



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Earle School District

Legislative Quarterly Report

July - September 2022

Submitted by

Office of Coordinated Support & Service

October 2022

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-13-112, a quarterly status report is provided for each school district currently under state authority. The following report is submitted to the State Board of Education, the Chairs of both the House and Senate Education Committees, and others prescribed by law.

The current report is part of quarterly reporting under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Although a district may be under state authority for various purposes, the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) believes that all systems must be fortified in order to have an effective school district. These systems are Academics, Facilities and Transportation, District Operations and Fiscal Governance, Human Capital, Student Support, and Stakeholder Communication/Family and Community Engagement.

DESE works in a collaborative manner to support the district based on items identified in the district plan of support and continues to work with the district to prioritize and identify solutions to further enhance any other systems including the use of DESE supports. DESE will further work with the district to develop local capacity in addressing each system by developing measurable goals and monitoring progress. This is intended to be reflective in nature and a way for DESE and the district to be purposeful in their future work together for the betterment of students.

EARLE BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. §6-20-1905, the Earle School District received notice by certified mail as being identified by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) for Fiscal Distress status. The District was classified in Fiscal Distress on October 12, 2017 due to the district failing to file an audit report within the nine month time period or within the time period under any extension granted by the Department of Education. The identification is based on acts or violations determined to jeopardize the fiscal integrity of the district including, without limitation, failure to fully develop and implement adequate corrective actions for previously identified audit findings and deficiencies.

Because of significant findings that jeopardized the fiscal integrity of the district, the State Board of Education assumed authority of the district and appointed an interim superintendent on November 6, 2017. As a result of the issues, ADE Commissioner Johnny Key exercised the authority granted under Arkansas Code 6-20-1901 et seq. to assume authority over the board of directors; however, Commissioner Key offered the board the opportunity to remain in place in an advisory capacity to the new superintendent. ADE personnel determined the following Fiscal Distress Indicators during an internal audit:

- Title I 2015-16 unallowable expenditures \$300,299.97; 2016-17 unallowable expenditures \$303,436.85
- NSL 2015-16 potential unallowable expenditures \$555,128.63; 2016-17 potential unallowable expenditures \$717,429.86
- Athletic/Activity Concessions had gate receipts unaccounted for: one football game, one in concession, two for basketball game 17 in concession 20.
- Payroll had some contracts that could not be tied to a W2 and some W2s had no contract.

- District website was missing documents listing legal balances, budget, salary reports, monthly expenditures reports, student handbook, audits, policy signature page, ASCIP plan, statistical report, and board minutes were not up to date.
- Credit card showed unmonitored use/unaccounted for documentation; potential cash advance to cover payroll.

On May 9, 2019, the State Board of Education approved a request from the Earle School district leadership and community advisory board to classify the district in need of Level 5 support.

Current DESE Quarterly Support

Submitted: John Hoy, Assistant State Superintendent

The Office of Coordinated Support and Service (OCSS) team in coordination with the Division of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) has continued to provide support to the Earle School District. John Hoy, Assistant State Superintendent, is onsite supporting the district 3-4 days a week. Ryan Burgess and Terri McCann, both Leadership Development Coaches, support the principals in the district. Julie Amstutz, State Special Education Leadership Development Coach, provides support for district staff in their efforts to improve instruction, support teacher growth, and increase student achievement for students with disabilities. Dr. Michael Watson, behavior leadership coach, provides support for district staff in their efforts to build a safe, collaborative culture for all students. Carol Herringer, Educational Ombudsmen and DESE Literacy Specialist assists instructional literacy educators. Kelly Stone, DESE RISE (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) regional specialist, assists in ensuring implementation of the science of reading.

Fiscal emphasis this quarter has been on developing a budget and a fiscal distress plan for FY 23 that will continue to address the fiscal integrity of the district. Academic emphasis has been on implementing school improvement plans, district support plans, and the DESE plan of support. The OCSS team has worked with Earle School District administrators, the DESE Fiscal Services and Support unit, educational consultants from Solution Tree, and support specialists from Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative (CRESC) staff to provide support in implementing these plans.

Student Support

The district has continued to implement scheduling structures that allow time for student remediation and/or enrichment during the school day that is outside of regular class time on both campuses. Teachers and instructional support staff continue to meet at least weekly at both schools to collaboratively discuss essential standards and student progress toward mastery of those standards. This work is continuing to be supported by Solution Tree and CRESC staff. While time for this work is now in place, the process for ensuring mastery for all students is still being refined.

In addition to providing regular student intervention time, the district provided extended year activities for both schools. Over 100 students participated in the extended year activities with 17 recovering credit at the high school and with 75% of pre/post assessments administered resulting in positive gains.

The implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has been an ongoing effort to build and maintain a positive culture for all students. Earle's PBIS Tier I support strategies are now in place and Tier II and Tier III support strategies for behavior are being developed. Data collected by the OCSS team and district administration over the prior year indicated that as PBIS points awarded to students increased, disciplinary referrals decreased.

The district provides dyslexia support for those students identified. Currently 34 students receive dyslexia intervention services from a trained dyslexia interventionist. Initial screening is complete and students are being monitored for progress. CRESC provides support for the district in this area.

Human Capital

Earle School District has continued to refine recruitment and onboarding strategies to staff district needs. Data noted in the [DESE LEA Insights database](#) reflects this effort by showing that the number of courses taught by teachers with a licensure exception in the district has declined three years in a row (from 177 courses in 2019 to 77 courses in 2022). The district owes this success to the combined efforts of district staff and the ongoing support of DESE staff.

However, Earle like many other school districts continues to struggle with filling all the positions needed to serve students well, and continues to seek out innovative ways to find teachers. DESE, CRESC, OCSS continues to assist in getting teachers properly credentialed and adequately supported. Providing quality instruction and access to opportunities remains a concern.

There is also a shortage in transportation staffing, the district is still attempting to secure additional bus drivers needed.

Academic

It is worthy to note that this academic year will be the first time in three years that the district will have all high school literacy and math positions filled by credentialed on-site instructors instead of virtual. This is also the first time in three years that the district will have state approved curricular resources available to all content teachers at the beginning of the year. OCSS, DESE support staff, and Crowley's Ridge Educational Service Cooperative Specialists are working closely with teachers to implement resources with fidelity. Solution Tree continues to also provide direct coaching support to the administration. OCSS staff is assisting in coordinating this support in an effort to ensure one voice is flowing to district leadership albeit from multiple sources.

Family and Community Engagement

During this quarter the district has continued to implement its approved Family and Community Engagement plan with minimal support from DESE staff.

Fiscal Governance and District Operations

The DESE Fiscal Support and Services Unit in coordination with OCSS provides ongoing support to the district through onsite visits and remote assistance. In preparation for the 2022-2023 school year, The DESE Fiscal Support and Services Unit in coordination with OCSS met with the district staff to provide proactive support in the budgeting process. Items addressed included, but not limited to: historical balance trends in operating and building funds, enrollment, staffing, millage, tax collections, debt payments, revenue sources, revenue amounts, future enrollment projections district wide and by cohort, certified and classified staffing by position trends for the last 12 years, audit results, expenditure requirements, fund balance carryover amounts, detailed budgeting projections, and analysis for revenue and expenditure line items.

Facilities and Transportation

The HVAC project designed to improve air quality in the district is nearing completion. The interior ductwork and installation was completed in a manner sufficient to begin school on time and uninterrupted. The installation of units on the exterior of the facilities are progressing in a timely manner. Work already approved to improve the roof, also designed to improve air quality, is currently on hold because of current projected cost overruns.

The district sold several school buses this quarter and is in the process of reviewing bids for the sale of several district facilities no longer of use to the district. Disposing of these properties will subsequently decrease district operating cost in the areas of maintenance and or insurance.

Staff at the high school has expressed concern regarding updating security cameras that have been impacted by the updated HVAC system. District administration and staff at both schools need to continue to evaluate and enforce safety measures in both schools. DESE is working to review budget items and identify priority items for the district in the area of safety.

Budget Summary

EARLE SCHOOL DISTRICT (1802000)

FY23 as of 2022-09-30			
Beginning Balance			Ending Balance
<u>7/1/2022</u>			<u>9/30/2022</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
379,928.22	657,915.99	868,405.46	169,438.75
FY23 Budget			
Beginning Balance			Projected Balance
<u>7/1/2022</u>			<u>6/30/2023</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
379,928.22	4,238,314	4,005,573	612,669.45
FY22			
Beginning Balance			Ending Balance
<u>7/1/2021</u>			<u>6/30/2022</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
251,887.96	4,904,105.26	4,813,440.32	342,552.9
FY21			
Beginning Balance			Ending Balance
<u>7/1/2020</u>			<u>6/30/2021</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
96,942.77	5,507,744.05	5,352,798.86	251,887.96
FY20			
Beginning Balance			Ending Balance
<u>7/1/2019</u>			<u>6/30/2020</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
85,347.19	4,898,952.22	4,887,356.64	96,942.77

(Does not include Building, Categorical, Federal, Activity and Food Service Funds)
Sep 30, 2022

11:13:30 AM