



Wilbur D. Mills
Education Service Cooperative

WDMESC

Annual Report
on Operations
2025-2026

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Director's Annual Memo

The Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative remains committed to providing progressive, high-quality services to the school districts we serve. In the 2025-2026 academic year, we continued to support our districts in implementing the Arkansas State Standards while ensuring access to high-quality professional development. Additionally, we have taken on the crucial task of assisting districts with the implementation of the Professional Learning Community Model. Other initiatives we have taken on include but are not limited to TESS/LEADS Credentialing, Beginning Superintendent Mentoring, Beginning Principal Mentoring, and C/D/F District Letter Grade Support

As a liaison between the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education and our member districts, our role has expanded with the introduction of the LEARNS and ACCESS Acts of 2023 and 2025. Historically, WDMESC Specialists provided support to any school in need. However, due to funding reductions, our team of Content Area Specialists decreased from seven to three the previous year. Despite these challenges, collaborative efforts between the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, our member districts, and our cooperative have resulted in improved achievement for our member school districts.

Our Board members remain actively engaged in guiding the cooperative with a strong shared vision. The 2025-2026 annual report, prepared by our staff, outlines the programs and grants provided to our 17 school districts and collaborative partners. The Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative employs 78 individuals, some of whom are housed directly in schools and preschools.

The Arkansas Department of Education provides base funding of \$408,618, with our total budget amounting to approximately \$6 million.

Shared Programs and Services

One of our primary objectives is to administer programs efficiently and effectively for our member schools. As a result, our 17 school districts, or portions thereof, share joint programs, including:

APSCN Field Support	Media Services
College and Career Readiness Prep Program	Medicaid Billing Services
Content Literacy	Migrant Education Program
C.T.E./Perkins Consortium Coordinator	Professional Development Programs
Digital Learning Consortium	Psychological Services
Early Childhood Special Education Program	Recruitment and Retention Services
Gifted and Talented Coordinator	School Health Nurse
LEA Special Education Supervisor	School Recruitment Employment Application Software
Licensure Assessment Support	Science Specialist
Literacy/Dyslexia Specialist	Teacher Center Services
Math Specialist	Technology Services
Beginning Principal Mentoring	TESS/LEADS Credentialing
Beginning Superintendent Mentoring	C/D/F District/Building Level Support

Arkansas education cooperatives have long served as key implementation support agents for new state initiatives. The Wilbur D. Mills Cooperative has played a crucial role in delivering the professional development and capacity-building necessary to bring these initiatives to life. Moving forward, we will continue to provide comprehensive support tailored to the evolving needs of our public schools.

Our mission remains steadfast: to support and serve our school districts in their pursuit of providing a high-quality education for all students. We are dedicated to delivering these services in the most effective and efficient manner possible. As we prepare for the challenges and opportunities of the coming year, the staff of the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative remains committed to excellence in service and support.

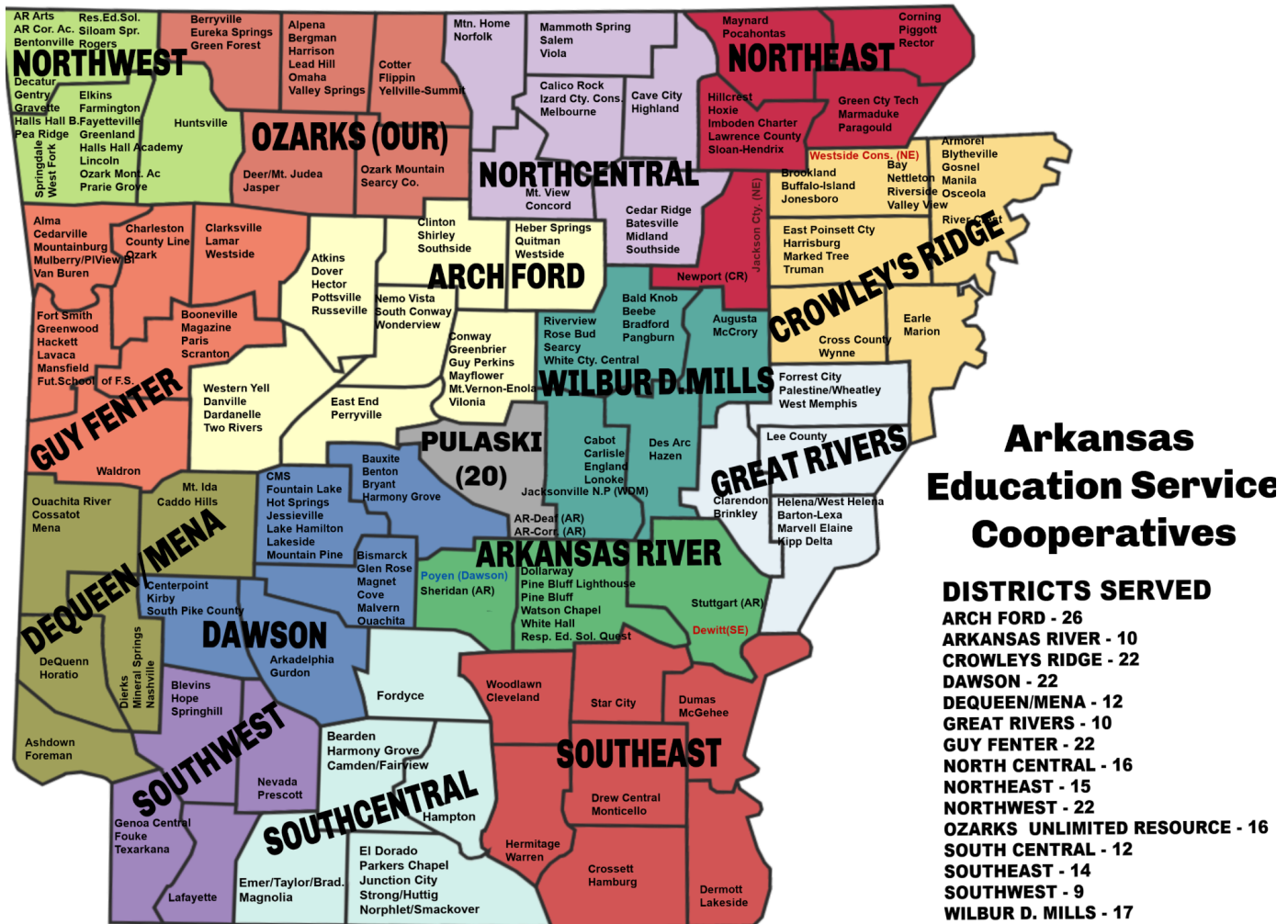
Brad Horn, Director

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative

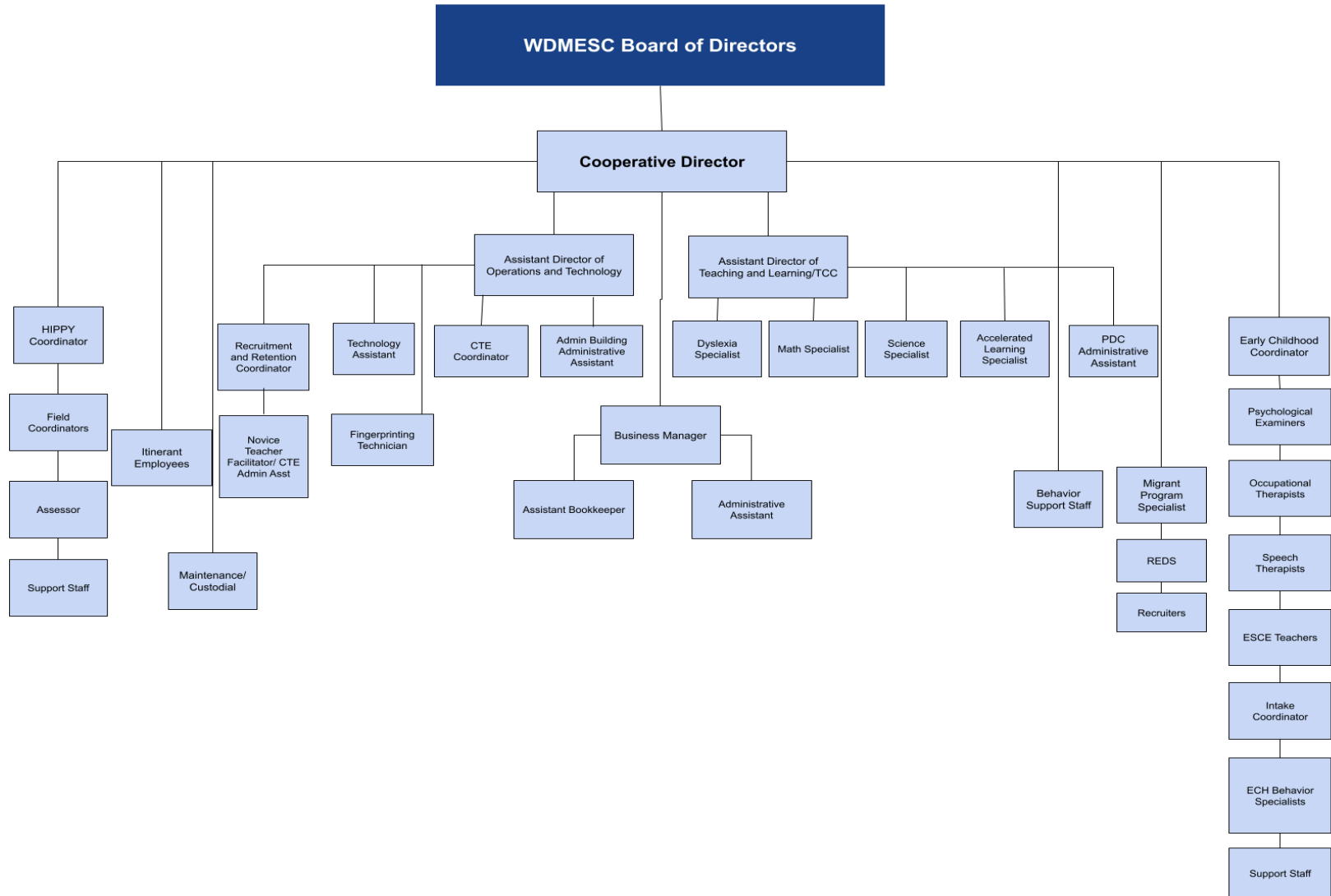
WDMESC Mission Statement

WDMESC exists to assist their member school districts in

- Meeting their local educational goals;
- Implementing educational priorities;
- Building capacity of teachers, administrators, and school board members; and
- Improving student learning, growth, and achievement.



WDMESC Organizational Flow Chart



School Districts served in Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Officers of the Board of Directors for 2025-2026

Name	Position	School District
Dr. Marc Sherrell	President	Des Arc
Mr. Pharis Smith	Vice President	White County Central
BJ Green	Secretary	Carlisle

Members of the Board of Directors for 2025-2026

Name	Position	School District
Cathy Tanner	Superintendent	Augusta
Dr. Jed Davis	Superintendent	Bald Knob
Zeb Prothro	Superintendent	Beebe
Sarah Wickliffe	Superintendent	Bradford
Michael Byrd	Superintendent	Cabot
BJ Greene	Superintendent	Carlisle
Dr. Marc Sherrell	Superintendent	Des Arc
Dr. Judy Hubbell	Superintendent	England
Andy Barrett	Superintendent	Hazen
Dr. Jeremy Owoh	Superintendent	Jacksonville North Pulaski
Brett Bunch	Superintendent	Lonoke
Scott Waymire	Superintendent	McCrory
David Rolland	Superintendent	Pangburn
Stan Stratton	Superintendent	Riverview
Allen Blackwell	Superintendent	Rose Bud
Dr. Bobby Hart	Superintendent	Searcy
Pharis Smith	Superintendent	White County Central

Teacher Center Committee Members for 2025-2026

Name	Position	School District
Becky Coyle	Administrator	Augusta
Candace Anselmi	Elementary Administrator	Bald Knob
Clint Williams	Elementary Principal	Beebe
Jeremy Robertson	Secondary Teacher	Bradford
Jill Fletcher	Administrator @ Large	Cabot
Megan Aukes	Secondary Principal	Carlisle
Billy Paschal	Mid Level Principal	Des Arc
Melissa Cason	Secondary Teacher	England
Angie Hambrick	Library Media Specialist	Hazen
Sydney Miller	Secondary Teacher	Jacksonville North Pulaski
Theresa Lawson	Mid Level Teacher	Lonoke
Glen Campbell	High School Principal	McCrory
Melissa Allen	Elementary Teacher	Pangburn
Shannon Roach	Middle School Teacher	Riverview
Amanda Frizzel	Secondary Teacher	Rose Bud
Sherri Jackson	Elementary Teacher	Searcy
Deana Smith	Mid Level Teacher	White County Central

Education Service Cooperative Annual Report

Date: 01/29/2025 **LEA#:** 73-20 **ESC#:** 15
ESC Name: Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative
Physical Address: 114 N. Main St., P.O. Box 850, Beebe, AR 72012
Phone Number: 501-882-5467
Director: Brad Horn
Teacher Center Coordinator: Brandi Hardcastle
Names of Counties Served: Lonoke, Prairie, North Pulaski, White, Woodruff
Number of Districts: 17 **Number of Students:** 31,092
Number of Teachers: 3,281

Governance:

How is the co-op governed? Board of Directors
How many members are on the Board? 17
Executive Committee? N/A
How many times did the Board meet? 11
When is the regular meeting? 3rd Wednesday of month
Date of current year's annual meeting: June 9, 2026
Does the co-op have a Teacher Center Committee? Yes If yes, then:
How many are on the Teacher Center Committee? 17
How many members are teachers? 9
How many times did the Teacher Center Committee meet? 3
When is the regular meeting? Fall, Winter, and Spring
When was the most recent survey/needs assessment conducted? January 2026
Have written policies been filed with the Arkansas Department of Education? Yes

Cooperative Finance Overview

Arkansas Educational Funding Cooperatives are funded from three primary sources: state, local, and federal.

State funds are awarded to Educational Service Cooperatives through targeted grants. The grant budgets and goals originate from the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Grant funds are reimbursed by DESE after program appropriate expenditures occur. The grants include targeted funds for reading specialists/coaches, math specialists, dyslexia specialists, science specialists, technology specialists, special education, curriculum training, and other grants as determined by DESE. The funds are not carried over. DESE also provides \$408,000 annually to each cooperative for general operations. State funds represented 32.97% of all cooperative revenues in FY25 or \$60,189,375.

Local revenue is money that comes to a cooperative from local school districts by agreement. The services associated with these agreements include staff shared between districts, professional development services, special education testing, interest income, cooperative operations, repair services, and other special projects as determined by participating districts and the cooperative. Local funds accounted for 37.26% of cooperative revenue or \$68,023,523 in FY25.

Federal funds are governed by federal & state laws and rules for each program. They are reimbursed by DESE after program appropriate expenditures are made. Balances are regulated by federal rules. Federal Programs operated through cooperatives include the Migrant program, Arkansas Better Chance, the Perkins Program, and Special Education ages 3-5. For the fiscal year 2025, the cooperative Federal revenue total was \$51,875,729 or 28.42% of all FY25 revenue.

Total revenue for 24-25 was \$182,553,219. This includes the broad categories above, plus additional revenues of \$2,464,593. The additional revenues occurred in select cooperatives and included insurance claims, food service programs for students, and other revenue streams not common to the group.

WDMESC Staffing

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative 2025-2026

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

Name	Position	Funding Source	New Hire	Resigned
Adair, Katie	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Allen, Pamela	Math Instructional Specialist	S		
Alvarado, Lourdes	Migrant Program Field Recruiter	F		
Ball, Jessica	HIPPY Field Coordinator	S		
Baum, Alton	Custodial/Maintenance	B		
Berner, Robyn	Early Childhood Programmer	S		X
Bettencourt, Baileann	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Bowls, Jillian	School Psychological Examiner-Rose Bud & Pangburn School Districts	D		
Brewster, Amy	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Bryan, Nicole	Early Childhood Programmer	S		
Buddenberg, Mary	Early Childhood Teacher	S	X	
Carrigan, Benjamin	Science Specialist	S		
Carroll, Hartley	Early Childhood Speech Language Path Asst.	S		X
Carroll, Jacob	Technology Assistant	S	X	
Chambers, Dahnah	Early Childhood Administrative Assistant	S		
Chena, Sandra	Migrant Program Student Support Specialist	F		
Cherry, Alicia	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Clark, Jason	HIPPY Director	S		
Clark, Wendy	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Collins, DeAnna	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Cook, Johnnie	Early Childhood Intake Coordinator	S		

Counts, Gabby	Early Childhood Paraprofessional	S		
Crider-West, Daphne	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Cross, Kyle	Computer Technologist-Riverview School District	D		
Cypret, Angelina	ECH SPED Paraprofessional	S	X	
Douell, Laruen	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Farfan, Lily	Migrant Program Field Recruiter	F		
Foster, Cheri	Early Childhood Teacher/ECH Consultant	S		
Frazier, Katlynn	School Psychological Examiner-Beebe & Riverview School Districts	D		
Fuller, Karen	Migrant Program Specialist	F		
Gajeski, Karen	School Psychology Specialist - Beebe School District	D		
Gerlach, Amy	Early Childhood Programmer	S		
Gibson, Christy	Behavior Support Consortium Coordinator	D		
Gibson, Jordan	Early Childhood Paraprofessional	S		
Gilbert, Stephanie	Early Childhood Occupational Therapist	S		
Gillion, Christie	General Business Manager	B		
Graham, Amber	Early Childhood Program Coordinator	S/F		X
Grooms, Lesa	Assistant Director/Teacher Center Coordinator	B		X
Hall, Kimberly R	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Hardcastle, Brandi	Coordinator of Teaching & Learning/TCC	S	X	
Harris, Heidi	Migrant Program REDS	F		
Heidelberg, Stephanie	HIPPY Field Coordinator	S		
Heineman, Alexanderia	Early Childhood Behavioral Support Specialists	S		
Henson, Sarah	Early Childhood Teacher	S		

Hofheinz, Monica	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Horn, Brad	Director	B		
Hurley, Kimberly	Early Childhood Occupational Therapist	S		
Jefford, Ginger	Early Childhood Programmer/Examiner	S		
Jobe, Colleen	Early Childhood Local Lead Coordinator	S/F		
Keller, Suzanne	HIPPY Administrative Assistant	S		
Kennard, Tuer	Novice Teacher Facilitator/CTE Admin Assistant	S		
Knighton, Misty	School Psychological Examiner-Beebe School District	D		
Lambert, Carmen	Migrant Program Field Recruiter	F		X
Leonard, Breanna	Early Childhood Teacher	S		X
Liles, Parker	Early Childhood Intake Processor	S		
Maxwell, Rhonda	Early Childhood Teacher	S	X	
Mershon, Jade	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Mikeal, My Duyen	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Miller, Rebecca	SPED LEA Supervisor	D		X
Mitchell, Marie	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Osborn, Karen	Administrative Assistant	D		
Park, Jennifer	Advanced Learning Specialist	D		
Parker, Misty	Early Childhood Programmer	F		
Parks, Kayla	ECH SPED Paraprofessional	S	X	
Poe, Kristy	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Quinn, Angela	PDC Administrative Assistant	S		
Ramey, Kelly	HIPPY Field Coordinator	S		
Ray, Jenny	Behavior Support Consortium Coach	D		
Reedy, Robert	CTE Coordinator	S/F		

Rodgers, Maguire	Technology Assistant	B		X
Rose, Tenisha	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Sanders, Victoria	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S		
Searcy, Taylor	ECH SPED Paraprofessional	S	X	
Seekins, Natasha	Early Childhood Clerk	S		
Sherrill, Jackie	Business Office Assistant	B/F		
Singletary, Brook	Instructional Technology Specialist	S/B		
Smith, Lucas	Early Childhood Teacher/Examiner	S		
Smith, Melissa	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Spann, Wendy	HIPPY Field Coordinator	S		
Stephenson, Michelle	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Thompson, April	Fingerprint Technician	B		
Ussery, Lauren	Literacy/Dyslexia Specialist	S		
Vannada, Kristen	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
Verkler-Yates, Morgan	Novice Teacher Mentoring Coordinator	S		
Wallis, Shayne	Computer Technologist-White County Central School District	D		
Watson, Jamie	Medicaid-eSchool Assistant	S/M		
Weatherford, Crystal	HIPPY Field Coordinator	S		
Webb, Bailey	Early Childhood Speech Therapist	S	X	
Wenzel, Chelsea	Early Childhood Teacher	S		
West, Heather	Early Childhood Teacher	S	X	
Williams, Tammy	Early Childhood Special Education Teacher/Programmer	S		X
Wolfe, Misty	Assistant Bookkeeper	S		
Woodham, Lindsey	Early Childhood Teacher	S		

Teacher Center

[Needs Assessment Administrator Only](#)
[User Satisfaction Survey](#)

Appendix A is a list of all in-service training/staff development workshops offered through the co-op, including month offered, topic, number of districts participating, number of participants and location of workshops. Included is a cumulative total of participants. See Professional Development Activities Report attached.

Does the co-op provide resource delivery to the districts? YES

Do districts contribute dollars to the media services? NO

Does the co-op operate a “make-and- take” center for teachers? YES - by appointment

How many teacher visits or requests for materials have been made to the center? (Count all teachers who have visited the center, using duplicate counts for teachers who have visited the center more than once).

- Number of Teacher Participants: 53
- Number of Other Participants: 11

Administrative Services

- Administrators and Local Board members professional learning
- APSCN Field Support
- Assessment data analysis
- Bookkeeping assistance
- Business Management training
- College Career Readiness Prep. administration/collaboration
- Computer Technician
- Conduct Annual Needs Assessment/planning assistance
- Cooperative purchasing
- Curriculum alignment/curriculum review
- Early Childhood Special Education services
- Early Childhood vision and hearing screening
- ESC Works support
- ESOL Support/Migrant Student Identification
- Evaluation procedures- assist/support (CTE, GT, SPED)
- Fingerprinting Services
- Gifted and Talented program assistance/professional development
- Grant writing assistance
- HIPPPY (Home Instruction for the Parents of Preschool Youngsters)
- Legislative Updates for school leaders
- Math/Science/Dyslexia Specialists
- Medicaid billing
- Mentor programs: Novice Teacher Mentor, Beginning Admin Mentor
- Migrant Education Program Coordinator
- Paraprofessional PRAXIS administration site
- Perkins Consortium/CTE Coordinator
- Personnel application software
- Praxis Support for educators and educator candidates
- Professional Development
- Psychological Services
- Ready for Learning collaborative partner
- Recruitment and Retention of educators
- School Health Nurse
- Social Emotional Support for certified, classified district staff
- Special education services/LEA Supervisors
- Technology training and support

Direct Services to Students

Student services provided through the co-op:

- ACT Prep
- Advanced Learning Programs: open to all 17 participating districts - Youth Entrepreneur Showcase and Stock Market Game
- Amazing Shake Competition
- America's Battle of the Books Competition
- Behavioral Support Consortium
- Chess Tournament
- Coding Competition
- College/Career Fair
- Early Childhood Special Education 3-5 years of age: special education teachers, special education programmers, educational examiners, speech/language pathology, behavior intervention, occupational therapy, physical therapy, audiology screening services, vision screening and consulting, paraprofessional, transition to public school
- Elementary Quiz Bowl
- Global Domination
- Gifted/Talented programs: 17 participating districts, 6th grade Career Exploration Day, 5th grade Critical Thinking Day, 4th grade STEM Day, 3rd grade Game Day
- Girl Power Competition
- HIPPY (Parents as Teachers, Transition to Kindergarten)
- Itinerant Teachers (LEA Supervisors, Educational School Psychologists)
- Migrant Support Services
- Online Digital Instruction (Pearson & Virtual Arkansas)
- Robotics Support for Programs and Competition
- Open Sci Ed Kits with training for educators
- STEM Day support
- Computer Science/Cybersecurity - Capture the Flag

Anecdotal Reports

Please attach three or four descriptions of activities which demonstrate partnerships, agreements or creative ways that the co-op has assisted local districts. The co-op personnel may write the reports, or the descriptions may be written by local schools served by the co-op. These reports may also include letters sent to the co-op or evaluations of a co-op activity.

1. Behavior Consortium - WDMESC provided a Behavior Support Coordinator and two coaches to interested districts. The program began with Administrator Training in August 2023. Administrator Training was conducted by the Coordinator and coaches. Training was then provided to teachers and counselors. The Behavior Consortium fostered a culture of understanding and intervention, ensuring that students received the support they needed for academic and social success. The Behavior Consortium continued into the 2025-2026 school year. Augusta School District, Bradford School District, Riverview School District, Bald Knob School District, and Carlisle School District participated in this Consortium.
2. HQIM/Communities of Practice Grant - Through the Communities of Practice Grant, WDMESC is providing High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) support to participating districts. England School District participated in this grant. The partnership between WDMESC and Bailey Education Group, is a collaborative effort geared towards empowering districts with tailored assistance in implementing HQIM strategies. Through this cooperative effort, districts are afforded the opportunity to engage directly with Bailey Education Group's seasoned Project Manager, facilitating personalized consultations to address the unique needs of the district. One aspect of this support system is the provision of coaching and

guidance, where experienced professionals work closely with educators to navigate HQIM integration. Through planning and support, educators are empowered to integrate high-quality instructional materials into their curriculum, thereby enriching the learning experiences of students. By leveraging the collective expertise and resources available through this cooperative endeavor, districts should create learning environments that foster academic achievement and student success.

3. Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative provided targeted support to schools identified as D and F. The team conducted 283 instructional classroom walks to gather data and guide improvement efforts. The focus of this support was to help schools strengthen instructional practices by identifying clear priorities for growth. Each school received guidance from the cooperative, including two key priority areas and aligned next steps to support continuous improvement.
4. Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative supported 13 new principals through the Beginning Principal Mentoring program. Throughout the year, six modules were delivered by the Teacher Center Coordinator, with a strong emphasis on building positive school culture alongside key leadership practices and school improvement strategies. In addition, each principal participated in a focus walk each semester to receive targeted feedback and support. This structured approach helped new leaders strengthen school culture while developing the skills needed to effectively lead and support their schools.

WDMESC Regional ESOL Support

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Regional ESOL support was developed in collaboration with the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education Learning Services Unit to improve the teaching and learning process for English Learners (ELs) and to assist with disseminating information regarding curricula choices and implementation. Each superintendent names an ESOL coordinator for their district.

Wilbur D. Mills Educational Service Cooperative connected ESOL Coordinators across the co-op to support communication, collaboration, and monitoring of progress through an ESOL grant. All 17 districts were invited to participate in the professional learning opportunities.

Coordinators were given the opportunity to review vendor options and collectively chose the SIOP Training of Trainers (TtT) model to best meet the needs of their districts. The TtT model was selected so that coordinators could take the learning and resources back to their districts to support ongoing implementation and training.

SIOP training took place at Wilbur D. Mills Educational Service Cooperative. Participants continue to have ongoing support and access to resources through the SIOP portal. Communication and networking opportunities were also maintained through regular email contact among districts, the ESC designee, and vendor partners to support collaboration, monitor progress, and provide additional assistance as needed. Quarterly communication with the Director of ESOL Program Services also occurred to provide updates, discuss progress, and identify areas needing additional support.

WDMESC Gifted and Talented Professional Learning Community

The WDMESC GT PLCs were developed in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Education to improve the teaching and learning process for gifted students and to assist with the dissemination of information regarding curricula choices, advanced options, acceleration, and implementation. All 17 of our districts are invited to participate in this work. Each district has a GT coordinator to oversee their curriculum, program options, proper documentation, and compliance with the rules and regulations set forth by the ADE. An invitation is extended to each coordinator to attend quarterly virtual meetings held at the co-op throughout the year. The meetings serve as means to keep districts in compliance with the GT rules and regs, to roll out and explain new initiatives, and implementation of curriculum. Experts in the field are also invited to present at these meetings or via Zoom to meet the needs of the group. The PLC meetings provide opportunities for districts to share and discuss with their colleagues from other districts. This community builds capacity across districts and allows them to better serve their gifted population by sharing curriculum and other materials.

WDMESC Counseling Professional Learning Community

The WDMESC Counseling Professional Learning Community (PLC), established in January 2025, brings together school counselors to collaborate, share strategies, and strengthen their impact on student success. This PLC serves as a space for ongoing professional growth, focused on meeting the diverse and evolving needs of students from elementary through high school. The PLC meets monthly, alternating between elementary and secondary grade-level focus areas, while also incorporating K–12 sessions to ensure alignment across all levels. This year’s work included a strong emphasis on acceleration opportunities, course codes, and graduation requirements, as counselors navigated several new components tied to the ACCESS. Additional focus areas included program planning, student success supports, social-emotional learning, data-informed decision making, and family engagement. By fostering collaboration, encouraging the sharing of best practices, and prioritizing both student and staff well-being, the WDMESC Counseling PLC is committed to equipping counselors to lead with purpose, equity, and impact.

WDMESC Assistant Superintendent / Curriculum Directors’ Collaborative Meetings

The Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative Curriculum Directors Job Alike group was established to improve the teaching and learning process for all content areas and to assist with the dissemination of information regarding curricula choices and implementation. All 17 of our districts are invited to participate in this collaboration. Each district designates staff to attend regular meetings held throughout the year.

The meetings serve as a venue for ADE personnel and other outside consultants to share with district leaders regarding the introduction of new requirements, explain initiatives, rules, curriculum updates, and other pertinent information. The meetings provide opportunities for leaders to share and discuss with colleagues from other districts.

WDMESC Principals’ Collaborative Meetings

The Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative Principals’ meetings focus is to assist building leaders as they enable their teachers to increase and improve learning opportunities for all students. The Principals Collaborative meetings are designed to enhance the understanding of current educational initiatives and unpack information. Our goal is to provide explanation and clarification as well as assist with implementation plans and strategies.

During the 2024-2025 school year, Andy Sullivan, from ADE/DESE, presented information about Annual Ratings and VAM scores. These are still fairly new concepts and the updated information provided insight for principals. Meagan Booe, ADE Behavior Specialist, presented information to the group concerning Behavior Management. She provided ideas and offered assistance to the schools. Amber Moss from Covey Education, presented information about self care and habits for success.

WDMESC Federal Coordinator Collaborative Meetings

The Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative Federal Coordinators meet regularly to review upcoming deadlines, required actions, and best practices for programs related to Federal funds. All 17 of our districts are invited to participate in this work. Each district designates staff to attend regular meetings held monthly. The meetings serve as a venue for sharing the latest information, collaborating with experts from other groups, such as the AAEE and ADE. The meetings provide opportunities for leaders to share and discuss with their colleagues from other districts. In 2024-2025, Jayne Green from ADE presented information about ESSER funds, spending, the AR App and provided updates. Dr. Eric Saunders, from AAEE, presented to the group and provided information on the following: school safety, school nutrition, ESA, and the AR App. Brooke McCain, from ADE/DESE Director of Standards and Systems of Support, presented information about accreditation, the future of monitoring, licensure, and the AR App.

WDMESC Technology Coordinator Collaborative Meetings

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative district Technology Coordinators and staff meet regularly to collaborate and learn from one another regarding district technology issues. The Office of State Technology and DESE regularly attend meetings to provide information and training on cybersecurity and other relevant topics. There were a total of 7 statewide meetings at which representatives from DESE and OST trained district technology coordinators on the cybersecurity

requirements of Act 504.

Program: Accounting

Funding Source: Base

Competitive Grant: No

Non-Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Personnel

Christie Gillion - Business Manager - HSD, Certified School Business Official

Misty Wolfe, Assistant Bookkeeper - HSD, Certified School Business Official

Goal

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

Program Summary

2025-2026 State Funding Source

- General Operating \$403,117.33
- Base Funding \$408,618
- Professional Development \$247,850
- Content Specialist \$270,000
- Technology Coordinator \$80,000
- HIPPY \$1,505,730
- Early Childhood Special Education State/EIDT \$1,541,255.10
- Early Childhood Special Education Extended School Year \$19,832
- Career & Technical Education Coordinator \$65,000
- Novice Teacher \$243,000
- Early Childhood Special Education Local \$467,250
- EL Program Support \$34,320

2025-2026 Federal Funding Source

- Carl Perkins \$178,100.51
- Carl Perkins Recruitment & Retentions \$10,000
- Carl Perkins Innovation-AWD Training \$48,216.17
- Carl Perkins Non-Traditional-Pre-Educator Pathway \$24,000
- Early Childhood Special Education Federal \$420,990.98
- ARMAC \$69,793.11
- Medicaid \$279,685.41
- ESEA Title I Migrant \$726,645.77
- ARP ESSER Acceleration thru Communities of Practice \$6,000
- Early Childhood Local Lead \$220,775.63

Program: Administration - Director's Office

Funding Source: Base Funds

Competitive Grant: No

Non-Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Personnel

Brad Horn, Director - MSE + Admin. Certificate

Christie Gillion, Business Manager - HSD Certified School Business Official

Misty Wolfe, Assistant Bookkeeper - HSD - Certified School Business Official

Shawn Sherrill, Administrative Assistant - HSD

Program Summary

The director has general supervisory responsibility for all cooperative programs. He is responsible to the governing board for recommendations on personnel, programs, and operations. He is specifically charged with leading the Cooperative staff to accomplish goals and to meet the program and service expectations of all funding agencies and stakeholders. He serves as a liaison for member districts to the Department for Education, the State Board of Education, the legislature, and other policy making agencies.

Both the director and business manager are bonded representatives with fiduciary responsibility for receiving and expending all funds. Because the Arkansas Public School Network (APSCN) accounting system is required of all state education agencies and because that system loosely fits such agencies as cooperatives where funding comes from many and varied sources, the bookkeeping procedures are complicated. The result is that much attention is paid to internal fiscal control. Each cooperative program coordinator is responsible for that program budget and is required to maintain a program account consistent with the APSCN coding procedures established by the central office and to work closely with the director and business manager in all fiscal decisions.

Program: ADE/APSCN

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education

Participating Districts: Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Heber Springs, Jacksonville, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Quitman, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, West Side, White County Central

Personnel

Jessica Bowman, APSCN User Support Coordinator - B.B.A

Goal

To provide end-user training and support to district staff that uses the statewide student management system, Enrollment, Cognos reports, and to provide training and guidance related to state reporting.

Program Summary

The User Support Coordinator 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 student management systems application provided by APSCN include: Demographics, Attendance, Scheduling, Report Cards, Discipline and Medical. Districts electronically submit data to the ADE nine times a year. The student field analyst provides districts with support and training workshops through meetings at the Cooperative, school visits, and communicating closely by email, telephone and Zoom meetings. Various trainings 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.

Major Highlights of the Year

Facilitate eSchool trainings for new or existing users, provides guidance on eSchool (student management system) upgrades, work with districts on state reporting error corrections and assists with implementation of Enrollment.

Program: Career and Technical Education

Funding Source: Carl D. Perkins Funding

Funding Amount: \$175,850.16

Competitive Grant: No

Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Bradford, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, and White County Central

Personnel

Robert Reedy, CTE Coordinator - MSE

Tuer Kennard, CTE Administrative Assistant

Goal

The mission of Career and Technical Education is to help schools strengthen the academic, technical, and employability skills of students enrolled in CTE programs and pathways. Our goal is to ensure teachers are trained in the latest technologies and equipped to bring those innovations into the classroom, preparing students for the demands of today's workforce and the careers of the future. We use Perkins performance indicators as a guide to identify areas where additional support, training, and resources are needed — ensuring both educators and students have the tools necessary for success. The following goals are the primary areas of focus at this time.

1. Support schools with the new pathway changes.
2. Help schools be more prepared to increase the number of Merit and Distinction Diplomas.
3. CTE programs will align curriculum and partner with industry stakeholders to gain students employability skills.

Program Summary

The Career and Technical Education Coordinator for the Wilbur D. Mills Consortium is responsible for writing and managing the annual Perkins Grant. This includes purchasing equipment, software, supplemental curriculum, and industry certifications for member districts based on pre-approved projects outlined in the grant.

The CTE Coordinator also manages all required reporting for the Perkins program and organizes professional development opportunities to support CTE educators. Additionally, a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) is completed annually to identify and prioritize areas of need, ensuring that support is targeted and effective for member schools.

Highlights of the Year

WDMESC hosted a college and career fair, bringing together students, community members, business and industry professionals, as well as faculty and staff from colleges and technical schools. Throughout the year, twenty three professional development sessions were offered across a variety of CTE pathways, providing valuable training opportunities to all schools within the WDMESC Consortium.

On February 6, 2026, WDMESC proudly hosted the Girl Power Manufacturing Event, designed to engage female students in hands-on CNC and manufacturing experiences. Eight schools participated, with 47 girls showcasing their skills and creativity through project-based learning using advanced manufacturing equipment. The event promoted confidence, career exploration, and empowerment for young women in non-traditional career fields. There are twelve industries that supported the event. WDMESC CTE department partnered with ASU Beebe which hosted the event at their Searcy campus.

Supplemental Curriculum: This year, many teachers at all thirteen of the WDMESC consortium schools requested supplemental curriculum to help with their lesson planning and classroom instruction. Here are the requests:

- iCEV online supplemental material subscriptions for their classrooms (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026). Teachers requested supplemental teaching materials such as: iCEV Agriculture, iCEV Business, iCEV Career Exploration,

iCEV FCS, iCEV Med Pro, and others as requested. All thirteen school districts with forty teachers in the consortium will benefit from these supplemental materials.

- Two Business and Marketing teachers (Bald Knob and Riverview) requested Gmetrix material from Certiport. Gmetrix is used to prepare students for the Microsoft Specialist certifications.
- Eleven Business and Marketing teachers, (Bald Knob, Bradford, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, White County Central) requested Testout supplemental curriculum that is used for business and marketing and also used to train students for the Microsoft Specialist certifications.
- AES education supplemental curriculum was purchased for Augusta Medical Professions and Criminal Justice programs of study for classroom instruction.
- White County Central Health Services pathway requested the Visible Body Courseware for Nursing Services.
- CTE teachers at Carlisle, Des Arc, Hazen, Pangburn, Riverview, and Rose Bud, requested the Glowforge Premium software to use with their Glowforge laser engraver equipment.
- And Another Thing, Agriculture curriculum was purchased for Carlisle, Hazen, and Pangburn Agricultural departments.
- Stukent curriculum was purchased for the Riverview Business and Marketing department.
- LivestockJudging.com subscriptions purchased for Bald Knob, Carlisle and Hazen Agricultural pathways.
- Microsoft Office Specialist certification site license purchased for Bald Knob and Riverview Business pathways

Certifications: The Perkins indicator for 5S1 Graduates with H2 Certifications is now 5.5%. So the number of certifications will be reduced from previous years. The following certifications were purchased:

- Five Family and Consumer Science teachers (Bradford, Hazen, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud) requested the ServSafe Food handler certification.
- Eight AWS Certifications purchased for Carlisle Agricultural pathways.
- All certifications are reported using the LEA Insights system.

Perkins Funded Projects: Here are the Perkins funded projects for the 2025-2026 school year.

- Two Augmented Welding Simulators are shared among Career Development and Agriculture programs. Bald Knob, Bradford, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, White County Central have all benefited from using these welding simulations.
- Five Glowforge Premium Software subscriptions were purchased for Carlisle, Hazen, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, CTE departments.
- Reimbursement for FCCLA National Leadership Conference advisor registration for Bradford, Carlisle, Pangburn, Rose Bud advisors.
- Xtool F1 laser engraver for WDMESC for teacher support and professional developments.
- Pangburn Agricultural requested the Hypertherm ProNest LT Unlimited subscription.
- The Des Arc Agricultural department requested new stationary equipment for the Agricultural Mechanics Shop. Including band saw, drill press, sander, air compressor.
- The Des Arc Agricultural department requested new storage cabinets for equipment for the Agricultural Mechanics Shop
- The McCrory Agricultural department requested new stationary equipment for the Agricultural Mechanics Shop. Including a sander and band saw.
- The Rose Bud Agricultural department requested Pen Making Starter Set equipment for the Agricultural Mechanics Shop.
- The Hazen Agricultural department requested a Classroom Aquaponics system for the lab.
- White County Central Health Care requested Health Care Simulators, Hospital Bed, Vital Sign Monitor for Health Care- Nursing Services.
- McCrory Business Department requested a HP Color LaserJet Enterprise MFP M480f.
- Des Arc Business Development requested a 100 Pack Wired Earbuds Bulk for Classroom Ear Headphones Wired Basic Student Earbuds.
- The England Business Department requested twenty five Computers for the England Management Pathway.

- The England Business Department requested Wired Ear Buds Earphone Bulk for Classroom School.
- The Carlisle Business Department requested a Portable White Board for the Management pathway.
- The Carlisle Culinary Arts department requested two ranges with air fryers.
- The Carlisle Culinary Arts department requested three Mercer Culinary Knife Set with Locking Storage

Grants: The WDMESC CTE department was awarded an Innovation grant of \$33,525.12 for the purchase of CNC equipment for schools to participate in the Girl Power Manufacturing Event. One BOSS Laser Engraver was purchased for the Hazen school. And five XTool Laser Engravers with for the following schools: Bradford, Des Arc, Lonoke (2), Pangburn. A Permanent Jewelry Welder for WDMESC to be shared among the schools.

The State Start-Up grants are to implement new CTE opportunities aligned with Programs of Study that meet industry needs. Grant funds must be used to purchase the Minimum Equipment List items. The following schools were awarded Start Start Up Grants for the 26/27 school year:

- Bald Knob, Agricultural Power, Structural, and Technical Systems- \$37,729.87
- Carlisle, Business Management- \$24,225.00

The CTE Coordinator has worked with several of the teachers to offer interactive and hands-on professional developments that are relevant and meaningful to our CTE programs. Nineteen CTE professional developments were offered to meet the needs of various CTE departments.

Tuer Kennard, CTE Administrative Assistant, provided the 410,412,418 Mentorship Program for CTE teachers to earn these endorsements to their license.

The CTE department is also assisting with competitive events for FFA, FBLA DECA, HOSA, Educators Rising, Skills USA, FCCLA and TSA. All of these groups are Career and Technical Student Organizations which support and enhance student learning and opportunities through the CTE. Students are able to compete and collaborate with other students from around the state.

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative CTE Concentrator and Completer Report
To understand the report please review the criteria for both Concentrator and Completer status.
Concentrator

A concentrator is a key component of Perkins V federal accountability performance measures. The federal definition states: The term ‘CTE concentrator’ means— “(A) at the secondary school level, a student served by an eligible recipient who has completed at least 2 courses in a single career and technical education program or program of study; and “(B) at the postsecondary level, a student enrolled in an eligible recipient who has— “(i) earned at least 12 credits within a career and technical education program or program of study; or “(ii) completed such a program if the program encompasses 5 fewer than 12 credits or the equivalent in total.”
A CTE concentrator is a student who has completed two (2) courses within a career cluster.

Completer

A completer is not a federal Perkins accountability measure but is recognized at the state level. A CTE program of study completer is a student who completes at least three (3) courses in a single career and technical education program of study. Although industry-recognized certifications are an expectation when completing a program or program of study, students may still be recognized as a completer if they do not attain an industry-recognized certification. This includes the courses at Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 within an approved single program of study. A CTE completer is a student who has completed three (3) courses within a career cluster.

A complete summary report can be found at the Department of Education, Division of Career and Technical Education’s website. <https://reports-dcte.ade.arkansas.gov/Summary>

The Concentrator and Completer Summary for Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative states the following information:

- State Participation is 84.77% vs. WDMESC Participation is 89.19%
- State Concentrators are 27.18% vs. WDMESC Concentrators are 32.44%
- State Completers are 10.03% vs. WDMESC Completers are 15.08%

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative CTE Department encourages its member districts to incorporate supplements curriculum, certifications, and technology advanced equipment to support high numbers of Concentrator and Completer numbers.

Program: Computer Science
Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education Grant – Act 220 of 2017
Competitive Grant: Yes
Restricted: Yes

Statewide

Personnel:

Name: Brian Lawhon	Name: Alex Moeller
Position: Statewide CS Specialist	Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree: MSE	Degree:
Name: Ashley Kincannon	Name: Joshua Rodgers
Position: Statewide CS Specialist	Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree: Ed.S.	Degree:
Name: John Hart	Name: Tammy Glass
Position: Statewide CS Specialist	Position: Statewide CS Specialist
Degree: MLIS	Degree:
Name: Zachary Spink	Name:
Position: Statewide CS Lead Specialist	Position:
Degree: MSE	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.

PD Offered:

- Computer Science Impact Meeting
- AI for ARPEP Teachers
- Applied Cryptography
- Bit by Bit
- Build a Game Pygame
- Business Intelligence
- Circuit Playground Training
- Code to Cultivation
- Coding with Circuit Playground
- Coding with Raspberry Pi
- Cryptography
- CS Planning with the New Standards
- Cybersecurity and Networking with Raspberry Pi
- Data Analysis and Visualization
- Data Science: Collect, Clean, Analyze
- Data Science: SQL, Spreadsheets, Python
- Fundamentals of Cyber
- Hardware Interactions
- High School Computer Science Certification and Preparation
- Networking: Packet Tracing
- K6 Robot Roundup
- Mobile App Development

- Organizational Security
- Precision AG
- Project Based Sewing Lab
- Sensor Exploration
- Soldering
- Visual Applications
- Web Application Development with Python

Conferences Presented at:

- State TSA Conference
- Arkansas Association for Career and Technical Education (ArACTE)
- ADE Summit
- AEA PD Conference
- ISTE - Raspberry Pi Escape room
- HSTI - K8 Computer Science
- Cyber.org - National Conference
- NICE K-12 Preconference Session

Events/Committees/Projects Assisted with:

- National Computer Science Education Week – Scheduled daily activities with local districts - December 2025
- Regional Capture the Flag Events - throughout the 2025-2026 school year
- DECA Conference - February 2026
- TSA State Conference – March 2026
- Support of Robotics Competitions (VEX, FIRST) March 2026
- Regional and State Girl Power - February 2026
- All-State Coding Competition March 2026
- Girls of Promise - March 2026
- SkillsUSA April 2026

Major Highlights of the Year

- Standards Development: Developed and launched five new courses (four middle school and one high school).
- Standards Modernization: Updated the Introduction to Computer Science standards to integrate a stronger emphasis on Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Statewide Training Impact: Delivered targeted CS training to 2,287 education professionals and 5,118 students.
- State Coding Competition: Designed and delivered the first open invitation Arkansas State Coding Competition.
- Interactive Cybersecurity: Hosted digital Capture the Flag (CTF) events at schools and educational cooperatives statewide.
- Student Mentorship: Mentored students across the state in Unity game development.
- CTSO Support: Continued the growth, development, and support of Career and Technical Student Organizations.
- Student Recognition: Distributed Computer Science Completer Cords to schools to honor students finishing their CS Pathways.

- National Advocacy & Representation: Represented Arkansas on the national stage with the Expanding Computing Education Pathways (ECEP) alliance and collaborated on the Code.org State of Computer Science Education report.

Ongoing Support & Initiatives

- Summer Training Prep: Creating and revamping professional development sessions for the upcoming summer.
- CS Summit: Coordinating the first Computer Science Summit at the ACTE Summer Conference.
- Classroom AI Integration: Developing training and resources for guided AI implementation in K-12 classrooms.

Program: Consolidated Purchasing Services

Funding Source: Member Districts

Funding Amount: N/A

Participating Districts

Augusta, Beebe, Bald Knob, Bradford, Carlisle, Des Arc, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central, and Wilbur Mills Coop.

Personnel

Brad Horn, Director - MSE + Admin. Certificate

Karen Osborn, Administrative Assistant - HSD

Goal

The goal of Consolidated Purchasing Service is to save money for member schools, to provide convenience and a time-saver for member districts.

Program Summary

The WDMESC seeks bids on instructional materials (including duplicator paper) to provide member districts with savings on the materials they would have to order from other sources.

Major Highlights of the Year

14 member districts participated, along with WDMESC, in the program and placed purchase orders to the successfully bidding vendors in the amount of \$197,531.66. The bid was awarded to Printing Papers Inc. for the 2025-2026 school year.

17 member districts participated in the required school choice announcement as required by the Standards for Accreditation Office at the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. WDMESC provides this service at a reduced cost by combining school district announcements in the county newspaper where it is available.

17 member districts participated in the required school lunch media release program as required by the Standards for Accreditation Office at the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. WDMESC provides this service at a reduced cost by combining school district announcements in the county newspaper where it is available.

Program: Early Childhood Special Education Program

Funding Source Federal & State Funding

Funding Amount \$2,515,746.08

Restricted Funding: Yes

Competitive Grant: No

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, Hazen, England, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy and White County Central

PERSONNEL

Name	Position	Degree
Colleen Jobe	ECSE Coordinator	MSE
Jamie Watson	Medicaid/E-school Assistant	HSD
Dahnah Chambers	Administrative Assistant	HSD
Natasha Seekins	Administrative Assistant	HSD
Bailee Bettencourt	ECSE Teacher	BSE
DeAnna Collins	Behavior Consultant	MSE
Johnnie Cook	Intake Coordinator	BS
Parker Liles	Intake Processor	HSD
Bailey Webb	Speech Pathologist	MS
Wendy Clark	Speech Pathologist	MS
Kristy Poe	Speech Pathologist	MS
Daphne Crider-West	Speech Pathologist	MS
Tori Sanders	Speech Pathologist	MS
Monica Hofheinz	Speech Pathologist	MS
Marie Mitchell	ECSE Teacher	MSE
Robin Hall	ECSE Teacher	MSE
Tenisha Rose	ECSE Teacher	MAT
Heather West	ECSE Teacher	BSE
Ginger Jefford	Examiner/ECSE Programmer	BSE
Alicia Cherry	ECSE Teacher	MS
Amy Gerlach	ECSE Programmer	BSE
Nicole Bryan	ECSE Programmer	MSE
Michelle Stephenson	ECSE Programmer	MSE
Misty Parker	ECSE Programmer	MSE
Sarah Henson	ECSE Programmer	BSE
Kimberly Hurley	Occupational Therapist	MS
Kristen Vannada	ECSE Teacher	BGS
Gabby Counts	Paraprofessional	HSD
Melissa Smith	ECSE Teacher	BA
Chelsea Wenzel	ECSE Teacher	BSE
Lucas Smith	ECSE Examiner	BSE
Jordan Gibson-Kurck	ECSE Paraprofessional	HSD
Taylor Searcy	ECSE Paraprofessional	HSD
Angelina Cypret	ECSE Paraprofessional	HSD
Stephanie Gilbert	Occupational Therapist	MS
Katie Adair	ECSE Teacher	MSE

Lauren Douell	Speech Pathologist	MS
Mary Buddenberg	ECSE Teacher	MSE
Charlene Brewster	ECSE Teacher	BA
Chelsea McConnell	ECSE Teacher	BSE
Cheri Foster	ECSE Teacher	MSE
Jade Mershon	ECSE Teacher	BSE
Lindsey Woodham	ECSE Teacher	MAT
Michelle Stephenson	ECSE Teacher	BSE
Duyen Mikeal	Speech Therapist	MS
Alex Heineman	Behavior Consultant	MS

GOAL: The goal of the Early Childhood Special Education Program is to identify and serve children with disabilities, ages 3 through 5, by providing developmental special education services, speech therapy, and related services such as occupational and/or physical therapy.

SMART GOALS: By the end of the 2025–2026 school year, the Wilbur D. Mills Early Childhood Program will conduct Child Find activities in all six zones (Zones 1–6) by collaborating with local agencies, distributing outreach materials, and hosting at least one screening or informational event per zone, in order to identify children ages 3–5 who may need early intervention or special education services..

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL:

Partnerships & Outreach

Collaborate with local Head Start programs, ABC programs, daycares, and other child care centers to raise awareness of Child Find. Conduct mass developmental screenings for students with parent consent at centers that opt to participate in mass screening days.

Marketing & Communication

Develop flyers, social media posts, and district newsletters to promote Child Find services. Ensure materials are accessible by translating them into multiple languages spoken within the community.

Scheduling Events

Schedule a minimum of one Child Find screening or informational session in each of the six zones. Offer flexible scheduling options, including evenings and weekends, to increase family participation.

Data Tracking

Maintain a Child Find calendar to document outreach efforts, event dates, attendance numbers, and referrals made for further evaluation.

Child Find Plan & Screenings

Implement a comprehensive Child Find plan that ensures free and confidential developmental screenings are available to all children ages 3–5 who reside within the district boundaries and may need evaluation or early intervention services.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Early Childhood Special Education Program is designed to support children ages 3 through 5 who may be experiencing developmental delays that could impact their ability to learn. Through this program, children are located, identified, and evaluated, and if they are found eligible, they receive individualized special education services to meet their unique needs. These services may include developmental special education instruction, speech and language therapy, and related services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, and mental health support.

In addition to these core services, the program offers Behavior Intervention Consultation to ensure that children with social or emotional developmental delays receive appropriate behavioral support. Consultants work closely with early childhood teachers in ABC, Pre-K, Head Start, and daycare programs. They help develop individualized behavior intervention plans for students who qualify for special education services and demonstrate challenges in the area of social and emotional development.

The process begins when a child is referred to the program. Each child receives a comprehensive screening in several developmental areas, including vision, hearing, fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development, self-help skills, social and emotional functioning, and communication. If the screening indicates a potential delay, a special education referral conference is scheduled to determine whether formal evaluations should be conducted.

Once evaluations are completed, an Evaluation Programming Conference is held with the family and relevant team members to review the results and determine if the child meets the Arkansas Early Childhood Special Education Eligibility Guidelines. If the child is found eligible, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is developed to target specific areas of need. This plan outlines the services and supports the child will receive. Each year, a conference is held to review the child's progress, update the IEP, consider Extended School Year (ESY) services, and determine the most appropriate educational placement.

The Early Childhood Special Education Program maintains strong partnerships with families and early learning providers across White, Woodruff, Prairie, and Lonoke counties, as well as the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District. The program collaborates with public school ABC programs, private ABC programs, and Head Start centers to meet the individual needs of children in the community. One key component of this outreach is the offering of mass developmental screenings at participating centers, which are free and confidential. These screenings help identify children who may benefit from further evaluation and early intervention services.

Upon eligibility for kindergarten, the Wilbur D. Mills Early Childhood Program will coordinate and conduct a transition conference with the child's district of residence. This ensures a smooth handoff of services and information, allowing the receiving district to plan effectively for the child's continued support and success in kindergarten.

Throughout all stages of service—identification, evaluation, planning, transition, and instruction—the program ensures full compliance with federal guidelines under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state regulations set forth by the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (ADE). These standards guide the program's commitment to providing equitable, high-quality early intervention and special education services to all eligible children.

Through a coordinated, child-centered approach grounded in both state and federal law, the Early Childhood Special Education Program works to ensure that every child has the support they need to reach their full potential during the critical early years of development.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

Child Find Numbers

905 December 1 Child Count (increase from 638 from the previous year) / Currently serving 970 students
1437 Children Screened / 1212 Children Referred (including EIDT and parent referrals)

Professional Development Trainings

The Wilbur D. Mills Cooperative offers various professional development opportunities for Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) staff, including but not limited to:

The Early Childhood Summer Summit provided multiple opportunities for learning and professional growth for teachers and childcare providers. Participants engaged in a variety of sessions focused on best practices, instructional strategies, child development, and early childhood resources. The event also created meaningful opportunities for collaboration, networking, and the sharing of ideas among educators and providers from across the region. Attendees were able to connect with peers, discuss common challenges, and build partnerships that support high quality learning experiences for young children.

The VIRTUAL – PD in Your PJs training, which offered ECSE staff the flexibility to engage with instructional technology tools at their own pace and from any location.

The ECH Paperwork 101 session, which covered essential training on the processes and paperwork related to early childhood special education, including referrals, evaluations, and IEP documentation.

The Functional Goal Writing training, designed to help staff create functional, measurable goals for preschool students with IEPs, emphasizing collaboration and data collection.

The Strategies for English Learners session, which provided strategies to support language development and academic success for EL students through differentiated instruction and vocabulary support.

The EC End of Summer Rally, which included state-required training on bullying prevention, human trafficking, and seizure-safe schools, alongside discussions on curriculum and inclusive practices for the upcoming school year.

The EC Curriculum Alignment session, allowing staff to collaborate in aligning services with the Pre-K curriculum while ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations.

Additionally, the Early Childhood Special Education Program held regular Child Find meetings, involving staff from area districts, centers, Head Start, and community organizations to discuss ways to locate children in need of services and communicate those services to all stakeholders.

Early Childhood Data for Annual Report

Preschool Achievement and Growth (APR Indicator 7)		LEA Rate	Rubric 1 .75 .5 .25 0	Score Eligible	Score Earned
A. Positive Social-Emotional Skills	Growth	92.00%	91.08...75.08...65.08	1	1
	Achievement	62.57%	68.24...52.24...42.24	1	0.75
B. Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills	Growth	94.85%	91.90...75.90...65.90	1	1
	Achievement	37.43%	59.64...43.64...33.64	1	0.25
C. Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Their Needs	Growth	92.94%	91.65...75.65...65.65	1	1
	Achievement	67.11%	76.93...60.93...50.93	1	0.50
Priority III Achievement Score Earned:				6 * 1 = 6	4.50 * 1 = 4.50

Implementation of IDEA: Compliance	LEA Rate	Rubric	Score Eligible	Score Earned
Indicator 11: Child Find - Timely Evaluation	100.00%	95.00 - 100% = 4 89.00 - 94.99% = 3 79.00 - 88.99% = 2 69.00 - 78.99% = 1 0 - 68.99% = 0	4	4
Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition - Part C to B	--		N/A	N/A
Indicator 13: Secondary Transition	--		N/A	N/A
Timely and Accurate Reporting	# Data Sets Inaccurate Reporting	Rubric	Score Eligible	Score Earned
Timely and Accurate Reporting	0	Timely & Accurate = 4 One data set = 3 Two data sets = 2 Three data sets = 1 Failed to Report = 0	4	4
General Supervision	# of Years with Non-compliance	Rubric	Score Eligible	Score Earned
Long-Standing Non-compliance	0	Compliant = 4 Noncompliant yr 1 = 3 Noncompliant yr 2 = 2 Noncompliant yr 2+ = 1 Noncompliant yr 3+ = 0	4	4
Compliance Score Earned:			24.00	24.00 100.00%

Program: Local Early Childhood Lead

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education

Funding Amount: \$150,000.00

Competitive Grant: Yes

Restricted Funding

Participating Districts

Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, Cabot School District, Lonoke School District, England School District, Carlisle School District

Personnel

Misty Parker, Local Lead Coordinator, Ed.S.

Goal

The goal of the WDMESC Local Early Childhood Lead organization is to strengthen access to high-quality early childhood education and care by submitting annual Child Count, Coordinated Funding Requests, and Local Plans; conducting regional information campaigns for families; coordinating implementation of the state's Quality Support System and CLASS initiatives; supporting providers in improving adult-child interactions; collaborating with community partners to implement a comprehensive local plan; and connecting families and providers to quality early childhood programs and services throughout the designated catchment area.

Program Summary

The WDMESC Local Early Childhood Lead organization created and implemented a collaboration plan outlining the process for working with providers, school districts, families, and community partners across the catchment area. Community partners and providers were identified, and an outreach and communication plan was developed to ensure ongoing collaboration and support throughout the school year. Regular provider meetings, newsletters, professional development opportunities, and family engagement activities were implemented to strengthen communication and partnerships.

A coordinated funding request was submitted to the Arkansas Department of Education at both the site and agency level to support early childhood programming needs within the region. A Child Count and classroom count were successfully conducted to support statewide planning and funding decisions. A comprehensive Local Plan for the upcoming school year was developed and submitted to the Office of Early Childhood with input from providers and community stakeholders.

During the year, WDMESC also expanded local capacity for CLASS implementation and support by increasing the number of trained CLASS observers and supporting providers with observation scheduling, mentoring, and continuous quality improvement efforts focused on adult-child interactions. Ongoing support was provided to providers related to the state's Quality Support System implementation efforts, CLASS observations, and professional learning opportunities.

As part of the Arkansas Local Leads Recompete process, WDMESC was awarded continued Local Leads funding and expanded services into additional areas of Pulaski County, including Maumelle and Sherwood. The expansion added 34 additional providers and increased the number of supported classrooms to 398 across Lonoke County and designated areas of Pulaski County. This expansion resulted in an annual budget increase of approximately \$248,000 to support increased services and provider supports.

Currently, the WDMESC Local Early Childhood Lead organization serves 39 providers and 2 HIPPY Programs in Lonoke

County, 21 providers in Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, and additional providers in the newly awarded Pulaski County municipalities.

Major Highlights of the Year

The WDMESC Local Early Childhood Lead organization was established. Because the grant was awarded part way through the 2024-2025 school year, the organization completed all required tasks on an expedited schedule while continuing to build strong collaborative relationships with providers and community partners across the catchment area.

A major highlight of the 2025-2026 school year was the successful completion of the Arkansas Local Leads Recompete process. WDMESC was awarded continued Local Leads funding and expanded services for the 2026–2031 grant cycle. The cooperative will continue serving Lonoke County and Jacksonville North Pulaski School District while expanding into the municipalities of Maumelle and Sherwood in Pulaski County. This expansion reflects the strong partnerships, collaboration efforts, and commitment to high-quality early childhood services demonstrated throughout the year.

As a result of the Arkansas Local Leads Recompete process, WDMESC was awarded support for 398 classrooms across Lonoke County and designated areas of Pulaski County. This expansion included the addition of 34 new providers within the cooperative’s catchment area and resulted in an annual budget increase of approximately \$248,000. The increased funding will allow WDMESC to expand services, strengthen provider support, increase CLASS implementation efforts, enhance professional development opportunities, and improve access to high-quality early childhood programs for children and families throughout the region.

Additional accomplishments included the expansion of CLASS observation capacity through the training and support of new CLASS observers, the implementation of provider communication systems and professional development opportunities, and the development of collaborative local planning processes that included provider and stakeholder input from across the catchment area.

Program: ESC Works

Funding Source: Arkansas Educational Service Cooperatives,
Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Competitive Grant: No

Restricted Non-Restricted

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 trainings 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.

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 trainings 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 trainings for new and veteran teachers on how to use the platform.
- Input trainings, 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 \$7,118.89 was paid by each entity for site maintenance and support FY25-26. Southeast Service Cooperative handles the renewal and purchase of this program each year. The total amount paid to escWorks to cover Region 4 (Arkansas) was \$113,902.24 FY 25-26.

Program: Advanced/Accelerated Learning

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education

Funding Amount: \$46,500

Competitive Grant: No

Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, and White County Central

Personnel

Jennifer Park, Advanced Learning Specialist - MSE

Goals

1. Provide quality educational opportunities and sessions for teachers and students while addressing the unique needs of advanced learners.
 - a. Plan and provide quarterly GT coordinator meetings
 - b. Plan and provide monthly K-12 counselor meetings
 - c. Plan and provide professional development
 - d. Collect and analyze local data to discover trends and set goals
2. Stay current in the field of acceleration and gifted education by attending sessions and reading newly released studies.
 - a. Attend GT and Advanced Learning meetings with ADE DESE Office of Gifted & Talented and Advanced Placement
 - b. Regularly communicate with the Public School Program Coordinator for School Counseling
 - c. Attend sessions and professional development
 - d. Assist districts in revision/creation and implementation of acceleration policies
3. Assist member districts to set goals and meet the program standards for Gifted and Talented Education as laid out by the Arkansas Department of Education
 - a. Provide support for the completion of the ARApp for GT program approval
 - b. Provide support for policies around gifted services.
 - c. Provide contacts and resources to assist in supporting counselors with master scheduling
4. Facilitate opportunities for student enrichment and mentorship
5. Assist districts and/or coordinators in honors, secondary content, and Advanced Placement updates and requirements.
 - a. Forward any new and upcoming information released by College Board or from the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement
6. Provide quality resources and serve as a liaison as needed with the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Gifted and Talented and Advanced Placement.
7. Work with parent and professional organizations including other public and private agencies.
8. Work with the district coordinators to promote accelerated options through public awareness and advocacy.
9. Support coordinators in program options and provide districts with current research, trends, and instructional strategies.
10. Work collaboratively with the other WDMESC staff/specialists to provide quality professional development and ongoing support.

Professional Development Program Summary

The Advanced Learning Specialist provided onsite support to schools in strengthening their Gifted and Talented (GT) programs by guiding them through the ARApp approval process, identifying program options, and assisting with policy

development to ensure compliance. In January 2025, a counselor-focused Professional Learning Community (PLC) was launched and has since met monthly, alternating between elementary and secondary grade-level focus while also incorporating K–12 alignment sessions.

Throughout the year, the PLC supported counselors in navigating new requirements associated with ACCESS, with a strong emphasis on acceleration opportunities, course codes, and graduation requirements. Additional focus areas included program planning, student success supports, social-emotional learning, data-informed decision making, and family engagement—all aimed at strengthening systems that support student success from elementary through high school.

Four onsite GT Coordinators' meetings were also held to provide targeted support and facilitate the sharing of strategies for enhancing local GT programs.

WDMESC further enriched student learning through a variety of onsite activities, including Game Day (3rd grade), STEM Day (4th grade), Critical Thinking Day (5th grade), Career Exploration Day (6th grade), The Amazing Shake Competition, Elementary Quiz Bowl, fall and spring Chess Tournaments (K–12), and the Global Domination event (grades 7–12). Districts also received information on enrichment opportunities such as the Stock Market Game and the Youth Entrepreneur Showcase. Additionally, WDMESC supported educators through professional learning focused on differentiation, unpacking standards, increasing rigor, and implementing effective instructional strategies.

Major Highlights of the Year

Last year marked a record-breaking moment for our Chess Tournament with 14 districts participating—the highest level of engagement at the time. This year, we continued that momentum and saw even greater growth, with 15 of our 17 districts participating. Last year, the event was moved to a larger venue at the Veterans Park Community Center in Cabot, and it has been well received by all involved. This expanded location continues to allow us to accommodate more participants, and we are proud to share that the tournament is now open to all students in grades K–12.

Our commitment to providing meaningful student enrichment experiences across all grade levels continued strong this year, with tailored events designed specifically for students from elementary through secondary. These opportunities encouraged collaboration, creativity, and growth beyond the classroom. A key feature of each event was the intentional grouping of students from different districts, allowing them to build essential soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork in a fun and inclusive setting.

In addition to spring events, WDMESC also hosted *Global Domination* in the fall, an engaging experience led by WCC students. This student-led opportunity allowed participants to engage in strategic thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving while benefiting from student facilitation that supported leadership, communication, and engagement throughout the experience.

Third grade students took part in Game Day, designed to help them better understand their abilities, take academic and social risks, practice good sportsmanship, and view failure as part of the learning process.

Fourth grade students participated in STEM Day, a hands-on, high-energy challenge where teams designed and built their best roller coasters using a common set of materials within 90 minutes—encouraging innovation, creativity, and problem-solving under pressure.

Fifth graders engaged in Critical Thinking Day, working through brain-stretching activities such as lifeboat survival scenarios and complex riddles, all aimed at strengthening analytical thinking and collaborative problem-solving.

Sixth grade students participated in Career Exploration Day, where they engaged in hands-on learning and connected with professionals representing a variety of high-demand careers. Students heard from a technical writer, an architect, and participated in a live Zoom session with a NASA materials engineer, gaining exposure to STEM and creative career

pathways at both local and national levels. They also explored food writing with *The Mighty Rib*, participated in a magazine scavenger hunt, and completed design and communication-based challenges that highlighted real-world applications of writing, engineering, and creativity.

With the *Accelerated Learning Pilot Proposal* and the new standards for Honors Math, WDMESC also hosted a session featuring *Hands-On Equations* to support districts in exploring instructional strategies that strengthen acceleration pathways. This work was designed to help districts better prepare students for success in 7th grade Algebra I by building conceptual understanding and increasing readiness through engaging, concrete mathematical approaches.

In addition, WDMESC hosted *The Amazing Shake* competition, which provided students with an authentic opportunity to demonstrate professionalism, communication, and poise in real-world scenarios. A key highlight of this experience was the intentional development of partnerships with community leaders and local business owners, who served as judges and mentors throughout the competition. These interactions allowed students to practice real-world networking skills while building meaningful connections with community leaders and entrepreneurs, strengthening the bridge between schools and the local business community.

WDMESC also supported educator learning through Economics-focused professional development centered on entrepreneurship and the skills needed for success in today's workforce. These experiences highlighted and featured local business and community leaders, including Guess & Co., Pea Farm Bistro, The Local Spark, and Rockin' W Ranch, who shared their expertise and real-world insights with educators. A key focus of this work was helping educators identify and reinforce transferable skills such as communication, problem-solving, creativity, collaboration, adaptability, and initiative—ensuring students are better prepared for future academic pathways, career opportunities, and real-world success. This learning strengthened connections between schools, students, and the local economy while equipping educators with practical strategies to intentionally embed these skills into daily instruction.

Program: Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)

Funding Source: Arkansas Better Chance

Funding Amount: \$ 1,505,730

Competitive Grant: Yes

Restricted

Participating Districts

Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Lonoke, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Personnel

Jason Clark, Program Director - MSE+

Katey Ball, Field Coordinator - MSE

Crystal Weatherford, Field Coordinator - MSE

Stephanie Heidelberg, Field Coordinator - MSE

Kelly Ramey, Field Coordinator - MSE

Wendy Spann, Field Coordinator - BSE

Susie Keller, Secretary/Intake - HSD

Goal

The goal of the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative HIPPY Program is to reach families in their familiar surroundings, empower parents in the educational role as their child's first teacher, assist the caregivers in better preparing their children for success in school, and serve as a liaison between the home and the public schools.

Program Summary

The WDMESC HIPPY Program served approximately 810 students, ages 2, 3, 4, and 5, and 780 families within fourteen (14) school districts during the 2025-2026 program year. The coordinating staff of the WDMESC HIPPY Program and the staff of thirty-two (32) home-based educators from the school districts administered the Family Map questionnaire to each parent and held two parent-teacher conferences with the parent. The children and parents also received Ages & Stages Questionnaire and Ages & Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire twice during the year. The Home Visiting staff role-played HIPPY curriculum each week for 30 weeks to the caregiver, and shared enrichment relating to their community and school district. The staff also assisted each family in acquiring the documentation necessary for the child to successfully transition into school. This documentation included information such as birth certificate, social security card, immunization records, and current well-child check-ups. The staff also entered each family and child into the ABC data system, COPA, which tracks family information and weekly home visits. HIPPY Monthly Group Meetings met six times at the participating school districts. Eighty-four (84) total parent/child meetings were held coop wide during the school year. Weekly staff training led by the field coordinators were held to provide home-based educators the skills to effectively instruct and support parents. WDMESC has made a long-term investment in quality learning experiences for children through the HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) program, which has a model of shared learning through family-engagement activities that will ensure children are able to successfully transition from the home environment to the school environment and beyond. HIPPY has components that include developmentally appropriate curriculum, weekly home visits, and regular group meetings that are meant to help guide and teach the parents and families how to transition from home life to school life successfully. The HIPPY curriculum uses standardized instructional materials, storybooks, activity packets, and manipulatives, and each activity packet focuses on skills in literacy, math, motor, language and science, while also reinforcing the development of oral language, sensory skills, perceptual discrimination, as well as problem-solving skills.

Major Highlights of the Year

The WDMESC HIPPY Program had a recent successful audit accreditation with the AR Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Arkansas HIPPY, and HIPPY US with complimentary findings. Wilbur Mills HIPPY currently holds

the HIPPY Certificate of Accreditation from HIPPY National for all sites. This is a quality assurance standard accreditation through the HIPPY Excellence Program that takes place every five (5) years. WDMESC was fully funded with all child slots being utilized for the 2025-2026 school year.

Program: Dyslexia

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education

Funding Amount: \$90,000

Competitive Grant: No

PERSONNEL

Lauren Ussery, Dyslexia Specialist, Ed. S.

Program Name: Literacy/Dyslexia - Level 2 Assessor Training

The Wilbur Mills Cooperative partnered with Stacey Mahurin to provide professional training for screening students for characteristics of Dyslexia. This workshop addresses what each screener tool assesses, how to score the screeners, and how to analyze the data. Teachers bring their level 2 screeners with them.

12 out of 17 of the Wilbur D Mills District were represented, with 11 other districts represented, and 34 educators were trained in how to use and analyze data with the level 2 screeners.

Program Name: Dyslexia Overview

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided Dyslexia Overview professional learning to K-12 teachers and dyslexia interventionists three times during July of 2025. All 17 school districts were invited to participate, and 12 districts, plus two outside of our cooperative, attended. This professional development session provides a foundational understanding of dyslexia, including its characteristics, causes, and impact on reading development. Participants will explore early signs, common misconceptions, and evidence-based instructional strategies to support students with dyslexia in the classroom. The session will also cover accommodations, interventions, and resources to create an inclusive learning environment that fosters success for all learners.

Program Name: Dyslexia Intervention Progress Monitoring and Data Tracking

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided Dyslexia Intervention Progress Monitoring and Data Tracking professional learning during July of 2025. All 17 school districts were invited to participate, and 13 districts attended. This professional development program in progress monitoring and data tracking is designed to provide educators with the necessary tools to effectively monitor and assess student progress. This training highlights key components embedded in existing dyslexia programs and focuses on generating parent reports, which keep families informed about their child's progress, ideally provided quarterly to strengthen parental involvement. Educators will learn best practices for conducting progress monitoring, including assessment frequency, data collection methods, and result interpretation to guide instruction. The session will also cover data tracking, using specific datasets to identify actionable next steps for individual students and assess their progress toward goals. Strategies for communicating data insights with colleagues and parents will foster a collaborative approach to enhancing student achievement. Overall, this training will empower dyslexia interventionists to use progress monitoring data to improve instructional practices and student engagement.

Program Name: Effective Use of ORF and Encoding Measures

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided Effective Use of ORF and Encoding Measures professional learning during June of 2025. All 17 school districts were invited to participate, and 8 districts attended. This training session is designed to provide educators with a comprehensive understanding of the ORF (Oral Reading Fluency) assessment, DSA (Developmental Spelling Analysis), and Words Their Way program. Participants will learn how to effectively administer and score these tools, interpret student data to inform instructional decisions, and implement targeted strategies in the classroom to support literacy development.

Program Name: Dyslexia Resource Guide Draft

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided Dyslexia Resource Guide Draft professional learning to K-12 dyslexia interventionists eight times during July and November of 2025. All 17 school districts were invited to participate, and all 17 districts attended. This professional development session equips educators and administrators with the knowledge needed to effectively identify, support, and intervene for students with dyslexia. Participants will explore key components of the guide, including screening and identification processes, evidence-based intervention strategies, and compliance with Arkansas law and rules.

Program Name: Dyslexia Resource Guide

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided Dyslexia Resource Guide professional learning to K-12 dyslexia interventionists in June of 2026 now that the resource guide has been approved. All 17 school districts were invited to participate. This professional development session equips educators and administrators with the knowledge needed to effectively identify, support, and intervene for students with dyslexia. Participants will explore key components of the guide, including screening and identification processes, evidence-based intervention strategies, and compliance with Arkansas law and rules.

Program Name: Sonday

The Wilbur Mills Cooperative partnered with Imagine Learning to provide professional training in the Sonday System (Let's Play Learn, Sonday System 1, and Science of Reading) to equip dyslexia interventionists to deliver the program with fidelity to students who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia. There were 3 out of 17 districts represented.

Program Name: School-Based Identification K-3

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided School-Based Identification professional learning to K-12 dyslexia interventionists in June of 2026. All 17 school districts were invited to participate. This session is designed to provide an overview of the updates on the legislation, rules, and the screening process for identifying early indicators of risk for dyslexia, as well as, documenting characteristics of dyslexia in the K-3 setting. In this session, we will examine the current definition of dyslexia, the core principles of dyslexia identification, case studies, and step-by-step procedures for analyzing assessment data from multiple sources. This course will prepare educators to be informed members of the school-based teams making decisions regarding the identification of students exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia for placement in dyslexia intervention programs.

Program Name: School-Based Identification 4-12

Dyslexia Specialist, Lauren Ussery, provided School-Based Identification professional learning to K-12 dyslexia interventionists in June of 2026. All 17 school districts were invited to participate. This session is designed to provide an overview of the updates on the legislation, rules, and the screening process for characteristics of dyslexia. In this session, we will examine the current definition of dyslexia, the core principles of dyslexia identification, case studies, and step-by-step procedures for analyzing assessment data. This course will prepare educators to be informed members of the school-based teams making decisions regarding the identification of students exhibiting the characteristics of dyslexia for placement in dyslexia intervention programs.

Major Highlights of the 2025-2026 School Year

The Dyslexia Specialist met regularly with the Arkansas Department of Education and other education service cooperative dyslexia specialists during Unit meetings. Dyslexia Unit Meetings are scheduled for all cooperative dyslexia specialists to convene as a professional learning community. The purpose of this time together is to

collaborate and brainstorm, share ideas and successes, and receive professional development that is data-driven to impact student achievement.

The Dyslexia Department supported schools in a variety of ways, including:

- On-site professional learning
- Data Analysis (ATLAS, Testlets, Level 2 CoD screeners)
- District Leadership Team Meetings for School Improvement
- ATLAS Support
- Level II Assessment Support
- Virtual meetings and support through Zoom
- Reviewing the law around dyslexia
- Providing technical assistance around the dyslexia laws
- Providing professional learning during the summer around dyslexia curriculum and dyslexia as a whole
- Conducting observations with dyslexia interventions to provide support in needed areas

Program: Mathematics

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education, K-12 Mathematics Specialist Grant

Funding Amount: \$90,000

Competitive Grant: No

Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Beebe, Bald Knob, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Lonoke, McCrory, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, and White County Central

Personnel

Pam Allen, Instructional Specialist - Mathematics - Masters

Mathematics Program Goals

- Support and base decisions on the [goals](#) set forth by and outlined by the Arkansas Department of Education
Key state initiatives include:
 - Promote adoption of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) through targeted professional learning, follow-up support, and collaboration with Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (CBPL) vendors to ensure access to quality materials and support, streamline the adoption of HQIM, and recognize the CBPL vendors across the region.
 - Support HQIM implementation through coaching and professional learning. Schools launching or implementing HQIM will receive focused support to strengthen content and instructional practices, with coaching and data used to identify and address areas for improvement.
 - Strengthen instructional leadership by providing targeted training to new building and district-level leaders on the Mathematics Leadership Walkthrough Tool. In addition, the math specialist will offer a suite of system-building trainings that address various components of system coherence, such as the follow-up walkthrough tool, system coherence development, and intervention planning. These trainings will be designed to support district leaders in creating sustainable systems that improve math instruction and student outcomes.
 - Deepen understanding and implementation of DESE STEM Initiatives through collaboration, professional learning, training, and participation in workgroups.
 - Other Priorities include K-6 Math Screener, the Algebra I Project, and 3-8 Math Intervention Plans
- Collaborate with and/or provide technical assistance to District Leadership Teams, giving priority to districts in most need
- Support, empower, and build capacity with District Leaders and Instructional Facilitators
- Provide quality professional development in Mathematics to Teachers, Instructional Facilitators, and Administrators

Mathematics Program Summary

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative, in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Education, administers the Mathematics Program for grades K-12, established by Act 1392 of 1999 for the improvement of mathematics' instruction throughout Arkansas. Assistance is provided to schools through professional learning programs, demonstration lessons, teacher observations, technical assistance, and teacher/administrator conferences in order to improve the teaching and learning of Mathematics through increased content understanding and improved instructional strategies across the curriculum.

Professional learning opportunities offered in 2025-26 included:

- *Journey to Math Excellence, Grades K-5*
- *Journey to Math Excellence, Grade 6-8*
- *Journey to Math Excellence, Grades 9-12*
- *Implementing IM, Grades 7-12*
- *Instructional Leaders*
- *Elevate Math Fluency: Kickoff - Your quest for Mastery Begins Here!*
- *Elevate Math Fluency: Addition and Subtraction*
- *Elevate Math Fluency: Multiplication and Division*
- *Unlocking the Power of ATLAS: Crafting High-Impact Questions for Student Success*
- *Hands-on Equations, Fractions, and Basic Algebra*
- *Math in Practice for Kindergarten*
- *Math in Practice for 1st Grade*
- *Math in Practice for 2nd Grade*
- *Math in Practice for 3rd Grade*

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

- Assistance with creating Mathematics Intervention Plans (MIPs)
- Assist with the K-2 Math Screeners and the Testlets from Cambium
- Assistance with adopting and/or implementing HQIM (Engage NY, Eureka Math Squared, Illustrative Mathematics, Go Math, Reveal Math, Prentice Hall/Savaas Math, I-Ready)
- Assistance and support given to administrators using the Math Key Levers Walkthrough Tool
- Coaching Cycles
- Consultant/Collaborator
- Implementation of the Arkansas Math Standards
- Implementation of the framework associated with Cognitively Guided Instruction
- Instructional Facilitator/Interventionist Support
- Team Meeting/Professional Learning Community Support
- Support for common formative assessments
- Classroom Observations
- Model or Co-teach to learn instructional practices
- Support for District Leadership Teams
- Lesson Planning Support/Demonstration Lessons
- Novice Teacher Support including Praxis Support
- Analyze and Interpret data
- RTI Support
- Support the use of the Performance Level Descriptors/Achievement Level Descriptors
- Support in screening students with the Forefront Education Screener and helping to look at the data to plan RTI Tier 2
- Provided targeted support to focus schools in most need of support.
- Manipulatives, technology (Document Cameras), and various other supplies were made available to teachers in the WDMESC region. Additional resources provided included various printed materials that would help with planning lessons and engaging students in all situations. Additionally, the Math Specialist has a [website](#) that has resources and sites highlighted to help educators find materials and/or research needed to help their students.

The Mathematics Specialist has worked in the following additional roles:

- Assisted with the Regional FIRST Robotics competition: The FIRST Robotics Competition Arkansas Regional was held in Searcy, AR. High school teams came together in Central Arkansas to showcase their months of hard work, creative problem solving and incredible team work. WDMESC Content Specialists played vital roles in the implementation of the event
- Assisted with the Regional Girl Power: CTE Contest
- Participated in a research project with DESE through the Center for Public Research and Leadership through Columbia University with a focus on implementation of Illustrative Mathematics
- Presented information about mathematics education to 2 sets of pre-service teachers from Harding University on using the Forefront Screener as an assessment tool to collect data on Number Sense. Then we went to a WDMESC District and screened their K-5 students in the fall and in the spring
- Served on State Math Committees, including writing assessment questions for Cambium

Professional Development/Support Received This Year

Math Unit meetings are organized so that K-12 Mathematics Specialists from all cooperatives convene face to face 3 times during the year to receive professional development that is current, research based, and data driven. The meetings also provide time for mathematics specialists to set goals, create and organize statewide PD, and assess impact on existing programs. Informational meetings were held virtually by DESE multiple times during the year.

Statistics

- Provided and/or received 120 hours of Professional Development.
- Provided and/or assisted with Professional Development to almost 300 participants.
- Provided over 130 instances of direct school support (observations, facilitating PLC's, model Lessons, technology support, etc. -- either face to face or electronically) to almost 900 teachers, administrators, instructional facilitators, and observed and/or worked with over 2500 students during the 2025-26 school year.

Program: Media

Funding Source: NA

Funding Amount: NA

Competitive Grant: NA

Non-Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Personnel

Brandi Hardcastle, Teacher Center Coordinator

Goal

To improve student achievement by providing appropriate instructional materials and prompt friendly service to all educators in the cooperative area.

Program Summary

A Variquest Visual Learning Tools Cut-out Machine and Poster Maker are provided for WDMESC educators. Educators can use the equipment or place an order to be fulfilled by the WDMESC staff.

WDMESC staff delivers to, and picks up from the schools the materials provided by the media center. Specialists provide lists of available materials and arrange for delivery and pick up, as needed. Materials include, but not limited to, Praxis study materials, professional learning books, student materials, microphones, speakers, sensory tools, etc.

The STEM Center kits from Harding University are available for check out to teachers in our cooperative districts and distributed by WDMESC staff.

A Glowforge is available for educator use. The Glowforge 3D machine serves as both a practical resource and a teaching tool. Its versatile capabilities allow staff and educators to fabricate an array of items, from intricate prototypes to educational aids, fostering creativity and hands-on learning. Beyond mere functionality, the Glowforge doubles as an educational catalyst, providing a path for others within the districts who may be unfamiliar with its operation. Through workshops and demonstrations, it not only produces tangible creations but provides enrichment.

WDMESC added a Sublimation Printer to the Teacher Center this year. This resource provides the ability to print designs that can be heat pressed onto multiple items/materials (t-shirts, tumblers, key chains, signs, etc.).

Program: Medicaid Services

Funding Source: Medicaid, Arkids and ARMAC

Participating Districts

White County Central & WDMESC Early Childhood

Personnel

Jamie Watson, Medicaid Billing

Goal

The goal of the WDMESC Medicaid Services program is to provide timely filings of Medicaid eligible claims for reimbursement on services rendered by our member school districts in speech therapy and speech, physical and occupational therapy for Early Childhood

Program Summary for Participating School Districts

The Medicaid program is a state operated program to provide reimbursement for services for low income and the medically needy. In the case of school districts, the program affects children who are being serviced through the school districts for speech therapy services and who have met all requirements to be eligible for the Medicaid Program. The school districts submits required paperwork to the Co-op, which consists of the completed IEP, reports, history, and evaluations for each eligible student. After all required paperwork is received the co-op sends a prescription and required paperwork to the child's primary care physician for his/her signature. The signed prescription is then put in the child's folder.

The co-op then submits each claim electronically to AR Medicaid Portal for Medicaid payment to the participating School District. The Medicaid billing clerk reconciles each participating school district's RA (Remittance Advice) and sends RA to the district when received. All payments for the School District are sent directly to the School District and at the end of each school year in June each district is invoiced for a 10% administrative fee to WDMESC for the provided services. The remaining 90% is deposited into a federal account by each school district and spent within one year on Special Education Services. The School District submits documentation for Audit review on billing of Medicaid each quarter if required.

Program Summary for WDMESC Early Childhood

In the case of WDMESC Early Childhood, the program affects children who are qualified for services for Speech, Physical and Occupational Therapy and who have met all requirements to be eligible for the Medicaid Program. After it is determined the child is eligible for services, the medicaid billing clerk submits the completed IEP, reports and evaluations and prescription request form to the child's Primary Care Physician for his/her signature. The signed prescription is then filed with the above documentation in the child's medical records. The medicaid billing clerk utilizes an electronic documentation system, Dstop, to submit medicaid claims to ensure accurate, timely reimbursement and compliance. Once reimbursement from medicaid has been approved, the medicaid billing clerk will reconcile all medical records for any discrepancies and verify that all records are available and accurate for review and audit.

Major Highlights of the Year

The WDMESC Medicaid Program served White County Central school district and WDMESC Early Childhood this year. The program was successful in receiving Medicaid funds for our districts and WDMESC Early Childhood.

Program: Novice Teacher Mentoring Program

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education

Funding Amount: \$243,000

Competitive Grant: No

Restrictive: Yes

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, and White County Central

Personnel

Morgan Verkler-Yates, Mentoring Program Specialist - M.Ed.

Tuer Kennard, Novice Teacher Facilitator - MSE

Goal

The grant will be evaluated on recipient's actual performance as it relates to the established targets for [performance measures](#).

Each performance measure related to mentoring was developed to measure progress toward accomplishing the mentoring goals outlined in Arkansas state law:

The Teacher Excellence and Support System also shall include novice teacher mentoring for each novice teacher employed at the public school that:

1. Provides training and support to novice teachers to increase teacher retention;
2. Establishes norms of professionalism; and
3. Increase effective teacher performance, which will lead to improved student achievement; and

There is a 4th goal:

4. Provide licensure assessment support

The performance measures for licensure assessment support are related to access to the support, the progress made toward completion of the support, and support success.

Smart Goals

By the end of the 25-26 school year, 84% of Novice Teachers plan to return to a teaching position in the same school as indicated in the Novice Teacher Survey, 90% of novice teachers report they were assigned a mentor or support person, and 100% of novices report they received mentoring support through WDMESC.

Program Summary

Novice Teacher Program: District Mentoring Plans (MOUs) were developed in collaboration with each district and signed by ALL building level principals and district superintendents. Each MOU described both the district's responsibilities (maintain and share accurate NT data; select and provide a Novice Support Person or Mentor; ensure all unlicensed novices have a licensure pathway plan, provide a district POC, and complete surveys) and WDMESC's responsibilities (maintain and share accurate NT data; provide mentoring, licensure/Praxis support, observations, and PD; support districts in efforts to recruit and retain, and provide TESS & PGP support through various means).

In the summer, WDMESC provided novices and mentors PD opportunities and/or their district's back to school onboarding. The mentoring program specific PDs were provided on five different days and were aligned to TESS domains, particularly domains 2 (The Classroom Environment) and domain 3 (Instruction). One of these gave teachers the coaching component they needed to gain Lead or Master designation on their license. Mentoring Program Specialist presented at Riverview, Cabot, JNPSD, Augusta, and Searcy's new teacher onboarding or back to school week with full staff present. Licensure Assessment study sessions were also held in the summer so that novices could utilize a quiet study space, have access to study materials, receive support as needed, and apply for assessment cost reimbursement. Three different

LPE/MPE cohorts were fully funded and held for teachers across all districts to help increase the number of teachers that will be able to serve as an experienced mentor teacher to student interns, as well as to build capacity with the new third grade promotion law.

All first, second, and third year novice teachers were supported by Morgan Verkler-Yates and Tuer Kennard. Mentors and building leaders were also supported to build capacity in order to increase teacher retention. The Mentoring Program Specialist is in each district multiple times a year based on Google form surveys, how teachers are tiered, principal requests, and teacher requests: Depending on circumstances some visits are virtual.

Licensure support: Independent study sessions were supported through 240Tutoring and monitored by paid proctors who also provided assistance with both academic content and test analysis. Six teachers met the requirements and received test cost reimbursement through the co-op. Approximately 172 requests for study resources were provided to support the licensure efforts of current and future educators. These resources included 240Tutoring and Mometrix study guides. During the year, 26 newly licensed teachers were supported through these efforts, and 16 tutoring requests were provided to assist candidates in preparing for licensure exams.

Major Highlights of the Year

- 393 Novice Teachers were supported.
- NT Mentoring ensured all Year 1, 2, and 3 novices were provided appropriate and qualified mentors by their districts.
- ALL novices, mentors, and building leaders were provided free access to WinkED Online Learning courses. Novices were assigned a specific scope and sequence based on their years of experience with an overarching purpose to equip novices in receiving a Highly Effective rating in each dimension of the AR-TESS evaluation rubric by their summative year (4). Leadership and Mentor tasks were in their own scope and sequence for ways to support novices in their learning.
- Monthly newsletters aligning to TESS were sent out every month to novices, mentors, and building principals.
- WDMESC partnered with Riverview, Cabot, JNPSD, and Searcy's back to school new teacher onboarding programs allowing for strong relationships and lines of communication before school ever started.
- A novice teacher AND mentor teacher database dashboards were created to house all novice and mentor teacher data. From this, shared district novice teacher data sheets were created via imported data allowing district points of contact and Mentoring Program Coordinator to correspond throughout the school year. Teachers were tiered in collaboration with Mentoring Program Specialist and building principals.
- WDMESC accurately reported novice teacher data within 2% or less for all school districts except for JNPSD. NT Mentoring Specialist partnered with all districts to assist in correcting data in LEA Insights and WDMESC databases by resharing SIS instructions and Cycle 2 data discrepancies.
- 3 cohorts for DESE approved coaching training/LPE/MPE designations were held (2 NIET) (1 Bailey Group) allowing districts to build capacity for novice teacher mentors and LPE/MPE designations.
- The ESC Mentoring program showed appreciation to teachers in all 17 supported districts during Teacher Appreciation Week.
- The MPS spent more time supporting D & F rated buildings conducting walkthroughs (some alongside mentors) and debriefing with teachers and administrators.
- The Mentoring webpage was updated and many additions were made to provide more resources and quick help for novices, mentors, and administrators.

Novice Teacher Data

WDMESC served 393 novice teachers.

During the 2025–2026 school year, Wilbur D. Mills ESC provided consistent and high-quality support to novice teachers across all 17 supported districts with the goal of improving retention and instructional growth.

- 100% of novice teachers were assigned a mentor or support teacher, confirmed through required submissions in the

Principal Mentoring Assurances form, district-wide MOUs, and a completed spreadsheet from each district POC and building principal identifying the assigned mentor for each novice. However, the survey results showed that 90% were actually assigned a support person.

- A strong focus was placed on mentoring program quality and impact, with 93% of novice teachers indicating that their mentoring support helped them make meaningful progress toward their PGP goals.
- The ESC Mentoring Program Specialist (MPS) worked with building principals to identify Master and Lead designated teachers in 100% of supported schools, ensuring alignment with statewide initiatives and Executive Order 23-08.
- Teacher appreciation was prioritized across the region, with cookie trays personally delivered to every building in all 17 districts during National Teacher Appreciation Week, supporting morale and recognition.
- The Spring DESE Novice Teacher Survey achieved a 72% response rate in all districts, offering valuable insight into program effectiveness.
- Notably, 84% of novice teachers reported they plan to return to the same SCHOOL building, highlighting the strength and impact of the ongoing support structures.
- 92% of novice teachers confirmed they received mentoring support, reinforcing the consistency and fidelity of mentoring across the region.

Wilbur D. Mills ESC prioritized the development of professionalism among novice teachers by ensuring early training and meaningful mentoring support during the 2025–2026 school year.

- 100% of novice teachers completed Code of Ethics training within their first month of teaching, reinforcing a strong foundation of professional expectations and ethical conduct from the start of the school year. This training was provided twice—once in the fall and once in the summer—to ensure coverage for all novice cohorts.
- Additionally, 97% of novice teachers reported that their mentoring support helped them establish and maintain professional norms, indicating that mentoring went beyond instructional guidance to include modeling and coaching around communication, collaboration, professionalism, and educator responsibilities.

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, MPS at WDMESC focused on strengthening instructional practice among novice teachers as a pathway to improving student achievement. Targeted mentoring and support were designed to build teacher capacity through aligned professional development and intentional guidance.

- 92% of novice teachers reported that mentoring support increased their knowledge of the Framework for Teaching (FFT) and its associated Clusters, indicating stronger instructional awareness and alignment with the TESS framework.
- 92% of novices also felt more confident in their understanding of the TESS summative observation process thanks to their mentoring support, helping them better prepare for evaluations and improve classroom practice.
- Most significantly, 94% of novice teachers felt that their mentoring experience directly contributed to their progress toward becoming more effective educators—a key indicator of the program’s impact on teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

Wilbur D. Mills ESC demonstrated a strong commitment to helping novice teachers achieve and maintain licensure by offering accessible, personalized assessment support across all 17 supported districts during the 2025–2026 school year.

- 100% of supported schools provided novice teachers with access to licensure assessment resources, which were organized and continuously updated on the ESC mentoring website. Teachers were also encouraged to submit specific needs through a Request Resources Google Form, ensuring timely and individualized support.
- A Licensure Pathway Plan was verified for all required teachers in order to guide support for unlicensed educators and outline steps toward full certification.
- In addition, the ESC mentoring program offered free study resources to those needing to pass Praxis exams or expand their licensure. These included access to 240 Tutoring, Mometrix study materials, Zoom study sessions,

and one-on-one tutoring opportunities, supported through a tutoring contract.

- All teachers who engaged with the ESC's licensure support services made measurable progress toward their licensure goals, reinforcing the effectiveness of the multi-tiered support approach.

Program: School Health Services

Funding Source: Arkansas Master Tobacco Settlement

Competitive Grant: NA

Restricted NA

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, and White County Central

Personnel

Shae Martin, RN, Community Health Nurse Specialist - Bachelor's Degree in Nursing

Goal

Provide schools with assistance and resources that will improve student health.

Program Summary

Provide technical assistance to area schools to:

Adopt tobacco-free policies and implement best practices for tobacco prevention and cessation.

Adopt policies promoting and implementing best practices for nutrition, physical activity, Coordinated School Health, and emerging public health issues.

Establish school wellness committees and fulfill state and federal mandates.

Inform communities of school health issues and current public health policy.

Provide education and training to:

Certify school nurses to conduct mandated health screenings.

Provide school nurses with professional continued nursing education related to school health.

Inform schools and communities of school health resources, available trainings, and grant opportunities.

Identify needed school health related training for school personnel.

Coordinate and provide school health trainings to school personnel and community members.

Major Highlights of the Year

Vision Screening/Hearing Screening/BMI/Scoliosis Screening training for 10 school nurses

Provided CPR/AED and First Aid certification training 9 times..

Provided Glucagon and Insulin Administration Training/Adrenal Insufficiency Training for School Nurses training to 7 participants.

Provided New Nurse Training to 9 new school nurses.

Presented Vaping 19 times to 489 students.

Developed an elementary safety team at one district and provided monthly training to 20 students on topics including fire safety, hands only cpr, choking/Heimlich maneuver, first aid, and handwashing.

Presented safeTALK suicide prevention twice.

Presented QPR suicide prevention 3 times.

Provided Resiliency for All training 3 times.

Provided Mandated Reporter training 3 times.

Provided Youth Mental Health First Aid training 4 times.

Provided Hand Washing training 12 times to 363 students.

Provided Poverty training once.

Partnered with DESE to provide Nursing Continuing Professional Development Contact Hours for the Arkansas Back to School Nurse Workshop to 521 school nurses across the state.

Provided Love Notes (Building healthy relationships program with 13 modules) to 111 students.

Program: Science

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education

Funding Amount: \$90,000

Competitive Grant: No

Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, JNPSD, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White Co. Central

Personnel

Ben Carrigan, Science Instructional Specialist - BSE in K-8, Masters in Teaching

Science Goals

- Provide support to teachers as they implement the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards and base instructional decisions on these standards as well as the needs of students
- Collaborate with and/or provide technical assistance to District Leadership Teams
- Collaborate with the ADE Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) during Unit meetings, Regional meetings, and other opportunities as they arise
- Support, empower, and build capacity with District Leaders and Instructional Facilitators using the Science Classroom Walkthrough Tool.
- Provide professional development for teachers, academic coaches and principals; school support, regular attendance of meetings with ADE and other specialists
- Collaborative work with state science specialists to develop professional training related to the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards
- Increase awareness of classroom strategies and practices that support the implementation of the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards
- Provide support/awareness to districts as they implement curriculum that includes STEM Model Program, Project Lead the Way, Advanced Placement, and STEM Events.
- Assist all districts in the decisions of High Quality Instructional Materials.

Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative, in partnership with ADE Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), oversees the Science Program for grades K-12. Through this partnership, assistance is provided to member schools in the form of professional development opportunities, model lessons, classroom observations, technical assistance, conferences, and collaborative events. The goal is to support teachers as they endeavor to improve their content knowledge of science as well as develop a classroom environment in which learning is accessible to all students. Contact was made with every school district in the Wilbur D. Mills Cooperative area to inform them of the professional learning opportunities, teacher training, and support that can be provided by the Science Specialists.

Professional learning opportunities offered in 2025-2026 included:

- DESE developed professional learning series. These sessions included:
 - Three-Dimensional Mastery: Science Instruction for Impactful Learning (15 participants)
 - Phenomenal Teaching: Unleashing Wonder in the Science Classroom (34 participants)
 - Assessment Alchemy: Using Assessment to Drive Science Instruction (16 participants)
 - Water Critters: Exploring Environmental Science (16 participants)
 - FUSE: Fundamental Understanding of Science Education (0 participants)
- Curriculum Resources/Pedagogy Training
 - Greers Ferry Lake GeoFloat and Hike (14 participants)
 - Blanchard Springs and Karst Topography (16 participants)
 - Middle and High School OpenSciEd Overview HQIM (16 participants)
 - K-5 OpenSciEd HQIM Overview (125 participants)

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

- Implementation of the Arkansas K-12 Science Standards
- Developing/Identifying/Selecting Quality Curriculum and/or Resources
- Novice Teacher Support
- Team Meetings/Professional Learning Communities Support
- Classroom Observations
- Model Lessons
- Lesson Planning Support
- Providing Resources from WDMESC and/or Harding STEM Center
- The Science of Reading support
- Special Projects
- STEM Nights
- Coaching Support
- HQIM selection / implementation
- Classroom Walkthrough Tool

Additional Responsibilities:

- Member of the DESE Core Leadership Team - AR STEM Model Program
- Member of DESE AR Model Program State Advisory Committee
- Served on the Regional Planning Committee for the FIRST Robotics Competition - Arkansas Regional
- Served as the Volunteer Coordinator at the FIRST Robotics Arkansas Regional Competition
- National Picture Perfect Science Expert Trainer
- National OpenSciEd Facilitator

Professional Development Received This Year

The science specialist was able to attend all the face to face and virtual unit meetings provided by DESE. Unit meetings are organized so that all the state specialists from all cooperatives convene on a regular basis as a professional learning community. This year's focus at DESE has been around the TNTP Coaching Model with each specialist completing coaching cycles with volunteer teacher coaches.

Additional Training Included:

- OpenSciEd Modules
- Mystery Science
- Picture Perfect STEM
- TNTP Coaching

Program: LEA Special Education Supervisor

Funding Source: Assigned Districts

Funding Amount: NA

Competitive Grant: No

Non-Restricted

Participating Districts

NA

Personnel

No special education supervisors for 2025-2026.

Goal

To supervise, plan, and keep in compliance the special education services for the district assigned.

Program Summary

NA

Major Highlights of the Year

NA

Program: Teacher Center-Professional Development; Curriculum Development Assistance; Resources

Funding Source: Participating Districts

Funding Amount:\$237,787

Competitive Grant: No

Non-Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Hazen, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Personnel

Brandi Hardcastle, Teacher Center Coordinator/Assistant Director

Karen Osborn, Administrative Assistant

Goal

- To align professional development services with district and school needs to build capacity of all adult learners in order to provide a world class education system which graduates students who are college and career ready
- To provide adult learners with content knowledge and research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards and prepare adult learners to use various types of assessment results appropriately
- To improve the learning of all students by providing resources to support adult learning and collaboration
- To provide curriculum development and selection assistance for the implementation of the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks
- To support school improvement initiatives and to enhance program integration through effective communication and technical support
- To enhance understanding of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- To assist in understanding and implementing the LEARNS Act

Program Summary

The Teacher Center Committee uses the data collected from districts to plan Professional Learning that meets the needs of educators in each of our 17 districts. The Director, Teacher Center Coordinator, Specialists and Technologist meet with constituent groups regularly. From those meetings and from the Annual Needs Assessment Survey, information is collected to assist in designing professional growth opportunities for the leaders and teachers in our region. Professional Development opportunities target the focus areas as outlined by the DESE, and PD sessions are offered to meet the requirements of law, as well.

Major Highlights of the Year

The Teacher Center Coordinator and Specialists provided support and coaching in districts. Attention was given to Schools in Need or Support. The Wilbur Mills Teacher Center Coordinator met monthly with Assistant Superintendents/Curriculum Coordinators and Principals. During the regular meetings of the Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum Coordinator group and principals, guest speakers were made available and discussed a variety of topics. Some of the presenters and topics were: Lance LeVar (LeVar Consulting) presented Title IX information, Dennis Cavanaugh (National Weather Service) provided information about weather alerts and warnings, Joy Gray (AR Dept. of Health) spoke about Project Prevent and related information, Andy Sullivan (ADE) shared information about VAM scores, and Meagan Booe (ADE Behavior Specialist) provided guidance on behavior management. WDMESC Technology Coordinator, Brook Singletary, provided information on the use of AI.

Program: Technology

Funding Source: State

Funding Amount: \$80,000

Competitive Grant: No

Restricted

Participating Districts

Augusta, Bald Knob, Beebe, Bradford, Cabot, Carlisle, Des Arc, England, Jacksonville North Pulaski, Hazen, Lonoke, McCrory, Pangburn, Riverview, Rose Bud, Searcy, White County Central

Personnel

Brook Singletary, Technology Coordinator - Masters Instructional Technology +

Goal

To provide quality technology support and training for the cooperative and for the member school districts.

Program Summary

The Technology Coordinator (TC) along with the Technology Assistant strive to support districts in their efforts to provide technology for teaching and learning by providing quality professional development for school staff and technology coordinators throughout the year. Along with training and technical assistance, the Co-op technology staff provides ongoing support to districts in the areas of cybersecurity, infrastructure, hardware and software.

The TC meets weekly with the statewide Arkansas Cooperative Technology Coordinators (ACTC) as well as DESE and the Office of State Technology. The TC holds regular meetings with district Technology Coordinators where the information learned about DESE programs, grants and projects in the weekly meetings with DESE is promoted.

Cooperative technology staff provide ongoing support to the cooperative in the form of hardware, software, network maintenance and training. Maintenance and upkeep of on and off-site devices is also provided as well as maintaining the email and phone systems and the Co-op website.

In addition, the Cooperative Technology Staff maintains the Continuity of Operations Plan, investigates and learns new technologies that could be beneficial to districts, updates the Cooperative Annual Report and Cost Analysis and fulfills DESE mandates.

The TC also serves on Arkansas' P-12 Cyber Incidence Response Team (CIRT). Arkansas' P-12 Cyber Incidence Response Team represents a collaborative effort among Arkansas Cooperative Technology Coordinators and the Arkansas Division of Information Systems (DIS). The Cyber Incidence Response Team is a group of IT professionals who are willing and ready to provide onsite support, at no cost to the district, whenever an Arkansas school district is faced with a cyber threat. Information collected through the P-12 Cyber Incidence Response Team will only be used to inform and protect Arkansas school districts.

Major highlights

- Coordinated and/or presented technology PD sessions for teachers based on Needs Assessment.
- Provided cyber security training for Co-op employees. Implemented online cyber security learning platform at WDMESC.
- Participated in statewide cyber security training following the passage of Act 504 - facilitated 7 training sessions at WDMESC for district technology coordinators and staff
- Provided cyber security training for district technology coordinators.
- Coordinated and led meetings with district technology coordinators.
- Met with DESE and Co-op Technology Coordinators on a weekly basis.

- Disseminated information to district techs from DESE.
- Served on DESE's Social Media Awareness Campaign (SMACTalk) Committee.
- Partnered with the ACTCs to provide training at the Hot Springs Technical Institute (HSTI).
- Partnered with the ACTCs to provide statewide PD in Your PJs training

Program: Technology Services

Funding Source: District

Funding Amount: \$114,228.38

Competitive Grant: No

Non-Restricted

Program: Technology

Funding Source: Assigned Districts

Participating Districts

Riverview, White County Central

Personnel

Kyle Cross, Technologist, Riverview - HSD

Shayne Wallis, Technologist, White Co. Central - BSE

Jacob Carroll, Technology Assistant, WDMESC - BS

Goal

To provide quality technology support for the participating school districts.

Program Summary

- Support districts in their efforts to provide technology for teaching and learning
- Provide support to increase access to ADE sponsored programs, features and grants
- Provide quality professional development
- Provide ongoing support to the district: hardware/software/network maintenance and training
- Add growth and provide upkeep to desktop/mobile labs and other school 1:1 initiatives
- Maintain email system and district websites
- Develop/maintain/implement District Technology Plan
- Develop/maintain Continuity of Operations Plan for member districts
- File E-Rate for member districts
- Investigate new technologies that might be beneficial for the educational process

PROGRAM: Behavior Support Specialists

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., BCBA
Jennifer Brewer, Ed.S.
Sandy Crawley, M.S.E
Kelly Davis, M.Ed., BCBA
Sonia Hartsfield M.Ed.
Audrey Kengla, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCBA
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, BCBA
Meagan Booe, M. Ed, BCBA
Carla Knight, M.S.E., BCBA

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.

BX3 Cohort 3- Building level teams	
1. Bryant Elementary- Dawson 2. Hurricane Creek Elementary-Bryant- Dawson 3. McRae Elementary-Searcy- WDM 4. Mena Middle School- DQM 5. Mena High School- DQM 6. Oscar Hamilton Elementary-Foreman-DQM 7. Pottsville Junior High- AF 8. Asbell Elementary Fayetteville	

BX3 Cohort 4 - Building level teams

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Magnolia Middle School2. Westside Elementary - Searcy3. Southwest Middle School - Searcy4. Janie Darr Elementary - Rogers5. Arkadelphia High School6. Lake Hamilton New Horizons -7. Washington Elementary - Fayetteville8. Lincoln Middle School9. Cedarville Elementary10. Glen Rose Elementary11. Flippin Elementary12. Beebe Elementary13. Bob Folsom Elementary - Farmington | <ol style="list-style-type: none">14. Westbrook Elementary - Harmony Grove15. Bayyari Elementary - Springdale16. North Heights Community School - Texarkana17. Beebe Middle School18. Louise Durham Elementary- Mena19. Manila Elementary20. Indian Hills Elementary - North Little Rock21. East End Elementary22. Lakeside Primary23. Peake Elementary - Arkadelphia24. Harmony Leadership Academy- Texarkana25. Rector Elementary School |
|--|---|

BX3 Cohort 5 - Building level teams

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Waldron Middle School2. Mountainburg Elementary3. Mountainburg Middle School4. Mountainburg High School5. King Elementary-Van Buren6. Fairview Elementary- Fort Smith7. East Side- Magnolia8. Central Elementary-Magnolia9. Hillcrest Elementary10. East End Middle- Sheridan | <ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Sheridan High School12. Eureka Springs Elementary13. Eureka Springs Middle School14. McCrory Elementary15. Jerry "Pop" Williams Elementary- Farmington16. Farmington High School17. Arkansas Arts Academy Elementary18. Clarendon Elementary |
|---|---|

BX3 Cohort 6 - Building level teams

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Arkansas High School2. Arkansas Middle School3. Kilpatrick Academy of Public Service4. Beryl Henry Elementary5. Beebe Early Childhood (K-1)6. Cabot Eastside Elementary7. Dierks High School8. eStem Downtown Elementary9. Sheridan Middle School | <ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Sheridan Alternative Learning Academy12. Sylvan Hills Elementary13. Davis Elementary (Bryant)14. Angie Grant Elementary15. Park Elementary (Corning)16. Trumann Elementary17. Trumann Middle School18. John L Colbert Middle School19. Lavaca Elementary |
|--|--|

10. Sheridan Intermediate School	
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PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Arkansas Behavior Support Specialists (BSS) affiliated with the Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary education (DESE) - Office of Special Education lead the state-wide initiative, the BX3 (Behavior eXtreme 3 - Training, Coaching, Empowering) Project. This BX3 project is designed to build capacity by providing coaching to building-level behavior teams that are working to develop tiered systems of positive behavior supports for all students. BX3 assists building level teams in developing and monitoring at least one SMART goal based on their assessment on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). Additionally, the BX3 teams create and update an action plan focused on meeting their individualized SMART goal(s). The BSS offer 4- 6 coaching sessions (one per month) for each BX3 team. Professional learning opportunities are offered as needed based on the SMART goal(s) and action plan.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025-26:

- Cohort 3 continued with 8 building-level teams across the state
- Cohort 4 continued with 25 building-level teams across the state
- Cohort 5 continued with 18 building-level teams across the state
- Accepted Cohort 6 with 19 building-level teams across the state
- 98% of participants in Cohort 3, 4, 5 and 6 agreed to strongly agreed that the coaching session on the topic covered was beneficial.
- 98% of participants in Cohort 3, 4, 5 and 6 agreed to strongly agreed that the BX3 Coaches helped their team plan action steps toward meeting their SMART goal(s).
- 99% of participants in Cohort 3, 4, 5 and 6 agreed to strongly agreed that the interactions with and methods used by BX3 coaches were positive and acceptable.
- 97% of participants in Cohort 3, 4, 5 and 6 agreed to strongly agreed that they feel confident in carrying out the steps in their action plan.

CIRCUIT

GOAL:

- To provide technical assistance and support to local school district administrators and school personnel in the development and implementation of evidence-based behavior supports for students receiving special education services
- To provide professional development to local school district administrators and personnel on evidence-based behavior supports

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Behavior Support Specialists (BSS) provide technical assistance in the area of behavior to all school districts within the state. The BSS receive requests for technical assistance through the CIRCUIT on-line referral system. Once a request for services is received, the BSS works in conjunction with the Special Education Supervisor of the referring school district to identify and provide needed support for students with disabilities. Services include:

- On-site coaching and consultation, student observation, record review and written recommendations with follow up and training as needed
- Coaching student team on Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) development
- Provide professional learning opportunities on evidence-based interventions

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025-2026:

- Provided coaching and consultation, student observation, records review, coaching with functional behavior assessment, or safety and behavior intervention planning for student teams for 150 CIRCUIT referrals across all Education Service Cooperatives

Professional Learning Opportunities**GOAL:**

- To provide professional development to local school district administrators and personnel on evidence-based behavior supports

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The Behavior Support Specialist (BSS) position provides professional learning opportunities on evidence-based behavior practices via in-person, virtual, and online learning modules available to all school districts in all Education Service Cooperatives.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025-2026:

- Offered 6 sessions of the 5 Essential Components of School-Wide Behavior Supports professional developments to building-level teams
- Added 6 Behavior Breaks which are short instructional videos to equip educators and parents with strategies that can be implemented quickly to improve student engagement and success. <https://arbss.org/behavior-breaks/>
- Offered over 143 professional learning opportunities in person to school districts in all Education Service Cooperatives with over 2392 participants

ADDITIONAL BSS HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025-2026:

- Held the first annual Arkansas School Behavior Conference on July 23 with over 450 attendees from across the state
- Partnered with DESE to support THRIVE Leadership Academy at Northeast Arkansas, Wilbur D. Mills ESC, OUR ESC, Crowley's Ridge ESC, Guy Fenter ESC, Arkansas River, and Southwest ESC to improve the implementation of positive behavior supports in school buildings.
- Served on the DESE Leadership Team for Arkansas THRIVE
- Served on the Arkansas Early Childhood Behavior Support Cadre'
- Served on the DDS Autism Work Group
- Served on the Autism Legislative Task Force
- Facilitated BCBAs working in the school through ArPSBAN meetings (meet once a month either in person or virtual), connecting BCBAs across the state through a community of practice
- Reached national and international audiences with newsletter
- Provided online modules for Special Education Apprenticeship Program for 2 Cohorts thus far
- Reached educators and University Educator Programs in Arkansas as well as nationally and internationally audiences with online modules
- Presented Level Up at East End Middle: Implementing Tier1/2 Strategies at AAEA Conference
- Presented the Student Intervention Matching Form at the APRSC Virtual Conference
- Presented Building Capacity in School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports: The Journey from THRIVE to BX3 and Behavior Boost: Practical Tools to Empower Every Educator at the ADE Summit
- Presented Break Away from Behavior at the ASEP Conference
- Presented Quick Tips for Positive Behavior at the ArSCA Southwest Fall Meeting
- Presented ACC: Supporting Schools, Supporting Students as part of the ACC panel at Arkansas Children's Hospital
- Presented at Arkansas Association of Alternative Educators Conference
- Presented What to Do When Students Behave and Misbehave! and Approaches for Managing Student Behaviors at the Fall ARMEA Conference

- Presented The Behavior Side of RTI with DESE- OCSS for New Administrators
- Presented Myth-Busting Behavior: What School Teams Often Get Wrong (and How to Get It Right) and Effective Approaches for Managing Student Behavior: Tier 1 and Tier 2 at the 2026 Forum on School Behavior and Mental Health
- Attended the Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders (1 BSS)
- Attend Southeastern School Behavioral Health Conference in April (2 BSS)
- Attended Verbal Behavior Conference in March (1 BSS)
- Attend Association for Behavior Analysis International Conference in May (3 BSS)

PROGRAM: Digital Learning – Virtual Arkansas

FUNDING SOURCE: ADE Grant – Act

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED: Yes NON-RESTRICTED: ____**PARTICIPATING WILBUR D. MILLS EDUCATION SERVICE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

District	Served (Yes or No)
AUGUSTA SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
BALD KNOB SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
BEEBE SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
BRADFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
CARLISLE SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
DES ARC SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
ENGLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
HAZEN SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
JACKSONVILLE NORTH PULASKI COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
LONOKE SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
MCCRORY SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
PANGBURN SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
RIVERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
ROSE BUD SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
SEARCY SCHOOL DISTRICT	Yes
WHITE COUNTY CENTRAL 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	2024-2025 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 Conflicts	- All VA courses can be taken at any time during the day, which provides flexibility in scheduling local course options to avoid scheduling 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: Migrant Education

FUNDING SOURCE: DESE Grant – Title 1 Part C

COMPETITIVE GRANT: No

RESTRICTED

PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS

Academies of Math & Science	AR School for the Deaf	Augusta	Bald Knob
Barton-Lexa	Beebe	Bradford	Brinkley
Cabot	Carlisle	Clarendon	Des Arc
England	Exalt Academy of SWLR	Forrest City	Friendship Aspire-LR
Hazen	Helena/W. Helena	Jacksonville	Kipp-Delta College Prep
Lee County	Lisa Academy-ALL	Little Rock	Lonoke
Marvell	McCrary	North Little Rock	Palestine-Wheatley
Pangburn	Pine Bluff	Pulaski County	Riverview
Rosebud	Searcy	Sheridan	Stuttgart
Watson Chapel	White Co. Central		

PERSONNEL

Karen Fuller, Migrant Program Specialist, BBA, M.Ed-Educational Leadership

Heidi Harris, REDS, Associate Degree-Business Administration

Sandra Garcia-Student Support Specialist-BBA-Business

Lily Farfan-Field Recruiter, Associate Degree-Social Services

Lourdes Alvarado-Recruiter/Student Support Specialist-Paraprofessional License

GOAL

The goal of the Migrant Education Program is to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

The purposes of the Migrant Education Program are to:

- Assist States in supporting high-quality and comprehensive educational programs and services during the school year, and, as applicable, during summer or intersession periods, that address the unique educational needs of migratory children.
- To identify eligible migrant students by the use of agricultural surveys in schools, businesses, and any venue that might employ or provide services for migrant families. Recruiters work to build rapport with local farmers and area businesses to ensure their assistance and cooperation with the program.
- Ensure that migratory children who move among the States are not penalized in any manner by disparities among the States in curriculum, graduation requirements, and challenging State academic standards.

- Ensure that migratory children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards that all children are expected to meet.
- Help migratory children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit their ability to succeed in school.
- Help migratory children benefit from State and local systemic reforms. (See section 1301 of the ESEA.)

Major Highlights of the Year

- Contacted and assisted project schools with the migrant grant process including their Indistar information, suggested expenditures, agricultural surveys, and the mandatory training for tutors.
- Provided in-person training for tutors on August 19, 2025 at the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative. A state-wide Identification and Recruitment Training was held on August 28, 2024 at Harding University.
- Provided districts with information regarding allowable expenditures and worked with migrant tutors to plan daily schedules to include in person and virtual students.
- Collected and recorded Mass Enrollments, Needs Assessments, Students' Eligible for Migrant Supplemental Services Forms, Daily Schedules, and On Track forms from each of the project tutors and the needed documentation from the non-project districts as well.
- Served approximately 850 students in the Wilbur D. Mills Educational Service Cooperative, Great Rivers Educational Service Cooperative, and Arkansas River Educational Service Cooperative areas. Of those, around 350 were non-project students and approx. 500 were project school students. These students were ages 3-21. Project schools are those who have a migrant student population great enough to receive funding and therefore can hire a migrant tutor and utilize the funds through their district. Such districts usually have at least 25 migrant eligible students enrolled, although this can vary due to the funding formula. Schools who qualify for funding have the opportunity to accept the funds or decline the funds and have the cooperative serve their student population, making them a non-project school. Other non-project schools do not have sufficient migrant student populations to qualify for funding and therefore are served by the cooperative.
- Provided migrant parents and children ages 3-5, that are not enrolled in kindergarten or other preschool programs, with needed supplies and manipulatives for at-home learning.
- Provided high-interest books, school supplies, and information on community resources (dental care, food banks, healthcare, milestones for pre-k, safety (fire, internet, and sun), banking, etc.) to migrant students and families.
- Provided free resources for those in need. Our staff is very passionate about our students and go above and beyond to help them with whatever needs the migrant students have. We have tutors and recruiters that search for outside resources to share with our migrant families. Recruiters have received sheets, towels, and blankets to distribute to families in need and provide school supplies to all students. We work in collaboration with local churches who have food to distribute it to our families in need.
- Completed needs assessments on each non-project student to determine which students were a priority for service. Students received supplies and books multiple times throughout the school year. Non-project students who are considered Priority For Service (PFS), those who have moved in the past year and are at risk of failing, are visited once to twice a month by cooperative staff to assist with instructional and or personal needs. Students in non-project schools were also provided with dental health supplies and educational information.
- Monitored high school seniors in the project and non-project schools to ensure they are working towards graduation. Provided them with information about ACT and scholarships available to migrant students.
- Assisted project tutors with setting up PAC (Parent Advisory Council) meetings in each of their districts to discuss literacy, math, and graduation requirements with parents. We held a Regional PAC meeting that focused on Financial Awareness and Resources. Presentations were done by representatives from First Security Bank, El Puente, and the Department of Labor.
- Met and established relationships with farmers and businesses.
- LEA tutors were encouraged to inquire about student progress and regularly check in with the student and/or parent to ensure they were completing their work.
- MSAC (Migrant Student Advisory Council) was held on November 4, 2025 at ASU-Beebe campus. Presenters from ASU-Beebe inform the students of what is offered there along with other campuses such as ASU-Searcy and

ASU-Newport. They also discuss financial aid, the admissions process, FAFSA, and give a tour of the campus showing classrooms, dorms, student center, and the cafeteria where students enjoy lunch while there.

- Arkansas Migrant Education Student Leadership Academy (AMESLA) was held this year on October 10-12, 2025. This is a leadership development opportunity for students from all across the state and is held at the 4-H Center in Ferndale, Arkansas. Team building activities such as rock climbing and rope trails are part of the activities that are taught during this weekend. It is limited to 40 students so applications are taken as first come, first served.
- A STEM Camp for students completing 7th, 8th, or 9th grades was held at Harding University on June 2-6, 2025. One professor from Harding University and another from a local school district taught the camp and students were engaged in numerous experiments along with some desk work and robotics. The hours for the camp were 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Searcy School District provided transportation for the students involved from their district. Students from Beebe, Searcy, Riverview, and White County Central school districts participated. Fifteen students participated and all were in attendance each day. Students were provided lunch(in the University cafeteria) and snacks by the Migrant Education Program and each student left with reading books for them and their siblings for the summer. Another STEM Camp is planned for June 2026 at Harding University for those who have completed the 7th, 8th, or 9th grades this school year. Students will be chosen based on their application and there are twelve to fifteen spots available.
- Provided credit recovery opportunities through Red Comet.
- Monitored the project school districts annually as required by the Office of Migrant Education.

Special Projects and Programs

Funding Source: Arkansas Department of Education, ARP ESSER and Local District Funds

Program Name: AR App

WDMESC, in collaboration with all the Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives and DESE, provided training to districts on the AR App. Our collective mission is to enhance teaching, learning, and leadership in Arkansas schools by providing high quality support services targeted toward improving the achievement of all Arkansas students. A series of sessions were developed to support the gradual completion of the AR App. The purpose is to help schools differentiate the process and produce a high quality application. The timeline of this work was January through May and will continue each year moving forward. Each month a different component of the AR App was the focus. The process is 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 each 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.

Program Name: Mathematics

The Instructional Specialist has completed the CGI Leadership Institute and is an ADE-AR Endorsed Trainer for Year 1, 2, and 3, and is currently leading and/or hosting 3 sessions.

Program Name: Robotics - FIRST Robotics Arkansas Regional

The FIRST Robotics Competition Arkansas Regional was held March 19-21, 2026 in Searcy, AR at Harding University.. Twenty-four high school teams from 9 different states and Mexico came together in Central Arkansas to showcase their months of hard work, creative problem solving and incredible team work. This year's game, REBUILT, was presented by HAAS.

WDMESC Program Coordinators and Content Specialists played vital roles in the implementation of the event. The science instruction specialist was a member of the planning committee and the event volunteer coordinator, who is responsible for recruiting and training over 80 volunteers each day. WDMESC was recognized as a "Friends of the Future" sponsor for their support.

Program Name: Communities of Practice (CoP)

Building Communities of Practice (CoP) is focused around Identifying Learning Loss and Accelerating Learning using High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM). DESE, in partnership with a national partner, will bring together groups of Arkansas system leaders (district and school teams). The Community of Practice will explore the leadership practices necessary to implement math and/or literacy instruction and learning supports that meet the moment, while staying focused on long-term recovery and acceleration goals. The CoP includes a series of sessions that includes research and evidence-based strategies to address and plan for the acceleration of learning using HQIM. Bailey Education Group is the selected vendor from those approved by Rivet Education to contract with for professional services to engage in content coaching, with emphasis on HQIM. One district opted to participate in this opportunity.

Program Name: Bus Driver Certification and Assessment

Due to federal regulations, individuals obtaining a new CDL are required to complete a curriculum and pass an assessment. As a result of the lack of bus driving candidates, cooperatives purchased a curriculum and assessment package from Vector Solutions, LLC. Mr. Horn, Director, administers training to transportation directors of WDMESC districts and continues to support the points of contact by providing guidance and resources as they implement this process. This training allows the district point of contact to certify new bus driving candidates.

Program Name: ESCWorks

WDMESC purchases the online platform, escWorks for each of the 17 member districts. escWorks is the platform used by the state of Arkansas to house professional development offerings. Educators in Arkansas use their escWorks account to register for professional development and to track their professional development hours.

Program Name: CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Training

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention® Training provides educators with the skills to safely recognize and respond to everyday crisis situations. The training complies with all current legislation and is evidence-based and fully accredited. WDMESC staff attended CPI certification training and provided this training to our districts.

Appendix A

[Professional Development Activities Reports](#)

Appendix B

[Board Report](#)