

**Arkansas Department of Education  
Rule Governing the Monitoring of Arkansas Comprehensive  
School Improvement Plans (ACSIP)  
December 2007**

**1.0 Regulatory Authority**

- 1.01 This Rule shall be known as the Arkansas Department of Education Rule Governing the Monitoring of Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plans.
- 1.02 The State Board of Education promulgates this Rule pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-15-424, 6-15-426, 6-20-2301 through 6-20-2305, and 10-3-2101 *et seq.* and Act 807 of 2007.

**2.0 Purpose**

- 2.01 To expand the monitoring process to include a comprehensive compliance review of the development and implementation of educational strategies, assessment, academic accountability and resources as outlined in each public school and public school district's Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP).
- 2.02 To monitor the use of "Instructional Facilitators" in school improvement plans.
- 2.03 To ensure compliance with federal and state law and State Board of Education policies.
- 2.04 To provide technical assistance for program improvement.

**3.0 Definitions**

For the purpose of this Rule:

- 3.01 "Alternative Learning Environment (ALE)" – a student intervention program in compliance with Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-18-508 and 6-18-509 that seeks to eliminate traditional barriers to student learning.
- 3.02 "Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program" – means the testing component of Arkansas Comprehensive, Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program, which shall consist of developmentally appropriate assessments as required by the State Board of Education, or other assessments which are based on researched best practices as determined by qualified experts which would be in compliance with federal and state law, End-of-Course tests for designated grades and content areas, and the high school literacy test.

- 3.03 “Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program” – means a comprehensive system that focuses on high academic standards, professional development, student assessments, and accountability for all schools.
- 3.04 “Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP)” – A plan developed by a local school team based on an analysis of student performance data and other relevant data that provides a plan of action to address deficiencies in student performance and any academic achievement gap as evidenced in the Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program as defined in Section 3.02. This plan shall be reviewed annually and monitored at least every two years. Additionally, this plan shall become the application for all instructional federal programs as administered by the Arkansas Department of Education.
- 3.05 “Benchmarks/Grade-Level Benchmarks” – Academic Content Standards and/or grade-level statements of what a student should know and be able to do. The Grade-Level Benchmarks provide guidance to classroom teachers in planning instruction aligned with the Academic Content Standards.
  - 3.05.1 “Benchmark Statements” – Statements that indicate the anticipated score or status advancement of a particular student population, on a particular measurement instrument, by a specified time. These measurement statements may incorporate the appropriate AYP target(s).
- 3.06 “Board” – The Arkansas State Board of Education.
- 3.07 “Compliance” – Documenting that the district adheres to applicable statutes and regulations.
- 3.08 “Department” – The Arkansas Department of Education.
- 3.09 “District Improvement Plan” – A compilation of the individual school improvement plans which align the district’s resources to meet the needs of the individual schools’ plans. The main focus of the district improvement plan shall be to ensure that all students have an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency on all portions of state-mandated assessments.
- 3.10 “English Language Learners (ELL)” – are students identified by the State Board of Education (Board) as not proficient in the English language based upon approved English proficiency assessment instruments administered annually in the fall of the current school year, which assessments measure oral, reading, and writing proficiency.
- 3.11 “Grade Level” – performance of a student (or group of students) at the proficient level on benchmark assessments at the specified grade that is age-appropriate for that student(s).

- 3.12 “Instructional Facilitator” – an individual holding a valid Arkansas teacher’s license meeting the criteria for a highly qualified teacher who facilitates continuous improvement in classroom instruction by providing instructional support to teachers in the elements of research-based instruction and by demonstrating the alignment of instruction with curriculum standards and assessment tools; develops instructional strategies; develops and implements training; chooses standards-based instructional materials; provides teachers with an understanding of current research; integrates technology into instruction; assists in the implementation of the components of the Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP).
- 3.13 “Interventions” – research-based programs, initiatives, or strategies designed to address the student academic, behavioral and social needs identified in the data analysis.
- 3.14 “Monitoring” – the process of collecting information from schools and school districts to:
  - 3.14.1 determine compliance with the implementation of school improvement plans, promote collaborative planning and budgeting, and provide technical assistance for program improvement; and
  - 3.14.2 examine in-class practice and student learning results as identified by school improvement plans to determine the impact of school programs and activities.
- 3.15 “National School Lunch Students” – are those students from low socio-economic backgrounds as indicated by eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch Act as determined on October 1 of the previous school year.
- 3.16 “Professional Development” – is a coordinated set of planned learning activities for school teachers and administrators that are based on research, are standards-based and continuous.
  - 3.16.1 Professional development shall result in individual, school-wide, and district-wide improvement designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency in the state academic standards.
- 3.17 “Program” – Any or all of the districts sponsored or district-supported educational opportunities for students, either within or beyond the school day.
- 3.18 “Public School District/Public School” – those school districts and schools (including open-enrollment charter schools) created pursuant to Title 6 of the Arkansas Code and subject to the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program except specifically excluding those schools or educational programs created by or receiving authority to exist pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-15-501, 9-28-205, and 12-29-301 through 12-29-310, or other provisions of Arkansas law.

- 3.19 “School Improvement” – the initial classification applied to a school that fails to meet adequate yearly progress for two successive years.
- 3.20 “School Year” – is the year beginning July 1 of one calendar year and ending June 30 of the next calendar year.

#### **4.0 Implementation**

- 4.01 Beginning with the 2007-2008 school year and each year thereafter, the Arkansas Department of Education will conduct periodic comprehensive on-site monitoring reviews of school and school district’s school improvement plans to verify that activities are being implemented in accordance with the approved application.

#### **5.0 Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan**

- 5.01 Each public school or school district shall develop and file, by a deadline date established by the Department, with the Department an Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (ACSIP) focused on student achievement.
- 5.02 The purpose of ACSIP is to provide equal opportunity for all students, including identifiable subgroups, to meet the expected performance levels established by the Board on all State assessments. The plan:
  - 5.02.1 Identifies a challenging set of goals and sets forth actions that will be taken to achieve the goals. It specifies the responsibilities of the school district and its schools. The plan includes periodic benchmarks, measurements processes, and evaluation protocols.
  - 5.02.2 Is based on an analysis of data produced by the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing Program and other reliable measures of student learning to determine classroom, school, and school district academic performance.
  - 5.02.3 Includes the public school or school districts use of categorical funding for:
    - (A) Alternative Learning Environments (ALE);
    - (B) Professional Development;
    - (C) English-Language Learners (ELL); and
    - (D) National School Lunch Students, as defined by Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-2303 (12) (A).
  - 5.02.4 Specifies allocation of funding and resources including tutors, teachers’ aides, counselors, social workers, nurses and instructional facilitators.
  - 5.02.5 Outlines a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies and activities indicated in the plan.

- 5.02.6 Includes a cross section of teachers, experts, parents and other stakeholders as plan developers.
- 5.03 An improvement plan is subject to annual review.
- 5.04 Any public school or school district classified as in school improvement under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-425 shall develop and file with the Department a revised comprehensive school improvement plan each year, meeting the requirements of this section and containing any additional requirements determined necessary by the department to ensure that all students in the public school or school district have an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency on all portions of the state-mandated assessments.
- 5.05 The district has the primary responsibility for ensuring that the school in school improvement receives technical assistance as it develops or revises its school plan and throughout the plan's implementation.
- 5.06 Technical assistance for a school identified for improvement must focus on strengthening and improving the school's instructional program. Specifically, the district must ensure that the school in need of improvement receives technical assistance based on scientifically based research in the following areas:
- (A) Assessment and Data Analysis: including purposes and use of data
  - (B) Identification and Implementation of Strategies, and
  - (C) Budget Analysis
- 5.07 At the end of each school year, the school district shall evaluate the implementation and impact of programs (interventions or actions) included in the comprehensive school improvement plan to ensure that the programs are providing intervention and prevention services designed to increase student achievement.
- 5.08 Evaluation results must be included in the comprehensive school improvement plan for the following year.

## **6.0 Comprehensive Monitoring**

- 6.01 The Department shall periodically monitor each public school's and school district's compliance regarding its comprehensive school improvement plan. A team of reviewers shall conduct a comprehensive site visit to:
- 6.01.1 Determine whether the evaluation conducted by the public school or school district under Section 5.07 of this Rule was conducted properly;
  - 6.01.2 Assess the areas in which the public school or school district needs to revise its plan;

- 6.01.3 Review the school/district's performance during the preceding two years, including the documented academic performance of its students;
- 6.01.4 Review the use of public school funding under the Public School Funding Act of 2003, Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-20-2301 *et seq.* for the following:
  - 6.01.4.1 Instructional facilitators, as that term is defined by the State Board of Education in Section 3.12 of this Rule;
  - 6.01.4.2 Alternative Learning Environments (ALE), Professional Development, English-language learners (ELL), and National School Lunch Students identifying specific:
    - Educational strategies;
    - Resources used, including tutors, teachers' aides, counselors, social workers, and nurses;
    - Expenditures made from categorical funds provided under § 6-20-2305(b); and
  - 6.01.4.3 The implementation of programs for students whose academic achievement is below proficient.
- 6.02 As part of the monitoring process under this Section 6, the Department shall evaluate the research cited by the public school or school district in its comprehensive school improvement plan in support of the proposed interventions and actions to assess its independence and empirical support for the effectiveness of the program.
- 6.03 The Department shall use the information obtained through monitoring comprehensive school improvement plans under this section to:
  - 6.03.1 Determine the compliance of the public school or school district with the provisions of this section; and
  - 6.03.2 Evaluate whether the assessment conducted by the public school or school district under this section was conducted properly, and assess the areas in which the public school or school district needs to revise its plan.
- 6.04 Make recommendations regarding the review findings for the purpose of improving educational practices beyond the level of minimum compliance to foster practices of continuous improvement.

## **7.0 Procedures for Comprehensive Monitoring**

- 7.01 On-Site Monitoring – Monitoring teams, consisting of ADE staff, shall conduct periodic on-site reviews. The number of team members will vary,

depending on the size of the school district and the number of program areas to be reviewed. The on-site review will be conducted in a revolving cycle. However, monitoring for specific issues and/or programs may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education.

7.02 Preparation for On-Site Visit – An annual notice of the monitoring process and checklist of items to be monitored will be provided prior to on-site visits. The monitoring team leader will inform the school district superintendent of the on-site monitoring visit at least one month prior to the visit. The team leader, in collaboration with the superintendent, will establish a proposed schedule of activities.

7.03 The monitoring process may include any of the following, as well as any additional procedures and policies as approved by the State Board.

7.03.1 Administrative Review – This portion of the visit will look at procedures that are typically the responsibility of district level staff. District administrators are asked to provide the monitoring team with an overview of how the coordination of funding is impacting student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

7.03.2 Program Evaluation – This portion of the visit will include a review of how district staff collects data from district schools and how the data is used for evaluation purposes and to update or revise the school improvement plan.

7.03.3 School Level Review – This section of the review is conducted at the schools. Reviewers collect data on the implementation of the district’s programs.

7.03.4 Interviews – Interviews with selected persons will be conducted, either individually or as a group, for the purpose of verifying and gathering information. Interviews will be conducted at the district and/or school and program site.

7.04 A draft report of preliminary findings will be mailed to the school district superintendent via certified mail within twenty (20) business days of the exit conference. Upon agreement of the findings by Arkansas Department of Education personnel, the final report will be sent to the district superintendent not later than sixty (60) business days from the conclusion of the exit conference via certified mail.

7.04.1 This report provides a rating for each compliance criterion; those ratings are:

7.04.1.1 “Implemented” - meaning at least substantially implemented; program requirements have been fulfilled.

- 7.04.1.2 “Implementation in Progress” - is used for criteria containing new requirements (results of Scholastic Audit Recommendations) and means that the district is either training staff or beginning to implement the new requirement in such a way that the on-site team anticipates that the new requirements will be implemented by the end of the school year or within the required time frame.
  - 7.04.1.3 “Partially Implemented” – program requirements have been implemented in part but not in total.
  - 7.04.1.4 “Not Implemented” - meaning at least substantially not implemented; no action has occurred toward the implementation of program requirements.
  - 7.04.1.5 “Not Applicable” - does not apply.
- 7.04.2 The report will include findings for each criterion that it rates “Partially Implemented” or “Not Implemented,” explaining the basis for the rating. Areas in need of further technical assistance may also be included.
- 7.04.3 Technical assistance plans may be developed to assist districts in meeting compliance.
- 7.05 Monitoring Report Response –The Superintendent or designee will have to review the report for factual accuracy prior to dissemination of the final report. Formal written response by the school district with regards to any required corrective action will be due to the Department thirty (30) days after the Final Report is mailed.
- 7.05.1 The response must outline the planned implementation of corrective actions issued for findings, including timelines for completion of the corrective action.
  - 7.05.2 These corrective actions are subject to the Department’s review and approval.