Research Report

K-12 Education Categorical Funding Review

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Senate and House Committees on Education

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INTRODUCTION

This study is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Act 57 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003 and Act 1204 of 2007. Those acts require the legislature to conduct an adequacy study each biennium to assess needs related to providing an adequate education for all Arkansas K-12 students.

Arkansas's K-12 education funding formula, referred to as the matrix, is used to determine the per-pupil level of foundation funding disbursed to each school district. In addition to foundation funding, districts may receive four types of categorical funding. Three of the four categorical funds are intended for student populations with more needs than the majority of students. These special needs groups include students in poverty, students who are not proficient in the English language, and students who need the additional assistance of an alternative learning environment. The fourth type of categorical funding provides professional development training for teachers. Professional development was established as a categorical program so that the funding could be restricted for that use rather than included in unrestricted foundation funding.

The report is based on web surveys of all 239 districts and 74 randomly selected schools. The Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR) staff conducted on-site interviews with school and district officials at each of the 74 schools. Financial data was extracted by the BLR staff from a data warehouse maintained by the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Division of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).

The report first considers financial information for all four categorical funding programs -- Alternative Learning Environments (ALE), English Language Learners (ELL), National School Lunch Act (NSLA) and Professional Development (PD). Additionally, the report reviews program requirements, district categorical funding use and fund balances, district surveys, school surveys and school site visit results for the three types of categorical funding that are designed to provide additional services for students with special educational needs. PD will be reviewed in depth in a separate report.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

States use one of two strategies for targeting funding, above the per student foundation amount, to students with special needs. The differences in student needs are addressed through adding weights to the basic funding formula for identified types of students or establishing separate categorical programs to provide funding for activities to meet the needs. In most cases, funding that is provided through categorical programs is restricted and can only be used for activities that will benefit students generating the funding. Thirty-nine states provide categorical funding for special education, and 32 states have categorical funding for transportation. (EPE Research Center, 2010). Arkansas provides funding for services in both of these areas through its foundation funding and additional special education funding appropriations within the Department of Education Public School Fund Account. Twenty states have categorical funding for English Language Learners. Unlike Arkansas, most states provide for low-income and at-risk students through weighting in their funding formulas.

REVENUE

Below is a series of tables depicting financial information about all four categorical programs reviewed in this report. The first shows how per-student funding has increased since 2007. There were significant changes between 2007 and 2008 for ALE and ELL funds, followed by no change the next three years. ELL funds were increased by just over 50 percent and ALE funds by 25 percent in 2008. All categorical funds were increased by 2 percent in 2012 and 2013. Professional development funds remained at $50 per student until FY2012 when they were increased to $51. Most of that funding is distributed to school districts on a per-student rate. However, $4 million of the total PD funding is set aside each year to develop and maintain a statewide professional development program for educators.

Funding Per Student	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change from 2007 to 2012
NSLA (Poverty Measure) <70%	$480	$496	$496	$496	$496	$506	5.42%
70% to <90%	$960	$992	$992	$992	$992	$1,012	5.42%
>=90%	$1,440	$1,488	$1,488	$1,488	$1,488	$1,518	5.42%
ELL	$195	$293	$293	$293	$293	$299	53.33%
ALE	$3,250	$4,063	$4,063	$4,063	$4,063	$4,145	27.54%
PD Total	$50	$50	$50	$50	$50	$51	2.00%
PD Amount to Districts	$41.23	$41.32	$41.33	$41.32	$41.36	$42.38	2.79%

For comparison see the data below. From 2007 to 2011, foundation funds increased almost 8.5 percent. The consumer price index also rose 8.5 percent.

Funding Per Student	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% Change from 2007 to 2012
Foundation	5,662	5,770	5,876	5,940	6,023	6,144	8.5%
CPI-U U.S. City Avg. - All Items Annual Average - Pct. Change Over Previous Year	2.8%	3.8%	-0.4%	1.6%	3.2%	N/A	2007- 2011 8.5%

Source: BLS.Gov

Funding for students with special needs increases when students are counted for funding in multiple categorical programs. For FY2011, the level of funding for NSLA equates to weights of 0.08, 0.16, and 0.25 for each of the three levels of NSLA funding. Weighting for Arkansas ELL students is 0.05. When ELL funding is combined with NSLA funding, an equivalent weighting reaches 0.13, 0.21, and 0.3 for each of the three NSLA levels.

2011 Revenue Per Categorical Student	Foundation + NSLA[1]	Foundation + ELL	Foundation + ALE[2]	Foundation + NSLA + ELL	Foundation + NSLA + ALE	Foundation + NSLA + ALE + ELL	Foundation + ELL + ALE
# of Students[3]	272,728	31,325	10,432	28,339	8,037	455	134
Foundation + Categorical Revenue Per Student	$6,519 $7,015 $7,511	$6,316	$10,086	$6,812 $7,308 $7,804	$10,582 $11,078 $11,574	$10,875 $11,371 $11,867	$10,379
Ratios of Arkansas Funding	0.08 0.16 0.25	0.05	0.67	0.13 0.21 0.30	0.8 0.84 0.9	0.8 0.9 1	0.7

Note 1: *Revenue is provided for each of the three NSLA funding levels. Student Count is PY from FY2012 STAIDDATA Report*
Note 2: *The number of ALE students is the headcount of students rather than FTE which is used for funding. FTE is 5,382 for FY11.*
Note 3: Source: *ADE STAIDDATA report and ADE staff.*

The weights used in other states to support low income students can be used to compare Arkansas's efforts in addressing the needs for these students. The weights listed are in addition to a base level of funding schools receive for each student. In some states relatively low base funding is offset by higher weights for selected student attributes or school district attributes such as district size. The following table is for selected states based on the availability of verifiable information. In Arkansas the rate is based on the ratio of categorical funding to foundation funding for the specified year.

State	Foundation Formula Weight Based on Student Low Income Status	Categorical Grant Funding Based on Student Low Income Status	Proportion of Weight Where Available	Expenditures Limited to Students Earning Weight	Determination of Eligibility
Alabama	Yes			Yes	
Arkansas		Yes	0.08, 0.16, 0.25	No	FRL eligibility
California		Yes			Title I Formula child count
Hawaii	Yes		0.10		FRL classification
Iowa	Yes				FRL eligibility
Kansas	Yes		0.465	Yes	FRL eligibility
Louisiana	Yes				FRL eligibility
Maine	Yes		.15 or .20		FRL eligibility
Maryland	Yes		0.97		FRL eligibility
Michigan		Yes	0.115		free school meals claimed
Minnesota	Yes		amt varies by rate	Yes	FRL building-level concentration
Mississippi	Yes		0.5	Yes	FRL participants
Missouri	Yes		0.25		FRL eligibility
Nebraska	Yes		.05 to .30		FRL eligibility
New Jersey	Yes		.47 to .57		low-income
Ohio	Yes			Yes	
Oklahoma	Yes		0.25		FRL participation
Oregon	Yes		0.25		
Rhode Island	Yes			Yes	
Texas	Yes		0.2	Yes	FRL participation
Vermont	Yes		0.25		food stamps
Virginia	Yes			Yes	FRL eligibility
Washington		Yes	set amount		FRL eligibility

Source: *Hightower, 2010 and Verstegen, 2011*

The following table is for selected states that provide additional support for ELL students based on the availability of verifiable information. In Arkansas, the rate is based on the ratio of categorical funding to foundation funding for the specified year.

State	ELL	Special Notes
Arizona	0.115	Weight as of FY 2008-09; http://www.azed.gov/finance/Reports/
Arkansas	0.05	Weight as of FY 2010-11.
Florida	1.147	ELL weight as of 2010-11; http://www.fldoe.org/fefp/profile.asp
Georgia	1.531	ELL weight as of FY 2011; http://internet.savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us/district/finance/Budgeting%20Services/Documents/Budget%20Brief/2012%20Weights%20for%20QBE%20Funding%20Formulas.pdf
Iowa	0.22	ELL as of FY 2009; http://education.unlv.edu/centers/ceps/study/documents/
Kansas	0.395	State aid based on FTE; ELL weight FY 2007-08; http://www.usm.maine.edu/cepare/eps-review
Kentucky	1	ELL as of 03-2012 http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/instructional+resources/college+career+readiness+for+all/risk+factor+migrant+lep+low+ses+homeless.htm
Louisiana	0.21	At-risk /LEP students receive F&RL; ELL FY 2007-08; http://www.usm.maine.edu/cepare/eps-review
Maine	.30-.60	*ELL based on number of eligible children in each LEA; F/R Lunch as of FY 2008-09; http://www.usm.maine.edu/cepare/eps-review
Missouri	.6	ELL as of FY 2010-11; http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/financialmanagement/documents/ffm-AllocationCriteria2010-11.pdf
New Mexico	.5	FTE ELL (additional wt.)as of FY 2011; http://www.ped.state.nm.us/div/fin/school.budget/2012/HowNMschoolsarefundedFY0411.pdf
Oklahoma	0.25	ELL as of FY2009-10; http://ok.gov/sde/sites/ok.gov.sde/files/TechAsstDoc.pdf
Oregon	0.50	ELL as of FY2010-11; http://www.ode.state.or.us/services/ssf/2010_11-ssf-estimate-as-of-5-9-12-0900-hrs.pdf
Texas	0.10	ELL as of FY 2010-11; http://www.clyde.esc14.net/docs/15-TEA.pdf
Vermont	.20	ELL as of FY 2010-11 http://www.leg.state.vt.us/jfo/Education%20RFP%20Page/Picus%20and%20Assoc%20VT%20Finance%20Study%20with%20Case%20Studies%201-2-12a.pdf

Arkansas's support for students with special educational needs is consistent with that of most other states. However, it is low when measured against the costs these students represent to their districts.

Imazeki (2007) synthesizes the estimates of marginal cost for poverty and English learners from 16 cost identifying studies. "In pupil weight terms, the estimates for poverty range from 0.30 to 1.22 (i.e., each student in poverty requires the resources of 1.3 to 2.22 regular students). The estimates for English Learners range from 0.24 to 1.01."

In addition, Odden and Picus (2004) summarize much of the research done in various states on the costs of services for English Language Learners. They find incremental costs (additional costs) in most states are in the range of 20 to 30 percent. Those authors also note that the instructional approach used is a large determinant of costs (e.g., separate ESL instruction versus immersion).

EXPENDITURES

Expenditures of categorical funds are used primarily for salaries (78 percent) with purchases of professional and technical services accounting for an additional ten percent. The expenditures presented below are grouped by accounting object class.

2011 Categorical Expenditures by Object Class	61000/62000 Personal Services: Salaries and Employee Benefits	63000 Purchased Professional and Technical Services	64000/65000 Purchased Property Services/Other Purchased Services	66000 Supplies and Materials	67000 Property	68000/69000 Other Objects/ Other Uses of Funds	Subtotal	%of TOTAL Spent on Personal Services: Salaries & Employee Benefits
NSLA	$124,877,547	$12,465,895	$1,635,034	$10,975,101	$4,011,221	$320,861	$154,285,659	80.94%
ELL	$11,882,555	$279,919	$65,540	$696,421	$56,141	$3,920	$12,984,496	91.51%
ALE	$27,422,676	$3,226,891	$2,330,037	$475,504	$45,445	$41,048	$33,541,601	81.76%
PD	$5,723,171	$6,642,710	$3,305,441	$1,584,210	$10,296	$475,029	$17,740,858	32.26%
Totals	$169,905,949	$22,615,415	$7,336,052	$13,731,236	$4,123,103	$840,858	$218,552,614	
Percentage	77.74%	10.35%	3.36%	6.28%	1.89%	0.38%	100.00%	

FUND BALANCES

The level of categorical fund balances is shown in the following chart. The fund balance percentage is the fund balance amount divided by the categorical revenue received that year. Districts that zeroed out their NSLA funds were primarily districts receiving the lowest level of NSLA funding per student. In some cases, the zero balances were the result of transfers to other categorical funds rather than expenditures of all of a specific type of categorical funds.

2011 Categorical Fund Balances	Total Categorical Fund Balances	Categorical Fund Balance Percentages				
		Districts With Zero %	Districts with >0% &<=20%	Districts with >20% &<=49%	Districts with >50% &<=99%	Districts with >=100%
NSLA (Poverty Measure)	$26,652,021	29	147	51	11	1
<70% 162 Districts	$13,225,012	23	103	31	5	0
70% to <90% 71 Districts	$10,665,359	6	41	18	5	1
>=90% 6 Districts	$2,761,650	0	3	2	1	0
ELL 144 Districts Does not include districts with no ELL Students	$2,184,804	25	24	11	27	57
ALE 211 Districts Does not include districts with no ALE Students	$2,060,617	88	79	25	10	9
PD $41.36 per student to districts	$4,521,702	45	92	56	33	13

Note: *Calculation of balance percentage does not include NSLA Transitional or NSLA Growth Funding Revenue for the year.*
Source: *APSCN Data*

The five districts with the highest ending NSLA fund balance per NSLA current year student perform below average in the percentage of proficient and advanced students.

Districts	NSLA Fund Balance Per NSLA CY Student	Percent Proficient and Advanced Literacy	Percent Proficient and Advanced Math
Dollarway	$1,252.19	45.9%	51.4%
Palestine-Wheatley	$1,179.71	59.2%	68.8%
Lakeside	$1,001.63	60.9%	63.7%
Osceola	$740.87	61.3%	50.3%
McGehee	$672.25	62.1%	70.9%
Statewide	$97.72	74.4%	76.3%

Source: *NORMES and APSCN data. CY refers to Current Year.*

Legislation enacted in 2011 (A.C.A. §6-20-2305) requires:

> On June 30, 2012, and on June 30 of each school year thereafter, if the total aggregate balance of all state categorical fund sources exceeds twenty percent (20 percent) of the school district's total aggregate annual state categorical fund allocations for the current school year, the school district shall reduce the total balance by ten percent (10 percent) each year until the school district's June 30 balance of aggregate annual categorical fund sources is twenty percent (20 percent) or less of the total aggregate annual state categorical fund allocations for the current school year.

TRANSFERS

By law unused balances of categorical funds may be retained for the following year or transferred for use in another categorical program. The NSLA transfer amounts indicated in the following chart were provided in the ADE NSLA report.

2011 NSLA Fund Transfers	018 Transfers to ALE	019 Transfers to ELL	020 Transfers to PD	Total Transfers
<70% 162 Districts	$7,369,739	$3,783,777	$409,551	$11,563,067
70% to <90% 71 Districts	$3,880,084	$182,569	$179,228	$4,241,880
>=90% 6 Districts	$257,327	$0	$0	$257,327
State Totals	**$11,507,150**	**$3,966,345**	**$588,779**	**$16,062,274**

AETN FUNDING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since 2005, Arkansas has provided about $50 per student ($51 in FY12) for staff professional development training, or about $22 million to $23 million statewide. Most of that funding, about $19 million annually, is distributed to school districts on a per-student rate. However, $4 million of the total PD funding is set aside each year to develop and maintain a statewide professional development program for educators.

The idea for the statewide program was to pool resources and create one online system that individual school districts and co-ops could not have afforded individually. ADE was given the responsibility of managing the funding and overseeing the program. The agency set up the online system by awarding grants to the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN) and other organizations to set up and maintain the portal for online courses, known as ArkansasIDEAS. The program develops some course content and subscribes to course content developed by outside vendors.

Total PD Funding	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
PD Funding Distributed to Districts	$18,884,530	$19,017,132	$19,135,499	$19,052,341	$19,146,436	Final, verified data not available
PD Funding Supporting the Statewide Program	$3,965,470	$3,940,087	$3,995,414	$4,000,000	$4,000,000	$4,000,000
Total	**$22,850,000**	**$22,957,219**	**$23,130,913**	**$23,052,341**	**$23,146,436**	**Not available**

Source: *ADE*

Most of the $4 million is distributed each year to AETN through grants. In 2010-11, AETN received no new grant funding because it had significant unspent reserve funding. ADE required AETN to use this funding to support the program in FY11, and in FY12 AETN's grants were renewed.

AETN's Share of Statewide PD Funding	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
PD Funding Provided to AETN	$2,916,237	$3,434,711	$3,846,921	$3,314,500	$0	$3,118,498
Other Statewide Funding Uses	$1,049,233	$505,376	$148,493	$685,500	$4,000,000	$881,503
Total Funding for Statewide PD Program	$3,965,470	$3,940,087	$3,995,414	$4,000,000	$4,000,000	$4,000,000

The ArkansasIDEAS portal offers educators 838 for-credit courses as well as other non-credit courses and reading materials. At the end of FY11, 26,307 educators had registered with ArkansasIDEAS. This figure represents the total number of educators who have registered since the program's creation, including those who left the profession, moved out of state or registered once and never used the portal again. That number also does not represent every educator who has used the portal. Some districts, according to AETN, use the portal to help lead face-to-face PD sessions. In those cases, the PD leader will be registered to use the portal, but the participants might not. Of the 26,307 registered users, 9,010 educators, or 19% of the state's licensed educators (46,980), completed at least one course in 2010-11. Collectively those educators completed 66,294 courses for a total of 148,594 hours earned.

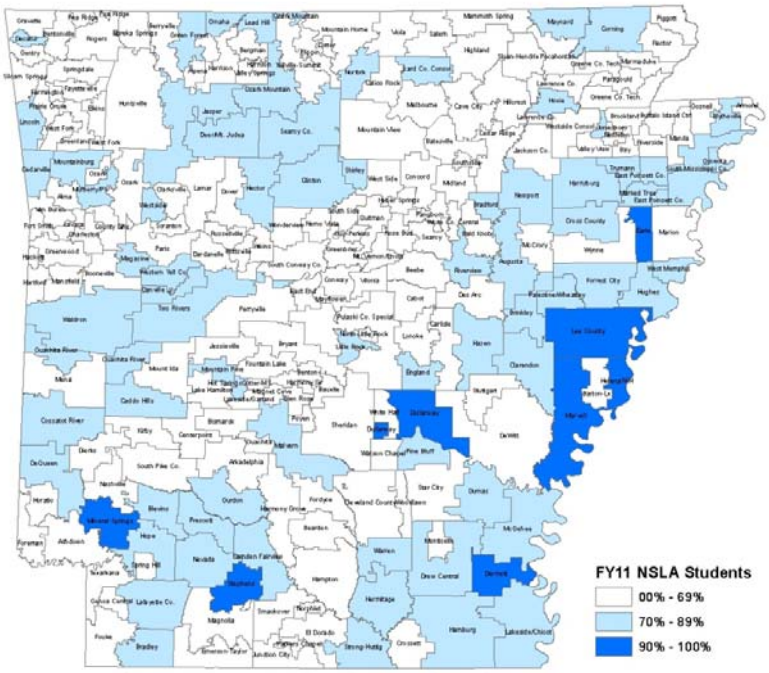
NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH ACT (POVERTY)

National School Lunch Act (NSLA) categorical funding is the Arkansas funding program for schools with high percentages of students in poverty. This state poverty funding program should not be confused with the federal school lunch program. The federal National School Lunch Act program is used as the measure of poverty for the Arkansas categorical funding program. The amount of funding received by each district is determined by the number of students eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program. NSLA funding provides one of three levels of NSLA funding to districts. The levels are based on each school's concentration of NSLA eligible students: less than 70 percent, 70 percent to less than 90 percent and 90 percent or more.

Districts also may receive additional money under two other programs: NSLA growth funding and NSLA transitional funding. If a district has grown at least one percent for each of the three previous years, it qualifies for NSLA growth funding. According to ADE's STAIDDATA report NSLA growth funding of $550,632 was distributed to 15 districts in FY2010-11. NSLA Act 272 of 2007 established a transitional formula intended to ease the drastic funding changes between established break points in the levels of eligibility. For example, the new funding ensured that a district with an NSLA concentration of 90 percent one year and 89 percent the next does not have to deal with a nearly $500 per student funding decline ($1,488 to $992). Transitional adjustments are made for up to three years with districts either gaining or losing funding until the new level is reached. In FY2010-11, 12 districts lost $7,705,119 as a result of moving to a new level. No districts gained funding.

DENSITY OF NSLA STUDENT POPULATION

The map shows the distribution of districts with significant populations of low income students. The areas of the state with the most concentrated poverty are in eastern and southern Arkansas. The forested mountainous areas in north central and west central Arkansas also have wide areas of poverty at the 70 percent to 90 percent level.



Map Prepared by the Bureau of Legislative Research, Policy Analysis & Research Section
School District Boundaries from the Arkansas Geographical Informational Section

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The NSLA funding formula law and related ADE rules specify how districts can use NSLA funding. A.C.A. §6-20-2303 defines National School Lunch students as students from low socio-economic backgrounds, indicated by eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch Act. Qualification for a free or reduced price lunch is set at 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Eligibility for that program equates to approximately $37,000 for a family of four (http://www.schoolfundingfairness.org/). The funding level for the state categorical program in each district is determined by the percentage of the district's previous year free and reduced lunch students.

A.C.A. § 6-20-2305(b)(4)(C) lists the eligible uses of NSLA funding: 1) classroom teachers, under certain guidelines; 2) before-school academic programs and after-school academic programs, including transportation to and from the programs; 3) pre-kindergarten programs coordinated by the Department of Human Services; 4) tutors, teachers' aides, counselors, social workers, nurses, and curriculum specialists; 5) parent education; 6) summer programs; 7) early intervention programs; 8) materials, supplies, and equipment, including technology used in approved programs or for approved purposes; 9) federal child nutrition program free meals under the Provision 2 program; 10) federal child nutrition program free meals for reduced-price students; 11) funding a longer school day; 12) funding a longer school year; 13) remediation programs partnering with higher education institutions; 14) Teach For America professional development; 15) the Arkansas Advanced Inititative for Math and Science; and 16) college and career coaches. NSLA Categorical funding may be used if certain conditions are met for teacher bonuses and as salary supplement for classroom teachers.

DISTRICT CATEGORICAL FUNDING USE

For the 2010-11 school year, $154 million of NSLA funding was expended for the purposes shown in the table that follows. The financial coding for eligible activities was aggregated into seven purposes. Additional detail about the financial coding is provided below the table.

Grouped Expenditures by Program Intent Code	Student Academic Support 004, 006, 011, 012	Additional Personnel 001, 003, 007, 008, 009	General Programs – PD, Scholastic Audit, Parent Ed 002, 010, 021	Miscellaneous 0013, 014, 016	Pre-K 005	Salaries Above Minimum 015	Special Education Programs and Staff 203, 206, 207, 212-215
Expenditures 2011	7.2%	55.9%	2.8%	26.0%	4.4%	0.7%	1.1%

Student Academic Support

- 004 NSLA, Before and After Academic Program
- 006 NSLA, Tutors
- 011 NSLA, Summer Programs
- 012 NSLA, Early Intervention Program

Additional Personnel

- 001 NSLA, Literacy, Math, Sci. Specialists/Coaches
- 003 NSLA, High Qualified Classroom Teachers
- 007 NSLA, Teacher's Aides
- 008 NSLA, CRT. Counselors, Lic. Social Workers, nurses
- 009 NSLA, Curriculum Specialist

General Programs -- PD and Parent Ed

- 002 NSLA, Professional Devel. Lit., Math/

- 010 NSLA, Parent Education

Miscellaneous

- 013 NSLA, School Improvement Plan
- 014 NSLA, Other activities approved by the ADE
- 016 NSLA, ACT fees for 11th graders (Taking ACT for first time per Act 881 of 2007)

Pre-K

- 005 NSLA, Pre-K

Salaries Above Minimum

- 015 NSLA, Supplementing Salaries of Classroom Teachers-Above Minimum Requirement

Scholastic Audit

- 021 NSLA, Scholastic Audit

Special Education

- 203 NSLA, SPED, High Qualified Classroom Teachers
- 206 NSLA, SP ED, Tutors
- 207 NSLA, SP ED, Teacher's Aides -- Special Education
- 212 NSLA, SP ED, Early Intervention Program
- 213 NSLA, SP ED, School Improvement Plan
- 214 NSLA, SP ED, Other activities approved by the ADE
- 215 NSLA, SP ED, Supplementing Salaries of Classroom Teachers-Above Minimum Requirement

School districts may also use NSLA funding to pay for College and Career Coaches. However, in FY 2011 financial coding to track expenditures for them was not in place. New codes are being used in the current school year (FY2012) that will provide helpful information concerning College and Career Coaches and other programs in the future.

Codes that are new for FY2012 include the following:

022 District required portion of Provision 2 meal program
023 Expenses related to funding a longer school day or school year
024 Remediation activities for college preparation
025 Teach for America professional development
026 Implementing Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science(AAIMS)
027 Hiring College and Career Coaches as administered by Department of Career Education
028 District Reduced CoPay Meals

221 NSLA, Scholastic Audit
222 District required portion of Provision 2 meal program
223 Expenses related to funding a longer school day or school year
224 Remediation activities for college preparation
225 Teach for America professional development
226 Implementing Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AAIMS)
227 Hiring College and Career Coaches as administered by Department of Career Education

NSLA fund balances for FY2010-11 statewide total $26,652,021 or 15.7 percent of that year's NSLA funding. Fifty-one districts have a fund balance between 20 percent and 50 percent and another 12 districts have balances over 50 percent. A two-month balance would be 16.7 percent.

Act 1220 of 2011 expands the permissible uses of NSLA categorical funding. It also requires school districts to spend at least 85 percent of NSLA categorical funding received and at least 80 percent of all categorical funding received. Under the act, the Department of Education may withhold from a school district the amount of categorical funding in its total categorical fund

balance that exceeds 20 percent and redistribute that funding to other school districts. The act will be in effect beginning with the 2012 school year.

DISTRICT SURVEYS, SCHOOL SURVEYS, AND SCHOOL SITE VISITS

Data from the surveys and site visits conducted by the BLR are summarized below. The table that follows shows the districts that offer both year-round and short-term tutoring program and summer academic programs. Some districts offer a variety of tutoring programs at multiple district schools. The table provides transportation, record attendance, and fee charges where applicable for the program in each district serving the largest number of students. That is followed by summary level information on all programs provided by the district. This information includes the percentage of students served by each of the three types of programs in the district and the number of students per paid teacher whether licensed or non-licensed. The number of students for the total number of paid teachers is also provided. Volunteer student support is not included.

	SIZE			NSLA STATUS			ACHIEVEMENT		
	SMALL	MED	LARGE	HIGH%	MID%	LOW%	HIGH	MID	LOW
Tutoring/Summer Programs									
% of Districts with Long Term Tutoring Programs	72.2	76	82.8	100	80.28	76.5	78.7	73.8	84.5
% of Districts with Summer Programs	19.4	58.7	83.8	66.7	67.61	61.1	70.5	57	66.2
% of Districts with Short Term Tutoring Programs	30.6	48.1	71.7	83.3	54.93	54.3	55.7	57	52.1
Transportation									
% of Districts with Long Term Tutoring Programs and Transportation	27.8	32.7	37.4	66.7	50.7	25.3	16.4	30.8	53.5
% of Districts with Summer Programs and Transportation	11.1	33.7	41.4	66.7	43.66	27.8	27.9	29	45.1
% of Districts with Short Term Tutoring Programs and Transportation	2.8	18.3	21.2	50	25.35	12.3	8.2	19.6	21.1
Attendance									
% of Districts with Long Term Programs and Attendance	52.8	70.2	76.8	100	76.06	66.7	67.2	65.4	80.3
% of Districts with Summer Programs and Attendance	22.2	59.6	83.8	66.7	69.01	61.7	72.1	56.1	69
% of Districts with Short Term Programs and Attendance	22.2	42.3	60.6	83.3	47.89	45.1	39.3	49.5	49.3
Charge Fees									
% of Districts with Long Term Tutoring Programs and Charge Students	2.8	36.5	5.1	16.7	2.82	25.3	1.6	1.9	4.2
% of Districts with Summer Programs and Charge Students	0	6.7	25.3	0	7.04	16.7	26.2	8.4	9.9
% of Districts with Short Term Tutoring Programs and Charge Students	0	1	6.1	16.7	1.41	3.1	3.3	2.8	2.8
All Structured Long Term Tutoring Programs									
On Average, % of total students served in all programs	6.2	5.9	4.3	14.1	8.7	3.4	1.9	4.9	7.9
On Average, # of students per paid licensed teachers in all programs	6.42	7.11	8.9	5.4	8.5	8.5	6.9	9.3	8.1
On Average, # of students per paid non-licensed teachers in all programs	28.07	25.07	61.9	15.8	42.8	54.3	63.8	54.3	35.5
On Average, # of students per paid licensed and non-licensed teachers in all programs	5.23	5.54	7.8	4.1	7.1	7.3	6.2	7.9	6.6
All Summer School Programs									
On Average, % of total students served in all programs	2.1	4.2	3.5	15.8	6.8	2.5	2.1	3.5	5.7
On Average, # of students per paid licensed teachers in all programs	11.59	6.04	9.7	3.3	10.3	9.4	9	10.7	7.3
On Average, # of students per paid non-licensed teachers in all programs	33.6	22.13	58.5	8.4	44.1	84	65.1	80.5	27.4
On Average, # of students per paid licensed and non-licensed teachers in all programs	8.62	4.75	8.4	2.4	8.3	8.5	10.2	9.4	5.8
All Test Preparation Short Term Tutoring Programs									
On Average, % of total students served in all programs	2.9	2	2.2	3.4	1.9	2.3	2.2	2.6	1.7
On Average, # of students per paid licensed teachers in all programs	5.7	6.69	12.3	2.3	8.4	12.3	12.3	11.3	7.2
On Average, # of students per paid non-licensed teachers in all programs	152	24.59	149.6	4.1	67.7	213.4	425.1	132.3	26.4
On Average, # of students per paid licensed and non-licensed teachers in all programs	5.49	5.26	11.4	1.5	7.5	11.6	12	10.4	5.7

School Survey

The BLR surveyed 74 sample schools about their tutoring programs. The schools were grouped into elementary, middle and high schools. The elementary schools reported 17.1% of their students participate in tutoring. Middle schools and high schools responded that 15.3 percent and 11.1 percent respectively of their students participate. Elementary and middle schools reported that the majority of their tutoring efforts were scheduled for selected students and were largely focused on teaching learning skills. High schools indicated that their tutoring programs primarily serve students who show up and the programs are designed to function as an extension of classroom lessons. At all schools, the tutoring was primarily accomplished by paying the school's own teaching staff to tutor. Almost all schools responded that they charged no fees for tutoring, and more than half of the schools said that they did not provide transportation for tutoring programs. Approximately half of the schools indicated that tutoring is not required, and about half said that tutoring programs were required at least sometimes.

School Site Visits

In on-site interviews, schools were asked to describe strategies that have been the most effective in increasing student achievement. Because the interview format permitted open-ended responses, principals (and in some cases superintendents) were not limited or directed in their responses. Most schools are actively employing a variety of programs in efforts to meet diverse needs of their populations and to shore up needs for additional and improved resources, including human resources. In many cases, these school improvement strategies and additional resources are financed through NSLA and Title I funds. The chart below shows the number of schools referencing each key theme identified in the analysis. There were multiple answers for each school.

Strategy Groups	Examples	# of Schools
Contracted Services	JBHM, E2E	5
Curriculum/Teaching	Double Block, Small Class Sizes, Cognitively Guided Instruction, Response To Intervention, Curriculum Alignment, Cross Curriculum	35
Student Support	Behavior Programs, Incentives, Interventionists, Parent Involvement	23
Teacher Support	PD, Professional Learning Communities, Instructional Facilitators, Para-Professionals, Co-Teaching, Teacher Evaluation	35
Technology/Software	I-Pads, Literacy Labs, Accelerated Reader, Smart Boards	22
Testing/Data	The Learning Institute, Data To Identify Student Needs	34
Tutoring	In-School Remediation/Intervention, After-School, Summer Programs	37

Principals were also asked to name some strategies that were not as effective. The question was designed to provide insight on individual strategies as well as to determine whether schools are evaluating, in some manner, the various education strategies adopted and are being discriminating in their choice of programs for improving achievement in their schools. After reflecting for some period of time, about half of the principals were able to identify some strategy that had not been effective. The responses for unsuccessful strategies were varied and included references to particular reading programs, after-school and summer learning programs, use of technology, and specific software programs. There were no clear indications that school leaders

had conducted any structured evaluations of the programs that they implemented. Reasons for discontinuing programs, when cited, referenced teacher input, competing funding needs, and the school leader's professional judgment.

ACHIEVEMENT RESEARCH

Arkansas ranks fifth in the nation for poverty among children under 18, according to the 2010 census. The number of children in poverty grew by almost 24,000 from 2005 to 2010. That is about the size of the state's largest school district, Little Rock. The 2010 rate of children in poverty in Arkansas is more than 1 in 4 or 27.6 percent. The rate among all Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states is lower at 25.6 percent. Among the SREB states, Mississippi ranks highest in child poverty (32.5 percent) with Alabama (27.7 percent) and Arkansas (27.6 percent) following in second and third. (SREB 2012 Fact Book Bulletin) The federal poverty rate is approximately $20,000 for a family of four, while the free and reduced lunch eligibility level is 185 percent of the federal poverty level or approximately $37,000 for a family of four (http://www.schoolfundingfairness.org/).

Concentrated poverty is a concern among educators (http://www.schoolfundingfairness.org/). In a ranking based on the U.S. Census standard for child poverty, Arkansas serves students in 52 districts (consisting of 16 percent of the state's total enrollment) with child poverty rates above 30 percent. As noted previously, child poverty rates reflect students with family incomes much lower than students eligible for free and reduced price lunches. Arkansas ranks 6th, tied with Texas, in the number of students served in districts with high concentrations of poverty. Mississippi ranks first with 33 percent, and Louisiana ranks second with 22 percent.

According to a study by Donald J. Hernandez completed for the Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Children who have lived in poverty and are not reading proficiently in third grade are about three times more likely to dropout or fail to graduate from high school than those who have never been poor." If you add living in a high-poverty neighborhood to the equation, more than a third of students with all three risk factors fail to finish high school. The report further states that even among proficient readers, less than five percent of good readers who have lived in affluent or middle-class neighborhoods do not graduate, compared to 14 percent of those from high-poverty communities

(http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/Publications.aspx?pubguid={8E2B6F93-75C6-4AA6-8C6E-CE88945980A9}

In his book "Class and Schools," Rothstein states that,

> "There is no clearly defined "tipping point" where student achievement plummets once a school's poverty concentration passes that point. A school's average student achievement appears to decline almost linearly as the school's percentage of children receiving subsidized lunches increases. But around the point where subsidized lunch eligibility exceeds 40 percent, the decline in average student achievement becomes slightly more precipitous. (Rothstein, 2004)"

The lowest level of NSLA funding is available to every Arkansas school district. But, increased NSLA funding for at-risk students in Arkansas is only available at 70 percent of school lunch program eligibility or more.

In its report on the Impact of National School Lunch Categorical Funding on Closing the Achievement Gap submitted in May, 2012, ADE notes that

> Section (ii)(c) [of Act 1369 of 2009], required the Department to expand the analysis of student achievement data evaluated in student achievement growth models, to include the evaluation of the best estimates of classroom, school, and school district effects on narrowing the achievement gap, in addition to the examination of student progress based on established value-added longitudinal calculations.

> While it is difficult, if not impossible, to correlate a single factor, such as the amount of NSLA funding a district receives, to an increase or decrease in student performance, ADE requested that each district include in its 2011-2012 ACSIP a method for evaluating NSLA expenditures for the school year. Districts will not be able to complete the evaluation of 2011-2012 NSLA expenditures in comparison to the achievement gap until the 2012 test scores are received. ADE will continue to work with districts to evaluate the effectiveness of NSLA funds on closing the achievement gap.

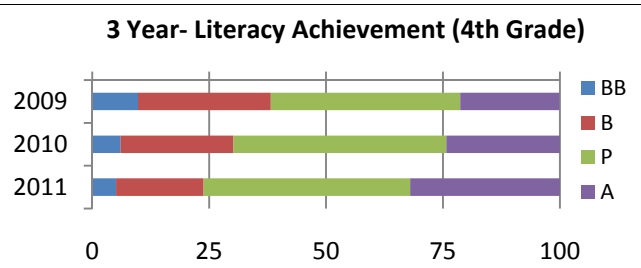
ADE also attached to the report three year trends, by district, in literacy and math for the combined student population, as well as the African American, Hispanic, White, Economically Disadvantaged, English Learners, and Students with Disabilities subpopulations. The report was also submitted in 2011 with wording that is substantially the same.

The Arkansas FY2011 benchmark achievement levels for the Economically Disadvantaged subpopulation are shown for Grade 4, Grade 8, and Literacy (11th grade). The column on the right shows the progress over three years.

FY2011 Literacy and Math Benchmark for the Economic Disadvantaged Subgroup

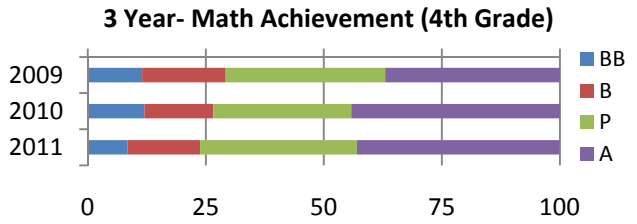
4th Grade Literacy

	Below	Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	9.8	28.4	40.5	21.2	22,033
2010	6.1	24.1	45.5	24.3	22,893
2011	5.1	18.7	44.2	32	23,474



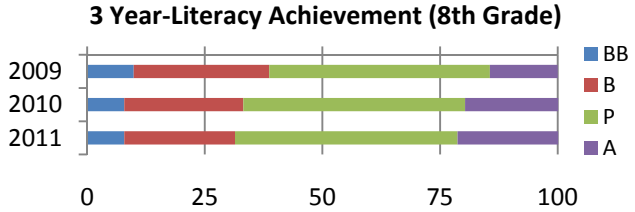
4th Grade Math

	Below	Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	11.5	17.7	33.8	37	22,043
2010	12	14.6	29.2	44.3	22,901
2011	8.4	15.4	33.2	42.9	23,485



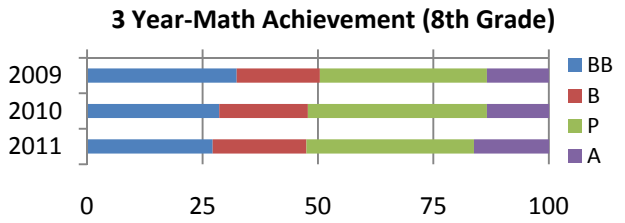
8th Grade Literacy

	Below	Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	9.9	28.8	46.9	14.4	19,231
2010	7.9	25.3	47.1	19.8	20,207
2011	7.9	23.5	47.3	21.4	20,798



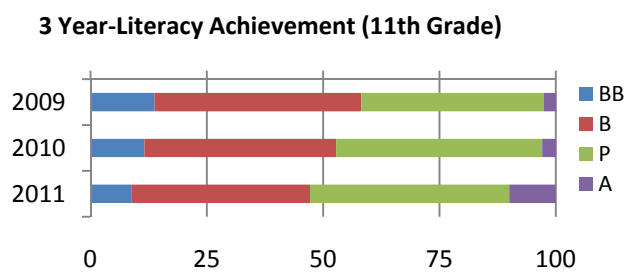
8th Grade Math

	Below	Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	32.4	18	36.2	13.4	19,234
2010	28.6	19.2	38.8	13.5	20,213
2011	27.2	20.3	36.3	16.3	20,799



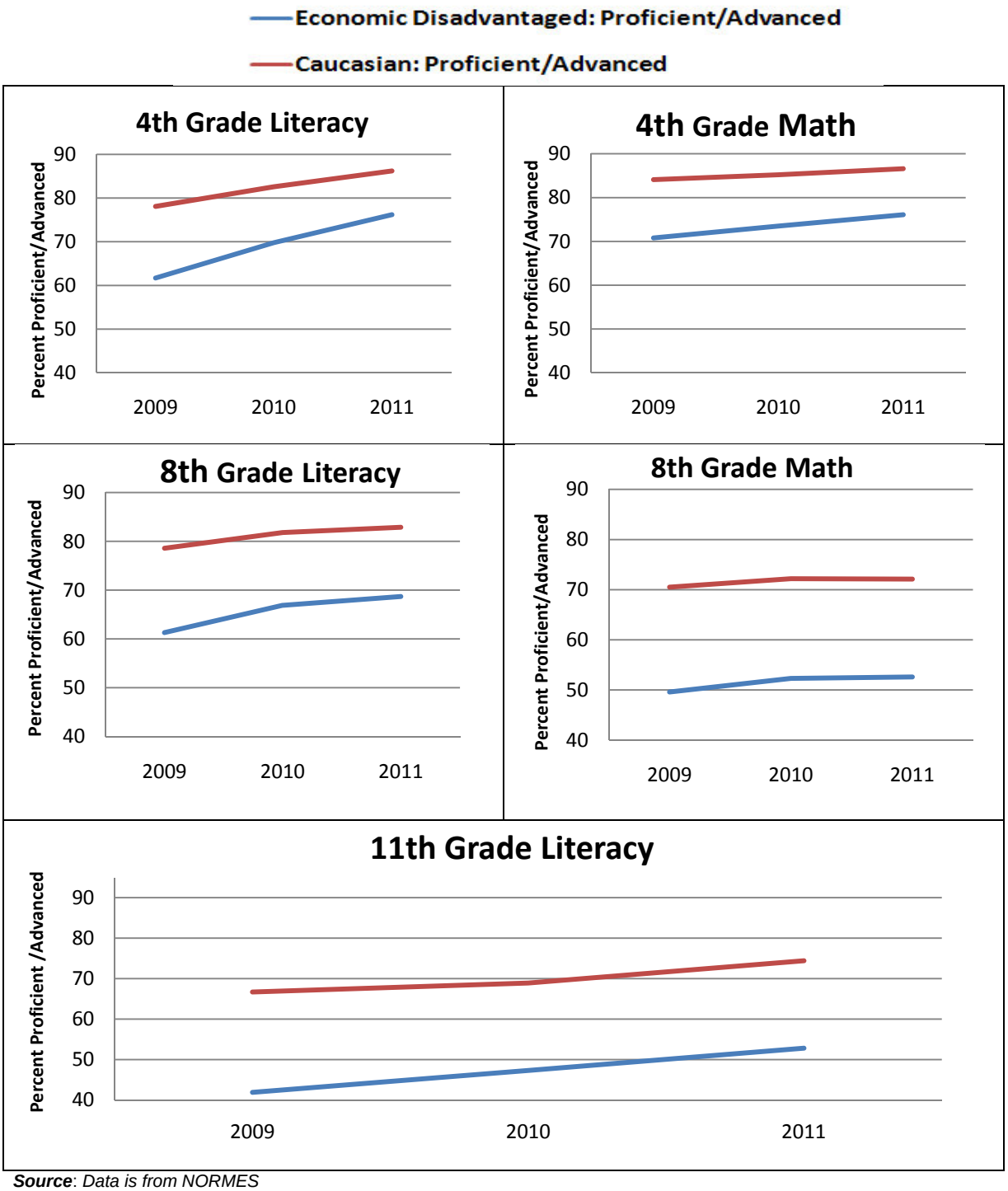
11th Grade Literacy

	Below	Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	13.8	44.4	39.2	2.7	14,321
2010	11.6	41.2	44.3	3	15,052
2011	8.9	38.3	42.8	10	15,693



Achievement Gap

Typically achievement gap studies use National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) normative testing data to compare subpopulations. For a different perspective and because the subpopulations of interest are all within the state, this table compares the achievement progress for the Economically Disadvantaged subpopulation and the Caucasian subpopulation on Arkansas benchmark exams for the past three years in Grade 4, Grade 8, and Literacy (11th grade).



Source: *Data is from NORMES*

The gaps are widest in the 11th grade and narrowest in the 4th grade. The gap has narrowed on all measures. However the most significant decrease in the gap is in fourth grade literacy. The gains are weaker in the 8th and 11th grades.

AR Benchmark Achievement Gap	Gap in 09	Gap in 11	Width of the Gap
4th grade literacy	16.4%	10.0%	-6.4%
4th grade math	13.3%	10.5%	-2.8%
8th grade literacy	17.3%	14.2%	-3.1%
8th grade math	20.9%	19.5%	-1.4%
11th grade literacy	24.8%	21.6%	-3.2%

HISTORY

Much of the research on improving student achievement points to the benefits of providing additional learning time for individuals or small groups. NSLA funding was the mechanism originally conceived of by Picus and Associates to provide those types of opportunities with tutors, extended day, and summer programs.

The 2006 adequacy report, "Recalibrating the Arkansas School Funding Structure" by Odden, Picus and Goetz, emphasized the importance of tutoring for at-risk students. The report states, "The most powerful and effective strategy to help struggling students meet state standards is individual one-to-one tutoring provided by licensed teachers." (Odden et al., 2006). The report built an extensive case for this statement. The report proposed additional funding, but its recommendation was based on the idea that all NSLA funding would be used only for tutoring, additional English Language Learners programs, extended-day programs, and summer programs other than credit recovery programs. The report also recommended that if such programs were implemented:

> The state should monitor over time the use and effect of such programs. If such programs are implemented, we also recommend the state require districts to track the students participating in the programs, their pre- and post-program test scores, and the specific nature of the after school and summer school programs provided, to develop a knowledge base about which after-school program structures have the most impact on student learning (Odden et al., 2006).

The recommendation to monitor the effect of the programs has not yet been implemented at the state level. Other than anecdotal statements, little is known about the effectiveness of such efforts in Arkansas.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are additional sources of state and federal funds that are targeted to school districts for purposes similar to the intended uses of NSLA funding. Using other sources of funding for programs for at-risk students lessens the need for increased NSLA funding.

Sixteen school districts received approximately $2.1 million for the high priority teacher recruitment and retention funding program in FY 2011. The program is funded with the state Public School Fund. This explanation of the program is provided by the Division of Legislative Audit.

> As authorized by ACA §6-17-811, these grants provided teacher bonuses as incentives for recruitment and retention in high-priority districts. A high-priority district was one having at least 80 percent free lunches and 1,000 or fewer students. "Teachers" were defined as those working directly with students 70 percent of their time in a classroom

setting, including guidance counselors and librarians. For all newly signed teachers to high-priority districts, a one-time signing bonus of $5,000 was paid at the completion of a full year of teaching and a $4,000 retention bonus was paid at the end of each of the next two subsequent years if the teacher continued teaching in the same high-priority district. A newly signed teacher was also eligible for a $3,000 retention bonus, which was paid at the end of the fourth, and each subsequent year, if the teacher continued teaching in the same high-priority district or another high-priority district. For all teachers not newly signed to work in the district, a $3,000 retention bonus was paid at the end of each year if the teacher continued to work in a high-priority district (Legislative Audit, 2011.)

Title I is the largest source of federal funds to local school districts to improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged students. It is part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Title I eligibility is determined by census poverty levels rather than free and reduced priced lunch criteria. Every district in Arkansas received some level of federal funding. See the report entitled, "Department of Education Grants Summarized by the Division of Legislative Audit for the Year ended June 30, 2011" for additional information on the types and amounts of federal funding received by school districts.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 provided significant new funding to schools in FY2011. ARRA programs targeted to disadvantaged students resulted in FY2011 expenditures as follow:

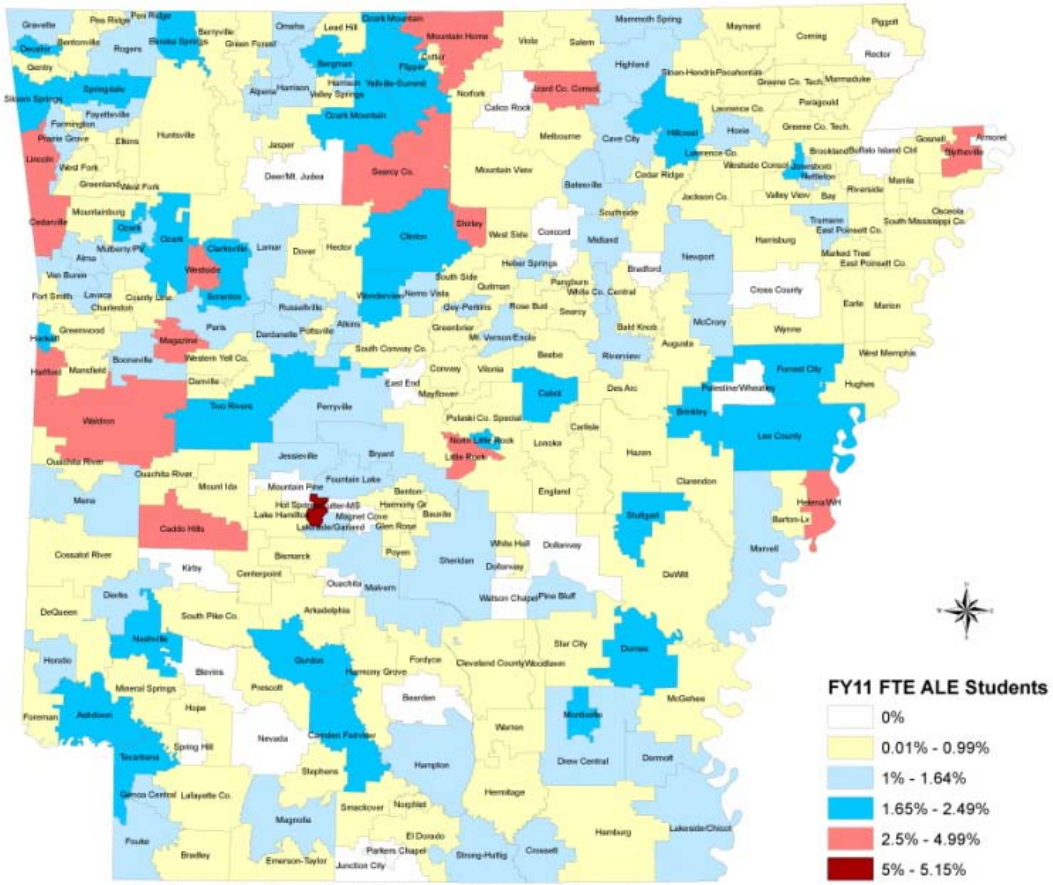
Program	2011 Funding
ARRA- Education for Homeless Children and Youth	$187,422
ARRA-School Improvement Grants	$4,845,197
ARRA-Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies	$37,447,883

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

An ALE is a student intervention program in compliance with Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-48-101 et seq. These programs seek to eliminate traditional barriers to student learning. According to ADE, the majority of Alternative Learning Environments (ALEs) are an extension of the traditional school opportunities. Most do not have the financial stability or number of students that allow for a "full school" of alternative education. Most of the ALEs that have a separate LEA number are full-school environments with 50-500 students or conversion charters.

ALE STUDENT POPULATION DENSITY

The map that follows shows a wide variety in the percentages of students assigned to ALE programs with an area north and west of the line from Caddo Hills to Izard County generally having higher percentages of ALE students.



Map Prepared by the Bureau of Legislative Research, Policy Analysis & Research Section
School District Boundaries from the Arkansas Geographical Informational Office

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Alternative learning environment programs are funded based on the number of full-time equivalent students in the program in the previous year. In FY2010-11, a student in an alternative learning environment must have been in the program for at least twenty (20) days for

the district to be eligible for funding. Legislation passed in 2011, repeals A.C.A. §6-18-508 and §6-18-509 concerning alternative learning environments and creates a new subchapter of the Arkansas Code, §6-48-101 et seq. The new law redefines ADE responsibilities, including: (1) funding of alternative learning environment students; (2) developing criteria for professional development and training for alternative learning environment teachers; and (3) developing rules for measuring the effectiveness of alternative learning environments. The new provisions went into effect July 1, 2011. Prior to this legislation a student had to participate in an ALE program for a total of 20 days for a district to count that student for ALE funding. Now students must be educated in an ALE for a minimum of 20 consecutive days.

ADE states that its ALE unit evaluates the effectiveness of programs through visits with individual districts on-site. The ALE unit provides technical assistance, rather than a more structured and documented monitoring process. ALE staff "observe" a district's program implementation compared to the district program description that has been approved by the ADE. Compliance, strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions are made according to the rules. The ALE unit visits programs throughout the year. The ALE Unit checks individual student plans, curriculum materials, resources, counseling services, special education services, positive established programs, physical culture, and climate of programs. The ALE Unit provides professional development, technical assistance, and support to build positive intervention programs in all non-traditional alternative education programs.

The requirement for ADE to monitor each school district at least once every three years existed under the former legislation. That mandate would seem to indicate that at least one-third of the districts (approximately 80) were monitored each year. However when documentation was requested for visits at the 11 ALE schools that serve ALE students only, little documentation was available and the remarks recorded did not appear to be the result of a systematic evaluation process with the exception of one documented visit in SY2012. The scant documentation dating back to 2008 addressed four programs in SY2008, none in SY2009, one in SY2010, one in SY2011, and one in SY2012. The reports are provided as Appendix A. ADE staff stated that many visits were made but there was no documentation because these were regarded as technical assistance visits rather than monitoring visits.

The first report produced by ADE under the 2011 legislation in May 2012 did not include information on the effectiveness of ALE programs. ADE indicated that subsequent reports will include the required information from school districts and their evaluations. The information is being collected using a new electronic format for the program approval form and an improved program assessment instrument (Appendix B and C). The program assessment instrument is designed to be a self assessment, but one page of the document will be used for ALE staff evaluations.

DISTRICT CATEGORICAL FUNDING USE

In FY2010-11, ALE per-student funding received no increase, remaining at $4,063. In FY2010-11 every ALE FTE student generated $6,023 in foundation funding in addition to the ALE funding for a total of $10,086 per student. When using the ALE student headcount, more than 75 percent of these students also qualified for NSLA funding which would result in $10,582, $11,078, or $11,574 per student depending on the district's NSLA eligibility percentage. District expenditures for ALE in FY2010-11 totaled $33,541,601 for 5,382 FTE ALE students or $6,232 per FTE student. Twenty-seven districts were not funded in 2010-11 because they had no ALE students in 2009-10. Districts may avoid providing ALE services by not designating students as meeting the minimum criteria established through rules by ADE for such services.

> 6-48-102. Alternative learning environment required — Reporting.
> Statute text
> (a)(1) A school district shall provide one (1) or more alternative learning environments for all students who meet the minimum criteria established by the Department of Education.
> (2) A school district complies with this section if the school district provides an alternative learning environment by one (1) or more of the following methods:
> (A) Establishes and operates an alternative learning environment;
> (B) Cooperates with one (1) or more other school districts to establish and operate an alternative learning environment; or
> (C) Uses an alternative learning environment operated by an education service cooperative established under The Education Service Cooperative Act of 1985, § 6-13-1001 et seq.

There is no investigation by ADE to determine whether districts not providing these services are adequately meeting the needs of all their students. One district leader reported that students that might be considered ALE in other districts were mainstreamed in his district. The requirement to provide an alternative learning environment hinges on an individual district's application of "all students who meet the minimum criteria established by the Department of Education."

Another financial concern is whether districts are using all the financial resources generated by a student for academic programs for that student. In the only ALE program evaluation documented for ALE schools in SY2012, ADE notes that,

> #5 Felder Middle School Learning Academy is an intricate part of the Little Rock School District. A realistic budget is necessary to provide for professional development training, materials, and equipment necessary to the educators and students.… The campus appears to be a fully run independent campus, however appears to be operating on a ghost budget. The alternative education funding is provided IN ADDITION to Foundational Funds. At this time, every student easily generates more than $10,000 per FTE. There are many additional funds that should be attached to this school to include: Title funds, 6B-Special Education funds, Safe and Drug Free funds, Tobacco Settlement funding, Technology funds, professional development, NSLA, etc.

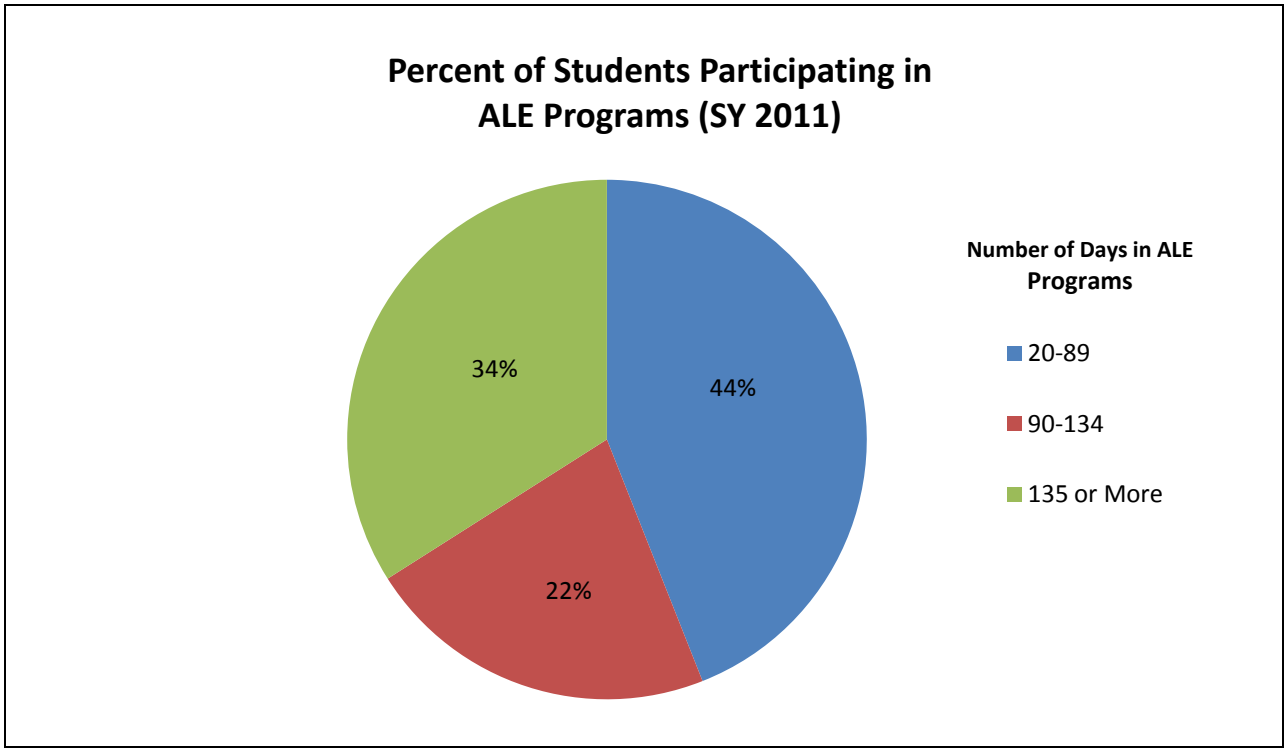
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FROM ADE

The majority of districts (184 of 212) that provide ALE programs for their students designate less than two percent of their students as ALE. However, six districts designate more than three percent. The district with the largest percentage of students designated as ALE has 5.2 percent. While the Department of Education's ALE staff use three percent as a recommended cap, there is no law, regulation, or standard of accreditation that establishes a cap.

Percentage of ALE Students FY 11	
ALE Percentage of All Students	**Number of Districts**
5.2%	1
3% - 4.9%	5
2% - 2.9%	22
1% - 1.9%	74
0.1% - 0.9%	110
0%	27

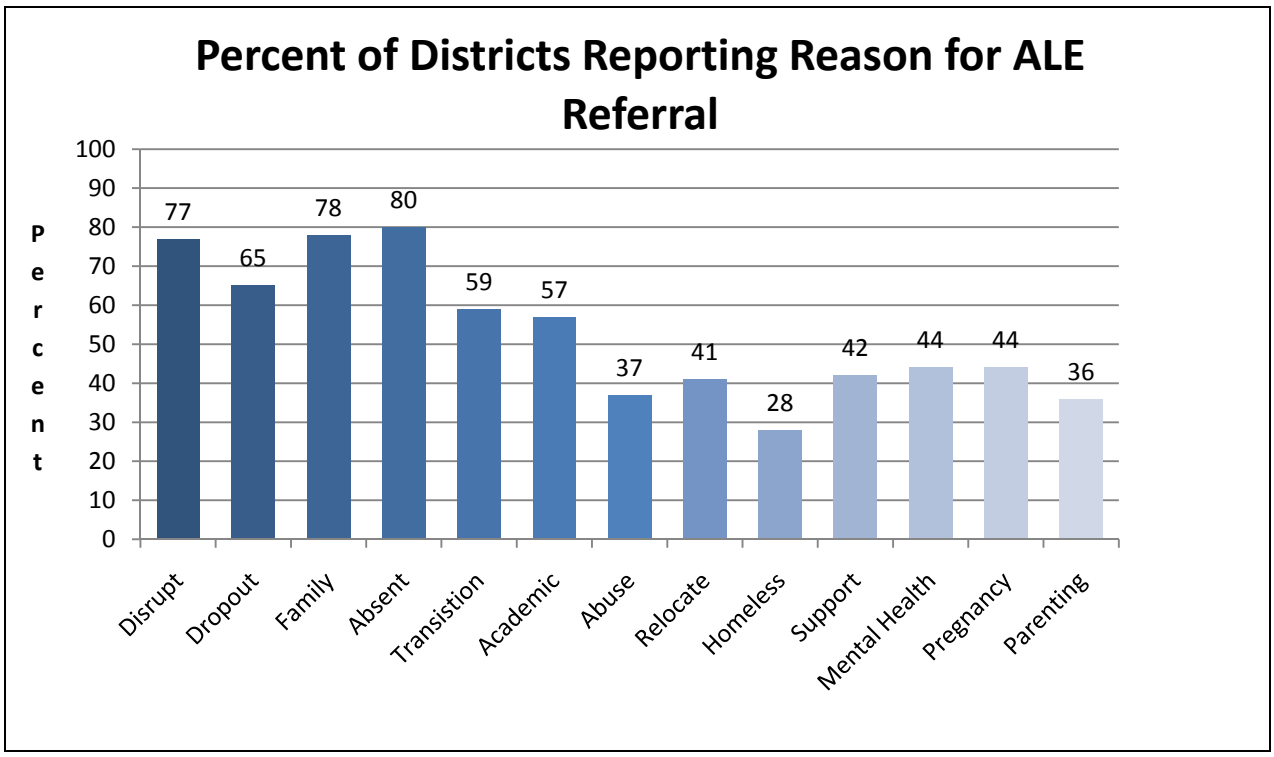
Source: *FY11 ALE count and 3 Quarter ADM from the FY12 STAIDDATA report by ADE*

According to data collected by the state's ALE staff, the ALE population is 47.9 percent minority students and 66.7 percent male students. This can be compared with the overall student population that is 35 percent minority students and 51.2 percent male students as reported in the ADE Data Center for SY2011. ADE also reported on the length of time students typically stay in the program.



DISTRICT SURVEYS AND SITE VISITS

The chart below shows what percentage of districts reported each problem as a reason for referral to their ALE program. The categories shown in Chart 1 are those authorized in the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Distribution of Student Special Needs Funding (http://arkansased.org/programs/ale.html).



Site Visits

Below are summaries of site visits to ALE programs. Data were also collected using phone and email interviews.

Program 1. An alternative learning center (only ALE students) in southwest Arkansas serves approximately 50 students in grades 7 – 12 from four nearby school districts. The new principal indicated that about 50 percent of the students are court-ordered, and many have ankle bracelets for monitoring. She also stated that the program currently has at least two bipolar and three schizophrenic students, and the majority of students have serious personality disorders. Several students are on medications for various psychological disorders. She noted that the school is in serious need of at least one full-time counselor and a full-time nurse. Presently, they have half-time counselor, who is inundated with testing and administrative duties, and no assigned nurse. There is a district nurse who is supposed to be there one day a week, but this visit often does not happen. The program works with two psychotherapists from the community mental health center, but there is an even greater need for psychological treatment. The school has a serious need for hygiene and health classes.

The principal indicated that there are teachers who are highly motivated to work with their students, but they are seriously handicapped by high turnover in English teachers, serious lack of technology of all kinds, and a need for at least a half-day special education teacher. At this time, she suggested they are basically surviving as a program, rather than meeting the present needs. In addition, the facilities are very old and "run down," and halls were dark and in need of repair and painting. Classes and offices were badly cluttered and had old and broken chairs and desks.

Program 2. An alternative learning academy in central Arkansas serves 300 students in grades 9 – 12 from various schools throughout the area. Students are assigned and may request admission to this alternative learning program. Entering this school is very reminiscent of entering a juvenile detention facility, with an armed guard and metal detectors, and long dark hallways needing paint and repairs to doors and sparse furniture. The central office looks like a school that had been closed, then reopened without any repairs or restoration, with old dingy furnishings. The new principal indicated that he had one full-time counselor and a 0.75 FTE nurse, while the need for these services far outstripped these resources. Often their nurse is called away to another school due to district shortages, and even one nurse cannot handle the chronic problems present, the medication schedule, and the number of pregnant girls in the program. Drug use and gang activity are issues at this school, and the school has incidents of crime and violence on campus. There is a police presence on campus most of the time. Several students have serious emotional and personality problems and are receiving treatment from mental health professionals. There is a serious shortage of math and special education teachers at the school and in the district. The principal says he has problems with teacher morale and absenteeism, with about 5 of the teachers being chronically absent. He states that they are struggling to teach students because of serious resource shortages, lack of teacher motivation, and complete lack of parental involvement.

Program 3. At another central Arkansas school, where the ALE program is housed in a traditional school, we did not interview ALE teachers or administrators, but we were told by teachers at that school that the district had isolated all ALE students from the district in a class at that school. It was their perception that ALE students were completely isolated from other students at the school, and had too few resources to operate an ALE program effectively. Interestingly, the academic coaches and counselor did not seem to have any interaction with the ALE program, despite being housed in the same facility. In fact, the ALE program was located in an isolated area, with several empty classrooms between them and other student classrooms.

Program 4. In a northwest Arkansas district, the alternative learning class for P-2 students is housed at one elementary school, instead of each school having its own. That district does not have an ALE program for grades 3-5. The school district thought it would be better to intervene early in the students' development process. This is the stage when students need to develop reading skills, and getting behind may mean a student will never reach grade-level academic performance.

There is a referral process to the ALE program for this school district. It is for kids with behavior problems who aren't responding to other interventions. This program provides reduced class size; work on social skills; and other key factors that affect the students. Once teachers see improvement in students' performance they return to the classroom. The school leader reported that it is taking longer than they expected with many students. Many of these students have high needs as a result of emotional problems, but they are able to learn when debilitating problems are addressed. A teacher and an aide work in the classroom with a maximum of 12 kids--eight at the time of our visit. A social worker works with the ALE program on a daily basis.

Program 5. An ALE school in central Arkansas (outside Pulaski County) serves ALE students through two programs on separate sides of the same building. One program uses a traditional ALE format. The other program, known as the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) provides virtual instruction for students who opt to go that route. Some home-schooled students also participate in the virtual instruction program.

The school uses APEX its primary curriculum provider for the virtual program. It also uses the Arkansas Virtual High School as a curriculum provider. ACE students can choose to attend classes on the traditional campus in addition to the virtual instruction. Often students select this option for electives such as band, etc.

Both ACE and the traditional ALE staff follow traditional school hours from 7:50 a.m. to 3:40 p.m. Monday through Friday. Using virtual instruction with staff who are physically present could be considered a hybrid approach.

The district reports that the ACE program has definitely filled a need in its community. Last year ACE seniors accounted for about 10 percent of the district's graduating class. Both programs serve grades 7-12. A separate program serves students in grades K-8, most of whom have specific behavioral and emotional needs.

Students choose (self-select) by applying to attend the ACE program. Typically, most who apply to ACE are accepted. Sometimes students apply and then, after participating in the required parent/student orientation, decide that this may not be the best placement for them, but this is not the case very often.

According to the district, over 95 percent of ACE students meet the special needs outlined in 4.01.1 of the ALE rules. This high percentage is most likely due to the fact that ACE is promoted as a non-punative alternative high school option for students attending the district's high.

ACE's population typically attracts students who are not successful in a traditional classroom or feel that they would be more successful in this type of learning environment for a variety of reasons. It's evident from the high percentage of students that qualify for the funding, that ACE highly encourages those who are at-risk in some way of failing in the regular school environment to enroll in the alternative program.

Program 6. A small northwest Arkansas community has approximately 1,800 residents with a racial makeup of about 92 percent white, 3 percent Native American, .06 percent Asian and 3 percent from other races. Approximately 12 percent of households are headed by single females, and the district reports an NSLA rate of 75 percent. According to data from the U. S. Census, the estimated median household income in 2009 was $32,709.

According to the district's superintendent, the alternative learning program in the district is a conversion charter school, where the district is given the flexibility to use innovative methods and scheduling to address the diverse individualized needs of students who do not function well in traditional classroom settings. The program enables students in grades 8-12, who may not excel in the typical classroom, or who may need more flexible scheduling, to work at an individualized pace on curriculum specifically designed for their needs and abilities. Both programs offer credit recovery opportunities. Staff work to ensure that students recognize and make wise choices, stay in school, and earn diplomas.

The ALE program originated in an education cooperative, but was relocated to the district about 2 years ago due to concerns including long bus rides, costs, high dropout and expulsion rates, limited capacity of about 12-14 students, and a variety of other unspecified problems. A major motivation underlying the creation of the district's program was the low graduation rate of about 70 percent in the district. Currently, the ALE program has 28 students; however, enrollment has varied from 25 to 36 students. The ALE program primarily has grades 8 - 12, although it has a

few 7th graders. A major goal of ALE is to provide individualized educational experiences and counseling services that prepare students to reenter the regular classroom.

In regard to duration in the ALE program, it is not uncommon for students to remain in that program for 2 years. The superintendent explained that is rare for students to remain in ALE for all 4 years of high school, but some do not transfer out because they are "high needs" students who are able to succeed only in the ALE program. There is no mandated or standard period of time for students to remain in ALE in this district.

The superintendent stressed that the intent of the program is to get students in their freshman year, and to work intensely with them to help them transition back to traditional high school. In this transitioning process, some students attend traditional classes while remaining in the ALE classes, a process that the district refers to as "supervised high school." These latter students' ALE teacher and a "sponsor teacher" monitors their behavioral and academic progress. The high school sponsor is the teacher, principal, or counselor who referred the student to ALE. Each student in ALE has a written intervention plan, including learning expectations. A primary focus of this ALE program is bringing 8th graders up to grade-level reading, and ameliorating familial/mental health problems before they enter high school with all of its demands. Intervention includes before- and after- school tutoring, and collaborative professional services from local social agencies, which are funded by a 21st Century Community grant. The superintendent rated their tutoring as excellent because of high pay, and it consists of both homework assistance and extension of classroom teaching, including skill development. Another major asset in the success of the ALE program, according to the superintendent, is the heavy use of technology. In addition to the use of smart-boards and document cameras in the classroom, each student has a computer. The superintendent believes that the use of prepared software packages for reading and learning math has accelerated performance levels of students in ALE. He indicated that having teachers who are comfortable using a variety of technology is essential to the progress he has noted in the ALE program.

ACHIEVEMENT RESEARCH

While some type of alternative learning program exists in almost every state, most of these programs are reported at the state level in a very limited fashion, if at all. Little research exists addressing the effectiveness of these programs primarily because of the variety in the structure of programs and of the students who attend them. In their 2006 report, Quinn and Poirier noted the basic lack of an undisputed definition for alternative education. The goals for individual alternative education students vary widely, making it difficult to identify in a wide scale study whether achievement is improved with the programs.

Additionally, testing procedures affect the availability of data for ALE students. The achievement for students in ALE programs is not tracked separately from the general student population, i.e., there is no established ALE subpopulation in AYP measures.

According to NCLB, the scores for ALE students must be included in the AYP determination for the school of record. The NCLB Accountability Workbook states that,

> Students whose continuous enrollment may be disrupted due to disciplinary action such as short-term expulsion or assignment to an alternative school site for a prescribed period of time will be tested and those scores will be used in the AYP determination for the school of record.

This requirement is diluted somewhat by the definition of a mobile student from the Accountability Workbook

> For the purpose of identifying students to participate in AYP decisions at the school level, a “full academic year” means that a student has been in continuous enrollment at a school from October 1 of the school year through and including the initial date of testing.

Using the state's data information system, each school is required to establish enrollment information of each student enrolled as of October 1 of each school year. Student mobility – drops and adds to the enrollment – is tracked in that schools enter dates of enrollment and drops for each student. The SEA will establish a required enrollment date for which schools will confirm student enrollment and from which ORME [NORMES] can validate that a student meets the continuous enrollment criteria.

Students who were enrolled in one school in a district on or before October 1 of a school year and transfer to another school within the same district will not be counted toward either school's AYP calculations, but will be included in the LEA calculations.

Students who move from one district in the State to another district in the State and are not in any school continuously between October 1 and the test week will not be counted toward the AYP determination for either (any) of the district(s) attended. However, those students will be tracked by ORME and their progress monitored at the SEA level.

Arkansas ALE Student Performance

According to ADE staff, there are 450 ALE programs in the state. In SY2011 there were 11 ALE-only schools with separate Local Education Agency (LEA) numbers. Most of those separate ALE programs are conversion charter schools.

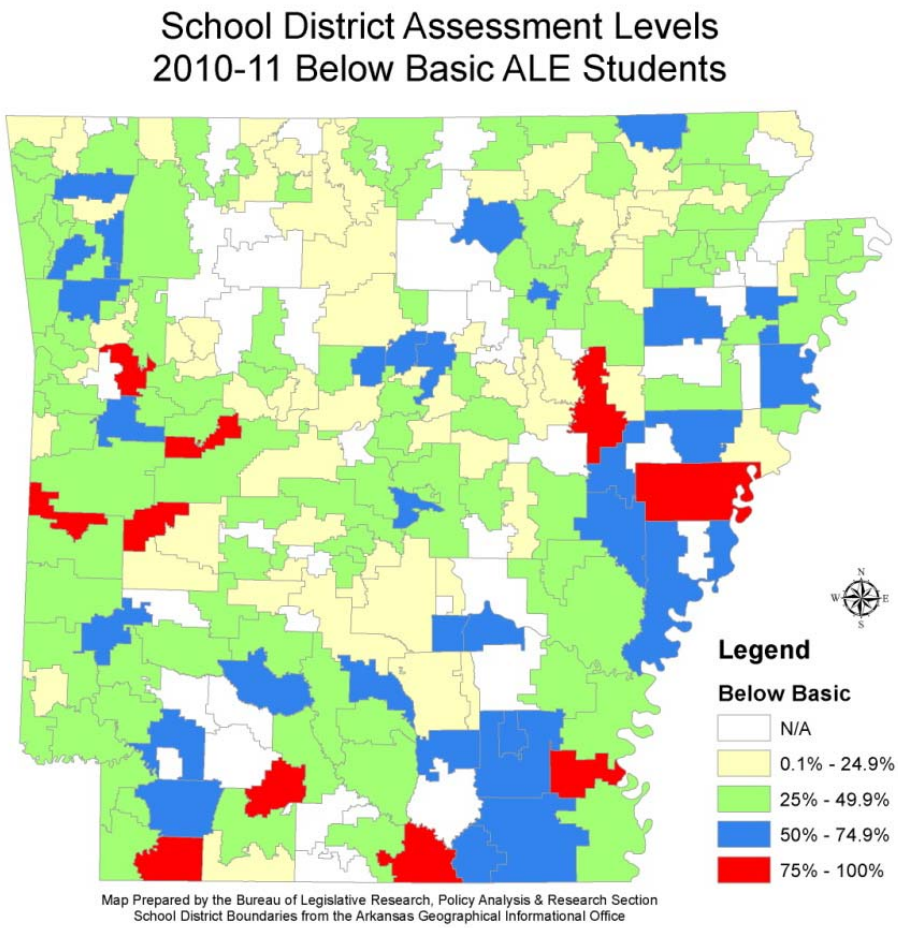
The academic performance of students who have been assigned for 20 or more days to an ALE program is abysmal. The SY 2011 scores in the table below are for students in the 11 separate ALE schools. There are a couple of exceptions to the bleak performance of these students. Those are highlighted in yellow. Achievement data for all students in ALE programs housed in either a separate school or within a traditional school follows in a separate table. Only about 27 percent of these students are proficient or advanced and nearly half of the remaining students are below basic.

AYP Status and Percent Proficient and Advanced for ALE Schools in Every Tested Grade

LEA	District	School	Final Smart Account-ability AYP	Overall AYP	Literature Combined Pop.	Math Combined Pop.
2603013	Hot Springs SD	Summit School	WSI-5-R	SI_5	17.6	23.7
2903013	Hope SD	Garland Learning Academy	All Mobile	All Mobile		
4304016	Cabot SD	Cabot Learning(IALE) Academy	A	A	0	66.7
4304703	Cabot SD	Academic Center For Excellence	WSI-1	SI_1	73.6	82.1
4702703	Blytheville SD	Blytheville Charter School & ALC	WSI-2	SI_2	16.7	7.7
6001068	Little Rock SD	Accelerated Learning Program	WSI-2	SI_2	12.5	Na
6001070	Little Rock SD	W.D. Hamilton Learning Academy	WSI-1	SI_1	0	8.3
6001703	Little Rock SD	Felder Alternative Academy	WSI-2	SI_2	0	7.1
6601005	Fort Smith SD	Belle Point Alternative Center	WSI-3-Ca	SI_3	16.7	20
7205703	Lincoln SD	Lincoln Academic Center of Exc	A	A	64.2	62.5
7207067	Springdale SD	Springdale Alternative School	WSI-2	SI_2	0	14.7
7302703	Beebe SD	Badger Academy	WSI-2	SI_2	28.6	0
Statewide All Students					**74.4%**	**76.3%**

Source: *NORMES*

The following map and two tables show the performance of ALE students across the state in any ALE setting. The data are provided by ADE.



Assessment Levels for ALE Students by Grade - School Year 2010-2011				
Grade Level	**Number of ALE Students Statewide**	**Percent Proficient and Advanced**	**Percent Basic**	**Percent Below Basic**
1	129	0.0	100.0	0.0
2	159	40.4	34.0	25.5
3	234	44.6	31.1	24.3
4	247	42.5	34.4	23.0
5	308	26.8	41.6	31.6
6	396	28.3	33.2	38.5
7	716	19.0	36.5	44.5
8	948	30.6	31.9	37.5
9	2018	26.9	36.3	36.7
10	2127	23.7	38.9	37.4
11	1709	23.5	53.5	23.0
12	1929	29.7	42.6	27.7
Total Grades 1-12	**10920**	**26.8**	**38.4**	**34.8**

Statewide Assessment Levels for ALE Students - School Year 2010-2011				
Number of Days in ALE Program	**Number of ALE Students Statewide**	**Percent Proficient or Advanced**	**Percent Basic**	**Percent Below Basic**
Greater Than 20 and Less Than 90 Days	4867	29.0	36.6	34.3
Greater Than 89 and Less than 135 Days	2387	25.9	37.3	36.8
135 or More Days	3821	25.1	40.6	34.3
Statewide ALE Totals	**11075**	**26.8**	**38.4**	**34.8**

HISTORY

In 2006 Picus and Associates (Picus, 2006) recommended a new staffing ratio as a basis for ALE funding that would cover all certified and classified staff in the school – administrators, teachers, specialists, tutors, extended day, summer school, pupil support and secretaries.

> The state needs to decide just what the new staffing ratio should be given the change in how students are counted [The state switched from headcount to FTE]. The state should continue to provide all current dollars for such programs, and will probably need to provide increased funds. But we were not provided sufficient detail to develop the new funding staffing ratio ourselves. The state also should consider limiting the pupil size of ALE schools to ensure that all schools that are funded via the ALE formula are indeed special schools for students with multiple social, emotional and behavioral issues. In that process, the state also should create program requirements and standards for ALE programs that meet the intent of this funding provision. ALE programs, as originally recommended, are NOT just alternative ways to provide instruction for students; they are intended to be small, personalized programs for students most of whom have multiple behavioral and emotional programs as well as drug and/or alcohol problems and have intermittent school attendance, and are typically no larger than 20-40 students. The legislature also would be wise to provide additional resources to the Department of Education so it can monitor these programs to insure appropriate program focus and quality.

That assessment was followed by this recommendation of the Adequacy Subcommittee in 2006.

> Nevertheless, the subcommittee finds that based on recommendations from the Department of Education, the categorical funding should be calculated on one (1) teacher per twelve (12) students, instead of the current student teacher ratio of 15:1, which is an effective funding increase of twenty-five percent (25%), (Education Committees, 2006).

The 2006 report also noted these concerns related to ADE staff for ALE programs:

> The subcommittee also received testimony from the Department of Education concerning the need for additional personnel to administer the department's alternative learning environment program. The department reported that the one (1) Program Advisor and her secretary were the only personnel available to monitor alternative learning environments statewide and provide needed resources to those programs. Due to the level of support these programs need from the Department of Education, the importance of the alternative learning environments to the learning needs of the students in those programs, and the need to provide guidance for using best practices statewide, the subcommittee recommends that four (4) positions be authorized for the Department of Education's alternative learning environment program.
>
> The subcommittee requested that the Department of Education follow up by December 12, 2006, with a report on the utilization of the program personnel and the future needs for the program. The department's report presented to the committees indicates that it has hired three (3) new consultants to work until the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. The department's proposal for 2007-2009 requests that four (4) new positions be created, which will provide one (1) regional

education consultant for each of four regions covering the entire state. The department's proposal for the cost of these four (4) positions is $400,000 for 2007-2008 school year, and $384,000 for the 2008-2009 school year, the difference consisting of additional costs in the first year for one-time administrative costs.

The Education Committees recommended that those positions be created and funded as proposed by the department.

According to BLR fiscal staff, two positions were added in the 2007 session for the Alternative Learning Environment Program as a result of the adoption by the Joint Budget Committee of a Governor's Letter. At that time ADE employed one ALE program-level staff and one ALE administrative assistant. The positions that were added to SB262 (which became Act 1420 of 2007) were two Grade 21 Public School Program Advisors. There was also additional appropriation for salaries, matching, operating expenses and conference fees and travel authorized for these positions, although the amounts for each line item were not specifically enumerated just for the ALE positions in the Governor's letter.

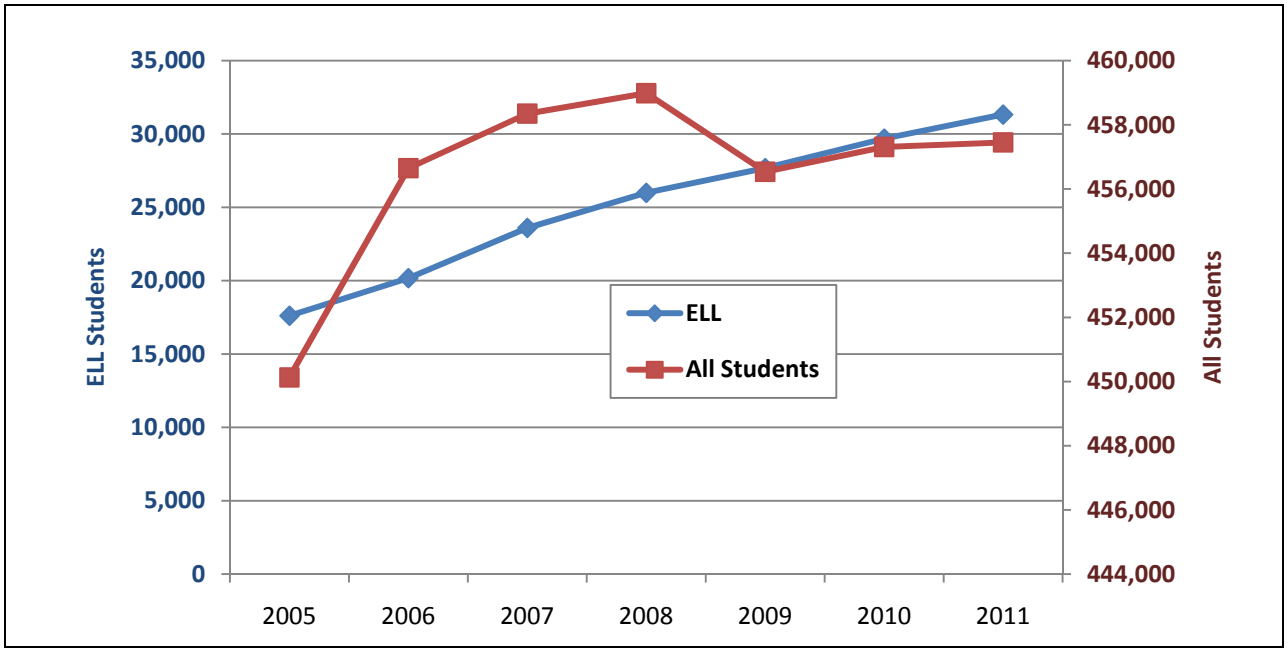
During the 2010 budget hearings, in response to a question from a legislator, ADE indicated that their ALE staff consisted of two program level individuals, with the capacity for a third. ADE now reports that a third position has been filled as of June, 2012.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2011 and 2012, members of the House and Senate Education Committees as well as members of the Senate Children and Youth Committee and the House Children and Youth Subcommittee conducted an interim study of the education provided to youth committed to the Division of Youth Services (Interim Study Proposals 2011-169 and 2011-170). The study also included the public school system's role in youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, and one focus was students' experience with ALE programs. In its final report, the study group noted that students placed in alternative learning programs spend multiple years there without a plan to work back into regular classrooms. The group recommended that districts develop transition plans for students moving from alternative school programs to regular classrooms. The study group also recommended that districts reevaluate policies that prohibit youth placed in alternative schools from participating in extra-curricular activities. Such activities, the group argued, can engage these students and keep them out of trouble. Finally, the group recommended that districts work more closely with the juvenile justice system to help prevent ALE students from entering the system and, for those students who do enter the system, to ensure a smooth transition back to school.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English Language Learners (ELL) funding is the Arkansas categorical funding program that supports students who are not proficient in English. These students face the challenge of learning a new language in addition to the challenge of mastering academic subject matter being taught in that language. In FY2010-11 there were 31,325 ELL students. Data retrieved from ADE's STAIDDATA reports indicate the growth in ELL enrollment has increased by 78 percent since 2005. The chart below reflects ELL growth in comparison with overall student growth from 2005 to 2011. The blue axis on the left is for ELL number and the red axis on the right is for all students.

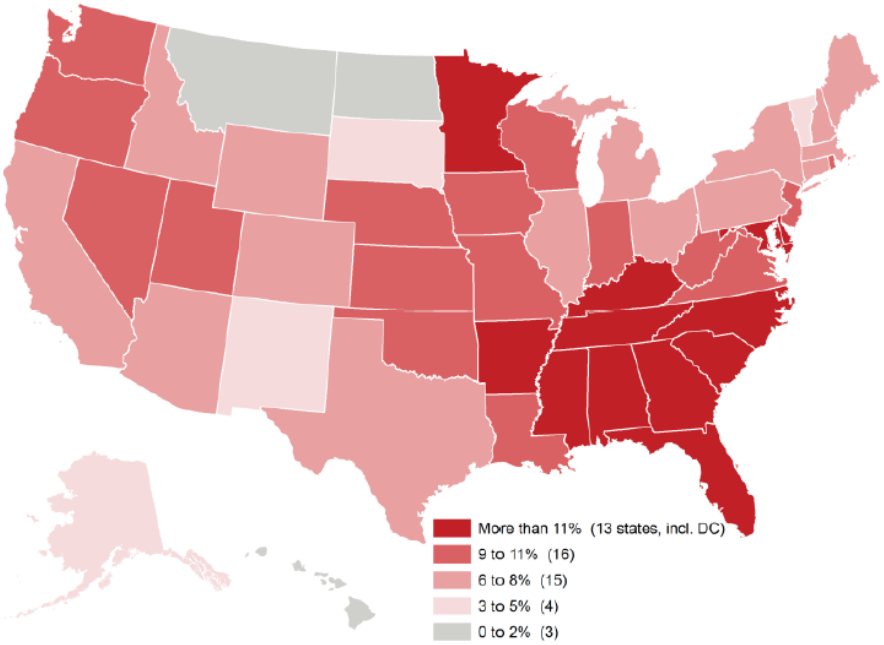


Year	ELL	All Students	%ELL
2005	17,612	450,129	3.9%
2006	20,173	456,649	4.4%
2007	23,599	458,349	5.1%
2008	25,992	458,986	5.7%
2009	27,675	456,538	6.1%
2010	29,682	457,310	6.5%
2011	31,325	457,452	6.8%

Arkansas's Hispanic population grew 114.2 percent between 2000 and 2010 but at that point comprised only 6.4 percent of the state's population, according to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). http://www.sreb.org/page/1349/data_library_population__demographics.html. The Hispanic population percentage increase in Arkansas was the 5th highest among the 16 SREB states. By comparison, South Carolina's Hispanic population increased 147.9 percent, while Texas' Hispanic population increased 41.8 percent for the same time period.

According to Education Week, 23 percent of children nationwide are Latino. As seen in the following chart, fewer than 10 percent were born in another country. But southeastern states, including Arkansas, have a relatively large concentration of non-native young Latinos.

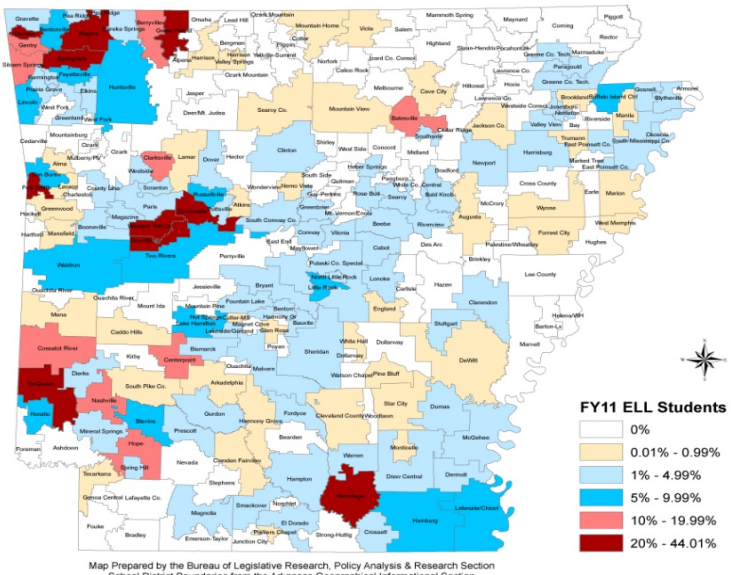
Percent of Young Latino Population Born Outside U.S.



Source: As first appeared in *Education Week,* Diplomas Count 2012, Arkansas State Graduation Brief. June 7, 2012. Reprinted with permission from Editorial Projects in Education.

ELL STUDENT POPULATION DENSITY FOR EACH DISTRICT

Fifty seven percent (17,876) of the 31,325 ELL students in the state are served by four school districts—Springdale (7,960), Rogers (4,672), Fort Smith (3,289), and Little Rock (1,955).



District-level data for ELL students are provided in the following tables:

Number of ELL Students FY 11	
# of ELL Students	**# of Districts**
1,000 or more	4
500 - 1,000	5
100 - 500	32
1 - 100	103
0	95

Percentage of ELL Students FY 11	
ELL Percentage of All Students	**# of Districts**
20% - 42.5%	10
10% - 19.9%	11
5% - 9.9%	15
1% - 4.9%	73
0.1% - 0.9%	35
0%	95

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

There are extensive state and federal requirements for ELL programs. This report highlights a few key program requirements.

State Requirements

As defined in A.C.A. §6-20-2303 “English-language learners” means students identified by the state board as not proficient in the English language based upon approved English proficiency assessments. The language tests are administered annually in the fall of the current school year and measure oral, reading, and writing proficiency.

Unlike categorical funding for NSLA and ALE, ELL funding is based on the number of ELL students in the current school year. Districts must submit to ADE documentation they will use to calculate the number of identified ELL students no later than November 30 of each school year. The identification must be based on tests approved by ADE.

To be designated as an ELL, a student must meet these two criteria:

- Student is identified as an ELL at the time of enrollment by a Home Language Survey, which is filled out by parents or guardians;
- Student is placed in an English as a second language, or ESL, program using a screener or placement test that has indicated that the student is not fully fluent in English.

The following activities are listed as eligible uses of ELL funding:

- Salaries for ELL instruction;
- Professional development activities;
- Instructional materials including technology;

- Counseling services, community liaison staff with language and cultural skills appropriate to the ELL population; and
- Assessment activities.

ADE has frameworks established for English Language Proficiency classes. Two examples of these frameworks are:

- English Language Proficiency Framework and English Language Arts Connections for Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing and Mathematics Connections; and
- English Language Proficiency Framework Connections for Biology.

Despite the development of these frameworks, Arkansas has no full ESL Certification for teacher licensure. Instead, Arkansas has an ELL endorsement.

Another requirement that affects the instruction of ELL students is state law requiring English to be the official language of instruction. The text is provided below:

> **A.C.A. § 6-16-104. Basic language of instruction**
>
> The basic language of instruction in the public school branches in all the schools of the state, public and private, shall be the English language only.
>
> It shall be the duty of the Commissioner of Education, the Director of the Department of Workforce Education, and city superintendents to see that the provisions of this section are carried out.
>
> Any person violating the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a violation and upon conviction shall be fined not to exceed twenty-five dollars ($25.00), payable into the general school fund of the county.
>
> Each day this violation occurs shall be considered a separate offense.

While students are instructed only in English, an acceptable use of ELL funding is to provide interpreters to assist parents and students in understanding information and directions from school personnel.

Federal Requirements

There are several federal requirements related to the state's participation in Title III funding. Title III is a federal education grant program. Part A of that program is known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act. Forty Arkansas districts had enough ELL students to meet a $10,000 funding threshold required by the Act to participate in this federal program totaling $1.95 million in FY2011 (Legislative Audit, 2012).

The state is required to establish Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), which are achievement targets used by the state to evaluate the effectiveness of the 40 Title III English language programs. Objectives or targets are based on English language proficiency standards and relate to ELL students' development and attainment of English language proficiency. Arkansas's AMAO Targets for FY2010-11, according to the ADE website, are shown below with the percentage of districts that met the target:

Title III AMAO Targets for ELL Students

School Year	AMAO 1 Percent of English Language Learners Making Progress by Moving from One Composite Level to a Higher Level on the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA)	AMAO 2 Percent of English Language Learners Fully Proficient in English with a Composite Score of 5 on the English Language Development Assessment (ELDA)	AMAO 3 AYP for the LEP Subgroup in Literacy and Mathematics at Each Grade Span Required for Federal Reporting
2010-11	Target 28% State Average 34.75% 37 of 40 districts (92%) met the target	Target 3.5% State Average 7.1% 36 of 40 districts (90%) met the target	Multiple targets. See the Achievement Research section below.

In 2011, the state as a whole did not make the statewide AMAO target of 80 percent of districts reaching the goal in all three areas. Most districts are meeting the first two AMAO goals but failing to meet the AYP targets. This means the ELL students are learning English but not performing as well in the content areas. It is important to note that only the 40 districts participating in the Title III program are evaluated in this manner.

The requirements for testing to determine a student's progress and release from ELL programming have impact for federal education compliance, federal civil rights compliance, state funding, and state benchmark testing as well. The following is an excerpt from Commissioner's Memo LS-07-035 dated September 6, 2006.

> On August 14, 2006, the Arkansas Board of Education approved new minimum criteria for exiting and reclassifying limited English proficient (LEP) students enrolled in English as a second language (ESL) programs in Arkansas schools.
>
> These criteria are required elements of Language Assessment and Placement (LPAC) LEP student documentation forms and parental notification forms of placement and assessment of English language learners (ELLs) enrolled in ESL programs.
>
> Documentation is required on all LEP students during enrollment in an ESL program and for two years after a student is exited from an ESL program. Each student's progress shall be reviewed and documented on a yearly basis, or more frequently as needed, by the school's LPAC.
>
> Districts are required to monitor and to assist ELLs for two years after exiting the ESL program, according the federal law under Title III of No Child Left Behind.
>
> Exited students' English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) test scores may be banked and included in a school's spring ELPA test score report for a maximum of two years.

Finally, a federal policy related to ELL students, prohibits school officials from asking about their citizenship. The United States Department of Education has adopted this policy in compliance with the Civil Rights Act.

DISTRICT CATEGORICAL FUNDING USE

In FY2010-11, ELL expenditures totaled $13 million in 132 districts, or $415 per ELL student. The categorical funding level was $293 per ELL student for FY2010-11. For the 90 percent of ELL students who also are eligible for free and reduced priced lunch (28,339), schools will receive $6,812, $7,308, or $7,804 depending on the concentration of students in poverty.

The ELL fund balance for districts averages $69.75 per ELL student, or about 23.8 percent of the $293 per student funding. Like other categorical programs, ELL funding may be carried forward from one year to the next and can be transferred to other categorical programs. The use of ELL funding is restricted to categorical programs only. In FY 2010-11 nearly $4 million of NSLA categorical funds were transferred to ELL programs.

ACHIEVEMENT RESEARCH

With 57 percent (17,876) of the 31,325 ELL students in the state served by four school districts—Springdale, Rogers, Fort Smith, and Little Rock, it is important to consider how the LEP subpopulation performed in those districts.

District	Literacy Percent Proficient or Advanced 2011 LEP	Math Percent Proficient or Advanced 2011 LEP
Fort Smith	57.2%	62.9%
Little Rock	55.1%	64.5%
Rogers	72.5%	74.1%
Springdale	61.2%	63.0%

***Source**: NORMES*

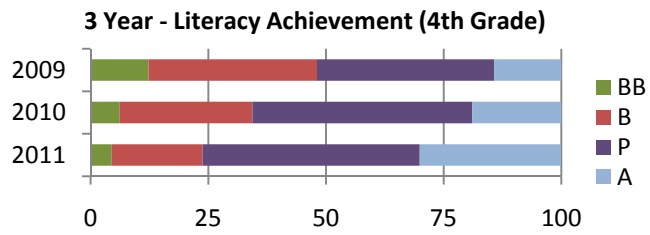
Smaller districts that serve comparatively large populations of ELL students perform about as well. DeQueen leads the group with 77 percent proficient or advanced in literacy and 80.7 percent proficient or advanced in Math for SY2011. DeQueen had 2,495 total students and 915 (37 percent) ELL students.

Statewide the performance of the LEP subgroup is shown in the following tables for Grade 4, Grade 8, and the End of Course Literacy (Grade 11) exam.

FY 2011 Literacy and Math Benchmark Results For the LEP Subgroup

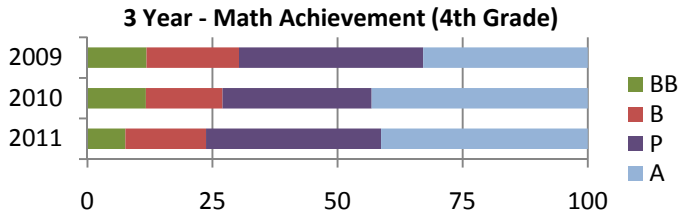
4th Grade Literacy

	Below Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	12.3	35.8	37.6	14.3	2514
2010	6.2	28.2	46.7	18.9	2709
2011	4.5	19.3	46.1	30	2815



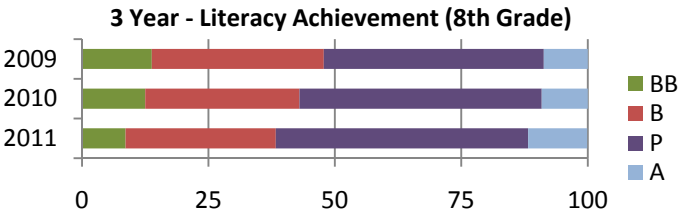
4th Grade Math

	Below Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	11.8	18.5	36.8	32.9	2529
2010	11.7	15.3	29.8	43.2	2724
2011	7.6	16.1	35	41.3	2829



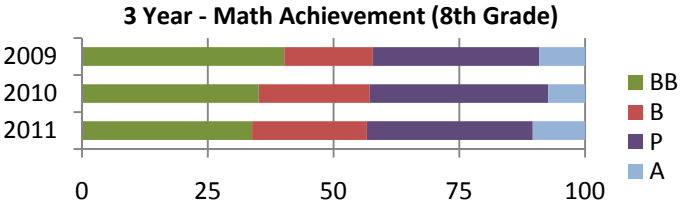
8th Grade Literacy

	Below Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	13.8	34	43.5	8.7	1592
2010	12.5	30.5	47.9	9.1	1738
2011	8.6	29.7	49.9	11.7	1816



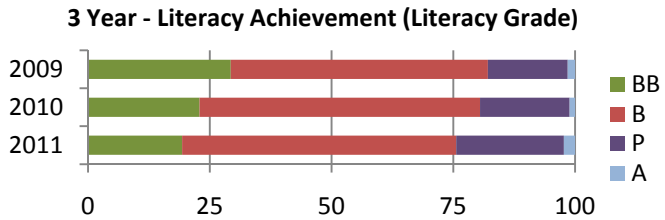
8th Grade Math

	Below Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	40.2	17.6	33.1	9.1	1599
2010	35.1	22.1	35.5	7.3	1745
2011	33.8	22.8	33	10.4	1818



11th Grade Literacy

	Below Basic	Proficient	Adv.	Students
2009	29.3	52.8	16.4	1.5	961
2010	22.9	57.6	18.4	1.1	1045
2011	19.3	56.3	22.1	2.3	1169



Research at the state level on the status of LEP students is found in the results of the Home Language Survey administered by the Arkansas Department of Education.

2011-2012 HOME LANGUAGE SURVEY

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	04 To 11
Total # of enrolled K-12 students in all districts (Enrollment as of Oct. 1st school year)	452,000	455,515	463,922	465,615	466,391	465,801	467,061	468,066		3.55%
										05 To 12
1. Total # language minority students		27,045	30,734	34,205	36,450	38,143	40,081	42,137	43,749	61.76%
2.Total # of K-5 language minority students		15,073	16,922	18,902	19,942	20,807	21,654	22,540	23,287	54.49%
3.Total # of 6-12 language minority students		11,972	13,812	15,303	16,508	17,336	18,427	19,597	20,462	70.92%
4.Total # of students identified as LEP		17,629	20,181	23,600	26,003	27,715	29,751	31,401	32,780	85.94%
5.Total # of K-5 LEP students		11,464	13,011	15,080	16,561	17,481	18,448	18,987	19,561	70.63%
6.Total # of 6-12 LEP students		6,165	7,170	8,520	9,442	10,234	11,303	12,414	13,219	114.42%
7.Total # of LEP students enrolled in instructional programs specifically designed to meet their educational needs.		17,194	19,430	22,914	25,279	27,166	28,831	30,381	31,701	84.37%
8.Total # of LEP students NOT enrolled in instructional programs specifically designed to meet their educational needs.		420	623	778	549	703	924	1,476	1,885	348.81%
9. Number of LEP students who dropped out during previous school year.		181	201	245	339	177	177	276	270	49.17%
10. # of LEP students referred to special education during previous school year.		378	382	392	351	381	454	581	386	2.12%
11. # of LEP students placed in special education during previous school year.		266	322	318	297	375	404	486	291	9.40%
12. # of LEP students participating in Title I programs		11,709	12,986	16,551	16,438	18,065	20,812	21,327	22,445	91.69%
13. # of students participating in Migrant programs		3,511	3,318	2,211	1,754	1,626	1,482	1,426	1,488	-57.62%
14 # of LEP students identified & placed in Gifted &Talented GT		189	189	236	284	492	559	553	620	228.04%

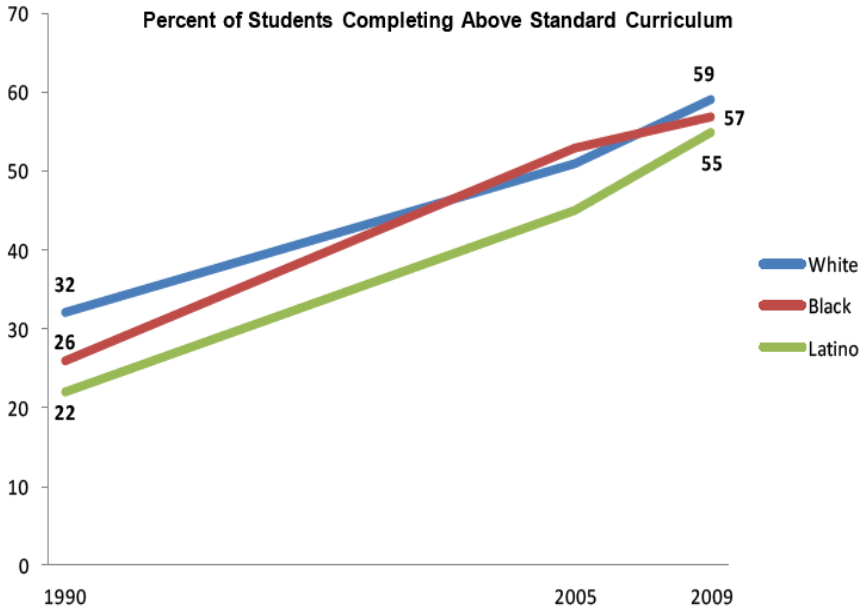
		% Difference 2009-10 to 2011-12
15. Number of LEP students (Grades 1 - 6) retained during the previous school year for 2009-10	268	
16. # of LEP students (Grades 1 - 6) retained during the previous school year for 2010-11	380	
17. # of LEP students (Grades 1 - 6) retained during the previous school year for 2011-12	317	18.28%
18. # of LEP students (Grades 7 - 12) retained during the previous school year for 2009-10	285	
19. # of LEP students (Grades 7 - 12) retained during the previous school year for 2010-11	191	
20. # of LEP students (Grades 7 - 12) retained during the previous school year for 2011-12	319	11.93%

Source: Arkansas Department of Education

National Research

The results of the NAEP High School Transcript study indicate that despite gains since 1990, fewer black and Latino students take courses described as midlevel or rigorous than whites.

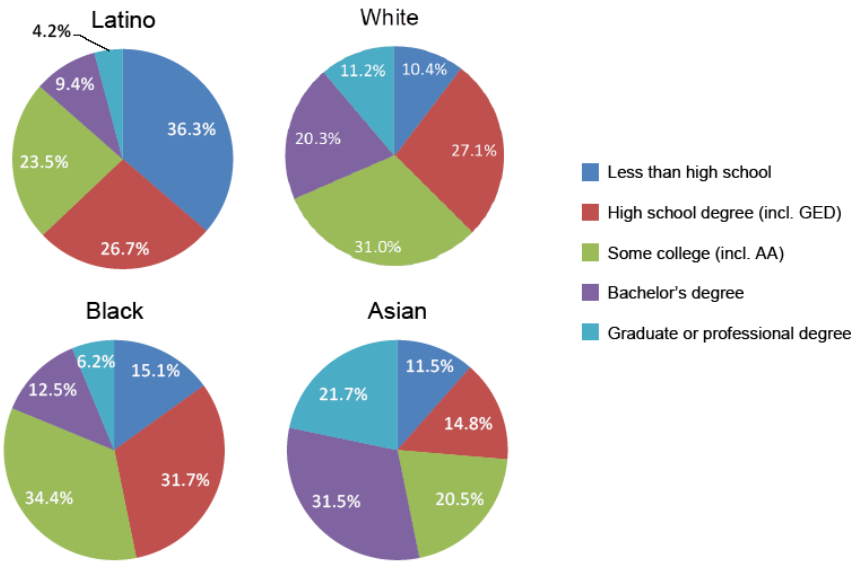
Rigorous Curriculum



Source: *EPE (Education Week), 2012*

The following charts, also provided by EPE, indicate the education attainment level for adults—ages 25-64. More than one third of Latinos have less than a high school degree.

Educational Attainment



Source*: EPE, 2012*

HISTORY

The 2006 Picus report stated that, "As most ELL students are also included in the NSL counts, which trigger tutoring, extended day and summer school resources … all of these resources would be available for low-income ELL students as well. Our recent work with other states and school districts that offer services to ELL student populations led to a recommendation in a recent adequacy study of 1.0 FTE position per 100 ELL students." As a result, a 50 percent increase in the amount of ELL funding was provided in 2008.

The Picus report's assumption about most ELL students being included in the NSLA counts was correct. Ninety percent of the ELL population in FY2011 was also NSLA according to ADE.

The Picus report recommended that districts be encouraged "to use federal Title I resources for extra strategies not funded with state dollars."

CONCLUSIONS

Significant gaps remain between the achievement of the Caucasian student subpopulation and subpopulations for low-income, ELL and ALE students. Categorical funding is not accomplishing improved academic achievement to the degree needed. Possible reasons for this failure include:

- Districts don't spend the categorical funding in a way that is most beneficial.
- All funding generated by a student may not be following the student.
- Districts accumulate fund balances at the expense of needed programs.
- Programs, particularly ALE programs, are not uniformly administered across the state.

There are examples of excellent programs and others that should be completely overhauled. Some districts are able to reach achievement goals with existing funds. Observations from case studies and anecdotal information indicates that these districts generally have top quality innovative administrations that won't accept poor performance by staff or students.

Improvements to NSLA and ALE policy that may result from laws passed in 2011 were not in effect for FY2011.

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APPENDIX A

ALE School Visits

[Redacted]

School #1 - 1/11/08 - Met with [Redacted] (central office) discussed ALE set up & plans for high school next year. Currently only have ALE for 5th-8th grade. Met briefly with [Redacted] who is principal. [Redacted] is the only ALE teacher and she has an aide with her. Building is an old rock structure separate from the main building. Not sure about the instruction method but it did not appear to be direct instruction. Students were seated in cubicles against back wall. Little if any technology was visible. Will need to revisit.

School #2- 1/11/08 – Talked with [Redacted] about program. He had question about work force readiness grant which he said he did not have any real information on. Buildings were fairly new steel structures in good shape. There was a computer lab and library. Computers were new addition this year. Mental health services are big component of program. Instruction is direct. Will need to revisit so I can see teacher and student interactions since I got there right before they dismissed for the day.

School #3- 1/11/08 – Two sites ALE & ACE met first with [Redacted] (Fed. Programs) and then with [Redacted] (Director of ALE). ALE curriculum is through MESA with ACE site being more of a credit recovery with some direct instruction. Both sites had nice facilities. Mental health services are provided. ACE program had moved into old bank building and was still getting set up.

School #4- 1/17/08 – Met and talked to [Redacted] Director of the Academy. Lots of technology and direct instruction by teachers who rotate from main campus. Mental health services are provided by community provider. Why try and ART are both being implemented. The ART sounds like it could use some help.

An ALE Program Evaluation Forms ADE

Arkansas Department of Education
Alternative Learning Environment
Reporting Form

Date of Visit: 09/29/09

Reason for Visit: ☐Training ☒Compliance ☒Advisement
Other:

District/School Information
District [Redacted]
District Address [Redacted]
District Phone Number [Redacted]
District Superintendent [Redacted]

School [Redacted]
School Address [Redacted]
School Phone Number [Redacted]
School Principal/Director/Coordinator [Redacted]

Statement of Noncompliance/Areas in Need of Improvement
#1 SPED students numbers too high in the [redacted]
#2
#3
#4
Additional:

Persons spoken to
#1 [Redacted]
#2
#3
#4
Additional:

Summary of Report
Visited New ACE program Facility and found it to be a great improvement compared to previous location.Climate was inviting and conducive to learning. Tour of facility with Director [redacted] answered questions regarding various components that are looked for in ALE.
Visit to [redacted] was enlighting. It is located in building that did house the ACE-ALE Component. Though the asthetic environment was good for learning. The program was not what we had agreed upon when we met to discuss the creation of the program.

Recommendations

[redacted] SPED student numbers need to be lowered. ALE is not a daytreatment. ALE is a intervention for students who do not fall under the protection of SPED or 504. Though SPED students can attend ALE they should not be overrepresented compared to the districts SPED population.

Attachments: ☐**Yes (# pages _____)** ☒**No**

Report by: [Redacted]

Position: ALE Advisor

Date: 09/29/10

Signature: _____

Arkansas Department of Education
Alternative Learning Environment
Reporting Form

Date of Visit: 10/28/10

Reason for Visit: ☐Training ☒Compliance ☒Advisement
Other:

District/School Information

District School #2
District Address
District Phone Number
District Superintendent
School [Redacted]
School Address
School Phone Number
School Principal/Director/Coordinator [Redacted]

Statement of Noncompliance/Areas in Need of Improvement

#1
#2
#3
#4
Additional:

Persons spoken to

#1 [Redacted]
#2
#3
#4
Additional:

Summary of Report

Toured ALE with [redacted]

Recommendations

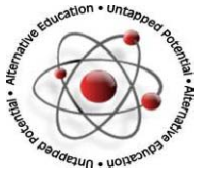
Attachments: ☐**Yes (# pages ____)** ☒**No**

Report by: [Redacted]

Position: ALE Advisor

Date: 10/28/10

Signature: _____



Arkansas Department of Education
Alternative Learning Environment
Reporting Form

Date of Visit: Tuesday, March 27, 2012

Reason for Visit: ☐Training ☒Compliance ☐Advisement
Other:

District/School Information
District [Redacted]
District Address
District Phone Number
District Superintendent
School [Redacted]
School Address [Redacted]
School Phone Number [Redacted]
School Principal/Director/Coordinator The Principal

Statement of Noncompliance/Areas in Need of Improvement
#1 PBIS Development The point system should be a highly visible and rewarded opportunity that clearly notes positive progression. The red level could be "Ready to Make Positive Decisions to Benefit Myself and Others", The green could be "Going in the Right Direction" and the blue level should be the most desired "Leadership Level", the leadership will demonstrate the positive transition expectations prior to returning to the traditional campus. The clothing signaled that uniforms are implemented, you could allow the leadership level to dress appropriately as a signal to others that those students are making good decisions, are attending school, getting their homework completed and progressing towards a positive transition and potential departure. The student culture will become that of self governing leadership instead of strict rules enforcement. Students will take pride in their accomplishments.

#2 The air quality in the newly created classrooms is significantly different than the temperature throughout the school, it may be appropriate to add water coolers in those rooms.

#3 The need for additional laptops appeared to be an important factor in helping the students remediate areas towards their ILPs for AYP success. A cart or two that would be available for teachers to check out a few at a time for special situations would most likely benefit the students and teachers which should elevate progress towards proficiency.

#4 Attendance at the State Alternative Education Conference (s) are suggested for all the alternative educators. The training and sessions are specifically developed around the unique needs of the non-traditional classroom and challenges that occur daily. Materials, resources, hands-on activities to be used in the lessons and additional support networks are shared during the conference time.

#5 [Redacted] is an intricate part of the District. A realistic budget is necessary to provide for professional development training, materials, and equipment necessary to the educators and students. The Positive Behavioral Intervention Support System must have a budget to help develop a reward system that will motivate the students as they progress beyond their previous areas of challenges. The campus appears to be a fully run independent campus, however appears to be operating on a ghost budget. The alternative education funding is provided IN ADDITION to Foundational Funds. At this time, every student easily generates more than $10,000 per FTE. There are many additional funds that should be attached to this school to include: Title funds, 6B-Special Education funds, Safe and Drug Free funds, Tobacco Settlement funding, Technology funds, professional development, NSLA, etc.

Additional: The equipment available through the opportunity of having an outdoor classroom is strongly desirable by most of our alternative education programs. The farm setting with an on-site garden is an enriched opportunity for every student that attends [Redacted]. It was disappointing to hear that it is used by the school and students in an extremely limited way. This should be greatly expanded. The students could have been growing seed starter flowers and vegetable plants for their families and the community as well as the garden plot already prepared on site.

Persons spoken to

#1 The Principal led a tour of the entire program as [Redacted] and [Redacted] viewed the newly located program that began this year.

#2 We spoke to almost every teacher as we entered all of the classrooms

#3

#4

Additional: The overall school appearance provides a clean and safe setting for the students that attend daily. A strong adult presence is noted and school security is a primary focus. The friendliness and cooperation from the multiple support agencies is a welcome partnership with School #3 and the mental health needs of the students. The security guards / school resource officers have an established relationship that appeared to regard every student with respect. The majority of classrooms appeared to be demonstrating active teaching with hands-on activities occurring regularly. The enthusiasm and dedication from most of the faculty members demonstrate a strong commitment to student success.
Reports for alternative education must be submitted in a timely manner. There appears to be a current breakdown in the contact individuals to disseminate important valuable information to alternative educators from the Arkansas Department of Education. In the past years the flow of information was consistent, it does not appear to be occurring at this time.

Summary of Report

The [Redacted] is an approved alternative education program. The separation of the middle school students from the high school [Redacted] program appears to be an excellent decision. The need for a realistic budget to allow the site based management of purchasing realistic necessary consumable supplies and materials is extremely important this must be provided as follow up within the next 30 days. The faculty appear to be teaching the majority of lessons in an interactive manner, the display of student work strongly compliments the alignment with AR standards. The use of ART common language and the classroom decorations are improving the positive culture of the classroom. Full development of the level system to include privileges, awards, motivational opportunities, award ceremonies that include an invitation to parents are

strongly suggested. Attendance at the AR alternative educators conference in July is strongly encouraged and suggested for all of the faculty. It is important as changes occur that opportunities are given for the new faculty to create goals and objectives through experiences that occur at the conference. The appearance of Smart Boards, grade level curriculum, projectors, and teacher computers demonstrate growth and development in the supplies available.

Recommendations
1. Full development of the PBIS level system.
2. Attendance at the State Alternative Education Conference July 16 - 18, 2013.
3. The Principal had no previous experience in alternative education, it is recommended that he attends alternative education conferences.
4. School #3 realistic and appropriate budget is necessary within the next 30 days. It is to mirror that of other Middle School budgets still reflecting the unique need of additional motivators for these extremely needy students.

Attachments: Yes (# pages) No

Report by: [Redacted]

Position: Arkansas Department of Education

Date: March 28, 2012

Signature: _____

APPENDIX B

ALE Program Description Approval Form

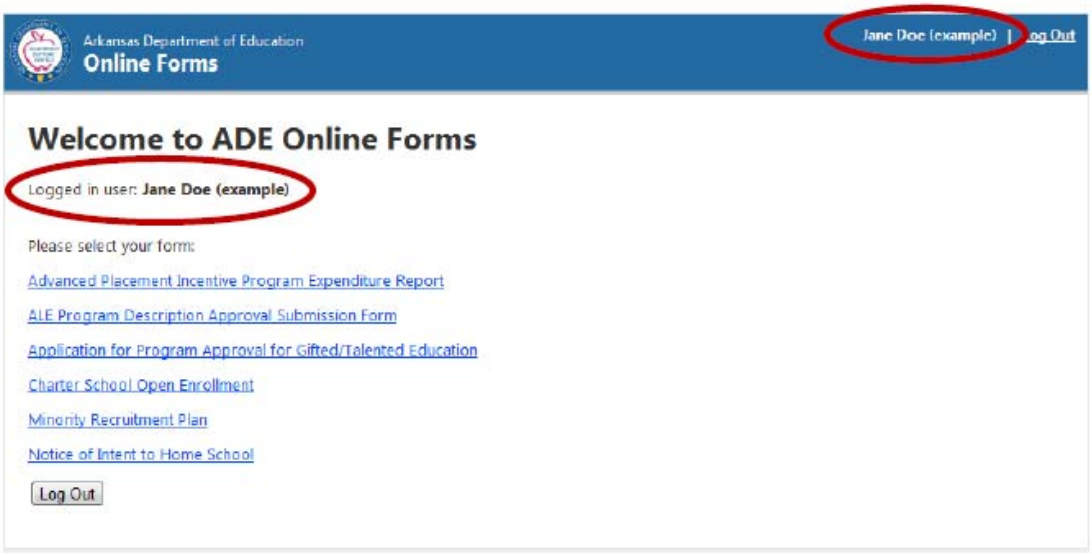
The Alternative Education Unit of Learning Services has worked closely with the Division of Research & Technology to create an online form where districts can securely submit data regarding alternative learning environment (ALE) programs in their district.

To access the form, go to http://adedata.arkansas.gov/onlineforms.

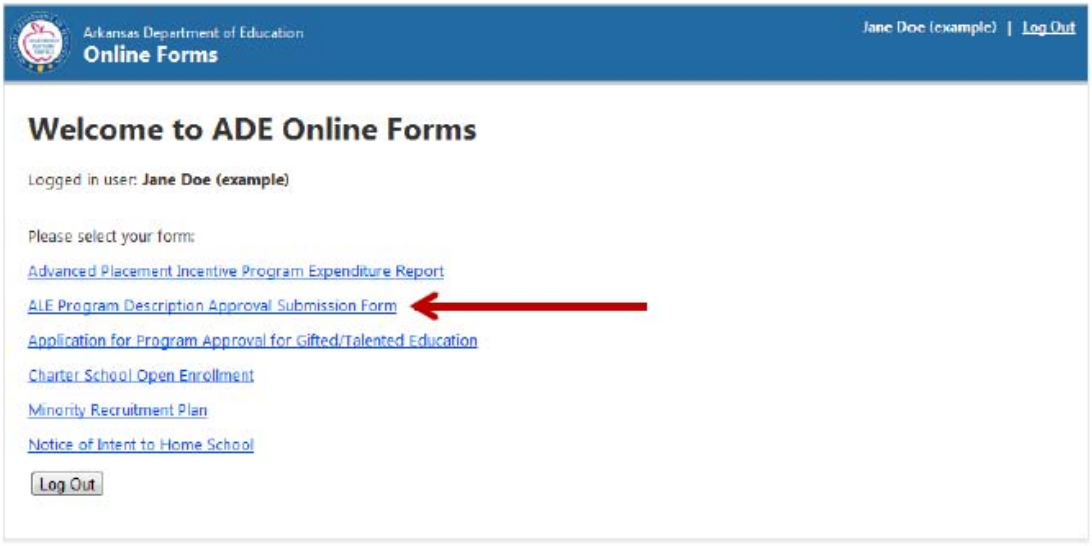
You will be prompted to log in using your Triand Account information.

NOTE: If you do not have a Triand account, click here to view a tutorial on setting up your account. You will need to request district level access from your Triand System Administrator.

Once have entered your user name & password, the system will recognize that you are logged in.

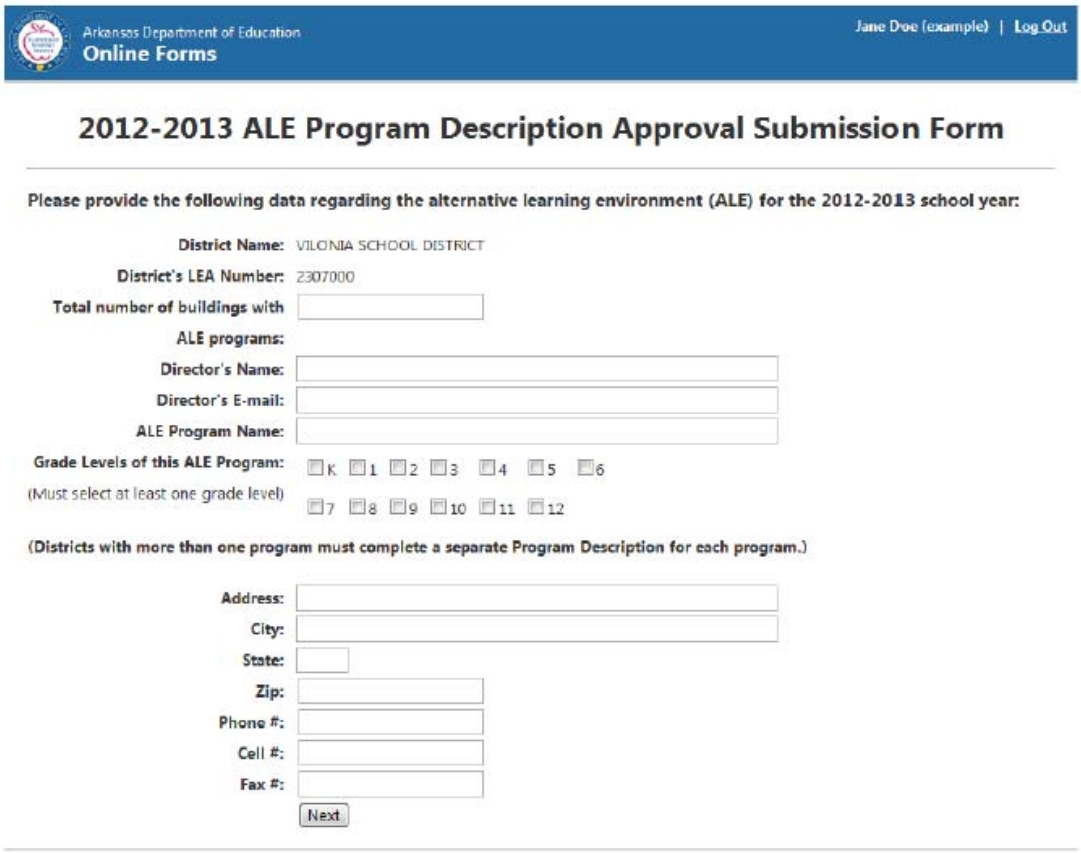


Click on the link for "ALE Program Description Approval Submission Form".



Complete the form with the information requested.

Note: The district & LEA number is populated based on the information from your log in credentials.



Arkansas Department of Education
Online Forms

Jane Doe (example) | Log Out

2012-2013 ALE Program Description Approval Submission Form

Please provide the following data regarding the alternative learning environment (ALE) for the 2012-2013 school year:

District Name: VILONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT
District's LEA Number: 2307000
Total number of buildings with ALE programs:
Director's Name:
Director's E-mail:
ALE Program Name:
Grade Levels of this ALE Program: K 1 2 3 4 5 6
(Must select at least one grade level) 7 8 9 10 11 12

(Districts with more than one program must complete a separate Program Description for each program.)

Address:
City:
State:
Zip:
Phone #:
Cell #:
Fax #:
Next

Once all demographic information has been entered, click "Next" to continue.

Continue to complete the form with the information requested.
NOTE: There is no limit of characters for your answers and the boxes provided will expand as you type. You can also copy/paste the information from other documents into these fields, if applicable.

2012-2013 ALE Program Description Approval Submission Form

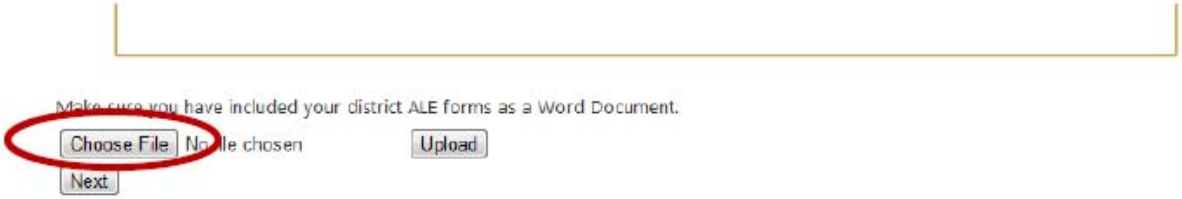
Please complete the following state-mandated components for every ALE provided.
Make sure you have included your district ALE forms as a Word Document.
Note: Provide complete thorough answers to the questions; boxes will expand as you type.

1. **Describe** the type of placement, progress, and transitional **written documentation used**. (4.02.19) (Grades, AYP, and Conferences.)
2. **Describe** the ALE Placement Criteria and process. How will the process be monitored and all team members included? (4.02.1.8-.9 & 4.02.1.16)
3. **Describe** how the ALE is a supportive/non punitive environment. (4.02.1.10)
4. **Describe** the proposed teacher/student ratios and how **ratios will be monitored** on a regular basis. (4.02.1.3 & 4.02.1.4)

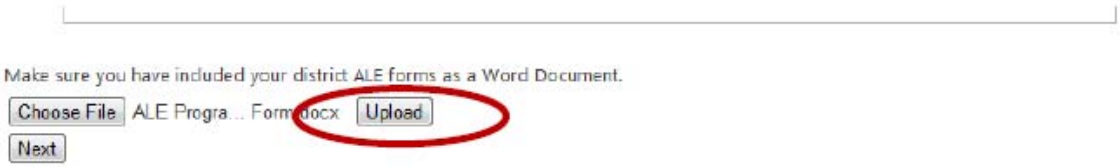
Page **4** of **8** *Last updated: February 24, 2012*

An field is included at the bottom of this screen where all ALE attachments can be included. NOTE: Only files in Word, Excel or PDF formats will be accepted.

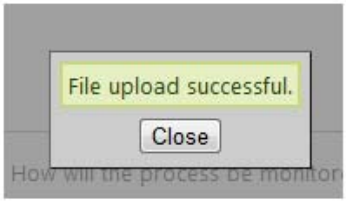
When you are ready to attach your files, click the "choose file" button.



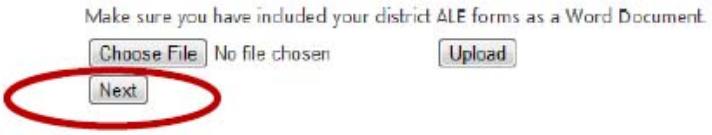
A window will appear where you can browse your computer to upload the file. Once you choose the file, the file name will display. Click "Upload" to upload the file.



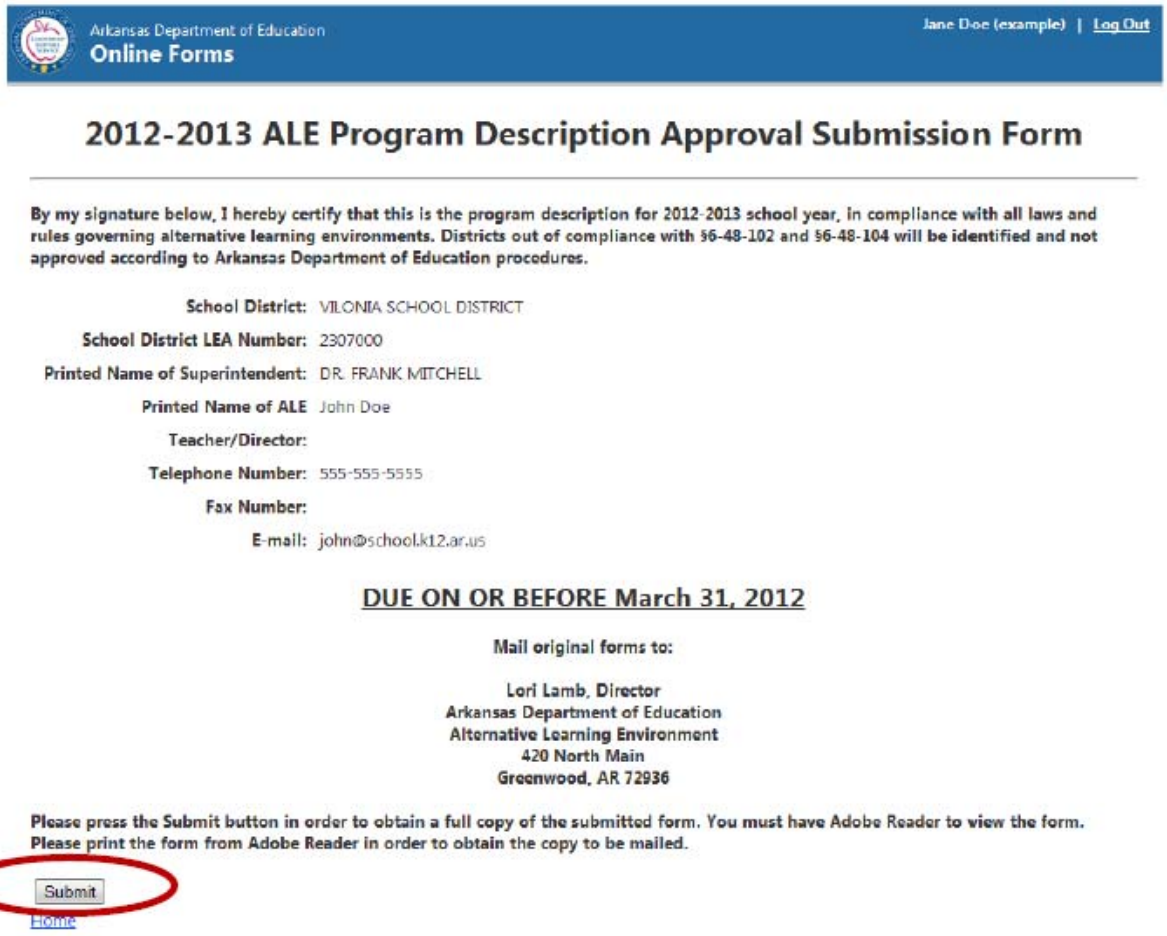
You will be prompted if your upload was successful.



You can click the choose file button & follow the steps again to attach more than one file. When you have uploaded all necessary documents, click 'next' to proceed.



The final page is a confirmation statement. Please review the information and then click submit.



Arkansas Department of Education
Online Forms

Jane Doe (example) | Log Out

2012-2013 ALE Program Description Approval Submission Form

By my signature below, I hereby certify that this is the program description for 2012-2013 school year, in compliance with all laws and rules governing alternative learning environments. Districts out of compliance with §6-48-102 and §6-48-104 will be identified and not approved according to Arkansas Department of Education procedures.

School District: VILONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT
School District LEA Number: 2307000
Printed Name of Superintendent: DR. FRANK MITCHELL
Printed Name of ALE John Doe
Teacher/Director:
Telephone Number: 555-555-5555
Fax Number:
E-mail: john@school.k12.ar.us

DUE ON OR BEFORE March 31, 2012

Mail original forms to:

Lori Lamb, Director
Arkansas Department of Education
Alternative Learning Environment
420 North Main
Greenwood, AR 72936

Please press the Submit button in order to obtain a full copy of the submitted form. You must have Adobe Reader to view the form. Please print the form from Adobe Reader in order to obtain the copy to be mailed.

Submit
Home

IMPORTANT: You must click submit in order for your information to be saved and sent to Learning Services electronically.

A printer friendly copy of your information will display in Adobe for you to print, sign and mail to the address specified.

Once your form has been submitted, you will receive email notification to confirm your submission.

A printer friendly copy of your information will display on your screen in Adobe for you to print, sign and mail to the address specified.

Note: The number of pages will vary, based on answers to questions 1-15.

EXAMPLE

2012-2013 ALE Program Description Approval Submission Form

ADE USE ONLY: DATE & INITIALS
Approved: _____
Pending Approval: _____
Unapproved: _____

Please provide the following data regarding the alternative learning environment (ALE) for the 2012-2013 school year:

District Name:	District's LEA Number:	Total number of buildings with ALE programs:
VILONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT	2307000	1
Director's Name:	E-Mail:	
John Doe	john@school.k12.ar.us	

ALE Program Name: Vilonia Learning Academy

Grade levels of this ALE program: 10, 11, 12

(Districts with more than one program must complete a separate Program Description for each program.)

Address: 123 Main, Vilonia, AR 72222

Phone#: 555-555-5555 Cell#: Fax#:

Please complete the following state-mandated components for every ALE provided.
Make sure you have included your district ALE forms as a Word Document.
Note: Provide complete thorough answers to the questions; boxes will expand as you type.

1. Describe the type of placement, progress, and transitional written documentation used. (4.02.19) (Grades, AYP, and Conferences.)
   This is a description of the type of placement, progress, and transitional written documentation used for my ALE.
2. Describe the ALE Placement Criteria and process. How will the process be monitored and all team members included? (4.02.1.8-.9 & 4.02.1.16)
   This is a description of the ALE Placement Criteria and process and how the process will be monitored for my ALE.
3. Describe how the ALE is a supportive/non punitive environment. (4.02.1.10)
   This is a description of the how the ALE is a supportive and non punitive environment.
4. Describe the proposed teacher/student ratios and how ratios will be monitored on a regular basis. (4.02.1.3 & 4.02.1.4)
   This is a description of the the proposed teacher/student ratios and how they will be monitored on a regular basis.
5. Describe how individual counseling services will be provided. (4.02.1.5)
   This is how individual counseling services will be provided.

Page **7** of **8** *Last updated: February 24, 2012*

6. Describe how instruction will be supplemented by technology. (4.02.1.11)
   This is how instruction will be supplemented by technology.
7. List the supplemental technology used.
   This is the list of supplemental technology used.
8. If Credit Recovery is a component of the ALE program describe how it is used and list materials used.
   Not applicable.
9. Describe the general school curriculum and instructional methods used; how is it aligned with Arkansas standards? (4.02.1.13)
   This is a description of the general school curriculum and instructional methods used.
10. If GED preparation is a component of the ALE program describe how it is used and list materials. (4.02.1.9)
    What are the ages of students that participate in the GED preparation component?
    GED prep is not a component of our ALE program.
11. Describe how SPED students placed in ALE will receive services and be monitored. §6-48-103
    This is a description of how SPED students will receive services and be monitored.
12. Describe the ALE Exit Criteria and how the transitional success will be monitored. (4.02.1.14)
    This is a description of the exit criteria.
13. Describe the behavioral and career centered intervention services being implemented in the ALE program. §6-48-103 (career ed, social skills curriculum, etc.)
    This is the behavorial and career centered intervention services.
14. Describe the immediate needs of the ALE program(s). (training, supplies, staff, etc.)
    This is the immediate needs of our ALE program.

By my signature below, I hereby certify that this is the program description for 2012-2013 school year, in compliance with all laws and rules governing alternative learning environments. Districts out of compliance with § 6-48-102 & § 6-48-104 will be identified and not approved according to Arkansas Department of Education procedures.

Vilonia Learning Academy

School District VILONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT **School District LEA Number:** 2307000

Printed name of Superintendent
DR. FRANK MITCHELL

_____ _____
Signature of Superintendent **Date**

Printed name of ALE Teacher/Director
John Doe

_____ _____
Signature of ALE Teacher/Director **Date**

Telephone Number: 555-555-5555 **Fax Number:** **E-Mail:** john@school.k12.ar.us

DUE ON OR BEFORE MARCH 31, 2012

Mail original forms to:

Lori Lamb, Director
Arkansas Department of Education
Alternative Learning Environment
420 North Main
Greenwood, AR 72936

Print your final submission and mail the original signed forms to the address specified.

APPENDIX C

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF Education

Alternative Learning Environment
Quality Program Indicators and Assessment Tool

Mission and Purpose

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-508, §6-18-509

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• Mission statement, goals, and expectations are clearly defined and communicated to staff, parents, and students.	0	1	2
• The characteristics and needs of the student population for whom the alternative education program is designed to serve are clearly defined.	0	1	2
• Mission, goals, and expected outcomes are documented, published, and clearly visible to and embraced by staff, students, and parents.	0	1	2
• Mission is consistent with district goals and state standards.	0	1	2
• Student success is central to all management of learning across academic, behavior, vocational, social, and life skill domains.	0	1	2
• A holistic view of the student (Social, Emotional, and Academic) is the focus of the program.	0	1	2
Total		___	___

Leadership

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-508, ADE-Special Needs Funding Rules (SNFR): 3.00, 4.00, 6.00, 7.00, 8.00	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• The district provides sufficient oversight to ensure program quality in a manner that protects the autonomy of the alternative education program operations.	0	1	2
• The district provides adequate resources and financial support for planning and quality implementation of the alternative education services.	0	1	2
• The district funds ALE according to ADM funds of $5,700 per FTE.	0	1	2
• The district allocates categorical restricted ALE funds of $4,063 per FTE.	0	1	2
• Program administrator is competent and engaged in all aspects of program operation and management.	0	1	2
• The principal is highly visible, making frequent informal contact with students and teachers.	0	1	2
• Shared vision communicated through the program's mission, core values, and goals.	0	1	2
• Collaborative process for determining program decisions.	0	1	2
• Decisions made regarding program operation align with state legislation and local policies and procedures.	0	1	2

- Establishment of clearly articulated procedures and guidelines for staff and students to include:
    - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all teaching and non-teaching staff,
    - Annual staff development plans that include orientation, in-service training, and coaching that address program and individual staff development needs across positive behavior support, assessment, crisis intervention, service coordination/wraparound services, effective learning/instructional strategies, and evidence-based practices or curriculums,
    - Referral, screening, and intake procedures to promote timely, user-friendly

access to program services,

- Procedures to collect, share, and store individual student records that promote effective placement, program services, and transition while protecting student confidentiality,
- Reliable assessment and development of individualized student plans that address academic, behavior, social, service coordination, and transition needs,
- Program discipline action plan that outlines rules/behavior expectations, actively teaches rules and behavior expectations to staff and students, recognition/reward systems that reward expected academic and behavior expectations, and correction responses to violations of rules and behavior expectations across program-wide, classroom, non-academic, and individual student systems,
- Procedures to encourage and actively engage parents/guardians as equal partners in the planning, implementation, and transition process for students,
- Procedures to build collaborative partnerships with public and private agencies such as mental health, juvenile justice, public health, advocacy agencies, child welfare, family support, judicial/legal, youth service agencies, and research/evaluation institutions,
- Crisis planning and management,
- Process and outcome evaluation to monitor student and program progress and improvement needs,
- Procedures to collect, store, and share program data ensures protection of student, parent/guardian, and staff confidential. 0 1 2

- Classroom observations conducted by the principal are focused on improving instruction. 0 1 2
- The principal regularly gives feedback to teachers regarding their instructional techniques. 0 1 2
- Recruitment, hiring, and training of qualified instructional and support personnel. 0 1 2
- Program organization ensures low student to teacher ratios that reflect the student needs:

o **Student to teacher ratio of 1:15 for 7th -12th, w/para 1:18**			
o **Student to teacher ratio of 1:10 for K-6th , w/para 1:12**	0	1	2
• Collaborates with and involves the traditional school, community, and home to foster an effective learning environment.	0	1	2
• Plans and implements strategies to maintain a safe, caring, and orderly program environment based on state and local policies, procedures, and legislation.	0	1	2
• Use of reliable data to guide instructional practices and student performance that are linked to the alternative education program's mission, goals, and objectives.	0	1	2
• Transportation, Food Services and Health Support are provided.	0	1	2
• Program operational procedures are available, appropriate, and utilized.	0	1	2
• Sufficient and appropriate resources (equipment, supplies, and curriculum materials) are available to include technology.	0	1	2
• Effective performance evaluation of administrative, teaching, and support staff.	0	1	2
	Total	___	___

Culture and Climate (Safe and Orderly Environment)

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-509, ADE-SNFR: 4.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• Program efficiently organizes alternative education program services into effective program-wide, classroom, non-classroom, and individual student systems.	0	1	2
• Procedures are in place that actively promote student engagement.	0	1	2
• Student academic, behavior, and social improvement or achievement is the basis of program accountability.	0	1	2
• The program has a designated team of representative administrative, teaching, support, and, if possible, student representatives that strategically plans, monitors, and implements prevention and intervention strategies to address program culture.	0	1	2
• Rules and behavioral expectations exist which are written, clearly understood and accepted by staff, students, and parents and are actively taught, rewarded or recognized and monitored to guide student behavior, evaluate progress, and manage the learning experience.	0	1	2
• Discipline is viewed as a means to self-improvement and learning acceptable behavior.	0	1	2
• Students are held accountable for maintaining school rules throughout the year.	0	1	2
• Administrators support teachers in dealing with student discipline matters.	0	1	2
• School staff enforces the student rules consistently and equitably.	0	1	2

• Teachers, administrators, parents, and students share responsibility for maintaining discipline.	0	1	2
• Students are frequently rewarded or praised by faculty and staff for following school rules.	0	1	2
• Many students are acknowledged and rewarded for academic improvements and achievements.	0	1	2
• Cultural and gender differences are accommodated and understood in order to meet student, home, and program needs.	0	1	2
• Communication of high expectations for student academics, behavior and teacher performance with opportunities for student success demonstrated on a regular basis.	0	1	2
• Teacher's base grading on students' achievement/performance rather than student behavior.	0	1	2
• Teachers believe that all students can achieve in each subject area.	0	1	2
• Teachers believe they are responsible for helping students achieve identified standards in each subject area.	0	1	2
Total		___	___

Professional Development

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-508, ADE-SNFR: 3.00, 4.00, 6.00, 7.00, and 8.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• Administrators, teachers and auxiliary staff meet state licensure requirements.	0	1	2
• Focus of staff development are positive student outcomes across academic, social, behavior, life skill, vocational, and transition domains that will enhance the student's success in present and future settings.	0	1	2
• Evaluation of program content, support, and staff performance inform individual and program professional development planning.	0	1	2
• Each staff member develops a plan to facilitate personal and professional growth.	0	1	2
• Each staff member participates in professional development for self and program improvement .	0	1	2
• Professional Development includes information related to effectively collaborating with community support services and how to connect with students and families.	0	1	2
• Professional Development reflects use of internal and external resources.	0	1	2
• Sufficient resources, such as time, substitutes and incentives, allow all staff to participate in workshops, conferences, and seminars.	0	1	2
• Opportunities are given to foster staff collaboration for ownership and reinforcement of Professional Development that lead to the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation and institutionalization.	0	1	2
• There is a staff development program based on school goals.	0	1	2
• Follow-up assistance (materials, coaching, etc.) is provided by the administration for implementing skills learned in staff development activities.	0	1	2
Total		___	___

Parental Involvement

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-15-1702, 6-18-1005, ADE-SNFR: 4.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• Parental involvement is welcomed and actively recruited.	0	1	2
• Leadership assures effective communication and interaction between parents and program personnel.	0	1	2
• Parents are recognized as equal partners and involved in all decision-making levels for their child that includes but is not limited to:			
o Placement,			
o Assessment, development, and modification of the student's personal educational plan			
o Functional Behavioral Assessment as needed,			
o Development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's Behavior Intervention Plan as needed,			
o Service coordination and transition planning.	0	1	2
• Parents participate in solution-focused problem-solving for education, behavior, or service coordination issues involving their child.	0	1	2
• Parents receive regular progress reports and, if requested, consultation regarding strategies to support their child's learning and personal success.	0	1	2
• Parents have access to parent education programs sponsored by the alternative education program or community.	0	1	2
• Confidentiality policies are enforced and privacy is provided in working with parents regarding student success and needed support services.	0	1	2

• Parent participation is embedded in the decision making processes of the program through site council, advisory groups, and/or evaluation.	0	1	2
• Parents are involved with evaluating the effectiveness of the program and providing suggestions to improve conditions for students.	0	1	2
• Procedures to address parent grievances in a timely manner are in place.	0	1	2
• Parents and/or community members are frequent volunteers.	0	1	2
Total		___	___

Curriculum, Instruction and Opportunity to Learn

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-509, § 6-41-202, ADE- SNFR: 3.00, 4.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• Students have an individualized plan for achievement.	0	1	2
• All students have access to the academic core curriculum.	0	1	2
• Teachers are highly qualified in the content area based on state standards.	0	1	2
• Teachers are competent in research-based teaching and behavior management methods for the target student population.	0	1	2
• Students are assessed for disabilities and provided special education or Voc 504 support in full compliance with the law.	0	1	2
• All students have opportunities to learn and/or participate in arts, health and physical education, life skills, vocational, character education and other non-core content areas.	0	1	2
• Teachers apply consistent criteria to assigning grades.	0	1	2
• The time set aside for instruction is free from interruption (i.e. intercom, messages, and assemblies, mowing).	0	1	2
• Learning activities that address all learning styles are provided.	0	1	2
• Students are engaged in learning activities from the beginning until the end of the instructional period.	0	1	2
• Students who are not achieving are given additional help in a timely manner.	0	1	2
• Teachers collaborate, plan, and review curriculum in order to eliminate and close learning gaps.	0	1	2
• Curriculum reflects evidence-based or best practice, are culturally competent, consider			

gender specific differences, and match the needs of the target student population.	0	1	2
• Curriculum options are available to students that assist in meeting district high school graduation or completion requirements and are linked to school-to-work opportunities.	0	1	2
• Secondary programs provide opportunities for on-the-job training, work experience, service learning, and mentorships.	0	1	2
• Technology is part of the **supplemental** curriculum delivery process.	0	1	2
• The needs of students related to personal, social, emotional, behavioral, career Development and essential learning for transition are addressed in the curriculum.	0	1	2
• Differentiated Instruction is provided to accommodate student learning styles, differences in ability levels, and to promote social competence.	0	1	2
• Instruction offers opportunities for individual and group delivery systems in addition to direct and indirect methods of instruction.	0	1	2
• Teachers identify and consider personal/social and other life skills for personalized planning, instructional delivery and support services for all students.	0	1	2
	Total	___	___

Collaboration with Community

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-509, ADE-SNFR: 4.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• Program planning incorporates community and other support services.	0	1	2
• Partnership with community agencies facilitate integrated case management and wraparound services for students and families.	0	1	2
• Program has a community advisory board that assists in planning, resource development, and decision-making.	0	1	2
• Partnerships are designed to support and enrich the program learning environment by including the community as a resource for education, advocacy, and volunteerism.	0	1	2
• Partnerships exist with community service organizations, agencies, cultural groups, faith-based representatives, industry and businesses.	0	1	2
• Collaborations with community partners are based on trust, open communication, clearly defined goals, and shared responsibility which links the program, home, and community.	0	1	2
Total		___	___

Transition Planning and Support

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-509, § 6-18-1005, ADE-SNFR: 4.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• The program has partnerships in place that strengthen the link between traditional schools and the alternative education program.	0	1	2
• Clear transition planning procedures are in place that address well-defined goals of the alternative education program placement, information and record sharing, and follow-up support following placement in the student's next education or vocational setting.	0	1	2
• Students and families are active participants in assessment, planning, and implementation of the student's transition plans.	0	1	2
• Program incorporates strategies to teach students responsible problem-solving, self-control, effective communication skills, and practice in respectful interpersonal/social interactions.	0	1	2
• Students are aware of and have access to the full range of regular education curricula.	0	1	2
• Program provides instruction in life skills, social competence, self-management, vocational, and recreation appropriate for the developmental and specific needs of their target student population.	0	1	2
• Students are aware of and have access to work-based learning e.g. service learning, work experience, and/or career preparation.	0	1	2
• Students aged 14 years or older develop and begin transition planning based upon his or her interests, abilities, strengths, and long term goals.	0	1	2
• Curriculum options are available to students that assist in meeting graduation Requirements and are linked to school-to-work opportunities.	0	1	2
• Secondary programs provide opportunities for on-the-job training, work experience, service learning, and mentorships that relate to the student's career interests,			

postsecondary education plans, goals, skills, abilities, and strengths.	0	1	2
• Transition planning includes referral and timely access to community services and support such as mental health, public health, family support, housing, recreation, healthy peer activities, vocational, and youth service agencies.	0	1	2
Total	___	___	

Monitoring and Assessment

Quality Indicators:

§ 6-18-508, § 6-18-509, ADE-SNFR: 4.00

	Not Implemented	Partial Implementation	Implemented
• The program administrators enforce data-driven accountability to measure achievement and identify program improvement needs.	0	1	2
• The purpose of assessments is clearly defined and communicated to the student, staff and home.	0	1	2
• Data collection procedures are clearly outlined to ensure reliable and valid assessment results.	0	1	2
• Alternative Education Program uses program-wide, staff, and student measures to monitor both program and student goals and objectives.	0	1	2
• The program implements Response to Intervention practices that utilizes continuous assessment for placement, instruction, intervention, and transition decisions.	0	1	2
• Teachers use multiple evaluation and assessment strategies that are reliable, frequent, rigorous, and aligned with program, curriculum, and individual student goals.	0	1	2
• Teachers use standardized, traditional, and non-traditional methods of assessment to track academic, behavior/school climate, and transition performance at both program and student levels.	0	1	2
• Assessment, curriculum, and instruction directly link to planning for accommodation of varied			

learning styles and multiple intelligence.	0	1	2
• Teachers use multiple assessment strategies to measure, specify, and monitor student performance.	0	1	2
• Multiple assessment measures using quantitative and qualitative methods are aligned with district-wide measures to identify student progress as prescribed by the state.	0	1	2
• Results of assessments are used to inform the student and parent(s) of progress, guide instruction, curriculum and program modifications, and plan transition support.	0	1	2
• Program develops and implements an annual comprehensive plan that aligns with the program goals and addresses the findings of process and outcome evaluation data. The comprehensive plan may include but is not limited to climate/culture, staff development, parent involvement, curriculum and instruction, community partnerships and collaboration, and parent involvement.	0	1	2
	Total	___	___

Standards and Number of Items	**Partial Implementation**	**Implemented**	**Total**	**Total Possible**	**Grade**
Mission and Purpose-6				**12**	
Leadership-21				**42**	
Culture and Climate-17				**34**	
Professional Development-11				**22**	
Parental Involvement-11				22	
Curriculum, Instruction and Opportunity to Learn-20				40	
Collaboration with Community-6				**12**	
Transition Planning and Support-11				**22**	
Monitoring and Assessment-12				**24**	
Mental Health Services-7				**14**	
School Summary Score-122				**244**	

F	**D**	**C**	**B**	**A**
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
≤145	**146**	**170**	**194**	**219≥**

Strengths:

Areas in Need of Improvement:

NON – NEGOTIABLE INDICATORS: