

Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council Report Curriculum and Assessment, May 2018

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 that they will exceed 1.0 percent in 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 put into place. 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 meets 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 an alternate assessment.
- Evidence that the State provided an opportunity for the public and LEAs to comment and provide input;
- Copies of all comments and a description of how the State addressed the comments.

On March 19, 2018, the ADE received verification from the US Department of Education that the Arkansas waiver request was granted for the 2017-2018 school year.

CCSSO ELP Standards for English Learners with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Tricia Kerr, ADE Program Director for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Robin Stripling are working with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to develop English Language Proficiency Standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. This work is being completed both remotely and in face-to-face meetings with others from around the nation.

CCSSO Assessment Updates

The CCSSO State Collaboratives on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) met in Miami, Florida, on February 21 and 22. 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 June 25

and 26, 2018. This group will continue to discuss the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), focusing on students with disabilities.

Dynamic Learning (DLM) Maps Item Writing

Robin Stripling attended the DLM ELA Item-Writing Event for three days in late January. Each item writer is expected to develop alternate assessment items based on the five achievement levels of the assessment. Arkansas will begin using the DLM alternate assessment in the 2018-2019 school year. DLM will provide training to Arkansas teachers at educational cooperatives during the summer of 2018 to provide support for instruction in self-contained classes.

Alternate Pathway to Graduation

A task force met in October and November to determine whether Arkansas should pursue an alternate pathway to graduation for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The task force determined that Arkansas should pursue this alternate pathway. In order to put this pathway in place, the State must have course requirements for an alternate diploma option that align with those of a regular diploma. The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) consortia has created alternate English Language Arts and Mathematics standards. Teams of general education social studies teachers and special education teachers will meet in Little Rock on July 18 and 19 to develop alternate achievement standards for social studies. Work has also begin on aligning health and wellness standards. Wendy Pascoe and Robin Stripling have joined a Community of Practice hosted by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) to guide this work.

ADE Science of Reading Conference

The Special Education Unit presented two sessions at the ADE Science of Reading Conference in March. Approximately 1500 teachers from around Arkansas attended the conference.

Summer Professional Development

Robin Stripling will provide the following professional development this summer:

- Special Education Updates at fifteen locations around the state
- Online Resources for Special Education
- Effective Instructional Strategies for Special Education
- Dyslexia and the Arkansas Dyslexia Law