

## PBSD UAPB Initiatives

<b>Tutoring AR Kids Read</b> <b>Kathy French -</b>	<b>Teacher Residency</b>	<b>Pine Bluff Community Schools</b>
<p>AR KIDS Read is a coordinated literacy initiative between the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) and the Pine Bluff School District designed to accelerate early reading achievement while strengthening the local educator workforce pipeline. Through this partnership, UAPB teacher candidates provide structured tutoring, small-group instruction, and targeted literacy interventions aligned with the Science of Reading.</p> <p>Currently, approximately <b>10 UAPB students</b> are hired through the federal work-study program and serve up to <b>20 hours per week</b> in literacy support roles within elementary schools. This structure provides consistent instructional support to classrooms while offering aspiring educators sustained, practical classroom experience prior to residency and licensure.</p> <p>This initiative directly supports the Arkansas LEARNS Act by:</p>	<p>The <b>TEACH PRIDE Teacher Residency (Perseverance, Rapport, Integrity, Determination, and Excellence)</b> is a year-long, paid, classroom-embedded preparation model developed by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) in partnership with the Pine Bluff School District (PBSD) to address educator shortages and strengthen teacher retention in Southeast Arkansas. Residents work alongside experienced mentor teachers while completing aligned coursework focused on instructional practice, classroom management, Arkansas Academic Standards, and licensure readiness.</p> <p>UAPB currently supports <b>16 teacher residents</b>, with <b>14 placed in Pine Bluff School District classrooms</b>. Within PBSD, <b>13 residents are employed as paraprofessionals, and one serves as an Aspiring Educator</b>, providing daily instructional support while completing their preparation</p>	<p>The Pine Bluff Community School Initiative is a comprehensive school improvement strategy led by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), in partnership with the Pine Bluff School District (PBSD), and supported by the NEA Foundation Community Schools Initiative grant.</p> <p>The initiative is currently in its implementation phase, building upon a year of strategic planning, needs assessment, and cross-sector collaboration.</p> <p>This model strengthens school performance by integrating academic supports, student services, family engagement, and coordinated community partnerships. Two Title I school sites serve as primary implementation campuses, leveraging braided funding streams to enhance the instructional core through expanded learning time, literacy events, health access, and family-focused supports.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expanding early literacy intervention capacity</li> <li>● Reinforcing Science of Reading implementation</li> <li>● Preparing classroom-ready educators aligned with state standards</li> <li>● Supporting district efforts to improve third-grade reading proficiency</li> </ul> <p>AR KIDS Read functions as both a literacy acceleration strategy and a workforce development initiative. It increases local instructional capacity, supports school accountability measures, and creates a sustainable pipeline of educators trained under LEARNS literacy requirements.</p>	<p>program. Residents are compensated by the district through a <b>strategic staffing model</b>, allowing schools to strengthen classroom capacity while developing future teachers within their own system.</p> <p>Candidates who complete the residency program will earn <b>licensure in their content areas as well as Special Education</b>, helping address critical shortage areas and strengthening instructional support across classrooms. The residency is further supported through the <b>National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR)</b> as part of the <b>Boundless Educator Initiative Grant</b>, which provides technical assistance, national best practices, and implementation support.</p> <p>Mentor teachers and residents also participate in <b>ongoing professional development workshops provided jointly by Pine Bluff School District and the UAPB School of Education</b>. These sessions reinforce instructional best practices, classroom management strategies, literacy alignment, and residency expectations, ensuring consistent support across both the university and district settings.</p>	<p><b>Core Implementation Components</b></p> <p><b>1. Community School Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The initiative includes a full-time Community School Coordinator to oversee implementation, partnership alignment, and accountability structures. Work plans are guided by data collection, needs assessments, and clearly defined MOUs outlining shared goals and roles among partners. This strengthens operational coordination between the district, university, and community organizations.</p> <p><b>2. Mobile Parent Resource Center</b></p> <p>A converted school bus will serve as a Mobile Parent Resource Center beginning in the 2025–26 school year. The mobile unit will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Free Wi-Fi and laptop access</li> <li>● Literacy resources and books</li> <li>● GED and job-readiness materials</li> <li>● Referrals to local agencies</li> <li>● Parenting and family engagement supports</li> </ul> <p>UAPB students across disciplines (education, nursing, social work, business, communications) will</p>
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	<p>This initiative directly advances the Arkansas LEARNS Act's priorities in educator recruitment, preparation, and retention. The residency creates a structured “grow-your-own” pipeline that prepares teachers specifically for the schools and communities they will serve, improving first-year effectiveness and long-term retention. Residents graduate with extensive classroom experience, strong instructional foundations, and familiarity with district expectations and accountability measures.</p> <p>The TEACH PRIDE Residency also stabilizes staffing in high-need schools by creating a sustainable workforce pathway, reducing reliance on short-term staffing solutions, and ensuring a steady pipeline of classroom-ready educators aligned with LEARNS performance expectations.</p>	<p>participate through structured service-learning placements, strengthening both community support and workforce preparation.</p> <p><b>3. Expanded School-Based Health Services</b>  In partnership with Jefferson Regional Medical Center, the local health department, and telehealth providers, the initiative is expanding access to school-based health services. UAPB nursing faculty and advanced students assist with health education, wellness programming, and supervised services. This approach addresses attendance barriers and supports student readiness to learn.</p> <p><b>4. Literacy and Academic Engagement</b>  Monthly “Leader Readers” literacy events, tutoring supports, and structured family engagement activities reinforce academic growth and literacy proficiency. These efforts align directly with Arkansas LEARNS Act priorities, emphasizing reading achievement and improved academic outcomes.</p> <p><b>5. Financial Literacy and Workforce Exposure</b>  Local banks have partnered with schools to launch school-based banks that promote financial</p>
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