



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**Legislative Update for
Pine Bluff School District**

State Authority

January-March 2021

Submitted by

Office of Coordinated Support & Service

April 2021

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 the new process 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. The major focus of this report will be around the Academic System and District Operations and Fiscal Governance System.

The Academic System consists of academic updates centered around the district support plan (DSP). The DSP is designed to describe the resources that will be allocated to the building in order to support implementation of the school improvement plan (SIP) and also the manner in which actions within the SIP are monitored by the district. Both the DSP and the SIP are based on the review of data and should follow a continuous cycle of inquiry. The DESE then can work in a collaborative manner to support the district based on items identified in the district plan of support and continue 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.

The legislative report consists of information related to the DSP and subsequent reports will provide updates of the monitoring of the DSP and any other relevant academic information pertaining to the goals of the schools. In the event that the district is under state authority for fiscal reasons, the report will also contain all relevant financial information.

BACKGROUND

The Pine Bluff School District (PBSD) was placed under the direction of the Commissioner of Education on September 13, 2018. At that time PBSD was classified in Fiscal Distress. State statute related to schools classified in Fiscal Distress has given the State Board of Education the authority to administer a wide range of actions when schools or districts are classified in Fiscal Distress. These actions are inclusive of removal of the local school board and assignment of the overall district administration to the Commissioner of Education. The SBE voted to remove the school board and superintendent. Commissioner Key then appointed a new superintendent to oversee the district operations.

On November 8, 2018, the Pine Bluff School District was classified in need of Level 5 Support and state authority was reaffirmed by the SBE. PBSD has 5 of 6 schools that have a letter grade of F. The district also has 4 schools identified in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). These CSI schools are Broadmoor Elementary, Thirty-Fourth Street Elementary, Jack Robey Middle School and Pine Bluff High School.

State statute requires quarterly progress monitoring of districts in state authority with updates provided to the legislature. The intent of the requirement for quarterly reporting is to keep both the public and the legislature informed regarding progress toward the exit criteria from state authority. This report seeks to fulfill that requirement for the PBSD which is under state authority for academic issues.

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) subscribes to the educational research-supported belief that plans of improvement must be both personalized to a school, and developed by the educators and parents charged with the responsibility for increasing student assessed proficiency. ADE does not seek to impose a plan on any district but does seek to support districts in analyzing and supporting school level plans.

In keeping with the idea that each school across the state will have a personalized plan, the district in consultation with the ADE will collaborate on a district plan of support. A district support plan shall follow a continuous cycle of inquiry and at a minimum specify the support the public school district will provide to public schools identified pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10, as reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95; collaboratively establish priorities regarding goals or anticipated outcomes with the school or schools, including feeder schools as applicable; identify resources to support the established priorities; describe the time and pace of providing support

and monitoring for the established priorities; and describe the measures for analyzing and evaluating that the district support was effective in improving the school performance.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

ADE/DESE Support

[Current DESE Support and Goals \(January-March\)](#)

[DESE Support and Goals \(Sept-Dec.\)](#)

[DESE Support and Goals \(June-Aug\)](#)

School Level Plans

[Southwood Elementary School Support Plan](#)

[34th Avenue Elementary School Support Plan](#)

[Broadmoor Elementary School Support Plan](#)

[Jack Robey Junior High School Support Plan](#)

[Pine Bluff High School Support Plan](#)

District Support Plan

[District Ready for Learning Plan](#)

Approved

[Parent and Family Engagement Plan](#)

Updated ESSA School Index By School

The link [here](#) shows the updated ESSA School Index scores and each indicator for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school year.

Exit Criteria/Plan

The Exit Criteria with Progress is linked [here](#).

Fiscal Distress Plan

Pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-1905, on August 8, 2018, the Arkansas Department of Education identified the Pine Bluff School District as a school district in fiscal distress. The Arkansas Department of Education made this identification because the Pine Bluff School District met the following fiscal distress indicator(s) as set forth in Ark. Code Ann. § 6-20-1904: (Declining balance identified by ADE to jeopardize the fiscal integrity of the school district and Any other fiscal condition of a school district deemed to have a material detrimental negative impact on the continuation of educational services by that school district).

[Fiscal Distress Plan](#)- new objectives

[Fiscal Distress Support](#)