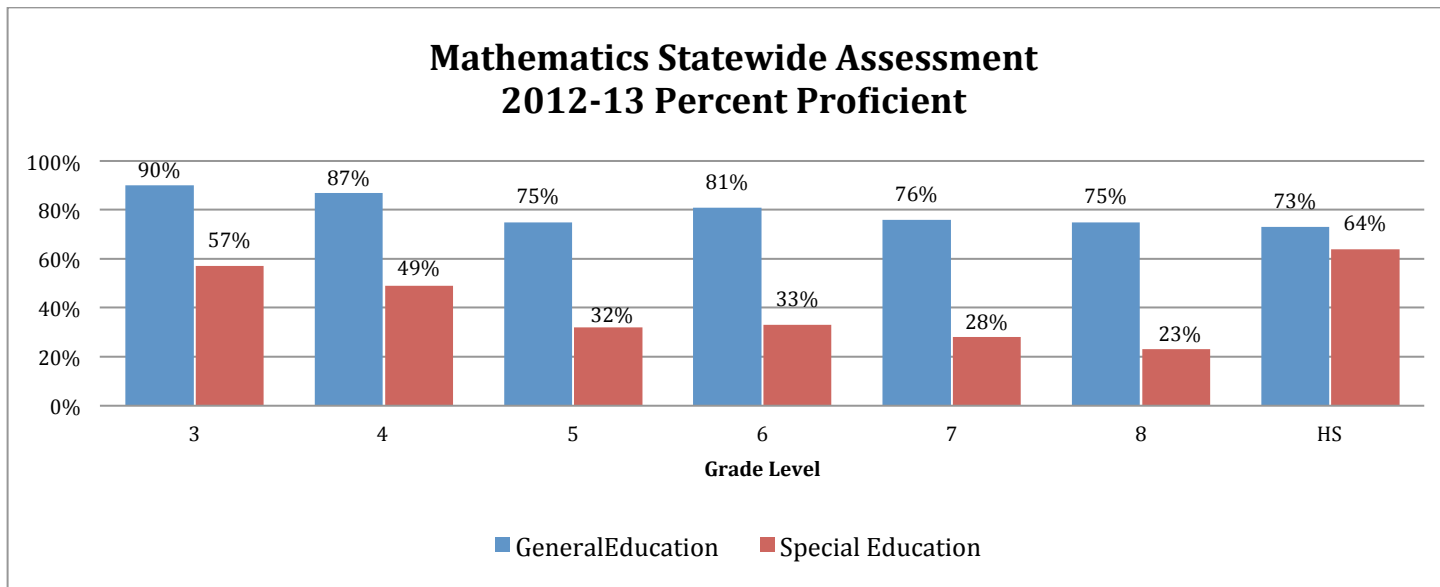
**Percent of Students with Disabilities Proficient in Literacy by  
Grade Level at the Educational Cooperatives**

Educational Cooperative	3rd (%)	4th (%)	5th (%)	6th (%)	7th (%)	8th (%)	9-12th (%)	Priority Schools	Focus Schools	Achieving/ Exemplary Schools
Northwest	46%	51%	45%	34%	44%	42%	35%	1	7	30
OUR	45%	43%	36%	19%	30%	28%	28%	0	2	6
Northeast	35%	37%	36%	20%	19%	22%	21%	0	0	0
North Central	50%	52%	41%	30%	26%	22%	42%	0	0	9
Crowley's Ridge	32%	46%	34%	20%	23%	20%	30%	5	8	13
Wilbur Mills	32%	36%	40%	29%	33%	38%	31%	1	3	7
Arch Ford	48%	47%	41%	35%	35%	35%	30%	0	0	9
Western	40%	40%	38%	24%	30%	29%	34%	2	4	16
DeQueen Mena	38%	40%	29%	18%	18%	18%	24%	0	7	9
Southwest	30%	37%	26%	14%	19%	26%	21%	0	2	10
Southeast	24%	30%	26%	19%	19%	10%	25%	3	7	0
South Central	37%	40%	34%	25%	15%	10%	39%	2	15	3
Dawson	45%	44%	42%	27%	30%	28%	29%	1	4	9
Arkansas River	29%	27%	24%	22%	21%	20%	31%	8	3	5
Great Rivers	28%	37%	32%	16%	16%	21%	25%	8	10	8
Tri- District	32%	36%	32%	14%	18%	19%	19%	10	18	14



## Percent of Students Proficient in Literacy by Grade Level at the Educational Cooperatives

Educational Cooperative	Student Sub-Population	3rd (%)	4th (%)	5th (%)	6th (%)	7th (%)	8th (%)	9-12th (%)	Priority Schools	Focus Schools	Achieving/ Exemplary Schools
Northwest	General Ed	88%	92%	92%	86%	89%	89%	81%	1	7	30
	Special Ed	46%	51%	45%	34%	44%	42%	35%			
OUR	General Ed	92%	93%	95%	87%	90%	91%	81%	0	2	6
	Special Ed	45%	43%	36%	19%	30%	28%	28%			
Northeast	General Ed	86%	89%	90%	81%	84%	83%	76%	0	0	0
	Special Ed	35%	37%	36%	20%	19%	22%	21%			
North Central	General Ed	89%	92%	93%	86%	86%	89%	82%	0	0	9
	Special Ed	50%	52%	41%	30%	26%	22%	42%			
Crowley's Ridge	General Ed	86%	92%	90%	78%	80%	82%	72%	5	8	13
	Special Ed	32%	46%	34%	20%	23%	20%	30%			
Wilbur Mills	General Ed	89%	94%	94%	87%	85%	88%	78%	1	3	7
	Special Ed	32%	36%	40%	29%	33%	38%	31%			
Arch Ford	General Ed	91%	95%	94%	84%	89%	86%	80%	0	0	9
	Special Ed	48%	47%	41%	35%	35%	35%	30%			
Western	General Ed	84%	91%	92%	84%	83%	84%	76%	2	4	16
	Special Ed	40%	40%	38%	24%	30%	29%	34%			
DeQueen Mena	General Ed	89%	94%	93%	83%	82%	85%	71%	0	7	9
	Special Ed	38%	40%	29%	18%	18%	18%	24%			
Southwest	General Ed	83%	88%	85%	67%	77%	75%	62%	0	2	10
	Special Ed	30%	37%	26%	14%	19%	26%	21%			
Southeast	General Ed	83%	85%	86%	73%	77%	77%	67%	3	7	0
	Special Ed	24%	30%	26%	19%	19%	10%	25%			
South Central	General Ed	77%	86%	86%	73%	74%	81%	69%	2	15	3
	Special Ed	37%	40%	34%	25%	15%	10%	39%			
Dawson	General Ed	90%	94%	94%	83%	86%	85%	78%	1	4	9
	Special Ed	45%	44%	42%	27%	30%	28%	29%			
Arkansas River	General Ed	81%	85%	82%	70%	71%	77%	63%	8	3	5
	Special Ed	29%	27%	24%	22%	21%	20%	31%			
Great Rivers	General Ed	77%	85%	78%	66%	68%	72%	51%	8	10	8
	Special Ed	28%	37%	32%	16%	16%	21%	25%			
Tri- District	General Ed	79%	85%	86%	62%	70%	72%	67%	10	18	14
	Special Ed	32%	36%	32%	14%	18%	19%	19%			



**Statewide Percentage of Students Proficient and Non-Proficient  
by Test Type and Grade Level in Math**

Statewide	Student Participation	Performance Level	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th - 12th
General Education	Without Accommodations	Non-Proficient	10%	13%	25%	19%	24%	25%	27%
		Proficient	90%	87%	75%	81%	76%	75%	73%
Special Education	Alternate Portfolio	Non-Proficient	13%	19%	23%	33%	34%	41%	7%
		Proficient	87%	81%	77%	67%	66%	59%	93%
	With Accommodations	Non-Proficient	57%	62%	79%	75%	80%	86%	58%
		Proficient	43%	38%	21%	25%	20%	14%	42%
	Without Accommodations	Non-Proficient	25%	33%	52%	55%	64%	71%	66%
		Proficient	75%	67%	48%	45%	36%	29%	34%

## Percent of Students Proficient by Grade Level in Math by Congressional District

Congressional District	Student Sub-Population	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9-12th
One	General Education	91%	87%	73%	81%	74%	75%	73%
	Special Education	55%	46%	30%	28%	22%	17%	68%
Two	General Education	88%	86%	73%	76%	74%	73%	69%
	Special Education	56%	47%	29%	31%	28%	24%	63%
Three	General Education	93%	90%	81%	87%	81%	80%	80%
	Special Education	65%	59%	39%	45%	39%	31%	66%
Four	General Education	90%	86%	74%	79%	74%	74%	69%
	Special Education	53%	41%	30%	30%	24%	18%	59%

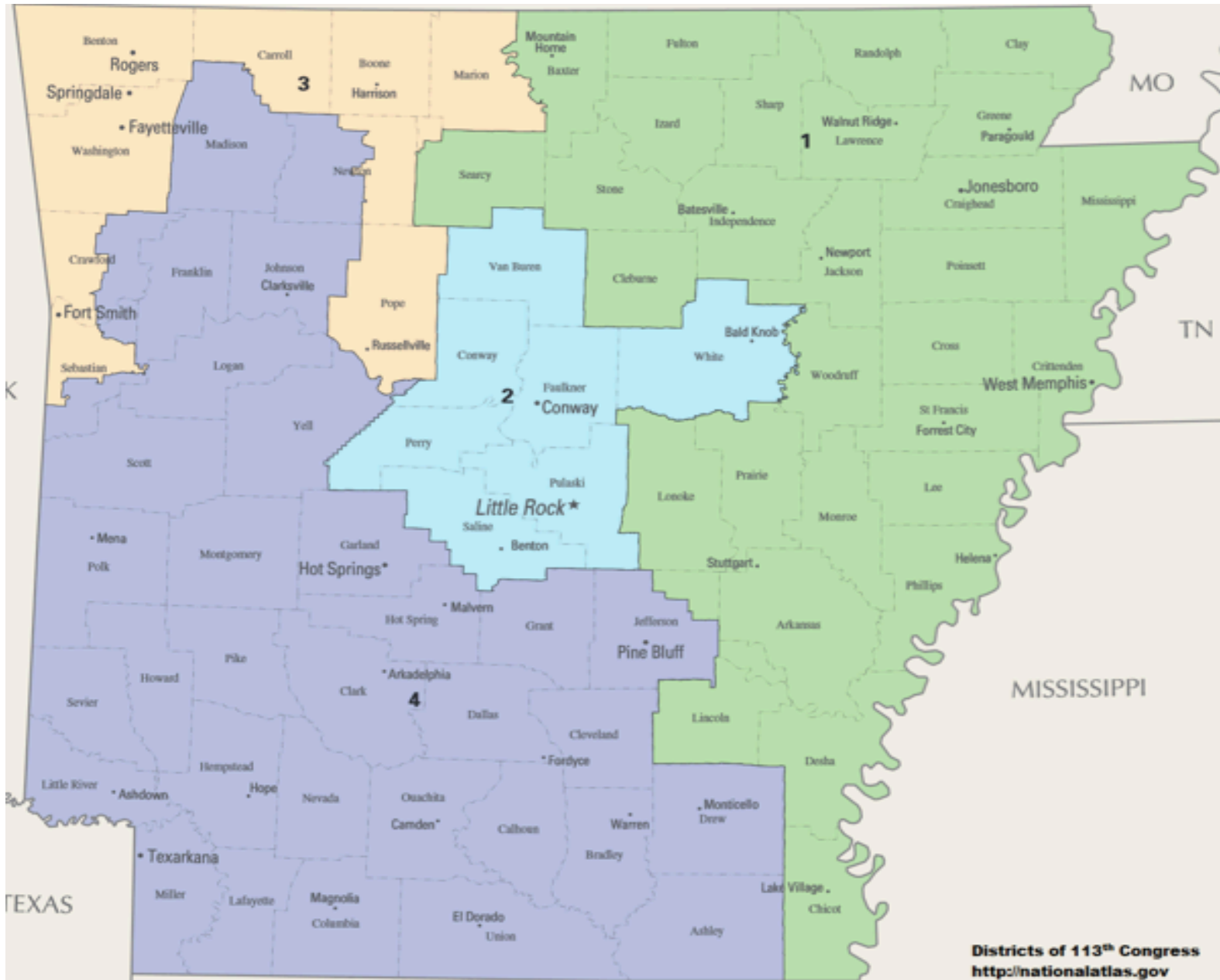
## Percent of Students with Disabilities Proficient in Math by Grade Level at the Educational Cooperatives

Educational Cooperative	3rd (%)	4th (%)	5th (%)	6th (%)	7th (%)	8th (%)	9-12th (%)	Priority Schools	Focus Schools	Achieving/ Exemplary Schools
Northwest	65%	61%	42%	46%	42%	35%	73%	1	7	30
OUR	64%	56%	31%	27%	30%	23%	69%	0	2	6
Northeast	59%	49%	35%	31%	25%	18%	80%	0	0	0
North Central	74%	53%	36%	36%	27%	17%	72%	0	0	9
Crowley's Ridge	48%	50%	28%	26%	22%	18%	71%	5	8	13
Wilbur Mills	55%	48%	33%	37%	25%	23%	72%	1	3	7
Arch Ford	68%	53%	35%	45%	34%	30%	71%	0	0	9
Western	60%	47%	33%	41%	33%	25%	48%	2	14	16
DeQueen Mena	62%	37%	35%	23%	29%	14%	76%	0	7	9
Southwest	46%	43%	22%	26%	25%	22%	33%	0	2	10
Southeast	45%	35%	27%	19%	16%	9%	61%	3	7	0
South Central	51%	40%	28%	26%	18%	11%	69%	2	15	13
Dawson	59%	52%	36%	35%	27%	23%	66%	1	4	9
Arkansas River	43%	31%	22%	24%	26%	17%	60%	8	3	5
Great Rivers	42%	38%	22%	21%	18%	16%	55%	8	10	8
Tri- District	45%	37%	23%	16%	18%	15%	53%	10	18	14

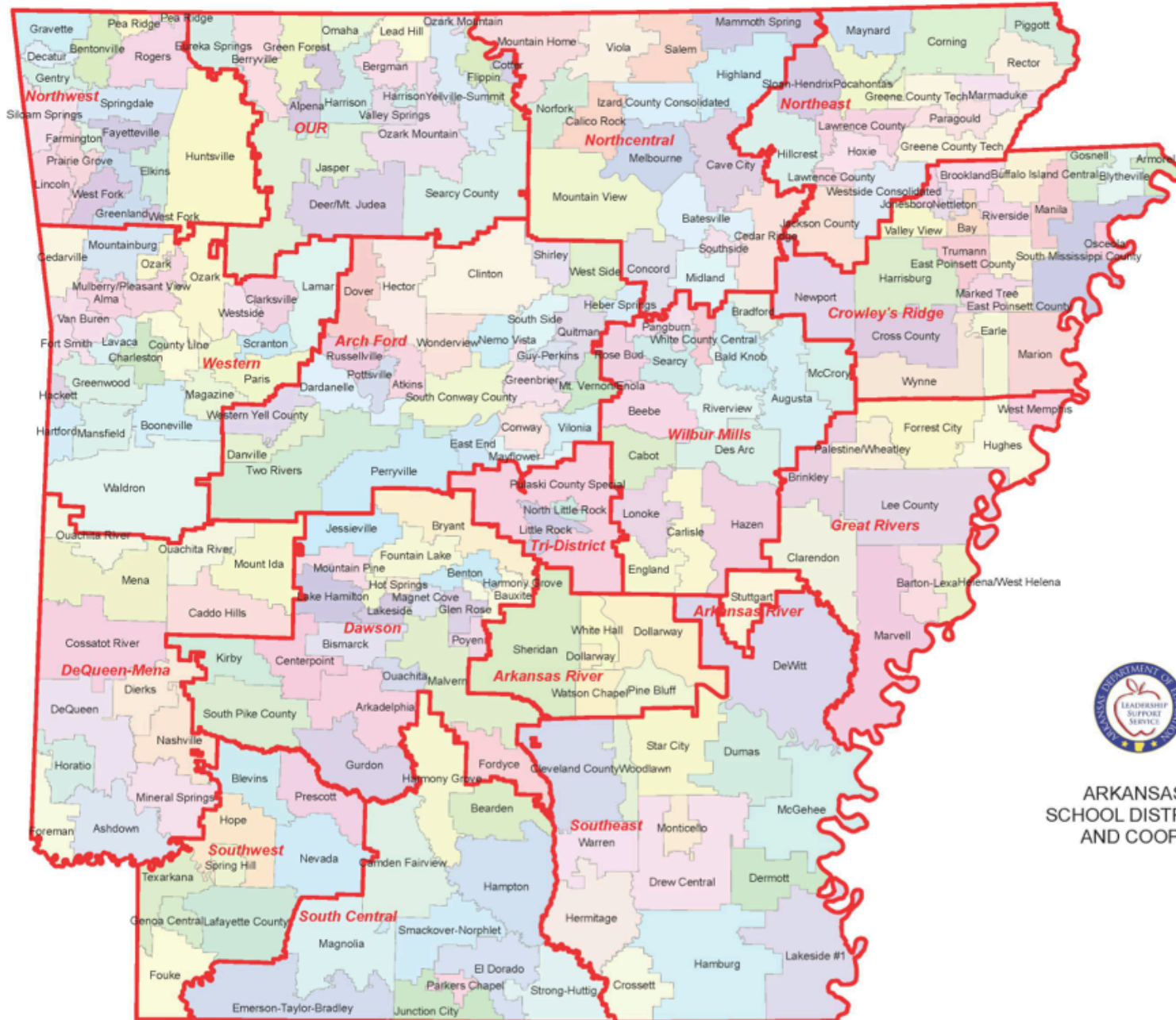
## Percent of Students Proficient in Math by Grade Level at the Educational Cooperatives

Educational Cooperative	Student Sub-Population	3rd (%)	4th (%)	5th (%)	6th (%)	7th (%)	8th (%)	9-12th (%)	Priority Schools	Focus Schools	Achieving/ Exemplary Schools
Northwest	General Ed	94%	91%	82%	88%	82%	81%	82%	1	7	30
	Special Ed	65%	61%	42%	46%	42%	35%	73%			
OUR	General Ed	94%	92%	84%	86%	84%	83%	81%	0	2	6
	Special Ed	64%	56%	31%	27%	30%	23%	69%			
Northeast	General Ed	93%	87%	75%	84%	75%	80%	78%	0	0	0
	Special Ed	59%	49%	35%	31%	25%	18%	80%			
North Central	General Ed	95%	91%	81%	86%	81%	78%	80%	0	0	9
	Special Ed	74%	53%	36%	36%	27%	17%	72%			
Crowley's Ridge	General Ed	90%	86%	72%	81%	75%	75%	70%	5	8	13
	Special Ed	48%	50%	28%	26%	22%	18%	71%			
Wilbur Mills	General Ed	92%	91%	78%	87%	76%	79%	81%	1	3	7
	Special Ed	55%	48%	33%	37%	25%	23%	72%			
Arch Ford	General Ed	94%	92%	81%	86%	81%	82%	81%	0	0	9
	Special Ed	68%	53%	35%	45%	34%	30%	71%			
Western	General Ed	89%	88%	77%	85%	77%	76%	77%	2	4	16
	Special Ed	60%	47%	33%	41%	33%	25%	48%			
DeQueen Mena	General Ed	93%	91%	87%	85%	72%	77%	76%	0	7	9
	Special Ed	62%	37%	35%	23%	29%	14%	76%			
Southwest	General Ed	87%	84%	66%	71%	68%	67%	59%	0	2	10
	Special Ed	46%	43%	22%	26%	25%	22%	33%			
Southeast	General Ed	89%	82%	66%	74%	72%	67%	63%	3	7	0
	Special Ed	45%	35%	27%	19%	16%	9%	61%			
South Central	General Ed	85%	80%	71%	74%	67%	70%	63%	2	15	3
	Special Ed	51%	40%	28%	26%	18%	11%	69%			
Dawson	General Ed	94%	91%	82%	85%	81%	83%	80%	1	4	9
	Sped	59%	52%	36%	35%	27%	23%	66%			
Arkansas River	General Ed	85%	79%	60%	71%	67%	66%	56%	8	3	5
	Special Ed	43%	31%	22%	24%	26%	17%	60%			
Great Rivers	General Ed	85%	82%	52%	68%	60%	62%	55%	8	10	8
	Special Ed	42%	38%	22%	21%	18%	16%	55%			
Tri- District	General Ed	83%	79%	64%	62%	62%	61%	55%	10	18	14
	Special Ed	45%	37%	23%	16%	18%	15%	53%			

# Arkansas Congressional Districts



# Arkansas Educational Cooperatives



ARKANSAS  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
AND COOPS

## **Stakeholder Participation Chart for SSIP Phase I**

### **Special Education Advisory Council**

The Arkansas Special Education Advisory Council (Advisory Council) includes members with the following roles: Parents, Career & Technical Education representative, Juvenile/Adult Corrections representative, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Representatives, LEA Special Education Supervisors, Individuals with Disabilities, Advocates, Higher Education representative, McKinney-Veto (homeless students) representative, Community Parent and Resource Center representative, and a District Superintendent.

### **Parent Stakeholder Groups**

The Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) /Arkansas Disability Coalition (ADC) serves families of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, and the educational, health and community-based services across the state. Parent educators (schools/education) and regional coordinators (health-related) are located throughout the state to provide a more local presence and better meet specific needs. The board of directors consists of up to 15 members, who are made up of individuals with disabilities, professionals dedicated to serving Arkansas families, and parents of children with disabilities aged birth to 26.

The Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC) serves families of children with disabilities ages birth through 26. It serves four counties, Benton, Carroll, Madison, and Washington. The CPRC, while advocating for children in special education, specifically emphasizes training and information for all families, including: foster families, parents who are working to reunite with their children, and the parents of young people in the juvenile justice system. In addition, the CPRC targets professionals working with these three groups.

#### SSIP Parent Panel

Panel of parents of SWD selected by parent advocacy groups and the AASEA board to provide feedback on SSIP Phase I development.

### **Teachers Stakeholder Group**

#### SSIP Teacher Panel

A group of over 120 special education and general education teachers identified by

special education LEA administrators to provide input on the Phase I development of the SSIP.

## **State Education Associations**

### Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA)

The AAEA is an umbrella association with twelve constituent educational administrator organizations (e.g. Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators, Arkansas Association of Curriculum & Instruction Administrators, Arkansas Association of Elementary School Principals, etc.). Its goal is seeking continual improvement in the quality of education and educational leadership in Arkansas. To this end, AAEA has committed itself to supporting school leaders through legislative representation, advocacy and professional learning opportunities. The AAEA Board is composed of 12 LEA administrators from across the state that represents each of the constituent organizations.

### Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators (AASEA)

A professional education association open to persons engaged in any phase of special education administration or supervision, including those serving public or private educational institutions. The AASEA is a constituency group of the AAEA and is led by a board of directors composed of 23 LEA special education supervisors.

## **LEA Administrator Stakeholder Groups**

### LEA Special Education Administrators

There are over 250 LEA Special Education Supervisors in Arkansas. LEA Special Education Supervisors represent all areas of the state and are responsible for overseeing that the provisions of IDEA are met at the local level, as well as working with teachers, parents, and other administrative staff to improve outcomes for students.

## **Internal ADE Stakeholder Groups**

### ADE Special Education Unit

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), Special Education Unit, works in collaboration with local school districts to provide special education services for students with disabilities (ages 3 to 21) in an effort to ensure that all special education students in Arkansas receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Additional responsibilities include the oversight of statewide compliance with all federal and state special education laws and regulations, development of programs and services, management of federally required data reporting and analysis, and administration of state and local special education budgets. Personnel in the ADE Special Education unit work within 6 sections: Data and Research, Dispute Resolution, Funding and Finance, Monitoring and Program Effectiveness, and State Program Development.



### Other ADE Units

The Directors and personnel of the following ADE Units participated in the development of the Phase I SSIP: ADE Professional Development Unit, ADE Curriculum and Instruction, ADE Federal Programs Unit, ADE School Health Services Unit, ADE Assessment Unit, ADE Public School Accountability Division, and ADE School Improvement Unit

### ADE-SEU Consultant Groups

Multiple ADE-SEU consultant groups provide PD that directly supports educators that serve SWD. The consultant groups assist in meeting the challenges of providing 21st century special education services. Representatives from the following Consultant Groups participated in the development of the Phase I SSIP: behavior support specialists, education services for the visually impaired, transition services, Co-teaching Project, traumatic brain injury services, speech-language pathology services, Deaf-blindness Project, State Personnel Development Grant, Easter Seals Outreach, Technology and Curriculum Access Center, and the education audiology resources for schools.

### **Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs)**

The ESCs are 15 regional service centers that support LEAs in (1) meeting or exceeding State Standards and equalizing education opportunities; (2) more effectively using educational resources through cooperation among school districts; and (3) promoting coordination between school districts and the ADE. Representatives from ESCs participated in the development of the Phase I SSIP.

<b>Stakeholder Representation in SSIP Phase I Development</b>	
<b>Stakeholder Representation of:</b>	<b>Provided by:</b>
Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)	Arkansas Association of Education Administrators (AAEA), Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators (AASEA), Special Education LEA Supervisors, SSIP Teacher Panel, SSIP Parent Panel, Advisory Council members
State Advisory Panel	Arkansas Special Education Advisory Council

<p>Parents of children with disabilities and parent advocacy groups</p>	<p>Parents serving on the Advisory Council, SSIP Parent Panel, Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), Community Parent Resource Center (CPRC), Additional advocacy groups identified by parents serving on the Advisory Council</p>
<p>Teachers</p>	<p>SSIP Teacher Panel</p>
<p>State and local agencies that pay for, provide, or collaborate on IDEA services and issues</p>	<p>Advisory Council members, ADE-SEU Consultant Groups, ADE Special Education Unit, other ADE Units, Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs)</p>
<p>Stakeholders with expertise on the issues to be discussed for the SSIP</p>	<p>Advisory Council members, ADE Special Education Unit, other ADE Units, ADE-SEU Consultant Groups, Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs), parents, teachers</p>

## Key Infrastructure Question

The Stakeholder questions asked at face-to-face meetings or on surveys are outlined below.

### Advisory Council

- Why do you think SWD in Arkansas are performing at lower proficiency levels than students without disabilities?
- What technical assistance and professional development supports do districts need in order to increase literacy achievement for SWD?
- What supports do schools need to provide quality instruction in reading, language arts, and literacy?
- What supports do teachers need to provide quality instruction in reading, language arts, and literacy?
- What practices, supports and services do SWD need to be proficient in literacy?
- What supports do parents need to be engaged in their child's school and support him/her in reading?
- What practices, programs, services are producing improved outcomes in reading, language arts, literacy proficiency in SWD?

### Arkansas Department of Education Personnel

- In what ways does the State system support local systems in their efforts to implement evidenced-based strategies?
- What issues or circumstances are seen as disadvantages to the State's ability to build capacity at the local system's level?
- What strategies are in place to foster collaboration and communication amongst and between State divisions and units?
- What are potential obstacles with regard to maintaining partnerships and collaborative communication among and between State divisions and units?
- What are barriers within the current Statewide system that may be contributing to low performance of students with disabilities?

### Special Education Administrators and State Education Associations

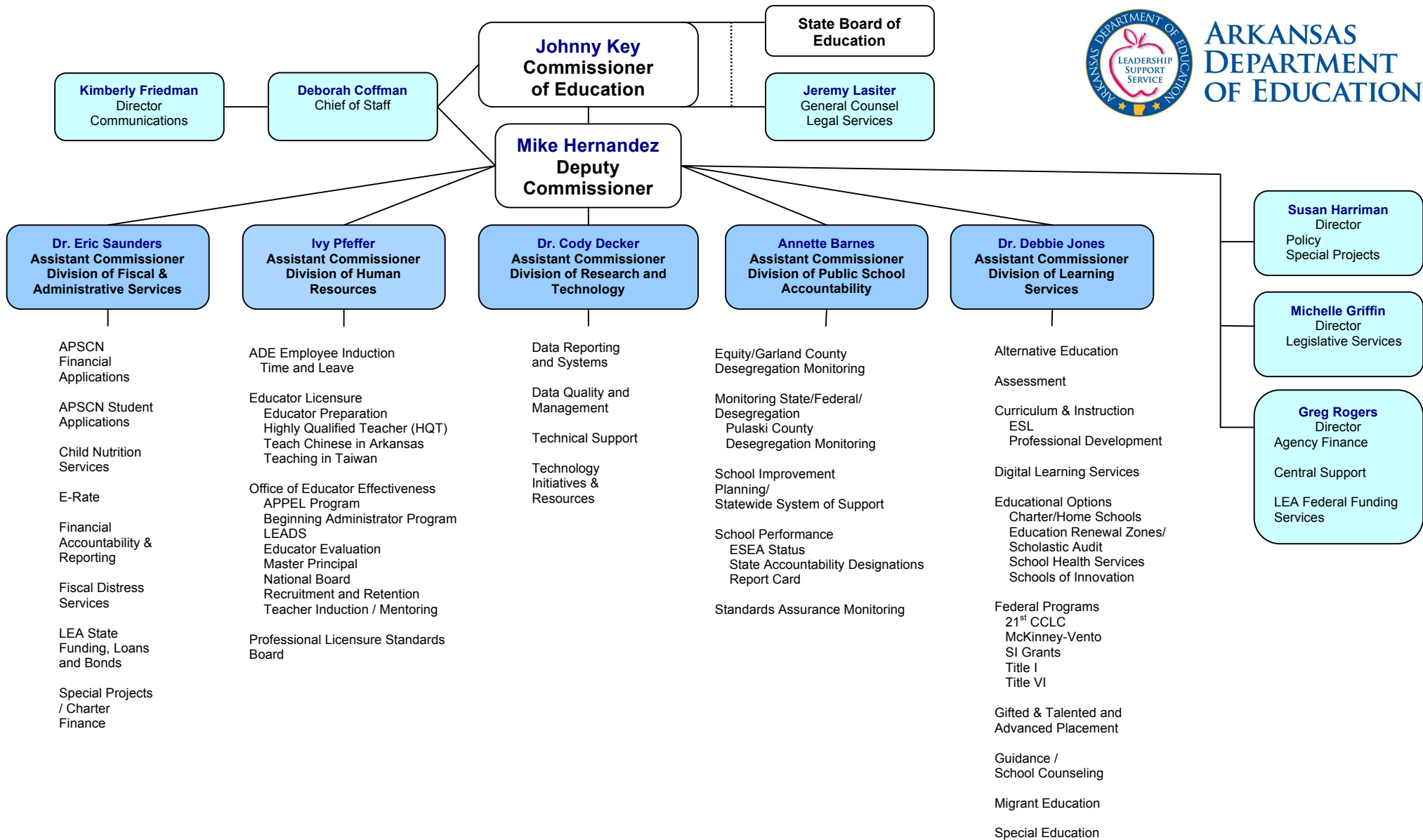
- What barriers can you identify that are impacting the delivery of high quality literacy instruction (teacher licensure, teacher mobility, etc.)?
- What practices, supports and/or services do students with disabilities need to be proficient in literacy?
- What supports do teachers need to provide quality instruction in literacy?
- What practices, programs, and/or services are you familiar with that target improved outcomes in literacy proficiency in SWD?
- How can the state support districts and schools in improving literacy proficiency for students with disabilities?
- What systematic, state-level actions would assist local districts in their efforts to improve outcomes for students with disabilities?

### Special and General Education Teachers

- What practices, supports and/or services do students with disabilities need to be proficient in literacy?
- What supports do teachers need to provide quality instruction in literacy?
- What barriers can you identify that are impacting the delivery of high quality literacy instruction?
- What factors do you feel are contributing to low performance in literacy for students with disabilities?

### Parents of Children with Disabilities and Parent Advocacy Groups

- Does your child's IEP include services to support reading achievement? If so, what type of services or supports has your child received to help improve his/her reading skills? Do you feel these service or supports were helpful to your child? Are there other types of supports or services that you feel would help improve your child's reading skills?
- What types of supports or services do you feel are the most important for reading achievement?
- What, if any, are some of the barriers your child has faced in improving his/her literacy skills?
- What factors do you feel may be contributing to low performance in reading for students with disabilities?



<b>ADE</b>	Arkansas Department of Education
<b>APPEL</b>	Arkansas Professional Pathway to Educator Licensure
<b>APSCN</b>	Arkansas Public School Computer Network
<b>CCLC</b>	Century Community Learning Centers
<b>ESEA</b>	Elementary Secondary Education Act
<b>LEA</b>	Local Educational Agency
<b>LEADS</b>	Leader Excellence and Development System

# ADE – Special Education Unit Professional Development and Technical Assistance Resources

[arksped.k12.ar.us](http://arksped.k12.ar.us)

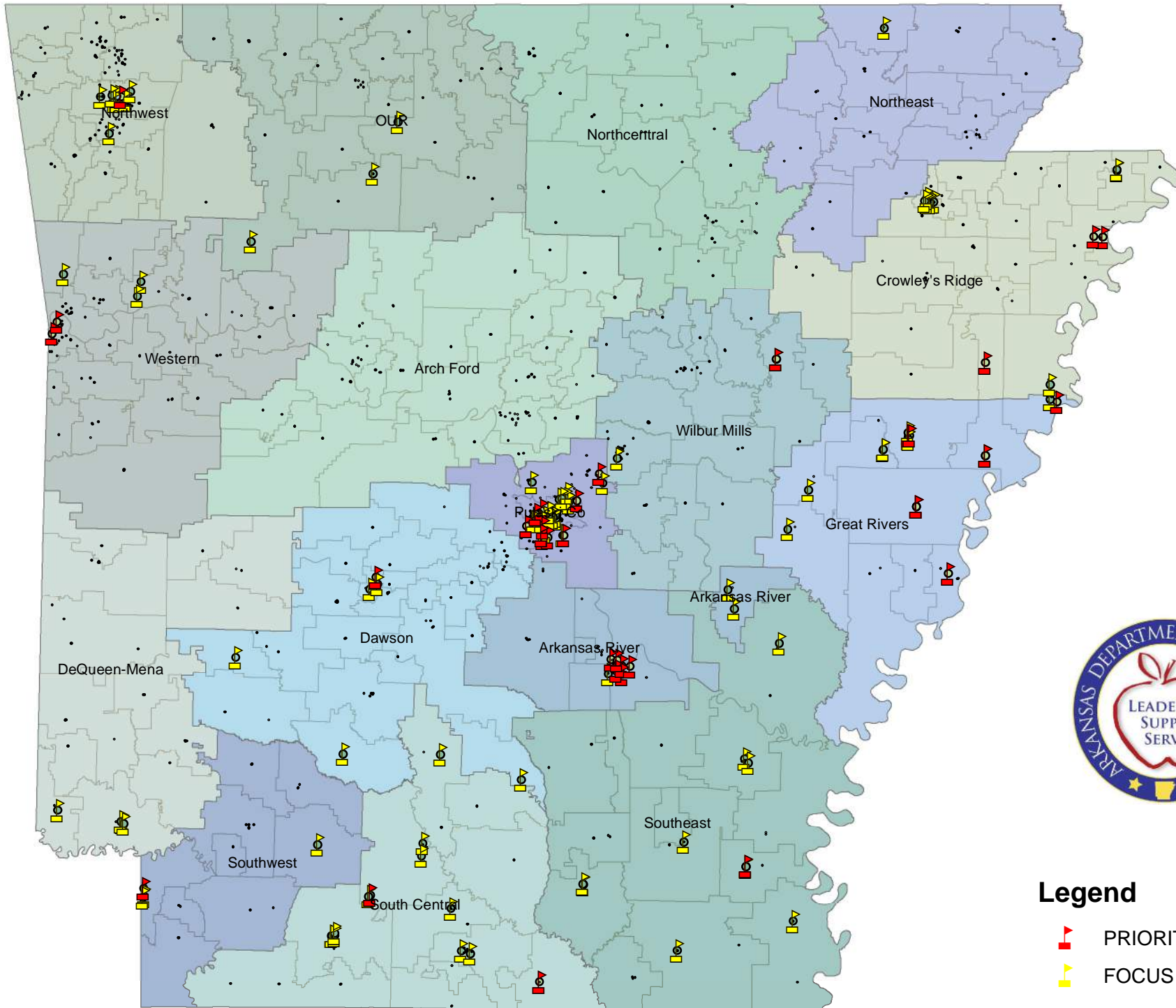
Resource	Description	Contact Person/Website Link
<b>CIRCUIT</b>	CIRCUIT is a clearinghouse for referrals made for individual students for specific services in the areas of special education identification, assistive technology, behavioral services, vision services, augmentative communication, and other programming needs. CIRCUIT staff connect people making referrals with the appropriate consultant to address student needs.	<a href="http://arksped.k12.ar.us/sections/CIRCUIT.html">arksped.k12.ar.us/sections/CIRCUIT.html</a>
<b>AR Learn</b>	AR Learn provides lists of trainings offered statewide to help general and special educators become more effective in working with students with disabilities. The site enables users to register for the professional development opportunities.	<a href="http://www.arlearn.org">www.arlearn.org</a>
<b>Behavior Support Specialists (BSS)</b>	The BSS group provides: individual student assistance, including assistance with behavior plan development and programming; and assistance with classroom/building/district level program development to meet the social/behavioral needs of students with disabilities.	Jennifer Gonzales jennifer.gonzales@arkansas.gov  <a href="https://arksped.k12.ar.us/TechnicalAssistance/default.html">https://arksped.k12.ar.us/TechnicalAssistance/default.html</a>
<b>Education Services for the Visually Impaired (ESVI)</b>	ESVI consultants provide: recommendations for adaptations and modifications to enhance the student's opportunities for learning; assessment, instruction, and consultation in the use of recommended low vision devices, adaptive mobility devices and canes; recommendations for large print or Braille books; recommendations for assistive equipment and materials; and assistance as needed with required Functional Vision Assessments and Learning Media Assessments.	Angyln Young angyln.Young@arkansas.gov  <a href="http://esvi.org">esvi.org</a>
<b>AR Transition Services (ATS)</b>	Transition consultants assist students with disabilities, educators, parents, agency personnel and community members in preparing students to transition from school to adult life and reach positive post-school outcomes. They provide technical assistance, trainings and consultations to special education teachers and other relevant staff, as well as to various agency personnel.	Bonnie Boaz bonnie.Boaz@arkansas.gov  <a href="http://www.arkansastransition.com">www.arkansastransition.com</a>
<b>AR Co-Teaching Project</b>	The Arkansas Co-Teaching Project provides support to schools interested in implementing a new co-teaching program or improving an existing one. Support is provided through comprehensive training, technical assistance, and informational resources.	Rose Merry Kirkpatrick roseMerry.Kirkpatrick@arkansas.gov <a href="http://arcoteaching.com/">http://arcoteaching.com/</a>



<b>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Services</b>	TBI Services include: consulting with school districts on intervention strategies that assist schools in managing student behavior; enhancing academic achievement of low performing students; assessment and identification of students potentially in need of special education services; and providing staff development to school faculty and administrators regarding TBI.	Aleecia Starkey <a href="mailto:aleecia.starkey@arkansas.gov">aleecia.starkey@arkansas.gov</a>
<b>Speech-Language Pathology Services</b>	Speech-Language services include: consultation and technical assistance to individuals and districts on a variety of communication, regulatory, and service delivery issues; professional education information in the form of training, self-study materials, and announcements; and a resource and equipment loan program which includes professional texts, assessment tools, self-study materials, and auditory trainers.	Shelly Wier <a href="mailto:Shelly.Wier@arkansas.gov">Shelly.Wier@arkansas.gov</a>  <a href="http://www.arcommunicationboard.com/">http://www.arcommunicationboard.com/</a>
<b>Medicaid in the Schools (MITS)</b>	Medicaid in the Schools services include training, technical assistance, support for electronic billing, program management, policy and program development, initiation/development of new revenue streams, and collection/management/and analysis of data.	Jeanie Donaldson <a href="mailto:Jeanie.Donaldson@arkansas.gov">Jeanie.Donaldson@arkansas.gov</a>  <a href="http://www.arimits.org">www.arimits.org</a>
<b>Children and Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI)</b>	CAYSI is a federally funded program serving individuals from birth to age 21 who are deaf/blind or who are at risk for deaf/blind. CAYSI consultants provide training, technical assistance and information to families, educators and others who work with these individuals. CAYSI supports the philosophy of inclusion of the individual with deaf/blindness in educational, vocational, recreational and community environments.	Jennifer Gonzales <a href="mailto:jennifer.gonzales@arkansas.gov">jennifer.gonzales@arkansas.gov</a>  <a href="http://arksped.k12.ar.us/Caysi.html">arksped.k12.ar.us/Caysi.html</a>
<b>Arkansas State Personnel Development (SPDG)</b>	The Arkansas State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) works with schools and regional partners to maximize all students' academic and social, emotional, and behavioral success. The SPDG website includes resources in the areas of shared leadership, literacy, math, positive behavior supports and teacher recruitment and retention.	Howie Knoff <a href="mailto:howard.knoff@arkansas.gov">howard.knoff@arkansas.gov</a>  <a href="http://www.arstudentsuccess.org">www.arstudentsuccess.org</a>
<b>Easter Seals Outreach (ESO)</b>	ESO consultants provide assessments and recommend services for children with disabilities ages 3-21. Services include: evaluations for ASD identification and argumentative/alternative communication; psycho-educational assessments; student centered planning and addressing specific needs of individual students or an entire classroom.	Suzie Baker <a href="mailto:sbaker@eastersealsar.com">sbaker@eastersealsar.com</a>  <a href="http://www.eastersealsar.com/services/outreach-team">www.eastersealsar.com/services/outreach-team</a>
<b>Technology and Curriculum Access Center (TCC)</b>	TCC provides assistive technology assessments, consultation, equipment loans, and in-service training to meet the needs of children and young adults with disabilities.	Bryan Ayres <a href="mailto:bayres@eastersealsar.com">bayres@eastersealsar.com</a>  <a href="http://eastersealsar.com/tcc-training-page">eastersealsar.com/tcc-training-page</a>
<b>Educational Audiology Resources for Schools</b>	EARS services include: managing hearing screening programs to assist with amplification and other classroom technical assistance; and recommendations for accommodations/modifications for students with auditory processing disorders,	Donna Smiley <a href="mailto:smileyDF@archildrens.org">smileyDF@archildrens.org</a>

<b>(EARS)</b>	cochlear implants, etc. A full range of evaluation services are available including audiological assessments, counseling/guidance for parents and hearing conservation education. Speech pathology services include specialized assessments (with a written report), classroom observations, assistance with writing appropriate goals, as well as modeling therapy with individual students.	<a href="http://www.archildrens.org/Services/Audiology/Outreach.aspx">www.archildrens.org/Services/Audiology/Outreach.aspx</a>
<b>UALR School of Law Mediation Project</b>	Trained professional mediators assist parties in finding effective solutions to the problems affecting educational services for children with disabilities. Mediators can facilitate IEP Meetings to guide the process of the meeting and assist members of the IEP team in communicating effectively to develop an acceptable IEP.	Request Mediation 501-342-9939  <a href="https://arksped.k12.ar.us/DisputeResolution/Mediation.html">https://arksped.k12.ar.us/DisputeResolution/Mediation.html</a>
<b>UCA Speech/Language Pathology Aides/Assistants</b>	LEAs may seek approval for a program to use Speech-Language Pathology Support Personnel (assistants and aides) who can perform tasks as prescribed, directed and supervised by master's level speech-language pathologist. The LEA submits written proposals developed collaboratively by the supervising speech-language pathologist and the administrator(s) who will be most directly involved with the program. The LEA may design a service delivery model which best meets the needs of students and professionals involved.	Sharon Ross sharonr@uca.edu  <a href="https://arksped.k12.ar.us/UCA.html">https://arksped.k12.ar.us/UCA.html</a>
<b>Arkansas Promise Grant</b>	Arkansas PROMISE is a research project open to youth ages 14 to 16 who currently receive SSI benefits. For 1000 youth, PROMISE will provide additional services to youth and their families to support their education and career goals. Services include: Intensive case management, two paid competitive work experiences, education and employment training and support for youth and families, benefits counseling, health and wellness training, and money to address emergency financial needs.	Philip Adams <a href="mailto:stephena@uark.edu">stephena@uark.edu</a>  <a href="http://www.promisear.org/">http://www.promisear.org/</a>
<b>State Program Development</b>	Funding is provided for tuition reimbursement to eligible individuals pursuing the necessary coursework from an accredited program to qualify for licensure in vision, hearing and speech/language. Funding is also provided for interpreter training.	<a href="https://arksped.k12.ar.us/StateProgramDevelopment/default.html">https://arksped.k12.ar.us/StateProgramDevelopment/default.html</a>
<b>IDEA Data and Research</b>	The IDEA Data & Research Office provides quality data management, analysis, TA, and research for the enhancement of the ADE's general supervision mandate. The Office ensures standardized data collection procedures for federal reporting, state and district level data analysis, and public dissemination of program effectiveness data including school district and early childhood program profiles, Significant Disproportionality-Coordinated Early Intervening Services Profiles, the State Performance Plan, and the Annual Performance Report	Jody fields <a href="https://arksped.k12.ar.us/DataAndResearch/default.html">https://arksped.k12.ar.us/DataAndResearch/default.html</a>



# PRIORITY AND FOCUS SCHOOLS



- Legend**
-  PRIORITY SCHOOLS
  -  FOCUS SCHOOLS

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