



Arkansas Department of Education

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Sarah Huckabee Sanders
Governor

Jacob Oliva
Secretary

April 22, 2024

Dr. Sarah Moore, Chair
Arkansas State Board of Education
Four Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dr. Micheal Stone
Lee County School District
161 Walnut Street
Marianna, AR 72360

Dear Dr. Moore and Superintendent Dr. Stone:

This correspondence confirms that the Lee County School District has rectified all the previously identified criteria for placement in fiscal distress, has encountered no subsequent indicators of fiscal distress, and has adhered to all the recommendations and requirements necessary for removing its fiscal distress status. As such, we will recommend that the Lee County School District be released from fiscal distress at the May 2024, State Board of Education meeting.

If released, the Fiscal Services and Support Unit will continue to assist the district as needed. Our unit will monitor the fiscal operations and accounts for the Lee County School District for 3 years, as required by law A.C.A. § 6-20-1912.

Please maintain a copy of this letter in your District's audit file.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Saunders". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Eric Saunders
Associate Deputy Commissioner
Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

CS: ddm

Cc: Mr. Jacob Oliva, Secretary of Education
Mrs. Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner

**Arkansas State Board of Education
 Authorization of State Authority
 School District: LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

TIMELINE

Date	Action	Notes
03/25/2019	Probationary Status–Standards for Accreditation Lee County School District and Lee High School State Authority Initiated	The State Board of Education found Lee County School District and Lee High School to be in probationary violation of the Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation (Sections 1-C.2.1 and 1-C.2.2 respectively). The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE) that the Board place the District and Lee High School on probationary status for these violations. The District appealed the Department's determination; however, the SBE did not approve the appeal. Under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-207(c), the superintendent and school board were removed and the district was placed under state authority.
05/09/2019 Expiration: 06/30/2024	Fiscal Distress Designation Lee County School District	Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-1905, the Arkansas Department of Education identified the Lee County School District as a school district in fiscal distress. The Arkansas Department of Education made this identification because the Lee County School District met the fiscal distress indicators as set forth in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-1904.
06/13/2019	Probationary Status, Year 1–Standards for Accreditation Lee County School District and Lee High School	State Board of Education reaffirmed placement of Lee County School District and Lee High School in Probationary Status–Year 1 for violations of the DESE Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation
06/11/2020	Accredited, Corrective Action–Standards for Accreditation Lee County School District Accredited, Cited–Standards for Accreditation, Anna Strong Learning Academy	State Board of Education affirmed Lee County School District in Accredited–Corrective Action status and Anna Strong Learning Academy with Accredited–Cited status pertaining to the DESE Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation.
05/13/2021 Expiration: 05/13/2026	Level 5–Intensive Support Classification	The State Board of Education approved the request of Lee County School District Superintendent Willie Murdock to classify the District in Level 5–Intensive Support, and directed the Secretary of Education to assume authority of the Lee County School District board of directors as may be necessary to operate the school district.