



Bureau Brief

Memorandum

TO : Members of the House and Senate Committees on Education

FROM: Nell Smith, Bureau of Legislative Research

DATE : December 17, 2013

SUBJECT : Questions on ACTAAP

The Bureau of Legislative Research developed the following questions for the Arkansas Department of Education to address in its presentations on the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP).

1. Act 1429 of 2013 eliminated the annual improvement rating system (also known as the gains rating), which assessed schools based on changes in individual students' learning. It also eliminated much of the statute describing the annual performance rating system (also known as the status rating), which assessed schools based on the number of students scoring advanced, proficient, basic and below basic on the state benchmark exams. State law calls for the State Board of Education to define the criteria for assigning a performance rating to each school. Describe why these changes were made and how the Department plans to define the new performance rating categories.
2. Act 1429 of 2013 changes the Arkansas School Recognition Program to reward schools with high student achievement, high academic growth and, for high schools, high graduation rates. Please discuss how these schools will be selected and how the \$7 million in General Improvement Funding for this program will be distributed.
3. Several states have backed out of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium. Discuss the impact of such moves on Arkansas's involvement in the consortium and on the cost of the PARCC tests.