

# Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council Report

## Curriculum and Assessment, January 2018

### CCSSO Assessment Updates

The CCSSO State Collaboratives on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) met in Dallas, Texas, on October 24 and 25. The agenda focused on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and what its implementation will mean for students with disabilities. The group will meet again on February 21 and 22, 2018, and will continue to discuss the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), focusing on students with disabilities.

### Waiver Request for Alternate Assessment

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to ensure that the total number of students assessed in each subject using the Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities does not exceed one percent (1%) of the total number of students in the state assessed with Arkansas statewide assessments. States that anticipate exceeding 1.0 percent for alternate assessment participation must submit a waiver request to the US Department of Education ninety (90) days prior to the beginning of the State's alternate assessment testing window. Furthermore, the ESSA requires that each district complete and submit justification when it anticipates exceeding 1.0 percent of students assessed in a subject with the alternate assessment. For the 2016-2017 school year, the State's participation rate on the alternate assessment was approximately 1.38 percent of all students assessed, with more than half of Arkansas districts exceeding the 1.0 percent threshold. After the ADE-SEU reviewed all district justification submissions, tiered supports were implemented based on intensity of need. Those supports included:

- Professional development pertaining to alternate assessment participation
- Classroom accommodations training
- Assessment data review
- Onsite and/or additional review

The Arkansas waiver request, submitted on November 18, 2017, included:

- A plan and timeline by which –
  - The State will improve the implementation of its guidelines for participation in the alternate assessment so that the State will meet the 1.0 percent cap in future school years;
  - The State will provide additional support and oversight to each district that the State anticipates will exceed the 1.0 percent threshold; and
  - The State will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking the alternate assessment.
- Evidence that the State provided an opportunity for the public and LEAs to comment and provide input; and
- Copies of all comments and a description of how the State addressed the comments.

### Alternate Assessment and Alternate Pathway to Graduation

A task force convened in October 2017 and met again on November 15, 2017, to review the participation guidelines for the alternate assessment and to develop a definition of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This work will support the State's development of an alternate pathway to graduation for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Work is currently being done to

align the state's academic content standards with alternate academic achievement standards for this population.

### **Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) Training**

Robin Stripling attended a four day LETRS training in late December. This instructional model was instrumental in the development of the state's Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (RISE). Ms. Stripling will continue to encourage special educators to participate in RISE training and to use evidence-based practices in their instruction.

### **ACT Aspire Training**

Robin Stripling will attend two days of ACT Aspire training on January 17 and 18 in order to provide training at four area educational cooperatives this summer for teachers who administer the ACT Aspire.

### **Dynamic Learning Maps Item Writing**

Robin Stripling will travel to Kansas City in late January to participate in three days of English/Language Arts (ELA) item writing for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment. Ann Finch from the ADE Assessment Unit will also attend as a science item writer.