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## **Bald Knob School District**

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### **ADDENDUM TO BALD KNOB DISTRICT LEARNING PLAN**

**ACT 1240 waiver request:** Please change from 5 years to 3 years.

**Teaching load:** The Wilbur Mills consortia (Pearson Connex and Virtual Arkansas) do not exceed 190 students.

**Elementary plans:** Pearson Connex virtual teachers will be self-contained for grades K-5 with a 50:1 student teacher ratio. The class load will not exceed 50 students. 6th grade virtual teachers are also provided through Pearson. This grade is departmentalized. The student teacher ratio is 37:1. Teachers have an average of 160-190 students assigned to their subject. All 6th grade virtual students are provided a certified teacher as an advisor.

Reading will be a primary focus for the schools in the Wilbur Mills Consortium. The schools will implement research-based curriculum and strategies for students who are reading at, above, or below grade level. Students reading or writing below grade level will receive additional support through increased frequency of targeted LiveLesson sessions and Connections multi-tiered instructional support program. Teachers use formative assessment data to determine a student's greatest area of need. A variety of supplemental instructional support programs are available to support student learning in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and writing. Teachers regularly monitor student performance in these programs and make adjustments as needed based on Connections guidelines for implementing multi-tiered instruction.

The school districts in the Wilbur Mills Consortium (K-8) plan to focus on literacy in the early grades using Connexus' research-based curriculum. Connexus' elementary literacy program spans Kindergarten to Grade 5, and is carefully scaffolded with a combination of high-quality, engaging instruction and resources. Language arts courses, supported by McGraw Hill Wonders program (grades K-5) and Common Core



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Literature series (grades 6–8), explicitly support the five main components of literacy instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Reading and writing instruction is prevalent throughout the language arts program, and is supported by core content area courses. All English language arts courses are fully aligned to the Arkansas Standards.

Phonemic awareness, the awareness of discrete sounds, or phonemes, is present at the earliest stages of literacy growth. As students master the recognition and production of individual sounds, the need for targeted phonemic awareness instruction declines. Phonics instruction capitalizes on phonemic awareness and focuses on the relationship between written letters, their names, and their sounds. Instruction progresses from letter sounds and small combinations to syllabic awareness. Fluency, the ability to read quickly and accurately, improves as the other components of literacy also improve. In the early years, vocabulary and text comprehension instruction is primarily listening-focused. As students improve in their ability to decode, vocabulary and comprehension instruction shifts to involve more reading. Direct instruction in fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension continues throughout elementary school. In the earliest years, literacy instruction is largely a collaborative process as students interact regularly with their teachers and Learning Coaches to build the foundations for success in reading and writing. As students grow in their literacy skills and enter into upper elementary courses, they assume more independence.



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Superintendent



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