

Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative



ANNUAL REPORT OPERATIONS 2025-2026

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From the Director's Desk

As we conclude the 2025–2026 service year, we are pleased to present the Annual Report of the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative on behalf of our Governing Board and dedicated team members. Throughout the year, our work has remained centered on our vision of serving as the heart of learning, leadership, innovation, and prosperity. The services and support provided by ARESC have continued to strengthen the goals of the school districts and communities we serve while supporting LEARNS and the State's vision for education in Arkansas.

During this service year, ARESC teams remained committed to fostering a culture of excellence through high expectations, exceptional customer service, innovative practices, and purposeful collaboration. Through mission-focused efforts and strong partnerships with educators, families, community stakeholders, and state agencies, we continue striving to provide opportunities and services that prepare children and schools for lifelong success and prosperity.

Each region across Arkansas possesses its own strengths, needs, and opportunities. The establishment of regional education cooperatives was rooted in recognizing and responding to those unique local characteristics. Maintaining strong regional leadership and accessible support services remains vital to ensuring schools and communities receive meaningful, responsive assistance. We are grateful for the continued commitment to localized educational support that allows the voices of educators, students, and community partners to remain central in decision-making and planning.

In accordance with A.C.A. 6-13-120, we respectfully submit this 2025–2026 Annual Report as a condensed version of the programs, services, resources, and activities provided through our Cooperative. This report highlights professional learning opportunities, technology initiatives, early childhood programs, career and technical education services, direct student services for specialized populations, organizational governance, and other essential reporting information.

ARESC remains dedicated to delivering high-quality, impactful services while connecting member districts and communities with valuable educational resources throughout Arkansas. Through continued collaboration with local industries, institutions of higher education, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, and other state agencies, we are honored to serve districts in Arkansas, Grant, Jefferson, Pulaski County, and surrounding counties in support of the students and families of our great state.

Cathi Swan, Director



Mission Statement: Our mission is to deliver cooperative support services that foster learners for life.

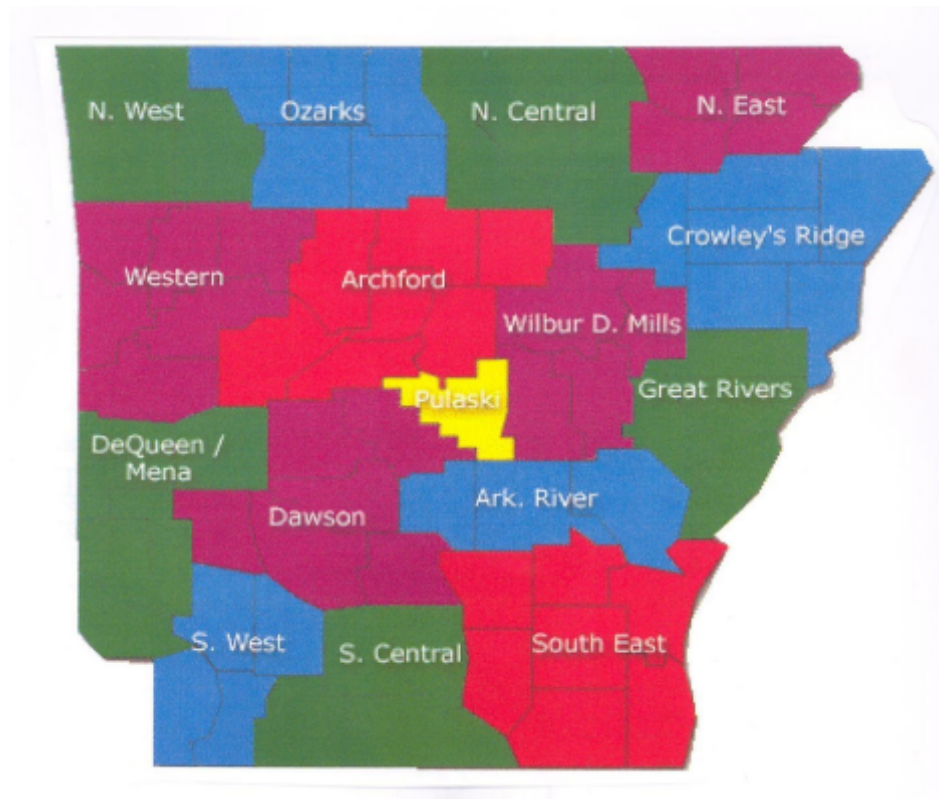
Vision Statement: We are the Heart of Learning, Leadership, Innovation, and Prosperity

Agency Goals with Collective Commitments:

- ★ Model and support a culture of high expectations and positive energy.
 - We will speak positively and provide solutions for challenges faced.
 - We will acknowledge and celebrate others.
 - We will persevere to reach our goals.
- ★ Model, support, and facilitate learners for life in all services.
 - We will strive for excellence and distinction in our own fields.
 - We will encourage and model a growth mindset.
- ★ Promote sharing of resources and services among stakeholders based on local, regional, state, and/or federal educational priorities.
 - We will use data to set priorities.
- ★ Provide assistance to schools in meeting or exceeding accreditation standards and equalizing educational opportunities.
 - We will focus on high levels of learning for all students and the systems that are necessary for this to occur.
 - We will maintain knowledge of evidence based best practices.
- ★ Encourage and facilitate innovative practices, strategies, and learning environments.
 - We will maintain knowledge of most effective evidence based practices, strategies, and learning environments.
- ★ Provide services to children, families, and schools that prepare them for a prosperous life.
 - We are committed to a system of support for students and adults.
- ★ Establish and maintain effective working relationships with all stakeholders of the community.
 - We are committed to quality communication and positive relationships with all stakeholders.



Proudly serving Arkansas, Grant, Jefferson, and
Schools Statewide





Organizational Chart



Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative School District Members for 2025-2026

Arkansas Correctional School System Arkansas Division of Youth Services Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind Pine Bluff School District Sheridan School District Stuttgart School District Watson Chapel School District White Hall School District
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Officers of the Board of Directors for 2025-2026

Name	Position	School District
Mr. Gary Williams	President	White Hall School District
Mr. Jeff McKinney	Vice President	Stuttgart School District
Dr. Jennifer Barbaree	Secretary	Pine Bluff School District

Members of the Board of Directors for 2025-2026

Name	Position	School District
Dr. Tracy Dowell	Superintendent	AR Correctional Schools
Mrs. Nicole Walsh	Superintendent	AR School for the Deaf and Blind
Mrs. Cindy Willis	Superintendent	AR Division of Youth Services
Dr. Jennifer Barbaree	Superintendent	Pine Bluff
Mr. Chad Pitts	Superintendent	Sheridan
Mr. Jeff McKinney	Superintendent	Stuttgart
Dr. Keith McGee	Superintendent	Watson Chapel
Mr. Gary Williams	Superintendent	White Hall

Teacher Center Committee Members for 2025-2026

Name	Position	School District
Mathew Jimerson	Teacher	Pine Bluff
Donna Vandevender	District Admin	AR School for the Deaf and Blind
Katherine James	Teacher	White Hall
Sharon Whitaker	Teacher	AR Correctional Schools
Deaquanita Lancelin	Teacher	Watson Chapel
Staci Wheeler	Teacher	Stuttgart
Amanda Crowder	Instructional Facilitator	Sheridan
Jessica Holmes	Non Teacher	Arkansas Division of Youth Services
Lincoln Daniels	Asst. Director/TCC	ARESC



Arkansas Department of Education

Education Service Cooperative (ESC) Annual Report's Data Sheet

DATE: 6/30/2026

LEA#: 35-20

ESC#: 10

ADDRESS: 912 West Sixth Street, Pine Bluff, AR 71601 **PHONE NUMBER:** 870-534-6129

DIRECTOR: Mrs. Cathi Swan

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/TEACHER CENTER COORDINATOR: Mr. Lincoln Daniels

NAMES OF COUNTIES SERVED: Arkansas, Grant, Jefferson with three state-wide school districts

NUMBER OF DISTRICTS: 8

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 12,810

NUMBER OF TEACHERS: 1007

NUMBER OF ADMINISTRATORS: 105

I. GOVERNANCE:

A. How is the cooperative governed?

Board of Directors X or Executive Committee

How many members are on the Board? 8

Executive Committee? n/a

How many times did the Board meet? 11

Executive Committee? n/a

When is the regular meeting? 3rd Thursday of each month

B. Date of current year's annual meeting: June 24, 2026

C. Does the co-op have a Teacher Center Committee? YES X NO _____

If yes, then: How many are on the Teacher Center Committee? 8

How many members are teachers? 5

How many times did the Teacher Center Committee meet? 3

When is the regular meeting? Fall, Winter, Spring - other meetings as needed

D. When was the most recent survey or needs assessment conducted? 12/2025

E. Have written policies been filed with the Arkansas Department of Education?

Yes X No _____

STAFFING 2025-2026

Listed below are all staff members of the co-op (including those housed at the co-op and paid through other sources), their titles and the salary funding source for the positions.

S=State, F=Federal, M=Medicaid, B=Base Funds, D=District Allocations.

Name	Title	Funding Source
Brandi Williams	Teacher Excellence Coordinator	S, D
Cody Knowlton	Math Specialist	S
Deolinda Branch	Career and Technical Education Coordinator	D, B, F
Cristian Haynes	Technology Coordinator	S
Stephany Brown	Science Specialist	S
Laura Daniel	Early Childhood Special Services Team Leader	S
Tammy Manning	K-12 Virtual Academy Principal	D
Tumiga Livingston	Infant and Toddler/Preschool Coordinator	S
William Shelly	Gifted and Talented/Recruitment and Retention	S
Carla Swan	Director	B
Lincoln Daniels	Teacher Center Coordinator/Asst. Director	B
Lisa Woodie	Behavior Support Specialist	D
Susan Brigham	Administrative Assistant	S
Kimberly Newton	HIPPY Coordinator	S
Monique Lee	Safecare Provider	S
Maricha Walker	Safecare Provider	S
Autra Dunn	Administrative Assistant	S
Antwinette Malakyah	Parents As Teachers Coordinator	S
Judy Gordon	Administrative Assistant	B
Devon Willis	Technology Support Assistant	D
Kristi Allred	Administrative Assistant	S

Paula King	Secondary Teacher	S
Ashley Stone	Secondary Teacher	S
Lakara Lofton	PAT Parent Educator	S
Latorria Mayo	Teacher	S
Stephanie Cole	Campus Supervisor	D
Jacqueline Hines	PAT Parent Educator	S
Denise Houghton	Literacy Specialist	S
Sandra Graves	Administrative Assistant	D
Chad Davidson	Facilities Coordinator	D, B
Terry Martin	Custodian	B
Steve Metz	Maintenance	B
Cynthia McDonald	Finance Manager	B
Sandi Metz	Administrative Assistant	B
Marguerite Norman	Home Visiting Coordinator	S
Katherine Pye	Accounts Payable/Grant Manager	B
LaKesha Anderson	Administrative Assistant	B
Lindsey Burkett	Local Leads Coordinator	S, F
Bradley Bateman	Campus Supervisor	D
George Davis	Teacher	D
Eric Elders	Campus Supervisor	D
Nicole Hadley	Behavioral Tech	D
Jarvis Hale	Campus Supervisor	D
Angela Martin	Nurse	D
Gabrielle Jones	Teacher	D
Amanda Johnson	Asst. Principal/Behavior Specialist/JAG Coordinator	D
Cynthia Bullard	Mental Health Specialist	D

Heidi Rowland	Campus Supervisor	D
James Virden	School Resource Officer	D
Alicia Wilkie	Medicaid Billing Specialist	D
Gennaifer Ashcraft	LPN/Administrative Assistant	D
Holley Wilson	Teacher	D
Christina Butler	SafeCare Coordinator	S
Rebecca Mincy	Teacher	D
Lasheena Hudson	Secondary Teacher	S
Saniyyah Roth	Paraprofessional	S
Sharon Jackson	Behavioral Health Associate	D
Kateshia Marshall	HIPPY Coordinator	S
Michael Owens	Behavioral Health Associate	D
Yarri Clark	PAT Parent Educator	S
Lynn Wright	Behavioral Health Technician/Resource Officer	D
Laray Wine	PAT Parent Educator	S
Nichol Darrough	Paraprofessional	S
Katrina Harroway	Paraprofessional	F
Jhada Walker	Paraprofessional	S
TaAlya Beard	Paraprofessional	S
Amy Stuckey	Paraprofessional	D
Manda Anderson	Teaching Assistant	D
Darla Bailey	Teacher	D
Carla Bryant	Teacher	D
Ladonna Hall	Secondary Teacher	D
Heather Carter	Teacher	D
Donna Depriest	Teacher	F

Seth Ellis	Teacher	D
Cindy Evans	Teacher	D
Dylan Harris	Campus Supervisor	D
Michaela Howard	Teacher	D
Alena Huett	Teacher	D
Blakelee Hyatt	Teacher	D
Imani Bealer	Paraprofessional	S
Kiara Davis	Secondary Teacher	S
Alicia Mosley	Teacher	D
Melissa Mosley	Teacher	D
Amy Main	Teacher	S
Tiara Ross	Secondary Teacher	D
Gardiner Sanders	Dean of Students	D
Krystle Summers	Teacher	D
Elizabeth Vansandt	Teacher	S
Graciela Alcocer	Teacher	D
Sharee Britton	Teacher	S
Heather Harris	Teacher	D
Brania Hasberry	Teacher	D
Britany Hill	Teacher	D
Whitney Wright	Teacher	D
Maggie Young	Teacher	D
Andrew Schod	Secondary Teacher	D
Chelsea Sims	Teacher	D
Carlisha Treadwell	Teacher	S
Holly Trucks	Teacher	D



Teacher Center

Below is a list of in-service training/staff professional development sessions offered through the cooperative, including month offered, topic, number of districts participating, number of participants and location. Included is a cumulative total of participants. See Professional Development Activities Report at the end of this document for additional information.

Does the co-op provide media services to schools? YES [X]

Do districts contribute dollars to the media services? NO [X]

Does the co-op operate a "make-and-take" center for teachers? YES [X]

How many teacher visits have been made to the center?

- Number of Teacher Participants: 13,663 entered in ESCWorks
- Number of Other Participants: 1,713 not entered in ESCWorks

[List of Professional Development Sessions, 2025-2026](#)

Administrative Services

Please check administrative services offered through the cooperative:

- [X] Cooperative Purchasing
- [X] Conduct Annual Needs Assessments/Planning Assistance
- [X] Special Education Services
- [X] Gifted and Talented Assistance
- [X] Grant Writing Assistance
- [X] Personnel Application
- [X] Assist with Evaluation/Monitoring Procedures
- [X] Bookkeeping Assistance
- [X] Technology Training
- [X] Curriculum Support
- [X] Business Management training
- [X] Computer Technician
- [X] C.C.R.P.P. Administration/Collaboration
- [X] E-Rate Applications
- [X] Assessment Data Analysis
- [X] Instructional Facilitator Training
- [X] Math/Science/Literacy Specialists
- [X] Numerous professional development opportunities for teachers
- [X] Administrators and local board members
- [X] Perkins Consortium
- [X] CTE Coordinator
- [X] Professional Development

- ☒ Medicaid billing
- ☒ Psychological services
- ☒ School Health Nurse
- ☒ HIPPY
- ☒ APSCN Field and Financial Support

Direct Services to Students

Please check the student services provided through the cooperative:

- ☒ Student assessment program
- ☒ Itinerant teachers – please list areas: (ECSE, SPEC)
- ☒ Occupational therapy and physical therapy
- ☒ Transition Assistance
- ☒ Mentor programs (ex. Foster Grandparents)
- ☒ Gifted/Talented programs: 6 participating districts
- ☒ Digital instruction (ex. AR iTunes U, podcasts)
- ☒ Speech Pathology services
- ☒ HIPPY
- ☒ Low incidence handicapped (vision/hearing)
- ☒ Other (Please specify):
 - Parents as Teachers
 - Preschool
 - Alternative Education Academies (Tiered Support)
 - Early Childhood Special Education
 - Behavioral Intervention consultants
 - Virtual Academy for K-12 students and families
 - Star Academy Career/STEM Sites
 - Summer Camps
 - Student Competitions
 - ACT Prep

Anecdotal Reports

These are descriptions of activities which demonstrate partnerships, agreements or innovative ways that the cooperative has assisted local districts. The cooperative personnel may write the reports, or the descriptions may be written by local schools served by the cooperative. These reports may also include letters sent to the cooperative or evaluations of a cooperative activity.

Act 1082 Support - While literacy coaching is a part of the ESC literacy specialist's work, it is just one of the many workstreams for these individuals. As a result, districts receive varying intensity of support from literacy specialists, based on their AD Progressive Levels of Support classification, and the fact that not every school needs support receives it. Arkansas has 5 levels of support (General, Collaborative, Coordinated, Directed, and Intensive) determined, in part, by a district's student reading outcomes on the state summative assessment. Arkansas literacy specialists support only Levels 3-5.

- Level 5 - Intensive Support: ADE literacy specialists conduct weekly site-visits to provide coaching and feedback in schools.
- Level 4 - Directed Support: ESC literacy specialists provide support to districts in their region including coaching teachers, model lessons, walkthroughs with principals and professional development around the Science of Reading.
- Level 3 - Coordinated Support: ESC literacy specialists provide support to districts in their region including coaching teachers, model lessons, walkthroughs with principals and professional development around the Science of Reading.

Act 1082 is designed to provide specific levels of support to public school districts based on reading scores. The goals of this support include helping schools deploy more powerful strategies, use resources more productively, and analyze data. The goals of this support include helping schools deploy more powerful strategies, use resources more productively, and analyze the curriculum that is used. To that end, both Level 3 and Level 4 schools meet periodically with the Public School Program Advisor from the DESE and the co-op team either virtually or in-person. Level 3 schools are required to meet once every nine weeks and Level 4 schools meet monthly. During these meetings a spreadsheet is reviewed that includes the topics: Literacy Curriculum, Assessments, Science of Reading, Dyslexia, and Writing Revolution. This spreadsheet is a living document that all stakeholders can update as actions are taken in support of any of the given areas.

ESC Literacy specialists also provide regular support throughout the year to these schools. This support can be in the form of model teaching, professional development for teachers and/or paraprofessionals, classroom walkthroughs with principal, or anything that is identified by the school or in the coordinated meetings. The professional development opportunities are designed to provide personalized support to ensure that all teachers acquire the instructional expertise needed to educate all students and improve reading skills.

AR Application – The ESCs developed a series of sessions to support the gradual completion of the AR App. This helped schools differentiate the process and produce a high-quality application. The timeline of this work began in January and concluded in May. Each month a different component of the AR App was the focus. The process was designed to support the comprehensive needs assessment, data collection, team formation, creation of SMART goals, and the development of goals that align with district data and LEARNS, all of which will be implemented through the district's strategic plan.

The two main purposes of this work were to support districts in high-quality completion of the AR App and the production of the district's strategic plan and to support the Arkansas Department of Education in the approval process as a result of high-quality submissions.

Each ESC provided a series of trainings throughout the Spring semester following the below imaged timeline.



In addition to this work in support of the AR App, ESCs worked collaboratively on each of the following priorities: Safety, Mental Health, and Accelerated Learning. A Safety Summit is being hosted by Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperative July 8-9, 2025 in partnership with the Criminal Justice Institute and the Arkansas Department of Education's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Collaboration with State Education Service Cooperatives/Tailgates Topics, Leadership Administrator Support Zoom Meetings

- In an effort to provide additional support to building administrators across the state, the Educational Cooperative Teacher Center Coordinators partnered together to offer virtual support on topics that we felt could assist in understanding new laws, DESE requirements, and other topics relevant to education and their positions. These sessions were ongoing, continuous support for aspiring and existing building leaders, assistant principals, and deans of students. Sessions were held quarterly. The topics were presenter driven and were selected to help assist leadership. These sessions were intended to build the capacity of school leadership, offer support and continued learning, and establish network opportunities around district and state leaders.

Each session lasted for a maximum time of one hour or less, was recorded for flexibility, and offered feedback and questions through Zoom Chat and Mentimeter. Recordings were available by request. Below are the sessions listed, live attendance, and requests for session recordings.

TAILGATE TOPICS ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORT FY 25-26

Topic	Date for Session	Presenter	Registration and Zoom Link
E-School Updates 42 Participants	October 7 @ 4:00 p.m.	Carmen Jordan	Register here: https://www.escweb.net/ar_esc/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=567998 Zoom link: https://scscoop-org.zoom.us/j/93658817598?pwd=ekplbzE1attls7Y2FJe1uUjH3K1XED.1 Meeting ID: 936 5881 7598 Passcode: 494792
Value Added Measure (VAM)/LEA Insights/School Rating System 73 Participants	December 3 @ 4:00 p.m.	Sharlee Crowson	Register here: https://www.escweb.net/ar_esc/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=568000 Zoom link:

			https://scscoop-org.zoom.us/j/92717907067?pwd=AWW6AlmNKG008GcXgDcfeilqRbuyWq.1 Meeting ID: 927 1790 7067 Passcode: 883630
Master Schedule 72 Participants	January 21 @ 4:00 p.m.	Various principals	Register here: https://www.escweb.net/ar_esc/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=568001 Zoom link: https://scscoop-org.zoom.us/j/93348995695?pwd=0LDfdXy50DZXZFbZjf2OxPxAgpJO UT.1 Meeting ID: 933 4899 5695 Passcode: 049467
Merit Pay 86 Participants	March 4 @ 4:00 p.m.	Dr. Brandie Benton	Register here: https://www.escweb.net/ar_esc/catalog/session.aspx?session_id=568004 Zoom link: https://scscoop-org.zoom.us/j/96074061693?pwd=FDZkYrhxfU5jjGmHP13mQbx9FaLwCz.1 Meeting ID: 960 7406 1693 Passcode: 571607
Total Sessions: 4	Total Participants 273		

Virtual Academy at The River - We partner with school districts across Arkansas to provide flexible virtual learning options for students grades K-12th. During the 2025–2026 school year, we partnered with approximately 39 districts throughout the state. Over the past two years, our team has worked diligently to develop Arkansas-based curriculum and implement High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) to better serve our students.

Our staff includes 18 certified educators and 3 support team members. Our teachers are Arkansas certified. As districts continue to face teacher shortages, we help bridge the gap by providing certified teachers through a blended learning model. In this approach, students remain in their local brick-and-mortar schools while receiving instruction from a certified teacher in a virtual setting. Currently, we serve approximately 700 students through both general education and special education virtual programs, helping districts expand access to quality instruction while meeting the diverse needs of learners across the state.

The students meet over ZOOM for synchronous whole group instruction and small group instruction. Small group instruction is focused on specific standards for students in math and literacy. Students also have asynchronous coursework to submit daily. There are weekly proctored formative and summative assessments. Parent feedback has been positive regarding the program, instruction, and ease of platforms.

Praxis and Foundations for Reading Assessment Support - Many of the new hires in our area schools experience challenges associated with gaining the necessary scores to obtain licensure. Our team has developed a multi-tiered approach that customizes support based on individual needs. These strategies include one intervention, small group sessions and online tutoring resources. ARESC contracts with educators to provide additional support to establish a calendar, timelines, support schedule and accountability checks. This additional layer of support builds executive functioning capacity in participants. This service reaches beyond our service area and our team created tutorial videos to share with our ESCs.

Alternative Education Settings - ARESC partners with seven districts to provide personalized support utilizing six different approaches to meet individual student needs.

- **Focus Academy** is a traditional alternative setting and serves students in grades 5-12 who are identified with two or more characteristics for placement in ALE and very often exhibit behavior challenges. These students often need intensive support in multiple areas with an intent to transition back to their traditional school setting.
- **Flex Academy** serves students in grades 9-12 who are in need of a very personalized schedule and support. These students are often in life circumstances such as pregnancy, financial crisis, anxiety, medical, and other life situations that have let them short of required credits for graduation. Our staff works to create an individualized plan for each

student and provide necessary support with schedule flexibility enabling completion of high school.

- **Compass Academy** - As requested by school districts outside of our region, ARESC worked to establish and provide an educational setting to meet the needs of individual students utilizing appropriate resources. This is a Tier 2 site that functions much like Focus and Flex but serves students in districts south of our region. **Explore Academy** serves students in grades 7-9 who have been identified as needing intensive academic and social support. An accelerated learning program utilizing hands-on STEM curriculum to improve academic and social skills during this critical transition from middle school to high school. The overall goals of this academy are to reduce drop-out rate, deliver two years of skills in one to catch them up, foster individual student responsibility for learning and behavior and to provide workplace readiness/career exposure with emphasis on soft skills and setting future goals.
- **After - Focus Academy** - This academy serves students in grades 7-12 as a lieu of expulsion opportunity. These students receive services through virtual instruction during the school day and participate in face-to-face tutoring and checkins throughout the week after the school hours. During the face-to-face afternoons, we provide meals, certified teachers, mental health support, and other support as needed.
- **Anchor Academy** - Students placed in our new Tier 3 academy receive more intensive and individualized support to improve behavioral and academic outcomes. The teacher student ratio does not exceed 8:1. This academy functions much like a day treatment facility and is staffed and resourced according to student needs.

Support Staff - Recognizing that critical team members for ensuring the success of our schools is not limited to certified staff, we provided full days of professional development in support of the following:

- **Administrative Assistants**- The morning time of this session focused on the "who, what, why, and how" of customer service. We provided two dates for this training to better meet the needs of our districts and their schedules. Topics included were communication skills, customer-centric conflict resolution, and tips for providing excellent service with every interaction. The afternoon focused on how important and what is needed to cause parents and students to choose their schools.
- **Bus Drivers** - Based on professional collaborations during our various job-alike groups we established a need for bus drivers to receive support in their knowledge and awareness of student disabilities and the overall behavior management plans on their buses. The first half of this day with bus drivers focused on
 - Relationships
 - Communication

- De-escalation Skills
- Power Struggles
- Student Disabilities
- Confidentiality
- Community Relations

The second half of our day was facilitated by our partners from DESE's Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation who provided required annual training for bus drivers. Through this collaborative effort and consolidation of training ARESC saved the DESE team from going to each of these participating districts.

- **Custodial and Maintenance Staff** - ARESC partnered with ASBA to provide training requirements outlined in the State Public School Facilities, Maintenance, Repair and Renovation Manual (Custodial and Maintenance Manual). Topics include: Chemical Right-to-Know, Back Safety, Bloodborne Pathogens, Slip/Trip/Falls, Heat Stress, Groundskeeping Safety, and PPE. During the first half of the day. The second half included mandated asbestos training for new hires, HAZCOM(Right-To-Know), and the annual review required for all custodians.
- **Paraprofessionals**- Our staff facilitated training titled Step 1 of Your para-PROFESSIONAL Journey. Topics included the following:
 - Confidentiality, FERPA, and HIPAA
 - Classroom and Behavior Management
 - Paraeducator Roles and Responsibilities in the Classroom
 - Working with Official and Immediate Supervisors
 - Developing Positive Communication Skills

Asynchronous follow-up support and training was made available to schools through a purchased subscription allowing for on-demand and employee centered support to be available throughout the school year.

Service To Community - Service is in our name. Our mission is to be the heart of learning, leadership, innovation, and prosperity. ARESC partners in many community service initiatives.

- **Arkansas Children's Week Family Play Day** ARESC staff members representing Early Childhood, HIPPY, PAT, SafeCare, Oakwood Pre-school, and Local Leads collaborated with various community organizations to plan and conduct Arkansas Children's Week Family Fun Day at a local church. Children from birth to teenagers attended a carnival atmosphere. Children played games, visited booths, received books, and other educational materials.
- **Curious George Summer Camp** - For the past six years, ARESC has proudly hosted the Curious George Summer Camp, fostering a strong tradition of literacy and learning. In

June 2026, the cooperative will continue this impactful program, offering preschool-aged children an engaging, thematic experience designed to strengthen literacy skills and promote school readiness.

The camp serves 4- and 5-year-olds residing in the Pine Bluff and Watson Chapel attendance zones of Jefferson County. Both Pine Bluff and Watson Chapel school districts are designated as Community Eligible Free and Reduced Lunch Program schools, ensuring accessibility for families in need. This six-week program prioritizes children currently enrolled in Oakwood Preschool, with special focus on those entering kindergarten in August 2025. A total of 40 students will benefit from dynamic, theme-based instruction, delivered in two onsite classrooms, each accommodating 20 participants per session.

The goals of “Join Curious George to Learn About Your Community” are aligned to the domains found in the Brigance Screen III for 4 and 5 year olds: Academic/Cognitive in Literacy, Language Development, and Physical Development. We provide a high-quality, engaging learning camp that emphasizes vocabulary development, provides real-life experiences, and fosters a love of reading. In addition, the camp provides opportunities to focus on mathematics, social skills, STEAM activities, and social-emotional development through the learning experiences of Curious George.

Students participate in a pre- and post-assessment to determine vocabulary enrichment activities and measure growth. Informal assessments will be conducted daily by teacher interaction (guided discussion) and parental feedback (home activity and discussion).

The implementation of camp day includes healthy snacks and lunch, auditory rest time, book walk, circle time, shared reading, guided physical activity, fine arts activity, role-playing, teacher guided lessons (connecting, modeling, recalling, predicting, summarizing), and an off-campus community visit that includes role-playing. Each day focuses on a specific Curious George book and field trip adventure in the community.

- *Curious George at the Fire Station* (Visit local fire station, engage a firefighter to read the book, tour fire station, learn Stop-Drop-Roll)
- *Curious George Visits the Library* (Visit local library, receive a library card, read time with librarian, locate the Curious George section)
- *Curious George at the Railroad Station* (Visit Arkansas Railroad Museum, tour types of trains, ride a train, and the conductor will read the book)
- *Curious George Has a Birthday Party* (Children plan and decorate for a birthday party and attend the birthday party.)
- *Curious George Gets a Job* (Visit from community employers.)
- *Curious George Makes a Pizza* (Visit local pizza restaurant to learn about making pizzas)
- *Curious George Goes Swimming* (Visit Aquatic Center, learn about water safety)
- *Curious George Goes Fishing* (Visit Delta Nature Center to learn about habitats and environments of Arkansas Fish - Arkansas Game and Fish)

At the beginning of camp, students are given a backpack and a community visit companion (*Teach Me Curious George*). The companion accompanies each student through the camp. At the end of each day, students read to the companion and are responsible for caring for the companion. Students leave each day with a copy of the book of the day, accompanying nonfiction books, and a supporting parental involvement activity.

- **ARESC Fall Festival** - Every October, ARES hosts a community Literacy and learning festival. The target audience is families enrolled in Parents as Teacher, HIPPY, Early Childhood Special Services, and area Preschool Centers. We have literacy stations set up throughout ARES, children go through mazes and tunnels, music and dance corner and make and take corners. ARES staff dress up according to the book that they are reading. Children leave with books, learning activities, nutrition snacks, and etc.
- **ARESC Health Fair** - Every October, ARES hosts a community health fair. The target audience is families enrolled in Parents as Teacher, HIPPY, Early Childhood Special Services, and area Preschool Centers. We offer Flu shots, COVID vaccines, adult health screenings, blood pressure check stations, cholesterol and glucose check stations, height/weight checks, child health screenings for birth to 6 years of age, well-child health screening, vision screening, hearing screening, and health and nutrition information, and literacy materials for all participants. Our partners include the Arkansas Minority Health Commission, Jefferson County Health Department, UAMS - AHEC, UAMS - Audiologist Department, SEARK Nursing Department, and the Sheridan Lions Club. We host an average of 400 attendees at ARES each year.
- **Excelby8** - Excelby8 is focused on building a reliable resource grid where all Arkansas families and communities have what they need to thrive. Excelby8 communities are local models for change. Parents, educators, health professionals, and other community members identify gaps in their resource grids and develop strategies for improving child outcomes. ARES led efforts to establish Jefferson County as an official Excelby8 Community. Jefferson County is led by Cathi Swan at the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative. The steering committee has been formalized and includes representatives from K-12 education, health, home visiting, business, philanthropy, and higher education. In 2024, the local steering committee launched the research phase of the E8 process, gathering community input on priority areas by hosting data walk events and talking with parents, educators, service providers, and other stakeholders who work on behalf of families with children ages 0-8. Data walks are gallery-style presentations of statistics related to boxes on the E8 resource grid. Excelby8 presents initial data to participants and asks them to react. This helps us better understand where children are excelling and where we may need to shore up local resources. ARES staff attended the 2024 Excelby8 conference and intends to ramp up this committee action in 2025-2026 by reconvening around gathering community-wide data. Our committee took a break from officially meeting during 2025-2026 but continued to work on literacy and community efforts with intent to ramp back up in the coming year.

Excelby8 Steering Committee for Jefferson County:

Chair - Cathi Swan, Chair, Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative
Committee Members

Peter Austin, Jefferson Regional Medical Center
Jennifer Barbaree, Pine Bluff School District
OPEN, Southeast Arkansas College
Dr. Kimberly Davis, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
Jason Duren, United Way of Southeast Arkansas
Sherri James, Southeast Arkansas Behavioral Healthcare System
Angela Lopez, Arkansas Department of Human Services
Dr. Sarper Turker, Arkansas Lighthouse Charter Schools
Chad Pitillo, Simmons Bank
Allison Thompson, Jefferson County Alliance
Dr. Gary Williams, White Hall School District
Dr. Keith McGee, Watson Chapel School District

Summer Camp - “Breakout Bonanza” is a two-week summer day program held from June 8-11 and June 15-18, 2026 and hosted by ARESC. The camp was developed for students entering 5-8th grades in 2026-2207 who are interested in science, engineering, art, innovation and escape rooms.

Students are exploring how technology, science, engineering, and mathematics are utilized in developing and creating ingenious puzzles to baffle and entertain. Students will utilize circuitry and programming along with math, science and artistic skills to develop challenging escape room puzzles. They will combine those puzzles into a unique theme-based storyline for another student to solve.

Students will understand how STEAM subjects are utilized in the design of escape rooms via the following objectives”

- Students will understand the steps in a plan-design-implement-test cycle.
- Students will utilize appropriate technology to plan, design and build puzzles for an escape room
- Students will engage in the engineering cycle multiple times to create and test multiple puzzles.
- Students will utilize creative/artistic skills when designing appropriate rigorous puzzles.
- Students will utilize mathematical concept both in the design and construction of their puzzles and in the premise of the puzzles themselves.

Meeting Unique Needs - ARESC serves three non-traditional student populations.

1. ARESC serves a unique population at Arkansas Correctional School School District (ACS). With recent emphasis on Science of Reading and Dyslexia, we continue to support a

comprehensive plan to identify and provide interventions for adult learners in need. Further support for ACS has been customized SoR training through RISE 3-6 sessions scheduled and delivered specifically for their staff.

2. Another unique population served by ARESC is the Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD). One barrier that has often prevented their staff from participating in events at ARESC has been the cost of interpreters. Our cooperative has worked with ADE to secure this funding which has allowed a huge increase in ASD participation in our services. Our specialists also work to schedule and customize sessions to meet their needs.
3. Our newest cooperative member with unique needs is the Arkansas Division of Youth Services. ARESC's primary support to this population is the screening, assessments and support necessary for students who might have the characteristics of dyslexia. As with the two schools mentioned above, innovative plans of support are a must.

Human Capital Support - Human capital support continues to be a high priority in our region. One of the strategies being utilized by ARESC is regularly scheduled collaboratives that have a timely focus and support.

- Recruitment and Hiring – Attracting, screening, interviewing, and selecting qualified teachers, administrators, and support staff.
- Onboarding and Induction – Supporting new employees through orientation, mentoring, and transition programs.
- Employee Retention – Implementing strategies to improve job satisfaction, engagement, and staff retention.
- Professional Learning and Development – Coordinating training, coaching, leadership development, and continuing education opportunities.
- Performance Management – Overseeing employee evaluations, feedback systems, and improvement plans.
- Talent Management and Succession Planning – Identifying and developing future leaders and critical talent within the district.
- Licensure and Certification Compliance – Monitoring educator credentials and ensuring compliance with state requirements.
- Compensation and Benefits – Managing salary schedules, benefits programs, and employee incentives.
- Employee Relations – Addressing workplace concerns, conflict resolution, investigations, and labor relations.
- Human Resources Data and Reporting – Maintaining personnel records, analyzing workforce metrics, and supporting data-driven decision-making.
- Attendance and Leave Management – Administering employee leave, absences, and attendance policies.
- Recognition and Wellness Programs – Promoting employee well-being, morale, and recognition initiatives.

District Job Alike Meetings - ARESC hosts monthly district job alike meetings designed to provide collaborative professional support for educators and district leaders across a variety of specialized roles. These meetings bring together professionals in district office HR, district office administration, curriculum and federal program, technology coordinator, behavioral support, special education, library media service, and transportation to share current information, discuss emerging trends, and strengthen professional practice. Sessions focus on changing rules and regulations, compliance update, best practices, grant opportunity and evolving responsibility associated with each position. The Job Alike format encourages networking, problem solving, resource sharing and regional collaboration to help sites remain informed, efficient, and student focused throughout the school year.

Fingerprinting Services - Fingerprinting is a service that isn't considered a high profile service but is very important to our cooperative area and beyond. During the past year our staff has fingerprinted 649 individuals that work for and/or attend the following school districts and universities.

Arkansas Correctional School
Arkansas Virtual Academy
Benton School District
Brinkley School District
Camden School District
Clarendon School District
Cleveland County School District
Conway School District
Dewitt School District
Dumas School District
El Dorado School District
England School District
ESTEM Public Charter School
Fayetteville School District
Fordyce School District
Forrest City School District
Friendship Aspire Academy
Hazen School District
Hot Springs School District
Jacksonville School District
Lighthouse Charter Schools
Little Rock School District
Palestine-Wheatley School District
Pine Bluff School District

Pulaski County School District
Sheridan School District
Star City School District
Strong-Huttig School District
Stuttgart School District
Watson Chapel School District
White Hall School District
Woodlawn School District
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
University of Central Arkansas
Retired(lifetime)
Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative
Subs- SubTeach
Teach For America

Paraprofessional Testing for High School Students -

While many parts of our state are experiencing teacher shortages for the first time, our area is in a crisis mode when it comes to attracting teachers. One promising solution is Educators Rising. Educators Rising is a career and technical student organization (CTSO) with intra-curricular learning opportunities integrated into existing education and training programs. Educators Rising is a community-based movement that provides Grow Your Own programming through the Educators Rising Curriculum and supporting student activities. Chapters are provided classroom resources along with the opportunity to attend the National Conference where members, teacher leaders, and educators from around the nation come together to showcase the skills they have gained in their education and training programs. Area schools with this program bring their students to ARESC to take the ParaPro exam as part of their certification pathway. During the past year we proctored the exam for 14 students from White Hall and Sheridan High Schools who we hope will become licensed educators.

Para Testing for Adults- A total of 19 adults tested on location at Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative. Paras represented the following districts: Sheridan, Pulaski County, White Hall, Watson Chapel ,Stuttgart, Pine Bluff, and Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind.

Title IX Investigation - The US Department of Education released Title IX requirements that became effective August 14, 2020. As a result of these requirements, area school districts requested that ARESC create an investigative team as well as a group of decision makers to be part of their required Title IX Personnel Team. Through partnerships with ADE and Bequette, Billingsley, & Kees, P.A. we have created cadres of investigators and decision makers with ongoing training and support. While this effort began prior to this past school year it is ongoing with recruitment of new investigators and decision makers

along with necessary training.

Star Academies of Arkansas - Arkansas River ESC continues to be the HUB site for Star Academy facilitation and implementation for Arkansas school districts. Star Academy is a dynamic STEM-driven, hands-on learning program proven to advance and inspire students who will thrive in a non-traditional learning environment. The program's project-based and technology delivered curriculum re-engages students while integrating hands-on learning with relevant career applications. Through their core curriculum courses, students work independently and collaboratively to develop leadership, and employability skills. While enrolled at Star Academy, students will be exposed to 100+ careers and build vital success skills such as teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving. These essential skills help them improve not only their academic performance, but prepare them for today's workforce. Proven at more than 78 sites over 15 years, Star Academy has marked the turning point in the lives of tens of thousands of students across the United States.

ARESC Program Descriptions

PROGRAM: Accounting

FUNDING SOURCE: State and Local

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK Correctional School, Arkansas Department of Youth Services, Pine Bluff SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT ***We also support several statewide and regional initiatives that go beyond our Cooperative boundaries.**

PERSONNEL: Cynthia, McDonald, Business Manager, BS/Katherine Pye, Accounts Payable, BA

GOALS: To provide financial support to all programs and participating districts of the cooperative.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

2025-2026 State Funding Source

Base Funding \$408,618

K-12 Content Specialist Grant \$270,000

Technology Center Grant \$80,000

HIPPY \$1,015,184

Early Childhood Special Education \$1,222,994.91

Parents as Teachers \$113,640

ArPEP Grant \$27,300

Novice Teacher Grant \$161,000

Team Digital \$40,000

AEGIS Build a Better Future \$19,315

Pre-K \$699,980

Safe Care \$220,000

EL Program Support \$15,690

Transportation Modernization \$1,102,500

Master Teacher 2.0 \$75,000

Digital Learning \$80,000

2025-2026 Federal Funding Sources

Medicaid \$45,867.85

HIPPY/PAT MIECHV \$333,000

EC Local Lead \$187,500

Pre-K \$128,450

PROGRAM: ADE/APSCN Student Applications Field Analyst FUNDING

SOURCE: State

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL

DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS SCHOOL, PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Linda Burt, APSCN Student Field Analyst, AA

Christelle Haddox, APSCN Student Field Analyst, BA

Carolynn Gunn, APSCN Financial Applications

GOALS: To provide end-user support to district student users of the SMS

statewide student management system, Cognos reports, and meeting statewide guidelines.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Student Applications Field Analyst provides services to districts within Arkansas that utilize the SMS statewide student management system software. The software is used to store district, school, and student data. Student Management Systems Applications is computer software used primarily to process and maintain student records. The SunGard Pentamotion student management systems applications provided by APSCN include: Demographics, Attendance, Scheduling, Report Cards, Discipline and Medical. With the use of nine cycles yearly, districts electronically submit data to the ADE. The student field analyst provides districts with consulting and training workshops through meetings at the Cooperative, school visits, and communicating closely by email and telephone. Various training offered throughout the year include, but are not limited to, SMS Required Fields for State Reporting, New Personnel, Cognos Report Writing, Next Year Scheduling, and Year End Rollover. The Financial Applications Analyst provides services to districts within Arkansas that utilize the software that stores district and school financial information.

PROGRAM: ArPEP

FUNDING SOURCE: State Grant

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS SCHOOL, PINE BLUFF/DOLLARWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Bill Shelly, ArPEP Site Facilitator, MSE

GOALS: To provide support and training to local school district ArPEP candidates. To maintain accurate records including attendance and grades in the Google Classroom platform. To communicate with DESE and provide consistent communication between DESE and the local ArPEP site.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: The ArPEP Site Facilitator facilitates the ArPEP Google Classroom site modules by retaining qualified instructors, maintaining accurate attendance records, grading assignments and maintaining accurate records of those grades and providing support and guidance to local ArPEP candidates. The Site Facilitator acts as a liaison between the Department of Education and local candidates.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

Continued quality services through face-to-face meetings and 1-on-1 support.

Served 19 local teachers in the Year 1 and Year 2 cadres.

100% of candidates were employed in local school districts during the program.

100% of candidates who submitted edTPA portfolios received passing scores.

PROGRAM: Behavior Support Specialist

FUNDING SOURCE: Federal-Part B

COMPETITIVE GRANT: Yes ____ No X__

RESTRICTED FUNDING: X____ **NON-RESTRICTED FUNDING:** _____

PERSONNEL:

Behavior Support Specialist Coordinator: Shelia Smith, Ph.D., L.P., BCBA-D

Behavior Support Specialists:

Shana Bailey, M.S.
Jennifer Brewer, Ed.S.
Sandy Crawley, M.S.E
Kelly Davis, M.Ed., BCBA
Sonia Hartsfield M.Ed.
Audrey Kengla, M.S., CCC-SLP
Amanda Kirby, M.S.E.
Kat Lancaster, M.A., CCC-SLP, BCBA
Lindsey Lovelady, M.S., BCBA
Allison Mears, LPC., BCBA
Nicheyta Raino, M.Ed., BCBA
Jenna Stapp, M.A.T.
Connie Thomason, M.Ed., BCBA
Mary Walter, Ed.S., SPS

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS: Statewide

GOAL: In an effort to support the DESE vision, mission, and goals, the Arkansas Behavior Support Specialists build local district capacity by providing educators with support and services needed to implement evidenced-based behavioral practices that meet the needs of all students.

BX3 PROJECT GOAL:

- BX3 is a capacity-building project that provides coaching to school behavior teams working to develop tiered systems of positive behavior supports for all students.

PROGRAM: Career and Technical

FUNDING SOURCE: Local

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Deolinda Branch, Career & Technical Education Coordinator. BA, MS

GOALS: During the academic year 2025-2026 the Arkansas Department of Education - Division of Career & Technical Education (ADE-DCTE) implemented year 1 of its “Pathway Revisions” plan, which seeks to better align CTE pathways with industry demands. This process included an in-depth review of existing pathways using guidance from the LEARNS Act and Advance CTE’s New Career Cluster Framework along with labor market data in order to ensure CTE programs continue to meet the current needs of the Arkansas workforce. This process has included revising existing pathways, merging pathways, deleting existing pathways, as well as identifying new pathways that will continue to prepare students for

enrollment, enlistment and employment. Full implementation of the “Pathway Revisions” will take four years, concluding in academic year 2028-2029 by phasing out deleted pathways and fully incorporating new pathways into the offerings available to students.

In seeking to continuously align CTE pathways to workforce needs, DCTE will ensure that Arkansas students will be provided the education and necessary training of both technical and durable skills to succeed in our global economy. Thus, preparing them for the high-skill, high-wage and high-demand careers which today’s economy demands.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: During academic year 2025-2026, the ARESC CTE Coordinator encouraged the development, implementation, and improvement of CTE programs for our districts by establishing working relationships with district and building leadership, counselors, local workforce board, CTE teachers and DCTE assigned-Regional Specialist. This was achieved through face-to-face meetings, school visits, fielding questions via phone/zoom and providing CTE guidance and support according to State and federal guidelines.

The CTE Coordinator worked closely with ARESC Perkins Board consortia to finalize and implement our annual Perkins Grant budget. This responsibility included overseeing and managing Perkins Grant funding and carrying out the approved activities and assisting with approvable reimbursements to consortia member districts.

The CTE Coordinator assisted with Perkins data collection and reporting which include student certification reports, post-secondary placement reporting, as well as other data used to complete the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) report. CLNA information is gathered based on guidance from ADE-DCTE Perkins Manuals, Operational Guides, and Policy & Procedure Manuals. The CTE Coordinator connected with and attended various events with regional workforce stakeholders, educators, business and industry representatives and other community stakeholders in order to gather relevant information needed to create a CLNA report that reflects both the needs and growth opportunities of school districts within the ARESC Perkins Consortia.

In support of program implementation, the CTE Coordinator worked closely with two local school districts to submit an application for the State’s Modernization Grant. Both applications, Pre-Educator and Plant Systems Pathways, were approved and the two districts will use these additional funds during the next academic year (26-27) to strengthen these pathways and update needed equipment thus leading to better learning opportunities for students.

PROGRAM: Compass Academy

FUNDING SOURCE: Local

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS: Cleveland County School District, Fordyce School District, Woodlawn School District

PERSONNEL:

Dylan Harris, Principal, M. Ed.

Holley Wilson, Teacher, MSE

Gennaifer Ashcraft, Administrative Assistant/LPN

James, Virden, SRO/CSSO

GOALS: The goal of Compass Academy is to provide a personalized and flexible educational experience that meets the academic, social, and emotional needs of a diverse student population.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: Compass Academy, under the direction of the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative (ARESC), is an alternative education program designed to re-engage students who face challenges in the traditional school setting, such as academic struggles, truancy, credit recovery, and personal obstacles. We provide a supportive environment where students can reconnect with learning, build confidence, and take ownership of their education. Each student at Compass Academy has an individualized Student Action Plan that aligns academic goals with social-emotional growth, behavior expectations, and post-secondary planning. These plans are developed collaboratively with each student and are regularly reviewed to reflect progress, challenges, and changing needs. By meeting students where they are, Compass Academy empowers them to get back on track, meet graduation requirements, and successfully transition to the next phase of life—whether it is returning to their home campus, entering the workforce, or pursuing higher education.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year - In its second year of operation, Compass Academy built a stronger foundation for student growth and success, providing a safe, flexible, and supportive learning environment where students recovered credits, improved attendance, and reconnected with their goals. Compass Academy proudly celebrated the graduation of three students this year, each overcoming significant challenges to meet this milestone. Three Compass Academy students met both academic and behavioral goals and were successfully transitioned back to their sending schools. Students at Compass Academy demonstrated an average growth of 1 grade level in math and 2 grade levels in ELA over the academic year, as measured by IXL Diagnostics. The greatest growth of an individual student was 5 grade levels in math and 6 grade levels in ELA, as measured by IXL diagnostics. Compass Academy students successfully recovered several units of credit, bringing them closer to meeting their graduation requirements. Compass Academy staff worked with a local community to create a quarterly birthday celebration event for students by providing cakes and drinks for all students and celebrating the birthdays for the past three months. Compass Academy students received Life Skills instruction in areas such as goal-setting, career interests, social/emotional development, resume writing, and mock interviews.

PROGRAM: Computer Science

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education Grant – Act 220 of 2017

Competitive Grant: Yes

Restricted: Yes

Statewide

Personnel:

Name: Brian Lawhon
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree:

Name: Alex Moeller
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree:

Name: Ashley Kincannon
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree: Ed.S.

Name: Joshua Rodgers
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree:

Name: John Hart
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree: MLIS

Name: Stacy Reynolds
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree: MSE

Name: Zachary Spink
Position: Statewide CS Lead Specialist
Degree: MSE

Name: Tammy Glass
Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree:

Goals:

The ADE DCTE Office of Computer Science's established goals and associated tasks for computer science education implementation in Arkansas are divided into five categories:

1. Standards, Curriculum, and Pathways - Successful implementation of computer science education in Arkansas requires the development and periodic revision of a comprehensive and vertically articulated set of K-12 computer science curriculum standards and courses, the local creation of well-developed curriculum that supports student learning, proper alignment of the K-12 expectations and opportunities to industry needs, and appropriate K-20 pathway development for students seeking formal computer science education beyond high-school.

2. Educator Development and Training - Successful implementation of computer science education in Arkansas requires the ADE and its partner organizations to anticipate and address the needs of the Arkansas educational system with regards to knowledgeable and informed computer science teachers. ADE in collaboration with the Arkansas Educational Cooperatives and other partners must support quality computer science educator development and training opportunities for all Arkansas Educators and Administrators.

3. Licensure - Successful implementation of computer science education in Arkansas requires the ADE and its partner organizations to anticipate and address the needs of the Arkansas educational system with regards to licensed and endorsed computer science teachers. ADE will continue and further research and implement, when appropriate, flexible licensure pathways and practices, based on legislation and regulation.

4. Outreach and Promotion - Successful implementation of computer science education in Arkansas requires the active use of a broad range of mediums, digital tools, and human networks to properly communicate about the Arkansas Computer Science Education Initiative and respond to the needs and concerns of Arkansas students, educators, community members, and industry leaders.

5. Program Growth and Student Success - Successful implementation of computer science education in Arkansas requires encouraging broad school implementation, supporting lighthouse schools to expand their programs, increasing statewide teacher capacity, growing student interest, and increasing stakeholder interest and support using innovative programs and outreach initiatives.

Program Summary:

Education Service Cooperatives, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education, administers the Computer Science Support Program for grades K-12 (Support for Integrating the Embedded K-8 Standards; Middle School Introduction to Coding: Grades 5-8; and High School CS). In the interest of providing Arkansas educators with access to quality computer science (CS) professional development (PD), the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Office of Computer Science provided grants for ten Computer Science Specialists beginning in 2017. The computer science specialists each serve the CS PD needs state-wide for all ESCs, and Public School Districts. Assistance is provided to local school district educators through PD services including sessions (ADE developed & customized based on needs assessments) at the Cooperative as well as support on-site in living the mission and striving for the vision of Computer Science Instruction in Arkansas.

Vision

All Arkansas students actively engaging in a superior and appropriate computer science education

Mission

To facilitate Arkansas's transition to becoming and remaining a national leader in computer science education and technology careers

PD Offered:

- Computer Science Impact Meeting
- High School Computer Science Certification and Preparation
- Autonomous Vehicle Workshop @ UCA
- Python Programming for Year 1 - High School CS Professional
- Python Programming for Year 2 & 3 - High School CS Professional Development
- Business Intelligence - High School CS/Business Professional
- Cybersecurity for Year 1 - High School CS Professional Development
- Cybersecurity for Year 2 & 3 - High School CS Professional
- Robotics for Year 1 - High School CS Professional Development
- Robotics for Year 2 & 3 - High School CS Professional Development
- Mobile Application Development for Year 1 - High School CS Professional Development
- Computer Science Planning and Pacing for Middle and High School
- Middle School Intro to Coding: Learn Text-Based Code (Formerly Coding Block)
- Computer Science: Teaching K-4
- Computer Science: Teaching 5-8
- Data Science for Year 1 - High School CS Professional Development
- Data Science for Year 2 & 3 - High School CS Professional Development
- Game Development and Design for Year 1 - High School CS
- Game Development and Design for Year 2 & 3 - High School CS Professional Development
- Computer Science: Intro to Block-Based Coding
- Computer Science: Transition to Text-based Coding
- Computer Engineering for Year 1 - High School CS Professional Development
- Networking for Year 1 - High School CS Professional Development
- Precision Agriculture
- Introduction to AI
- EAST Raspberry Pi
- EAST Circuit Playground

Conference Presentations:

- State TSA Conference

- Arkansas Association for Career and Technical Education
- ADE Summit
- AEA PD Conference
- HSTI
- EAST Conference

Events/Committees/Projects Assisted with:

- National Computer Science Education Week – Scheduled daily activities with local districts - December 2025
- Regional Capture the Flag Events
- TSA State Conference – March 2025
- Support of Robotics Competitions (VEX, FIRST) March 2025
- All-State Coding Competition April 2025
- SkillsUSA April 2025

Major Highlights of the Year:

- Revised pathways and standards across all CS courses
- Supported the work of the Data Science HIRED grant and the Cybersecurity HIRED grant
- Mentoring students across the state in Unity game development.
- Assisted with regional Stakeholder Meetings
- Provided training to annual ADE Counselor sessions
- Provided CS training to over 1853 education professionals and 8311 students.
- Lead Judge and Coding Challenge Creator for All-Region and All-State Coding Competition.
- Provided digital capture the flag events at schools and cooperatives around the state
- Administration statewide site visits for implementation of ACT 414
- Continued growth, development, and support of TSA
- Computer Science Completer Cords
- State of Computer Science Education Report - Code.org
- Partnered in the creation of new computer science related CTE courses

ONGOING SUPPORT:

- Specialists are in the process of revamping trainings for the upcoming summer
- Specialists have increased the number of professional development offerings as well as developed and will deliver several new trainings this summer..
- Specialists are currently working to visit all 260 districts to help support their implementation of ACT 414. This work will continue through the remainder of the year and summer.
 - o For districts who already have computer science programs in place, specialists are working to identify ways to grow and develop their program to fit their needs.

PROGRAM: Digital Learning – Virtual Arkansas (2025-2026 Academic Year)

FUNDING SOURCE: ADE Grant – Act

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

Districts	Served (Yes or No)
ARK. CORRECTIONAL SCHOOL	No
ARK. SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF	Yes
PINE BLUFF/DOLLARWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes

CENTRAL OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL:

John Ashworth: Virtual Arkansas Executive Director; EdS, MS, BS

Mindy Looney: Virtual Arkansas Interim Director of Operations; BS, MBA

Candice McPherson: Virtual Arkansas Director of Design and Development; MS, BS

Amy Kirkpatrick: Virtual Arkansas Director of Technology; MS, BS

Jason Bohler: Core Campus Principal; MA, BA

Samantha Carpenter: Concurrent Credit Campus Principal; EdS, MS, BA

Christie Lewis: CTE Campus Director; BBA, MS

Rachael Walston: Learn Anywhere Principal; MS, BS

MISSION: Equip, engage, and empower Arkansas schools, students, and teachers by providing equitable access to superior online education.

VISION: Leveraging local, national, and global partnerships to advance students and educator success through innovative technologies and services.

CORE VALUES: Teamwork, Relationships, Integrity, Quality, Innovation

GOALS:

Virtual Arkansas exists to provide affordable and equitable educational access and opportunities for Arkansas students, teachers, and schools. According to *Act 2325 of 2005*, distance learning opportunities were employed:

- To help alleviate the teacher shortage
- To provide additional course-scheduling opportunities for students
- To provide an opportunity to access an enriched curriculum
- To develop and make available online professional development

Virtual Arkansas has specific goals that drive its operations. These goals are outlined in the chart below, along with the most recent results:

Goals	2025-2026 Results
Help Address the Arkansas Teacher Shortage	- VA made courses available in all critical academic licensure shortage areas - VA provided access to 97 full-time Arkansas certified teachers for local schools
Provide a Wide Range of Courses for Arkansas Students	- VA provided access to 214 total courses; 151 courses with a VA teacher - These courses provided opportunities to 29,170 Content + Teacher enrollments and 16,500 Content Partnership enrollments
Ensure Educational Options for Economically Disadvantaged Students	- VA courses were made available to all high-poverty districts and were utilized by 90% of all Arkansas school districts with a 70% or higher FRL population - VA offered preferred automatic concurrent credit registration for high-poverty districts. 100% of high-poverty schools that submitted the necessary paperwork for enrollment during the early registration period were granted seats in the classes for which they registered
Ensure Educational Options for Rural Students	- 59% of all Virtual Arkansas Content + Teacher Enrollments were from districts designated as rural - VA provided educational options and opportunities to all rural districts and was utilized by 97% of all districts designated as rural - 79% of all Concurrent Credit enrollments were from districts designated as rural
Provide Educational Options for Students with Scheduling	- All VA courses can be taken at any time during the day, which provides flexibility in scheduling local course options to avoid scheduling conflicts

Conflicts	- This is particularly important for smaller districts, as they have many courses only available during certain periods of the day
Maintain Positive Customer Support Ratings	- Virtual Arkansas had a 100% positive rating in customer support/service measures on the 2023-2024 perception survey to administrators and counselors.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Virtual Arkansas is a supplemental state virtual program that partners with local Arkansas schools, the Arkansas Department of Education, and the local Education Service Cooperatives to provide 6th-12th grade online courses, resources, and services to Arkansas schools, teachers, and students who might not otherwise have access to these resources and opportunities. This initiative is guided by Act 2325 of 2005: An Act to Provide Distance Learning.

www.virtualarkansas.org

We are not an online high school or a diploma-granting institution, but a resource for supplementing education for students through their local school.

Virtual Arkansas is comprised of five campuses:

- Core Campus High School: Arch Ford Educational Service Cooperative
- Core Campus Middle School: Arch Ford Educational Service Cooperative
- CTE Campus: Dawson Educational Service Cooperative
- Concurrent Credit Campus: Southeast Educational Service Cooperative
- DYS Campus: Arch Ford Educational Service Cooperative

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year - Virtual Arkansas

- Provided 100% virtual student options for local schools through the Learn Anywhere Academy (LAA).
- Provided parent orientation webinars and informational webinars throughout the school year.
- Recognized as a national leader, including the second highest number of Quality Matters externally reviewed and quality assurance certified courses in the nation for state virtual programs.
- Partnered with the Department of Youth Services (DYS) to provide high-quality online courses and opportunities to adjudicated youth.
- Spearheaded the state effort to include a new Arkansas Military Service and Security Pathway for students interested in a military future. Had over 170% enrollment growth between year 1 and year 2.
- Executive Director completed his role as Board President for the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA), a partnership of 20 state virtual programs dedicated to advancing quality online learning, after 6 years of service.
- Designed and developed the America 250 teaching and learning resources utilized by schools, families, and students throughout the state.

- Partnered with the Arkansas Department of Education to design and develop facilitator materials for the ArPEP program.
- Supported DESE in the launch of the Course Choice program.
- Virtual Arkansas offers 5 full H2 pathways and an additional 6 H2 pathways with at least 2 levels of courses

Virtual Arkansas Data (Based on 2024-2025 School Year)

- Helped Arkansas school districts and programs save over \$78,000,000 since 2014
- Saved Arkansas school districts over \$5.2 million during the 2024-2025 school year in its Content + Teacher and Content Partnership services
- Have served over 360,000 Content + Teacher enrollments since 2013
- Virtual Arkansas Students had a 93% Pass Rate
- 12,485 Unique Arkansas Students served by Virtual Arkansas
- 78% of Virtual Arkansas teachers have a Master's degree or above
- 165 Content+Teacher courses available to students throughout Arkansas
- Concurrent Credit students earned 8,283 College Concurrent Credit Hours
- 80% of Concurrent Credit enrollments from rural districts
- Career and Technical Education: 6,460 enrollments
- 2,510 Computer Science enrollments
- 2,589 Advanced Placement Enrollments
- 97% of all Arkansas Rural Districts Served by Virtual Arkansas
- 59% of all Virtual Arkansas Content + Teacher Enrollments From Districts Classified as Rural
- 94% of all Arkansas public school districts served

PROGRAM: Early Childhood Special Education

FUNDING SOURCE: Local School Districts

Funding Amount: \$1,222,994.91

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Laura Daniel/daniell@aresc.k12.ar.us Coordinator

Susan Brigham, EC Administrative Assistant - brighams@aresc.k12.ar.us

Kristi Allred, Registrar- allredk@aresc.k12.ar.us

Lindsey Burkett, Behavior Specialist - burkettl@aresc.k12.ar.us

Alicia Davidson, Speech Therapist - davidsona@aresc.k12.ar.us

Meagan Fenters, Speech Therapist - fentersm@aresc.k12.ar.us

Lauren Craine, EC SPED Teacher - crainel@aresc.k12.ar.us

Sheryl Donham, EC SPED Teacher - donhams@aresc.k12.ar.us
Marquita Young, EC SPED Teacher - youngm@aresc.k12.ar.us
Alyssa Hyatt, EC SPED Teacher - hyatta@aresc.k12.ar.us
Jennifer Rice, EC SPED Teacher - ricej@aresc.k12.ar.us
Beth Vansandt, EC SPED Teacher - vansandtb@aresc.k12.ar.us
Carlisha Treadwell, EC SPED Teacher - treadwellc@aresc.k12.ar.us
Catelyn Chadwick, Speech Therapist - chadwickc@aresc.k12.ar.us
Amy Main, EC SPED Teacher - maina@aresc.k12.ar.us
Sharee Britton, EC SPED Teacher - brittons@aresc.k12.ar.us
Lisa Prescott, Speech Therapist - prescottl@aresc.k12.ar.us
Whitney Wright, Speech Therapist - wrightw@aresc.k12.ar.us

GOALS: The goal of the Early Childhood Division is to identify, evaluate, and serve young children with developmental delays to ensure school readiness.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Early Childhood Division envisions learners ages 3 to 5 who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy and demonstrate academic readiness for future school success.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

- Expand inclusive preschool opportunities
- Increase early identification efforts
- Improve data tracking and outcomes
- Increase Kindergarten readiness rates
- Continue to provide high-quality, compliant services

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year

- *Delivered Child Find Packets to current centers
- *Participated in multiple child find activities/mass screenings
- *Established relationships with new centers
- *Participated in multiple professional development opportunities
- *Participated in ARESC Fall Festival
- *Participated in ARESC Annual Health Fair
- *Participated in ASEP fall conference

* The ARESC Early Childhood Special Services team provides the special education and related services for our traditional school district partners. We provide SLIDE Classrooms that allow parents that have children with multiple service appointments to schedule one session and receive them all. ARESC Early Childhood Special Services has 90 slots for children in the SLIDE classrooms.

- *Assists with Jefferson County Excelby8 Community.
- *Participates in the ARESC Early Learning Action Team.
- *Assists with the annual Curious George Summer Camp

Program: ESCWorks

Funding Source: Local

Competitive Grant: No

Participating Entities

Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative	Northcentral Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative	Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative
Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative	Northeast Arkansas Educational Cooperative	Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Crowley's Ridge Education Service Cooperative	Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative	
Dawson Education Service Cooperative	Ozarks Unlimited Resources Education Service Cooperative	
DeQueen/Mena Education Service Cooperative	South Central Service Cooperative	
Great Rivers Education Service Cooperative	Southeast Service Cooperative	
Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperative	Southwest Arkansas Education Cooperative	

Purpose - Since 2004, the escWorks platform has been used across the state to house professional development hours required by Arkansas law to renew and retain teaching licenses and certifications. escWorks is an event management software that can schedule and track professional development offerings online. It then produces reports to quickly and clearly communicate services provided or taken over time. The software is made up of multiple online modules designed to schedule events, manage data, and most importantly, keep track of educators professional development hours. Before escWorks was purchased, there was not a consistent and logistical platform to track educator professional development in Arkansas.

Goal - By using escWorks, Arkansas school districts and administrators can access professional development history from any educator at any location across the state. This platform allows for school districts to easily verify employment history and training when they are interviewing and selecting high-quality educators for open positions. Whether an educator has taught one year or twenty, they can use the platform to see their history of professional development and courses taken over their career. They can print transcripts and reports to keep in their personnel files or personal folders. Participants also have the ability to print a certificate of completion after a training session.

Additionally, after each training session, a professional development evaluation survey is sent to all participants. The surveys are identical in the platform and allow participants to share feedback about training that our staff or guest presenters instruct. Our cooperative staff and specialists use the data from these surveys to improve instruction and grow in methodology. We measure the level of implementation

of knowledge and skills participants had before and after attending the training. The comment section at the end of the survey is another tool we use to gain personal feedback from the teachers we support. It also allows us to closely inspect our practices and delivery methods.

Each Educational Cooperative assists their local school districts with escWorks in the following ways:

- Hosting training for new and veteran teachers on how to use the platform.
- Input training, meetings, and other events that participants can select to attend for yearly professional development.
- Check attendance records with district administration to make sure professional development requirements were met.
- Mark attendance in escWorks after a training is completed.
- Answer Help Desk questions that come from users of escWorks.
- Assist current and retired educators with obtaining records and reports.

Each of the fifteen Educational Service Cooperatives and the Arkansas Department of Education split the cost of this service each year. Approximately \$6,242.62 was paid by each entity for site maintenance and support FY25-26.

PROGRAM: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

FUNDING SOURCE: LEA Shared Services

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes

PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS: Statewide

PERSONNEL:

Name and Position	Degree
Maria Touchstone, ESOL Program Director	Master's Degree Educational Leadership

GOAL:

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (ADE) English Learner (EL) support program is the result of a collaboration among the Division of Learning Services' Curriculum and Instruction Unit and the Student Assessment Unit and the Division of Public School Accountability's Federal Programs Unit. This program's goal is to provide resources, support, and leadership to assist schools in their efforts to support ELs in the development of the skills needed to communicate effectively in English both in and out of school.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

ADE works with schools and Education Service Cooperatives to:

- provide assistance through the Teacher Center Coordinators for professional development of teachers and administrators in the implementation of effective English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program design and delivery
- assist, upon request, with school improvement program planning for ELs
- coordinate ESOL professional development training
- convene regional meetings of ESOL personnel to discuss strategies and share resources used to instruct ELs under the Arkansas State Standards

- implement and assess the Arkansas State Board of Education adopted English Language Proficiency Standards
- provide on-site technical assistance addressing ESOL techniques and strategies

Strategic Support Plan for Educators of ELs in Arkansas (ELL Grant)

Vision

Transform every classroom to foster a learning community where language and content learning are harnessed to create a vibrant space where ELs' linguistic and academic assets are celebrated and leveraged to guarantee student learning. This plan envisions educators becoming reflective practitioners and leaders who empower every student by skillfully and intentionally using on-grade-level HQIM to instruct and make data-informed instructional practices.

Action Steps

1. **Engagement:** Landscape Analysis Consult with personnel at the educational cooperatives to validate regional data-based needs and define localized priorities for districts based on EL population density. Priorities include the extent of student needs for English Language Development (ELD) and meaningful access to core content instruction.
2. **Vendor Selection:** Use the AR Professional Learning Partner Guide and previous relationships/knowledge of EL-centered PL vendors to select partners that demonstrate both successful past performance in working with educators of ELs in urban and rural settings.
3. **Monitor and Evolve:** Analyze existing monitoring systems (i.e. ATLAS and ELPA21 performance data) to determine EL-specific indicators for monitoring EL outcomes and professional learning impacts to fuel improvement cycles for short- and long-term educational cooperative support plan development.

Strategic Goals

1. **Responsive Vendor-Led Through-Year Professional Learning:** Tailor professional learning pathways based on educational cooperative EL population density. For instance, districts with high EL enrollments (e.g., Northwest at 51%) require scalable, intensive interventions for district and school-level leaders, whereas districts with lower concentrations (e.g., Southeast at 5%) benefit from focused, integrative communities of practice and teacher-level support.
2. **Selective, Impactful Partnerships:** Engage vendors and professional learning partners who demonstrate expertise in EL pedagogies for sustainable practice through direct teacher support in the classroom or, for high-density districts, building system and instructional support at the district, school, and classroom level.
 - Past partners such as E.L. Achieve and ED Northwest serve as models for these critical collaborations.
 - Review existing CBPL partnerships (AR Professional Learning Partner Guide) to determine where PL can be extended to an ELD-specific focus using existing school HQIM as the core content.
3. **Data-Informed Resource Allocation:** Use language proficiency (ELPA21), academic performance data (ATLAS or other), and EL population density information to drive strategic decisions for vendor support. This includes conducting targeted landscape analyses and setting up feedback loops that allow educational cooperatives to monitor progress against measurable outcomes.

Funding

Leverage existing categorical funds to provide grants to Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs) in each region. These ESCs will collaborate with DESE-approved vendors to deliver direct support to districts and schools. Funding distribution will be based on student density, academic performance (ATLAS), and

language development data (ELPA21) [see data/demographics information below]. Categorical funding for professional learning will be allocated at a rate of \$45.00 per pupil.

PROGRAM: Explore Academy

FUNDING SOURCE: Initial Program Cost: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families(TANF) Dropout Prevention Grant / Facilities,Staffing,Transportation Funding Source: Participating School Districts

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: X NON-RESTRICTED: PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE

SCHOOL DISTRICTS: PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL:

Brad Bateman, Campus Supervisor, MSE
Amanda Johnson, Assistant Principal, Counselor, MSE
Chelsea Sims, Teacher
Monya LaGrone, Teacher
Braden Owens, Electives Facilitator
Rebecca Mincy, Teacher
Mary Bush, Teacher
Cynthia Bullard, Mental Health Therapist

GOALS: An Alternative Education that provides a personalized accelerated learning environment where students can engage the curriculum with project-based learning.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

Students and Staff from Explore held their end of the school year awards day on May 28. Many students were recognized from attendance to academics to most improved. Students and staff from Explore Academy participated in a "Fun Day" on May 9 with games and snacks throughout the day to celebrate the work they have done this school year. Many former students attended and former students who are now 11th graders spoke to students about the things they learned while at Explore and encouraged students to make good decisions and work hard.

Increased attendance rate for 91% of students.

Students decreased write-ups and referrals to the office by 98% compared to the 23/24 school year to the 24/25 school year

9th grade students for first semester had a 100% completion and pass rate averaging 4.5 credits, projected for second semester finishing with at least 8 credits

Students were given I-Learns Assessment in Math. Based on projections the following was identified

Regardless of 7th, 8th or 9th grade, the earliest identified gap in critical concepts was around the beginning of 3rd grade. Math content in 3rd grade includes word problems and proportionality, rounding,

area and circumference, and fractions. All students on average increased in grade level by 3+ grade levels.

9th Grade

- Lessons mastered per hour in 2025 were 12% greater than in 2024, and Chapters mastered per hour were 35% greater.
- For Chapters taken (not challenged past), Chapter Pre to Post tests improved from 51% to 94%.

8th Grade

- Lessons mastered per hour, and Chapters mastered per hour in 2025 were each about 39% greater than in 2024.
- For Chapters taken (not challenged past), Chapter Pre to Post tests improved from 51% to 96%.

7th Grade

- Lessons mastered per hour in 2025 were 3% greater than in 2024, and Chapters mastered per hour were 5% greater.
- For Chapters taken (not challenged past), Chapter Pre to Post tests improved from 50% to 94%.

Student growth for literacy and reading benchmarks

9th Grade

- 86% of students in one or more areas (2023 - 2024)
- 93% of students in one or more areas (2024 - 2025)

8th Grade

- 100% of students in one or more areas (2023 - 2024)
- 100% of students in one or more areas (2024 - 2025)

7th Grade

- January benchmarks showed 75% growth in one or more areas since August (2024 - 2025)

From parent surveys for the 2025-2026 school year

- 100% were satisfied with the quality of teaching
- 100% felt their child was safe at Explore Academy
- 100% felt their child was valued as a student at Explore Academy
- From anonymous parents "I am most satisfied with the Big progress that my son has made and all the new things that he has learned since he's been at Explore! He's always eager and ready to go to school to see what's new for that day. The teachers and principal are very passionate and care for each and everyone of the students. I LOVE IT!!!
- I have noticed changes in my daughter for the better. She is excited about going to school now. I love how they keep me notified on every situation concerning my daughter through phone calls immediately. Everyone there is so caring thanks to Explore, my daughter has improved educationally, socially and emotionally!!

- I love how professional and caring the staff is. They always keep me updated on my child's progress. The smaller class setting has made a difference and I have seen great improvement in my child's academics.

PROGRAM: Facilities and Maintenance and Transportation

FUNDING SOURCE: LEA's

Funding Amount: \$50,000

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

PINE BLUFF (& DOLLARWAY) SCHOOL DISTRICT; SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT; STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT; WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT; & WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Chad Davidson, Facilities Compliance Coordinator

GOALS: To assist school districts with the multi-year facilities plan / project planning and funding, as well as maintenance and transportation rules and regulations.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: Public School districts are required to have a minimum six (6) year facilities master plan. The coordinator of this program provides school districts in the ARESC and GRESC areas with training, services, and site visits to support proper planning. This program coordinator typically drafts and compiles all of the data necessary for submission with the facilities master plans, as well as other facilities-related submissions. All submissions are sent to and all efforts are coordinated with the Arkansas Division of Public School Academic Facilities & Transportation.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

Facilities Master Plan (& Training):

All public school districts had their facilities master plans submitted and approved, for the 2025 preliminary master plan (odd year update, due 2/1/2025). For each eligible project, we will identify and apply to receive state assistance funding through the next Partnership Program (27-29, which will be due, for Early Review, by 11/1/2025). As needed, training continues to be held for Facilities, & the CMMS (now Operation Hero) for maintenance personnel, as well as annual Safety training, including Asbestos Awareness.

Partnership Funding:

25-27 Partnership Cycle - One ARESC project (from one district) for a total state share of \$11,592,181.71. However, this project is currently not yet funded, as the state had to draw a funding line, where they ran out of money. This project is 4th in line below, and will likely receive the state share later this year (2025). With this one, and the last three Partnership funding programs, that's a total of \$54.3 million in facilities and state share money for the public school districts of ARESC.

PROGRAM: Flex Academy

FUNDING SOURCE: ADE, Local

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL:

Eric Elders, Director, MSE

Heidi Rowland, Principal, MSE

Amanda Johnson, JAG Specialist, MSE

George Davis, Teacher, MA

Russell Carnes, Teacher, MA

Cynthia Bullard, Mental Health Therapist

GOALS: To provide a personalized academic plan for students unable to attend traditional school.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: The Flex Academy (Alternative Learning Environment) Under the direction of The Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative (ARESC); provides academic excellence for participating districts.

The students who entered this program, faced some life altering situation that otherwise may have caused them to drop out of school. The Flex Academy is designed to meet and adjust academic learning to assist him/her in their academic endeavor by creating a “success plan” for each student’s unique situation.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year

Attendance Goals -

Seniors 57% met both in person and virtual goals, 43% met either in person or virtual goals.

Underclassmen 63% met both in person and virtual goals with the remainder meeting either online or virtual goals

Academic Goals -

Seniors 14 seniors (93%) met graduation requirements

Overall 97% of credits attempted were achieved with an average of 6 credits attempted per student—not including data on credits fulfilled on campus (ROTC and SEARK classes as well as those completed before entering the program)

PROGRAM: Focus Academy

FUNDING SOURCE: ADE, Local

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL:

Eric Elders, Director, MSE

Jarvis Hale, Dean of Students, BA

Michaela Howard, Teacher, BS

Russell Carnes, Math/Science Teacher, MS

Amanda Johnson, Assistant Principal, Counselor, Behavioral Facilitator, MSE

Angela Martin, LPN Nurse, LPN, BS

Sandra Graves, Administrative Assistant

Sharon Jackson, Behavioral Health Associate

George Davis, Teacher, MA

Gabrielle Jones, Teacher, BS

Seth Ellis, Teacher, BS

Libby McGee - Teacher, BS

Gardner Sanders, Behavioral Health Associate

Cynthia Bullard, Mental Health Therapist

Officer Wright, SRO

GOALS: To provide an alternative learning environment to help students succeed academically.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year - During the year, the Focus Academy staff (Teachers, Behavior Interventionist, Therapist, Administrators, etc.) successfully transitioned 19 students back to the sending school districts. 5 students completed graduation requirements.

Attendance Rate

Middle School Average days missed 9. Increased attendance 67%

High School Average days missed 7. Increased attendance 82%

After Focus data is included in the numbers

Behavior

Middle School 42 write ups, 15 suspensions, 81 parent conferences, 74% decreased behavior risk

High School 38 write ups, 22 suspensions, 47 parent conferences, 82% decreased behavior risk

After Focus data is included in the numbers

Academics

Middle School Students showed an average growth of 1.4 year growth in math and 1.3 in English language arts per IXL data, middle school language arts nationally recognized by the NOLA program with highest scores on entire platform

High School 97.5% of credits attempted were passed as of 1st semester. 92.5% of credits attempted were passed as for 2nd semester.

PROGRAM: **HIPPY (Home Instruction for Preschool Youngers)**

FUNDING SOURCE: Arkansas Better Chance and Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting

Funding Amount:: \$1,015,184.00 (ABC) \$261,000.00 (MIECHV)

COMPETITIVE GRANT: Yes

RESTRICTED: Yes

NON-RESTRICTED: ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

Pine Bluff School District

Sheridan School District

Stuttgart School District

Watson Chapel School District

White Hall School District

Cleveland School District

Woodlawn School District

Star City School District

Fordyce School District

Sparkman School District

Forrest City School District

Lee County School District

Brinkley School District

McCrory School District

August School District

Newport School District

Clarendon School District

Pulaski County School District

Jacksonville School District

Little Rock School District

North Little Rock School District

Sherwood School District

Jonesboro School District

Helena-West Helena School District

Barton-Lexa School District

PERSONNEL:

Name	Position	Degree
Flannigan, Marguerite	Program Coordinator	MSE
Smith, Bailey	Field Coordinator	BSE
Ashley, Sharriaka	Field Coordinator	MSA
Howell, LyDreana	Field Coordinator	MSA
Newton, Kimberly	Field Coordinator	BSE
Marshall, Kateshia	Field Coordinator	BSE
Dunn ,Autra	Adm. Assistant - Financial	BSA
To Be Hired	Field Coordinator	BSE
To Be Hired	Field Coordinator	BSE
Mayfield, Brooke	Home Based Educator	HSD

Bowlin, Sara	Home Based Educator	AA
Bowman, Heather	Home Based Educator	CDA
Brown, Kristin	Home Based Educator	HSD
Miller, Jennifer	Home Based Educator	HSD
Cunningham, LaKendra	Home Based Educator	BA
Freeman, Tequila	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
Fryar, Karissa	Home Based Educator	CDA
Gutierrez, Yesenia	Home Based Educator	CDA
Harris, LaTrenda	Home Based Educator	CDA
Hayes, Talensihe	Home Based Educator	AA/CDA
Blasgenme, Jessica	Home Based Educator	HSD
Johnson, Alisa	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
Spinks, Betty	Home Based Educator	AA/CDA
McNeil, Cheryl	Home Based Educator	CDA
Mendoza, Manuela	Home Based Educator	AA/CDA
Russell, Pam	Home Based Educator	CDA
Parks, LaShanna	Home Based Educator	AA/CDA
Spadoni, Anja	Home Based Educator	AA

Davis, Darnisha	Home Based Educator	AA
Cranford, Aliyah	Home Based Educator	HSD
Bayles, Nicole	Home Based Educator	HSD
Lee, Ashley	Home Based Educator	AA
Brent, Tomyra	Home Based Educator	HSD
Gibbs, Arkita	Home Based Educator	HSD
Callum, Tamaree	Home Based Educator	AA
Callum, Tanya	Home Based Educator	HSD
To Be Hired (Pine Bluff)	Home Based Educator	CDA
To Be Hired (Pulaski)	Home Based Educator	CDA
To be Hired (Stuttgart)	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
To be Hired (Sherdian)	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
To be Hired (Creighead)	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
To be Hired (Eastern Arkansas)	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
To be Hired (Eastern Arkansas)	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA
To be Hired (Philips)	Home Based Educator	HSD/CDA

GOALS: The goal of the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative HIPPY Program is to reach families in their familiar surroundings, empower parents in the educational role as their children's first teacher, assist caregivers in better preparing their children for success in school, to refer families to community services as needed, and to serve as a liaison between the home and the public schools.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: The ARESC- HIPPY Program served 643 students, ages 2, 3, 4, and 5, within twenty-five (25) school districts during the 2025-2026 program year. The ARESC-HIPPY Program is staffed by one Program Coordinator, seven Coordinators, one Office Support Staff, and thirty- six (36) Home-based Educators administered the Ages and Stages Developmental Screening, Vision Initial Screening, Hearing Initial Screening, and Family Map to each child, as well as other screenings. Families are then given references if needed for smoking cessation, mental health help, and for low cost health insurance. The staff also assisted each family in acquiring the documentation necessary for the child to successfully enter school, such as a birth certificate, a Social Security card, health screening, and immunization records. The staff also enters each family and child into the state data system, ETO, and COPA, which track monthly enrollment, Ages and Stages, and IEP Assessment. Staff are trained weekly to make sure they are following program model fidelity.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

The ARESC-HIPPY holds an Annual Health Clinic each year for its families and children in October to help parents get their child's health screenings. All of the physicians and nurses volunteer their time for a great cause.

ARESC-HIPPY had an amazing Fall Festival at ARESC, where about 300 children received books and literacy materials. The State Home Visitor of the Year was from the ARESC-HIPPY, LaShana Parks.

ARESC-HIPPY participated in the PBESC Arkansas Children's Week Family Play Day, serving over 400 children in our communities

The ARESC-HIPPY Program had a successful audit with the AR Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education with complementary findings. Arkansas State HIPPY audited each field office, as well as with Stellar Ratings. It is the highest award available for the state. ARESC-HIPPY had a successful HIPPY US Accreditation audit. ARESC-HIPPY is accredited for the next five years by HIPPY US and International.

PROGRAM: K-12 Math 2025-2026

FUNDING SOURCE:

Funding Amount: \$90,000

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes

NON-RESTRICTED:

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS SCHOOL, PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Cody Knowlton, K-12 Math Specialist, BS

GOALS:

The goals of the ARESC Math Instructional Specialist Program are as follows:

1. Support the adoption and implementation of HQIM across all participating districts to ensure instructional coherence aligned to Arkansas Math Standards.

2. Provide job-embedded instructional coaching focused on evidence-based strategies for grades 4–8, Algebra I, and Geometry in schools identified as D or F or 60% need support.
3. Develop instructional leadership by training and supporting administrators on the use of the DESE Math Leadership Walkthrough Tool.
4. Increase the quality of Tier 1 instruction through lesson modeling, co-teaching, instructional planning, and classroom-based support.
5. Facilitate HQIM launch and sustainment through curriculum-based professional learning (HQPL), pacing support, and implementation fidelity tools.
6. Support ATLAS assessment and classroom tool integration to build formative assessment practices and improve instruction.
7. Offer DESE Elevate Math PD in Fluency, Standards, and Interventions to strengthen foundational math teaching practices.
8. Mentor and support novice teachers through cognitive coaching and instructional modeling.
9. Collaborate with PLCs and school leadership teams to unpack standards, build assessments, and align interventions to student data.
10. Maintain alignment with DESE grant goals through monthly data reporting, meeting participation, and collaborative implementation with state and regional partners.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: 2025–2026

The 2025–2026 ARESC K–12 Math Program provides targeted, job-embedded support to educators and instructional leaders across the cooperative in alignment with the Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM) and the DESE Elevate Math Initiative. The program supports participating districts through coaching, professional learning, curriculum support, and leadership development focused on improving math instruction and student outcomes. The ARESC Math Specialist met three times face to face and monthly virtually with the DESE program manager to plan coaching cycles and instructional support based on district needs, summative and formative assessment data, and school improvement plans. Coaching cycles focus on grades 4–8, Algebra I, and Geometry, particularly in schools with a D or F rating. These cycles include co-planning, lesson modeling, goal setting, feedback, and student evidence analysis. A landscape analysis was conducted across participating districts to assess HQIM adoption and implementation. Ongoing technical support was provided to assist school and district leaders in selecting, launching, and sustaining the use of high-quality curriculum materials. Support also included implementation planning and fidelity monitoring.

Additional areas of focus in 2025–2026 include:

- Coaching cycles focused on SMART goals, lesson modeling, co-teaching, and reflection on instructional practice
- Mentoring of novice teachers through cognitive coaching strategies
- Facilitation of DESE Elevate Math PD, including sessions on fluency, interventions, and standards
- Implementation support for the ATLAS Classroom Tool and interim assessments
- Professional learning and walkthrough training for administrators using the DESE Math Leadership Walkthrough Tool
- Supported school leaders in identifying high-quality math instructional practices through walkthrough calibration, feedback conversations, and instructional leadership coaching.
- Support for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), including identifying essential standards, building assessments, and planning responsive instruction
- Support for district teams with HQIM implementation through pacing support, lesson internalization, curriculum alignment, and implementation fidelity planning.

- Delivery of virtual and in-person professional development sessions tailored to district needs

Specialist Training: Math Leadership Walkthrough Tool, Elevate Math PD content, Content Coaching through TNTP, ATLAS Classroom Tool.

Cooperative Schools: Contact was made with every school district in the ARESC Cooperative area to continue to build and strengthen relationships, offer technical and material assistance, inform them of the professional learning opportunities and student learning opportunities, provide teacher professional development, support for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and any other support that can be provided by the Math Specialist. Contact was made with ARESC districts to provide coaching, curriculum support, professional development, and technical assistance. Priority schools were identified based on academic performance data to receive intensive instructional coaching and HQIM implementation support. Coaching priority was provided to: Stuttgart Meekins Middle (1 teacher, 1 cycle) and Pine Bluff James Matthews Elementary (2 teachers, 2 cycles)

Other support included: unwrapping standards, writing learning targets, writing common formative assessments, implementation of Effective Teaching strategies and Effective Instructional Practice, disaggregation of CFA data, facilitation of implementation of first grade standards based report cards. Professional Development and Support: On-site and virtual support was provided for cooperative teachers and administrators through Math coaching cycles in the areas of: using the ATLAS Classroom Tool, identifying essential standards, unwrapping essential standards, writing learning targets, discovery learning, writing formative assessments, analyzing data from formative assessments, constructing DOK questions, and continued support of Standards Based Report Cards in White Hall and Stuttgart School Districts.

Professional Development Offered in 2025-2026:

ARESC-Elevate Math Fluency - KickOFF - Embark on a six-hour professional learning journey to uncover the importance of math fluency and dispel common fluency fallacies. Participants will gain insight into related truths and acquire practical strategies, tasks, games, and routines for improving math fluency skills in their classrooms while learning how to support Arkansas fluency standards. Secure your spot to unlock the keys to good beginnings for fluency!

ARESC-Elevate Math Fluency: Addition/Subtraction of Whole Numbers - Take your math instruction to the next level in this dynamic session designed to empower educators with innovative strategies for building fluency in addition and subtraction of whole numbers. Explore engaging activities, actionable tools, and proven techniques aligned with Arkansas Math Standards to enhance student mastery and confidence.

ARESC-Deep Dive Into the AR Math Standards: K-5 -In this session, teachers will examine and unpack the new 2023 Arkansas Math Content Standards for K-5.

ARESC-Deep Dive Into the AR Math Standards: 6-GEO - In this session, teachers will examine and unpack the new 2023 Arkansas Math Content Standards for 6-Geometry.

ARESC-Elevate Math Fluency: Multiplication/Division of Whole Numbers - Take your math instruction to the next level in this dynamic session designed to empower educators with innovative strategies for building fluency in multiplication and division of whole numbers. Explore engaging activities, actionable tools, and proven techniques aligned with Arkansas Math Standards to enhance student mastery and confidence.

ARESC-Productive Student Talk - Productive student talk accelerates learning by making thinking visible, building academic language, and promoting deeper understanding. Learn practical strategies to foster productive student talk and increase authentic student engagement. This interactive PD will model

high-impact discussion protocols, questioning moves, and classroom routines that you can implement immediately. This session is suitable for K-12 teachers in all content areas.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026:

The Mathematics Department has assisted schools in a variety of ways including:

- Coaching cycles in level 4 and 5 schools, or or 60% need support
 - James Matthews Elementary
 - Meekins Middle School
- Math Coaching Cycles-classroom observations, SMART goals, TNTP walkthrough tool, providing professional feedback, consultation for lesson planning and resources, model lessons, creating common formative assessments, creating common summative assessments, planning interventions, classroom behavior management strategies
- Facilitated completion of a standards based report cards for Third grade in Park Avenue Elementary .
 - Establishment of essential learning targets (Math, ELA, Science)
 - Pacing for essential learning targets (Math, ELA, Science)
 - Creation of common formative assessments for each essential learning target (Math, ELA, Science)
 - Creation of common summative assessments for each essential learning target (Math, ELA, Science)
- Facilitated the implementation of ATLAS Classroom Tool in math classrooms (Park Avenue Elementary School, Meekins Middle School, White Hall High School, Pine Bluff High School, James Matthews Elementary)
- Cognitive Coaching to build capacity with novice teachers
- Supported teachers in implementing discourse-rich instructional routines that promote mathematical reasoning, student thinking, and academic language development.
- Team Meetings/Professional Learning Communities Support
 - Weekly/biweekly meetings with Pine Bluff High School, White hall High School, Park Avenue Elementary, Pine Bluff Junior High School, Watson Chapel High School.
- Monthly CTM meetings-White Hall High School
- Monthly Grade level meeting - White Hall School District Grades 3 - 5
- Offering professional development and collaboration among teachers through blended learning (Zoom, Google Meet)
- Collaboration with other content specialists to provide cross-curriculum units and Summer camp initiatives
 - Stephany Brown Science Specialist
 - Lisa Woodie Behavior Specialist
 - Bill Shelly Mentoring Program Specialist
 - Deolinda Branch CTE Coordinator
- Collaboration and support from DESE state math specialists for support for Level 5 school districts
- Collaboration with DESE state math team and TNTP to conduct Math Lab at Watson Chapel Junior High School and Watson Chapel High School in both Fall and Spring semesters.

PROGRAM: K-12 Science

FUNDING SOURCE: ADE State Grant

Funding Amount: \$90,000

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes

NON-RESTRICTED: ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS SCHOOL, PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Stephany Brown, K-12 Science Specialist

GOALS:

The goals of the ARESC Science Instructional Specialist Program are as follows:

1. To assist all participating education institutions in meeting goals and implementing grade-level Arkansas Science State Standards
2. To enrich the curriculum-based content knowledge and teaching strategies of science teachers.
3. To assist with the implementation of high-quality instructional materials
4. To assist in mentoring novice teachers
5. To assist teachers in implementing phenomenal science to ensure all students receive equitable instruction and opportunities
6. To assist in the school improvement process (PLC)
 - a. Identifying essential standards
 - b. Unpacking essential standards
 - c. Writing formative assessments
 - d. Analyzing data from formative assessments
 - e. Planning and implementing interventions based on data
7. To provide training and support for the implementation of the ATLAS Classroom portal
8. To provide high-quality coaching (TNTP and Cognitive) to build capacity in science educators
9. To provide support and resources that support science educators in the licensure process

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The 2025-2026 science program primarily focused on increasing the knowledge and skills of science educators through job-embedded coaching cycles of support. The ARESC specialist met monthly with the DESE program manager to plan coaching support cycles based on quantitative and qualitative data, district needs assessment, and school improvement plans. The ESC specialist provided through-year professional learning through a comprehensive coaching system to improve teacher efficacy and build instructional capacity targeted at increasing student outcomes. The ESC specialist also conducted a landscape analysis at each cooperative district on high-quality instructional materials and high-quality professional learning. Other areas of focus included:

- Ongoing building and strengthening of relationships with cooperative schools; professional development for administrators, teachers, and coaches

- Teacher and administrator conferences to evaluate and improve science teaching and learning through increased content understanding and improved instructional strategies
- Mentoring novice teachers (Cognitive coaching)
- Science Content Coaching through TNTP

The ESC specialist provided multiple targeted professional development opportunities for principals, assistant principals, and instructional facilitators focused on the DESE Science Walkthrough Tool. These sessions were designed to build a fundamental understanding of effective science instruction and to ensure consistent use of the tool across campuses. In addition to training, the specialist actively supported instructional leaders by participating in classroom walkthroughs, modeling the use of the tool, and collecting observational data. The specialist then facilitated collaborative feedback sessions, sharing insights with teachers to promote instructional improvement and alignment with best practices in science education.

The ESC specialist provided ongoing professional development focused on the effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), specifically supporting the use of OpenSciEd and Amplify Science. Through daily school visits, the specialist worked directly with teachers to model best practices, offer instructional coaching, and address challenges related to HQIM integration. Training and support also incorporated the use of the ATLAS Classroom Tool to enhance instructional planning and fidelity of implementation. These efforts ensured that educators were equipped with the knowledge and strategies necessary to deliver rigorous, student-centered science instruction.

Specialist Training: ATLAS Classroom Tool, Content Coaching through The New Teacher Project (TNTP), Three-dimensional formative assessment writing, Standards-Based Grading and Reporting

Cooperative Schools: Contact was made with every school district in the ARESC Cooperative area to continue to build and strengthen relationships, offer technical and material assistance, inform them of the professional learning opportunities and student learning opportunities, provide teacher professional development, support for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and any other support that can be provided by the Science Specialist. Coaching cycles of support were provided for target schools. High-quality instructional materials support included White Hall School District (Open SciEd) and Stuttgart School District (Amplify Science). Principals in the following districts participated in professional development in using the science walkthrough tool: Watson Chapel School District, White Hall School District, and Pine Bluff School District. Other support included: unwrapping standards, writing learning targets, writing common formative assessments, implementation of three-dimensional lessons, and disaggregation of CFA data.

Professional Development and Support: On-site and virtual support was provided for cooperative teachers and administrators through science coaching cycles in the areas of: using the ATLAS Classroom Tool, using morphology in the science classroom to support the science of reading, identifying essential standards, unwrapping essential standards, writing learning targets, planning and implementing three-dimensional lessons, science investigations, writing phenomenon, writing performance tasks, writing formative assessments, analyzing data from formative assessments, science journals, constructing DOK questions, laboratory experiments and materials. Other professional development provided included: Science Curriculum Cohorts, FUSE: Fundamental Understanding of Science Education, Science Acceleration: Teaching Honors Science in Grades 5, 6, & 7, ATLAS Science: Using Assessment to Drive Science Instruction, Phenomenal Teaching: Unleashing Wonder in the Science Classroom, and Productive Student Talk.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

The Science Department has assisted schools in a variety of ways, including:

- Science coaching cycles for schools
 - Stuttgart High School
 - Stuttgart Junior High School
 - Coleman Elementary
 - Pine Bluff High School
 - Meekins Middle School
- Support site visits to ARESC school districts
 - Pine Bluff School District-21
 - Sheridan School District-4
 - Stuttgart School District-37
 - Watson Chapel School District-28
 - White Hall School District-28
- Science Coaching Cycles: classroom observations, SMART goals, TNTP walkthrough tool, providing professional feedback, consultation for lesson planning and resources, model lessons, creating common formative assessments, creating common summative assessments, planning interventions, classroom behavior management strategies
- Facilitated the implementation of ATLAS Classroom Tool in science classrooms (Meekins Middle School, Pine Bluff High School)
- Assisted with science lab resources and materials (Coleman Elementary, Watson Chapel Junior High School)
- Team Meetings/Professional Learning Communities Support
 - Weekly/biweekly meetings with Meekins Middle School, Stuttgart Junior High School, Pine Bluff High School, Coleman Elementary School)
- Collaboration with other content specialists to provide professional Learning
 - Productive Student Talk (Cody Knowlton, K-12 Math Specialist)
- Collaboration and support from DESE state science specialists in developing professional development sessions for summer 2026
- Facilitated collaboration for Biology Integrated RTI items (White Hall High School).
- Promoted the Arkansas Outdoor Education Pilot program to area schools
- Facilitated professional learning sessions on Lesson Internalization (Pine Bluff High School, Pine Bluff Junior High School, Coleman Elementary School)
- Participated in a coaching lab in collaboration with DESE and TNTP
- Created a comprehensive Key Levers Walkthrough Tool in collaboration with Math Specialist Cody Knowlton, which was shared with school districts
- Created assessment items for the ATLAS Classroom Tool Item Bank

PROGRAM: Virtual Academy at The River

FUNDING SOURCE: Local - Participating School Districts

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: **NON-RESTRICTED:** X

DISTRICTS Served

Pine Bluff School District
Alma School District
Atkins School District
Bald Knob School District
Bentonville School District
Booneville School District
Bryant School District
Cedarville School District
Clarendon School District
Cleveland Co School District
Concord School District
Dover School District
Drew Central School District
Farmington School District
Flippin School District
Fordyce School District
Highland School District
Guy-Perkins School District
Hampton School District
Lafayette Co School District
Lakeside (Garland Co) School District
Midland School District
Mansfield School District
Mt Home School District
Mt View School District
Ozark School District
Riverview School District
Rosebud School District
Sloan-Hendrix School District
Smackover School District

Two Rivers School District

Wynne School District

Southside School District

Sheridan School District

Stuttgart School District

Compass Academy

Explore Academy

Anchor Academy

Focus Academy

PERSONNEL:

Tammy Manning, Principal MSE/NBCT

Krystle Summers, Assistant Principal

Brandi Williams, Instructional Specialist

Mandy Anderson, Administrative Assistant

Kalynn Medlin, Administrative Assistant

Alicia Mosley, Teacher

Carla Bryant, Teacher

Holly Trucks, Teacher

Melissa Mosley, Teacher

Cindy Evans, Teacher

Darla Bailey, Teacher

Amy Stuckey, Paraprofessional

Alena Huett, Teacher

Heather Carter, Teacher

Heather Harris, Teacher

Britany Hill, Teacher

Lacy Price, Teacher

Brania Hasberry, Teacher

Morgan Reeves, Teacher

Graciela Alcocer, Teacher

Maggie Young, Teacher

PURPOSE: The mission of The Virtual Academy at The River is to prepare students to be lifelong learners by using an innovative approach and digital platforms to ensure the success of every student.

GOALS: The program's primary goal is to partner with districts to provide a virtual learning option for students.

- Deliver high-quality instruction
- synchronous/asynchronous
- Small group instruction
- One-to-one interventions
- Bridge learning gaps
- Wrap-around services

PROGRAM SUMMARY: Virtual Academy @ The River partners with local Arkansas school districts and Education Service Cooperatives to provide synchronous and asynchronous instruction for K-12 students.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

- Served **39 school districts**
- Provided instruction for approximately **700 students**

Parent comments from the survey:

I love everything about this program! The staff is supportive, the teachers are great, and my kids are actually learning and thriving. Thanks for all you guys do. ❤️

We absolutely love this program and all the teachers!! Anna has completely excelled in virtual with the one-on-one interaction and more visual for her learning with her autism!! I am beyond proud of her and the hard work she does and how understanding each teacher has been with her.

I'm glad there is another option for kids who can't attend regular school.

PROGRAM: Technology

FUNDING SOURCE: State Grant

Funding Amount: \$80,000.00

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes NON-RESTRICTED: ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS, SCHOOL, ARKANSAS DIVISION of YOUTH SERVICES, PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Cristian Haynes, Technology Coordinator,

GOALS: To provide quality technology support for the cooperative, its programs, and member school districts. Assist member school districts with implementation and assessment of cybersecurity best practices and Arkansas Act 504 compliance requirements. Provide professional development on technology topics for school personnel with emphasis on cybersecurity, data privacy, and incident response preparedness.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Supporting districts in their efforts to provide technology for teaching and learning.

Provide ongoing support to cooperative staff including hardware, software, network maintenance, cybersecurity implementation, and training.

Provide quality professional development in cybersecurity, data privacy, and technology operations for technology coordinators, support staff, administrators, and educators.

Host meetings and workshops with member district technology coordinators and staff throughout the school year.

Assist member districts with Arkansas Act 504 cybersecurity policy implementation and planning.

Provide guidance and training related to NIST cybersecurity control groups and best practices.

Attend state technology meetings with ADE, DIS, CIRT, Tel-AR, and other Arkansas Cooperative Technology Coordinators.

Attend professional development opportunities including ACOT, Tel-AR, WRS, HSTI, and Cyber Incident

Response Team training.

Maintain cooperative technology equipment, software, and cybersecurity systems.

Assist with inventory and endpoint management of cooperative technology equipment.

Maintain technical equipment used by participants and presenters during cooperative trainings and events.

Assist with development and implementation of cooperative cybersecurity policies, procedures, and compliance documentation.

Participate in the Cyber Incident Response Team for the State of Arkansas K-12 community.

Implement and maintain cybersecurity tools and endpoint protection systems for cooperative infrastructure.

ACTUAL LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE:

1.a. The Technology Coordinator engaged in 100% of the expected training and planning opportunities related to cybersecurity and incident response preparedness.

The Technology Coordinator attended 31 total meetings with ADE, OST, Tel-AR, CIRT, and other Arkansas Cooperative Technology Coordinators, including 20 virtual meetings and 11 face-to-face meetings.

The Technology Coordinator completed 12 days of Cybersecurity Training, including:

September 15–16, 2025 – Cyber Incident Response Team Training

November 4–7, 2025 – ACOT Conference

February 18–19, 2026 – Tel-AR Conference

March 11–13, 2026 – WRS Summit

April 13–14, 2026 – Cyber Incident Response Team Training

Additionally, the Technology Coordinator presented at statewide conferences including:

HSTI – Hot Springs Technology Institute

ACOT – Arkansas Conference of Technology

The Technology Coordinator also obtained the following certifications:

CompTIA A+

CompTIA Network+

1.b. The Technology Coordinator provided 100% of the targeted cybersecurity capacity-building opportunities within the co-op region.

Hosted 6 statewide Act 504 Cybersecurity Policy Regional Workshop Series sessions:

February 12, 2026

February 26, 2026

March 5, 2026

March 19, 2026

April 2, 2026

April 9, 2026

Facilitated cybersecurity awareness and protection training for administrators during the March 6, 2026 Co-op Bookkeepers Meeting.

Implemented and managed multiple virtual cybersecurity awareness campaigns and required online security training for all ARESC staff:

August 25, 2025 – 188 learners

January 5, 2026 – 187 learners

Additionally, the Technology Coordinator actively participated in the statewide Arkansas Act 504 Cybersecurity Policy workgroup and contributed to development of the Arkansas Cybersecurity Rubric.

2.a. The Technology Coordinator exceeded the target for meetings and support opportunities provided to co-op and district technology staff.

The Technology Coordinator conducted 11 face-to-face or virtual meetings for area school technology coordinators during the 2025–26 school year.

Meetings included recurring technology coordinator collaboration sessions, cybersecurity planning discussions, Arkansas Act 504 workshops, and regional technology support coordination meetings.

On-site and virtual support was also provided throughout the year to assist districts with cybersecurity planning, compliance efforts, infrastructure support, and operational technology needs.

2.b. The Technology Coordinator attended 31 total meetings with ADE, DIS, OST, CIRT, Tel-AR, and other co-op technology coordinators, including 20 virtual meetings and 11 face-to-face meetings, meeting 100% of the expected performance target.

3.a. The Technology Coordinator identified and addressed multiple technology and cybersecurity needs within the cooperative and member districts.

Facilitated regional participation in the Arkansas Act 504 K–12 Cybersecurity Policy Regional Workshop Series with all member districts receiving communication, resources, or direct support related to implementation.

District participation included strong representation from Sheridan School District and Watson Chapel School District, with additional outreach and support provided to Pine Bluff, White Hall, Stuttgart, Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind, Correctional Schools, and Division of Youth Services.

Provided workshops and guidance focused on implementation of Arkansas Act 504 Phase 2 requirements and associated NIST cybersecurity control groups becoming effective July 1, 2026. Workshop topics included:

January 29, 2026 – Audit & Accountability (AU)

February 12, 2026 – Configuration Management (CM)

February 26, 2026 – Planning (PL)

March 5, 2026 – Personally Identifiable Information Processing and Transparency (PT)

March 19, 2026 – System & Services Acquisition (SA)

April 9, 2026 – System & Communications Protection (SC)

May 13, 2026 – Make-up Session

Additionally, the Technology Coordinator successfully implemented ThreatDown Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) protection across the entire cooperative technology fleet consisting of more than 350 devices to strengthen cybersecurity posture and support Act 504 compliance initiatives.

PROGRAM: Recruitment & Retention (Novice Teacher Mentoring)

FUNDING SOURCE: State Grant

Funding Amount: \$161,000

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:**

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS SCHOOL, PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL: Bill Shelly, Mentoring Program Specialist, MSE

GOALS:

- To train and support successful classroom teachers through a comprehensive mentoring, peer coaching, training system for Novice teachers.
- Become familiar with the Framework for Teaching (FFT) and the relationship between Novice Mentor training and TESS (Teacher Effectiveness Support System)
- District retention of fully trained teachers
Trained and supported teachers remain in the teaching profession

PROGRAM SUMMARY: The DESE provides grant funding to ESC's to provide training and support to Novice teachers. ARESC utilized that funding to provide face-to-face group meetings, mentoring for novice teachers, online support and resources, professional learning materials and individualized (1-on-1) support.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

Provided virtual support and training through Zoom and other platforms.

Reduced the number of novice teachers in the region due to retention efforts.

Assisted 22 teachers in earning their Lead Teacher designation through NIET and TNTP to build mentoring capacity within districts.

Assisted 67 teachers with licensure assessments including Praxis content tests, Foundations of Reading exams and micro-credentials.

Provided coaching training to potential mentor teachers and support teachers.

PROGRAM: ParaProfessional Assessment

FUNDING SOURCE: Educational Testing Services (ETS)

Funding Amount: No Grant was required. ETS does not charge an educational agency to become a testing center and download technology requirements for testing. The candidates pay ETS \$55.00 online per testing session. ARESC does not charge the candidates any other amount (i.e. sitting/facility fees).

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS: ARK SCHOOL for the DEAF, ARK DEPT of CORRECTIONS SCHOOL, , PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT, SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT, WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

ARESC has also provided tests for candidates from **districts** state-wide in Arkansas.

PERSONNEL: Katherine Pye, Testing Facilitator, BA

GOALS: To provide the opportunity for candidates to meet the qualification requirements for New Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: The qualification requirements for new federally funded instructional ParaPros are as follows:

- Completed two (2) years of study at an institution of higher education, or
- Obtained an associate's degree or higher, or Passed the ParaPro Assessment with a score of 457 for Arkansas. Other states may require a different passing score which is provided by ETS.

The ParaPro Assessment for prospective and practicing paraprofessionals measures skills and knowledge in reading, mathematics, and writing, as well as the ability to apply those skills and knowledge to assist in classroom instruction. The test consists of 90 multiple choice questions across the subject areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. Approximately two-thirds (2/3's) of the questions in each subject area focus on basic skills and knowledge.

Approximately one third (1/3) of the questions in each subject area focus on the application of those skills and knowledge in the classroom context. Fifteen (15) of the questions in the test (five in each subject area) are pretest questions and do not count toward the test taker's score. The test questions are arranged by subject area, with reading first, then mathematics, then writing. If a candidate does not score the required score of 457 for Arkansas (or the required score for any other state), then ETS requires the candidate to wait at least 3 weeks before re-taking the assessment.

PROGRAM: Parents as Teachers (PAT)

FUNDING SOURCE: ABC and MIECHV

Funding Amount: ABC 111,360.00 MIECHV 111,000.00

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:**

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

PINE BLUFF SCHOOL DISTRICT

SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUTTGART SCHOOL DISTRICT

WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHITE HALL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL:

Antwinette Malakyah, ABC/MIECHV Coordinator

Lakara Lofton, Parent Educator,

LaTorria Mayo, Parent Educator,

Yarri Clark, Parent Educator,

Jacqueline Hines, Parent Educator,

GOALS: To encourage parent-child interaction through the use of PAT curriculum activities, personal visits and group meetings. To monitor child development through child assessments.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: PAT uses the research based curriculum developed by Parents As Teachers National Center in St. Louis, Mo. Independent research shows that at age 3, children who have participated in the PAT program score above the national norm in achievement.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year - During this year we were able to keep our required number of families for each program. We kept our children active and engaged through home visits and participating with them in their activities. We continued our group meetings by doing them live on our Facebook page, zoom, as well as face to face. We had the Parents as Teachers National Conference in Puerto Rico, a health fair in October 2025. Also, Ar Children's Week in April 2026. P.A.T will have an End of the Year Celebration this year at the Museum of Discovery. The date is June 27, 2026. ABC and MIECHV serve and screen twice monthly.

PROGRAM: SafeCare

FUNDING SOURCE: Arkansas Children's Hospital

Funding Amount:: \$220,000.00 (Arkansas Children's Hospital)/ Fees for Service

COMPETITIVE GRANT: Yes

RESTRICTED: Yes

NON-RESTRICTED: ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SERVICE AREAS:

Grant County

Jefferson County

Bradley County

Dallas County

Calhoun County

Lincoln County

Cleveland County

Prairie County

Lonoke County

PERSONNEL:

Name	Position	Degree
Flannigan, Marguerite	Program Coordinator	MSE
Butler, Christina	Enrollment Coordinator	MPA/MSW
Walker, Maricha	Provider	MSW
Lee, Monique	Provider	BS

GOALS: The goal of the Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative (ARESC) SafeCare Program is to provide evidence-based, in-home parent support services to families with children ages birth to five in order to strengthen parenting skills, improve child safety, promote healthy parent-child interactions, and reduce the risk of child maltreatment. The program aims to support families within their home environment while collaborating with community partners and the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) to improve outcomes for children and families. SafeCare also seeks to connect families with community resources, increase protective factors, promote safe sleep practices, and provide education related to child health, development, and home safety.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: The ARES SafeCare Program served 59 families, including 89 children and 76 adults throughout the service area during the 2025-2026 program year. The ARES SafeCare Program is staffed by one Enrollment Coordinators and two Providers who work collaboratively with DHS workers, supervisors, the Sixth Division Circuit Court, and community partners to support families in achieving stability and success. Staff members conduct intake visits, provide weekly in-home services, complete assessments, maintain documentation in ETO, and participate in ongoing coaching and fidelity monitoring to ensure adherence to the SafeCare model.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year -

- The ARES SafeCare Program continued providing evidence-based parenting services to families throughout Area 7 and surrounding service regions through strong collaboration with DHS and community agencies.
- SafeCare staff increased education efforts related to infant safe sleep practices and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention during intake visits and home sessions.

- The program strengthened partnerships with DHS supervisors and community organizations to improve service coordination for families.
- Providers and coordinators participated in ongoing coaching sessions and fidelity monitoring to ensure services remained aligned with the SafeCare evidence-based model.
- Families received support related to parenting resources, child development, and healthcare needs.
- The SafeCare Program maintained compliance with documentation, service delivery expectations, and model fidelity requirements through continuous staff development and supervision.

PROGRAM: Preschool

FUNDING SOURCE: Arkansas Better Chance / CCDF

Funding Amount: \$699,980

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING ARKANSAS RIVER EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

WATSON CHAPEL SCHOOL DISTRICT

PERSONNEL:

Tumiga Livingston, Director, M Ed Ldrshp

Lindsey Burkett, Assistant, MSE

Donna DePriest, Teacher, MSE

Paula King, Teacher, AA

Lasheena Hudson, Teacher, AA

Laikita Collins, Teacher/BA

Ashley Stone Teacher/BA

Jhada Walker, Paraprofessional, CDA

Katrina Harroway, Paraprofessional, CDA

TaAlya Beard, Paraprofessional, CDA

Saniyyah Roth, Paraprofessional, AA

Taylinn Lee, Paraprofessional, AA

Nichol Darrough, Paraprofessional, CDA

GOALS: Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative Preschool Program is committed to providing high-quality early childhood education to children ages 3-5 with qualifying household incomes.

PROGRAM SUMMARY: Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative Preschool Program currently has six center based learning environments located in Jefferson county. All programs must satisfy the requirements specified in The Child Care Licensing Act, teacher licensure requirements, Arkansas Better Chance policy, as well as annual professional development requirements. Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months are used to assist in the development of learning goals for preschool children.

PROGRAM: Early Childhood - Local Leads

FUNDING AMOUNT: \$187,500

FUNDING SOURCE: State, Federal

COMPETITIVE GRANT: Yes ☒ No ☐

RESTRICTIVE GRANT: Yes ☒ No ☐

PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS: Arkansas County, Cleveland County, Jefferson County, and Lincoln County

PERSONNEL:

Lindsey Burkett, Local Lead Captain, MSE

GOALS

The ARESC Local Lead goal is to establish a comprehensive, locally supported plan for providing early childhood programs and services within the community and develop a provider collaboration plan. Other responsibilities of the plan is to conduct an unduplicated count of children served through public funds; develop a needs assessment and identify gaps in services; foster Local partnerships to create alignment among public and private providers and agencies within the community to facilitate the development of local plans; and coordinate enrollment processes for families support access to early childhood programs.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Local early childhood organizations (Local Lead) are organizations designated by ADE to serve as state-local implementation partners responsible for helping to develop and execute the state's early childhood plan. The State of Arkansas is establishing local leads to create a unified early childhood system that better prepares children for Kindergarten.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR:

- Promoted relationships with stakeholders by participating in the Early Childhood Education Subcommittee.
- Local Lead Captain has completed the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) training for PreK, Toddler, and Infant observations.
- Local Lead Captain completed affiliate trainer certification for infant and toddler
- Brought CLASS Pre-K Observer training to ARESC in the Summer resulting in six Pre-K CLASS Observers.
- Local Lead Captain led Toddler training in the Spring, resulting in twelve ARESC Toddler CLASS

Observers.

- Completed a Child Count for the four county area to identify gaps in services for all age groups.
- Completed a shared Local Lead Plan that included a detailed needs assessment and information campaign plan for the communities.
- Local Lead Captain completed over 25 observations in the Spring Semester.

PROGRAM: Star Academies of Arkansas, 2025-2026

FUNDING SOURCE: TANF

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes **NON-RESTRICTED:** ____

PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

Dumas School District

Camden Fairview School District

Blytheville School District

Osceola School District

Pine Bluff School District through ARESC Consortium Sites

Watson Chapel School District through ARESC Consortium Sites

White Hall School District through ARESC Consortium Sites

Magnolia School District

Stuttgart School District

Strong-Huttig School District

El Dorado School District

Lake Village School District

Helena/West Helena

Purpose: Arkansas Star Academy Sites are implemented to increase the graduation/retention rates, education, and skill levels of youth to prepare them for transition to college or employment. This type of proactive intervention in the lives of youth will make it more likely they will become independent and productive members of society. Studies support that project-based learning develops self-directed students who ultimately become self-directed, employable citizens. Employers and industry partners increasingly want employees who demonstrate initiative and skills when communicating, performing technical duties, and creatively solving unexpected problems. Students learn to drive their own progress, whether working individually, in peer-pairs, or with the whole class. The ownership they take over their course projects sets the foundation for the ownership they will take over their projects in high school and in their careers. Through the application of content via STEM-based projects, students transfer their

knowledge and skills to other settings, including their self- determined career pathway(s) explored throughout the program. All core academics, even English and writing, help students envision new career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. ARESC partnered with NOLA, Inc. to provide this service. NOLA powers the Star Academy model of teaching and learning.

The ARESC Dropout Prevention Program addresses the following goals:

- End the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage
- Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
- Reduce the drop-out rate for over-age students
- Foster individual student responsibility for learning and behavior
- Provide workplace readiness and career exposure with emphasis on life/soft skills.
- Improve literacy and numeracy skills
- Improve attendance
- Decrease discipline issues

Program Goals - ARESC led an innovative learning setting for 7th-9th grade students from schools rated C, D or F by the State and with supporting community demographic information. The students were from districts that have 93 to 100% free and reduced lunch population, behind 2 or more grade levels in reading and mathematics, and had other drop-out indicators. ARESC worked with local schools to identify the students and families that would benefit from this innovative new teaching and learning program. Students that needed an educational boost or new motivation for learning were targeted. There was an application/placement process where the student was the focus of the discussion and decision making process for placement.

Each program served up to eighty (80) students per academic year. Results will be based on academic, attendance, discipline, and personal growth data.

Current Status - All installed sites are operational and implementing programming with fidelity. Each site is implementing based on their local needs. Some are targeting 7th graders, some are targeting 8th graders, some are targeting 9th graders, and some are targeting a combination of each of the grade bands.

Arkansas River ESC (ARESC) is providing email, phone, and on site support with quarterly checkpoints. ARESC staff is providing support to all sites by providing supplemental professional development, storage and unpacking services, technology guidance, teacher support, inventory training/tagging visits, ribbon cutting planning, data compilation, data analysis, and overall implementation support.



**Map of current Star Academy Sites.*

Hope is not in this grant but we provide support and include them on the map.

Project Name: Beginning Superintendent and Principal Mentoring

Competitive Grant: No

Goals and Description: Education Service Cooperatives began mentoring beginning superintendents and principals in the 2025-2026 school year. ARESC supported 5 beginning principals and 4 beginning assistant principals in the Beginning Administrator Mentoring program.

The Beginning Superintendent/Principal Mentoring Program is a two-year initiative designed to support first-year and second-year superintendents/building principals across Arkansas. Administered regionally through the state's Education Service Cooperatives (ESCs), this program provides structured leadership training aligned with the Arkansas LEADS framework. It emphasizes building a positive school climate and strengthening instructional leadership. This Beginning Superintendent/Principal Mentoring Program is designed to equip Arkansas' newest educational leaders with the essential tools, habits, and mindsets they need to foster strong climates, improve instruction, and ultimately improve student outcomes. Its flexible design ensures statewide consistency while allowing for regional customization based on local needs.

Year 1: Foundational Leadership Development

Focus:

- Climate, Communication, Coaching, Commitment

- LEADS, especially Domain 2 (School climate)

Key Components: Summer statewide kickoff training, on-site school visits, quarterly climate-focused focus walks, regional meetings, 6 annual hybrid training modules, and a foundational coaching course.

Training Topics: TESS, Ethics, Professional Growth Plans, Relationship Building, Interpreting Test Data, School Safety, Discipline, Special Education, 504, Dyslexia, Mentoring Basics, Standards for Accreditation, Communication, Conducting Hard Conversations, Building Visibility, Using Interim Data, Student Voice, Telling Your School's Story, Conducting Needs Assessments, Classroom Walkthrough Practices, Introduction to Coaching, EES Overview, Hiring Basics, Professional Development Planning, Roster Verification, and Preparing for Annual Teacher Ratings.

Year 2: Advanced Instructional Leadership

Focus:

- Instructional Leadership
- High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)

Key Components: Summer statewide 2-day training, on-site school visits, regional meetings, focus walks (focused on instruction and HQIM)

Training Topics: Building an Instructional Model, Classroom Walkthroughs, Profile of a Highly Effective Principal and Teacher, Data Collection, HQIM

Project Name: Support for D/F Districts

Competitive Grant: No

Goals and Description: Education Service Cooperatives, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education, provided support for D/F rated school districts for the 2025-2026 school year. ARESC supported 2 F rated districts, 2 D rated districts, and 2 C rated districts. ARESC provided support in the following areas: instructional focus walks, debriefs with district administrative team, intentional support from content specialists, review of ATLAS data, support in the requirements to obtain a diploma of merit and/or distinction. Work will be ongoing in the 2026-2027 school year.

Arkansas River ESC Impact on Student Performance
Report to ARESC Board of Directors - Act 802
2025-2026

Program	Impact
Oakwood Preschool ABC/CCDF	Oakwood Preschool had a highly successful 2025–2026 school year. The staff utilized Pearson’s Work Study Software to monitor the progress of 105 students, assessing their growth against developmentally appropriate benchmarks for each age group. Instruction was guided by the FrogStreet curriculum, approved by Arkansas State University Early Childhood Services. By the end of the year, students demonstrated impressive achievement, surpassing 85% proficiency across all developmental domains. These domains include personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies, the arts, physical development, health, and safety. These results highlight the effectiveness of both the curriculum and the teaching methods implemented at Oakwood Preschool.
PAT	During the 2024-2025 year, the ARESC-PAT program served a total of 100 (60- ABC, 40 - MIECHV) individual families with target children aged to three years. PAT will have 18 children graduating from the PAT program and transition to the HIPPY program
HIPPY	ARESC-HIPPY served 715 (607 -ABC, 108- MIECHV) families for the 2024-2025 school year. We serve the following communities: Arkansas, Jefferson, Grant, Saline, Monroe, Woodruff, St. Francis, Lee, Cross, Pulaski, Lincoln, Cleveland, and Dallas Counties. HIPPY children and families are assessed using the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, ASQ/SE, Family Map and every 10 week assessment skill sheet.
Early Childhood Special Services	We screened approximately 3,725 students, evaluated 1,391, and provided services for 412 students who qualified under IDEA. According to the Annual Performance Report, we scored a positive rate change in Indicator 06-A (percent of children with IEPs aged 3,4, and 5 who are enrolled in a preschool program attending a regular early childhood program receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program). Although our rate is still under the state rate, our current goal is 25%. We also had positive rate changes in all Early Childhood Outcomes rates, exceeding the state rate in 6 of the 7 areas. Our strongest indicators were Indicator 11, Child Find, Indicator 12, Transition, and Timely and Accurate Date, in which we scored 100% in all three. Again, higher than the state average. On the Early Childhood Family Outcomes Survey, 96.3% of parents reported school-facilitated improvement. Of the 135 surveys, 130 averaged an overall score of 5 or better.

Curious George Summer Program - PreKindergarten	Summer Enrichment Camp: “Join Curious George to Learn About Your Community” Forty-four four- and five-year-olds in Jefferson County participated in a six-week summer enrichment camp focused on literacy, math, and social skills. The camp integrated Curious George books with real-life experiences, fostering holistic development. Pre- and post-testing using the Brigance Screening Tool revealed significant growth in physical, language, academic, and social-emotional skills, with 100% of students showing improvement.
The Virtual Academy at the River	The Virtual Academy saw student growth in both literacy and math using data from the ATLAS assessment that the districts provide us. The Academy served over 750 students and 30 school districts in either hybrid or fully online instruction.
Alternative Education - 9-12 Focus Academy - 5-8 Focus Academy - Flex Academy - Explore Academy	<u>Focus Academy</u>- Continued to provide a structured alternative learning environment focused on improving student behavior, academics, attendance, and successful transitions back to host districts during the 2025–2026 school year. The program served middle and high school students from participating districts through individualized schedules, intervention supports, progress monitoring, and behavior-focused services. During the school year, Focus Academy strengthened collaboration with districts, expanded the use of Edgenuity and IXL for academic support and credit recovery, and refined placement and transition procedures to improve consistency across campuses. Students received mentoring, counseling support, parent communication interventions, and individualized behavior plans designed to promote student success. Focus Academy remained committed to providing a supportive, structured environment while helping students develop the academic and behavioral skills needed for long-term success and reintegration into traditional school settings when appropriate. <u>Flex Academy</u>- continued to provide a flexible educational option for students needing virtual, blended, or non-traditional instructional settings during the 2025–2026 school year. Students received individualized instruction, credit recovery opportunities, intervention supports, and progress monitoring while maintaining access to educational services. Flex Academy continued to provide an important alternative pathway for students requiring additional flexibility and individualized support to remain successful in their educational journey. <u>Explore Academy</u>- continued to serve students needing additional behavioral and academic support in a structured alternative setting during the 2025–2026 school year. The program focused on improving attendance, increasing academic engagement, and supporting positive behavioral growth through individualized

	interventions and consistent progress monitoring. Explore Academy maintained strong communication with districts, families, and counselors while utilizing mentoring, restorative practices, and behavior interventions to support student success. Through structured interventions and individualized support systems, Explore Academy remained committed to helping students build the skills necessary for success both academically and behaviorally. Focusing on grade level hands on impact learning that set students to be successful in returning to their schools in 10th grade.																														
Career & Technical Education	Based on the 2025 Career and Technical Education Consortium report on performance measures for concentrators, the ARESC CTE support had an overall positive impact on a few student achievement indicators. The table below shows ARESC consortium Perkins V data in comparison to the State Perkins V data for CTE Concentrators. Concentrator - A student who has earned full credit in any two CTE courses in any given CTE Pathway. <table><tr><td></td><td>ARESC Consortium</td><td>State</td></tr><tr><td><u>Perkins V Indicator</u></td><td><u>FY25 (%)</u></td><td><u>FY25 (%)</u></td></tr><tr><td>Four Year Graduation Rate</td><td>99.2</td><td>98.4</td></tr><tr><td>Academic Proficiency Reading/LA</td><td>33.3</td><td>44.1</td></tr><tr><td>Academic Proficiency Mathematics</td><td>19.4</td><td>29.5</td></tr><tr><td>Academic Proficiency in Science</td><td>32.6</td><td>46.3</td></tr><tr><td>Post program placement</td><td>93.5</td><td>93</td></tr><tr><td>Non-Traditional Concentration</td><td>85.1</td><td>89.2</td></tr><tr><td>Program Quality H2 Certifications</td><td>< 3</td><td>5.3</td></tr><tr><td>Program Quality Merit/Distinction</td><td>22.3</td><td>29.8</td></tr></table> ARESC Consortium met or exceeded the State target numbers for graduation rate, math proficiency, post-graduation placement, non-traditional concentration and Merit/Distinction. However, areas for growth include reading, science and H2 Certifications, which fell below the State target numbers.		ARESC Consortium	State	<u>Perkins V Indicator</u>	<u>FY25 (%)</u>	<u>FY25 (%)</u>	Four Year Graduation Rate	99.2	98.4	Academic Proficiency Reading/LA	33.3	44.1	Academic Proficiency Mathematics	19.4	29.5	Academic Proficiency in Science	32.6	46.3	Post program placement	93.5	93	Non-Traditional Concentration	85.1	89.2	Program Quality H2 Certifications	< 3	5.3	Program Quality Merit/Distinction	22.3	29.8
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Early Childhood Local Leads	With the passing of the LEARNS Act in 2023, the Department of Education set about to establish a cohesive plan for early childhood learning that would seamlessly integrate early learning with kindergarten readiness. The cornerstone																														

	of this plan is an alignment of comprehensive services among local providers, as well as the fostering of partnerships between the families, communities, and state. ARESC Local Leads has coordinated with over 100 service providers in the four county region assigned to the cooperative. This year, ARESC began the implementation of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), a tool to be utilized as part of the accountability system that provides a rating “indicative of child outcomes.” CLASS measures the quality in teacher-student interactions, provides ratings on teacher performance, and creates a system of data collection and common language that providers can use to identify targeted areas. The ARESC Local Leads Captain is responsible for coordinating all CLASS observations and data collection. The goal for the state was to complete at least one observation for each provider in the catchment area. The goal was met, collectively among all regions, with ARESC completing more than 50 in total. The work of the Local Leads Captain, in coordination with local service providers, will ultimately result in families and children having access to comprehensive quality early childhood learning in compliance with the law.												
Math, & Science	During the 2025–2026 school year, under the direction of the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the focus of the Math Specialist was on providing job-embedded coaching cycles. These coaching cycles were designed to offer sustained, on-site professional learning tailored to the needs of teachers and instructional teams. Support centered on the implementation of high-quality instructional materials, alignment to state standards, and the development of effective science teaching practices. Through regular classroom visits, co-planning, modeling, and reflection, the coaching cycles aimed to build instructional capacity and improve student outcomes in math across the region. <i>During the 2025–2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative test was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of 50 face-to-face site visits were conducted in the <u>Pine Bluff School District</u> to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.</i> <u>Math</u> <table><tr><th><u>Grade Level:</u></th><th><u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u></th><th><u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u></th><th><u>Progress shown in proficiency changes</u></th></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>10%</td><td>17%</td><td>7% increase</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>9%</td><td>17%</td><td>8% increase</td></tr></table>	<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Progress shown in proficiency changes</u>	3	10%	17%	7% increase	4	9%	17%	8% increase
<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Progress shown in proficiency changes</u>										
3	10%	17%	7% increase										
4	9%	17%	8% increase										

5	6%	8%	2% increase
6	19%	23%	4% increase
7	10%	19%	9% increase
alg	3%	19%	26% increase

During the 2025–2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative test was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **68** face-to-face site visits were conducted in the **Stuttgart School District** to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

Math

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Progress shown in proficiency despite assessment changes.:</u>
4	19%	23%	4% increase
5	17%	19%	2% increase
6	26%	32%	6% increase
8	20%	46%	26% increase

During the 2025–2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative test was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **61** face-to-face site visits were conducted in the **Watson Chapel School District** to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

Math

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Progress shown in proficiency despite assessment changes.:</u>

3	14%	17%	3% increase
5	14%	30%	16% increase
7	10%	27%	17% increase
8	4%	9%	5% increase
alg	6%	8%	2% increase

Math

During the 2025–2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative test was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **51** face-to-face site visits were conducted in the **White Hall School District** to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

Math

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Progress shown in proficiency despite assessment changes.:</u>
3	35%	48%	13% increase
5	27%	39%	12% increase
6	27%	31%	4% increase
7	38%	41%	3% increase
8	15%	20%	5% increase
alg	24%	27%	3% increase
geo	6%	14%	8% increase

During the 2025–2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative test was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **21** face-to-face

site visits were conducted in the **Sheridan School District** to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Progress shown in proficiency despite assessment changes.:</u>
3	38%	43%	5% increase
4	37%	48%	11% increase
5	41%	43%	2% increase
6	41%	44%	3% increase
7	42%	47%	5% increase
alg	33%	43%	10% increase
geo	30%	39%	9% increase

Science

During the 2025-2026 school year, under the direction of the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the focus of the Science Specialist was on providing job-embedded coaching cycles. These coaching cycles were designed to offer sustained, on-site professional learning tailored to the needs of teachers and instructional teams. Support centered on the implementation of high-quality instructional materials, alignment to state standards, and the development of effective science teaching practices. Through regular classroom visits, co-planning, modeling, and reflection, the coaching cycles aimed to build instructional capacity and improve student outcomes in science across the region. Our team used the school data from the Atlas and the 2023-2024 data to support schools. We are providing the achievement from 2023-2024 since we do not have a baseline or comparison due to change of state assessments. Please find the 2023-2024 student achievement data.

*During the 2025-2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative assessment was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **21** face-to-face site visits were conducted in the **Pine Bluff School District** to provide*

job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Growth</u>
3	12%	18%	6%
4	5%	14%	9%
5	6%	8%	2%
6	11%	17%	6%
7	6%	14%	8%
Biology	5%	12%	7%

During the 2025-2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative assessment was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of 37 face-to-face site visits were conducted in the Stuttgart School District to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Growth</u>
3	23%	24%	1%
5	24%	33%	9%
6	25%	30%	5%
7	27%	42%	15%
8	29%	42%	13%
Biology	36%	40%	4%

During the 2025-2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative assessment was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and

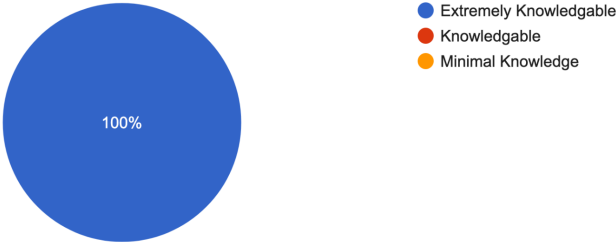
professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **28** face-to-face site visits were conducted in the **Watson Chapel School District** to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Growth</u>
3	7%	27%	20%
5	12%	23%	11%
6	17%	22%	5%
7	16%	32%	16%
8	18%	21%	2%
Biology	9%	24%	15%

During the 2025-2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative assessment was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of **28** face-to-face site visits were conducted in the **White Hall School District** to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance.

<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</u>	<u>Growth</u>
3	38%	52%	14%
4	40%	45%	5%
5	30%	45%	15%
6	27%	36%	9%
7	39%	41%	2%
8	29%	44%	15%
Biology	22%	25%	3%

	During the 2025-2026 school year, student achievement data from the ATLAS summative assessment was used to identify trends in instructional practices and student outcomes. This comparative analysis helped inform targeted support and professional learning in alignment with district goals. A total of 4 face-to-face site visits were conducted in the <u>Sheridan School District</u> to provide job-embedded coaching and implementation support focused on improving instructional quality and student performance. <table><tr><th><u>Grade Level:</u></th><th><u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u></th><th>Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026</th><th><u>Growth</u></th></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>44%</td><td>49%</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>44%</td><td>48%</td><td>4%</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>47%</td><td>52%</td><td>5%</td></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>45%</td><td>65%</td><td>20%</td></tr><tr><td>Biology</td><td>40%</td><td>54%</td><td>14%</td></tr></table>	<u>Grade Level:</u>	<u>Proficient (ATLAS) 2024-2025</u>	Proficient (ATLAS) 2025-2026	<u>Growth</u>	3	44%	49%	5%	5	44%	48%	4%	6	47%	52%	5%	7	45%	65%	20%	Biology	40%	54%	14%															
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7	45%	65%	20%																																					
Biology	40%	54%	14%																																					
Mentoring/Novice	Number of Novices served in 2023-2024 - 201 Number of Novices Served in 2024-2025 - 194 During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, the mentoring program specialists conducted 422 site visits to novice teachers and building administrators. We conducted an additional 1,572 Zoom meetings, phone calls and emails to support novice teachers, mentors, building administrators and central office staff in Arkansas River ESC school districts. The results of the end of year Novice Teacher survey for 2024-2025 is as follows: <table><tr><th>A</th><th>B</th><th>C</th><th>D</th><th>E</th><th>F</th><th>G</th><th>H</th><th>I</th><th>J</th><th>K</th><th>L</th><th>M</th></tr><tr><td>Mentoring Program</td><td>Response Rate</td><td>Responses</td><td>Plan to Return to Teaching Position</td><td>Received Mentoring Support</td><td>Assigned a Support Person</td><td>Mentor Prog Impact Decision to Stay</td><td>Mentor Program Est norms of professionalism</td><td>Mentor Program Progress to Effective Teaching</td><td>Mentor support helped make progress on PGP Goal</td><td>Mentor Prog Understand TESS summative evaluation process</td><td>Support Person Improve Teaching</td><td>mentoring support helped increase their knowledge of the Framework for Teaching or the FIT Clusters.</td></tr><tr><td>ARK. RIVER</td><td>144</td><td>75%</td><td>87%</td><td>88%</td><td>81%</td><td>69%</td><td>96%</td><td>95%</td><td>89%</td><td>93%</td><td>88%</td><td>93%</td></tr></table>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	Mentoring Program	Response Rate	Responses	Plan to Return to Teaching Position	Received Mentoring Support	Assigned a Support Person	Mentor Prog Impact Decision to Stay	Mentor Program Est norms of professionalism	Mentor Program Progress to Effective Teaching	Mentor support helped make progress on PGP Goal	Mentor Prog Understand TESS summative evaluation process	Support Person Improve Teaching	mentoring support helped increase their knowledge of the Framework for Teaching or the FIT Clusters.	ARK. RIVER	144	75%	87%	88%	81%	69%	96%	95%	89%	93%	88%	93%
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GT Enrichment	During the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years, a total of 217 parents, coaches and students completed evaluations of student enrichment opportunities held at Arkansas River ESC including Quiz Bowl, chess and the Jefferson County Spelling Bee. 97% of survey participants reported student growth in the evaluations of enrichment opportunities. 2,318 students in grades 3-12 participated in enrichment opportunities those 2 years.																																							
Dyslexia	Cycle Four data from the 2025-2026 school year indicates that the total Number																																							

	of Students Receiving Dyslexia Intervention Services in grade K-12 in the ARESC region is: 734. This is an increase of 31 students from the Cycle Seven data that reported 703 students in the 2024-2025 school year. Districts were provided with professional learning and/or technical assistance (TA) around the implementation of dyslexia screening protocols and procedures (K-12) and analysis of dyslexia screening data (K-12). Six collaborative team meetings with district dyslexia coordinators were conducted to provide updates and technical assistance around screening, data analysis and intervention fidelity. On-site visits were conducted to provide targeted support to each district. Emphasis has been placed on Early Interventions, K-3 ATLAS assessments, IRPS, and 4-12 screenings as outlined in the dyslexia rules. Results of the Dyslexia Specialist Support Survey: How would you rate the specialist's knowledge of the information presented or shared? 8 responses  A pie chart with a single blue segment representing 100% of the responses. The legend indicates three categories: 'Extremely Knowledgeable' (blue), 'Knowledgeable' (red), and 'Minimal Knowledge' (yellow). The blue segment is labeled '100%'. Additional Comments on Survey: Denise has been a huge help this year from analyzing ATLAS data, completing level 2 testing, and any other things that I may need. She always offers support however needed. I've gained new knowledge about Dyslexia laws and updates at each CTM. These meetings are a great resource. The specialist has extensive knowledge and provides valuable support.
Behavior Support	During the 2025–26 school year, the behavior management program expanded from three to five district participants, reflecting increased demand for support across schools. While the program continued to prioritize observing students in their school environments and providing actionable feedback, its scope broadened to emphasize improving instructional quality through trauma-informed practices, de-escalation strategies, targeted social and behavioral interventions, and small-group lessons delivered by school personnel

	for students with and without identified special education needs. Through ongoing observations and job-alike meetings with district staff, we developed and delivered training tailored to school needs, including conducting FBAs, teaching in self-contained classrooms, and implementing trauma-informed teaching in daily practice. The program also emphasized consistent documentation of behaviors, student needs, and intervention effectiveness to guide placement decisions and determine when to collaborate with the Arkansas BSS Circuit for students not responding as expected. Support levels varied based on individual student needs and school requests, ensuring responsive and context-specific assistance across districts.
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