

## **Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Special Education Unit Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Curriculum and Assessment, October 2019**

### **Alternate Pathway to Graduation**

In early 2019, the State Board of Education approved the Arkansas Alternate Pathway to Graduation for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate achievement standards are in place for literacy, math, and science. Arkansas created alternate achievement standards for Civics, Economics, US History, World History, Art, and Health and Safety, which are currently being piloted. The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Special Education Unit (DESE-SEU) worked collaboratively with Virtual Arkansas to develop an online Fine Arts course for this group of students. Tabitha Reindeau and Robin Stripling participated in a Community of Practice hosted by the National Center on Educational Outcomes to guide this work. Eighteen trainings were held during the summer of 2019 to inform Arkansas educators of this new pathway. Additional trainings are currently being provided at all educational cooperatives for educators. Trainings will also be provided for district administrators at districts and educational cooperatives. Information pertaining to the pathway may be found at [tinyurl.com/ArAltPathway](http://tinyurl.com/ArAltPathway).

### **Alternate Assessment**

Arkansas is required to submit a request for an extension on its 1% Alternate Assessment Waiver to the US Department of Education. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 stated that any state with more than 1% of its tested population participating in an alternate assessment, must request a waiver from the US Department of Education. In 2018, 1.21% of Arkansas students participated in the alternate assessment for literacy and 1.20% participated in the alternate assessment for math; less than 1% of Arkansas students participated in the alternate assessment for science. In 2019, 1.32% of Arkansas students participated in the alternate assessment for literacy and math, and 1.29% of Arkansas students participated in the alternate assessment for science. Analysis of assessment data showed that the percentage of students participating in literacy and mathematics decreased in each grade level in 2019, but the overall percentage increased because one grade level of alternate assessment was added for both literacy and mathematics; five grade levels were added for science.

Districts administering the DLM to more than one percent of its students were required to submit justification documentation to the DESE-SEU. Those justifications were reviewed by DESE-SEU staff in mid-September. Based on the justification information provided, required actions have been put into place for districts. For districts anticipating to administer the alternate assessment to more than two percent of its students, DESE-SEU staff will make an onsite visit to review student due process folders.

### **Additional Trainings**

The Special Education Unit (SEU) Curriculum and Assessment team provided a training on Accessibility Supports for the Arkansas Transition Services' UDL Conference in September. The team will also provide a training at the Arkansas Council for Exceptional Children conference in October. Additionally, the team is working with the DESE Division of Learning Services to provide Student Success Plan training in educational cooperatives.