



ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

Arkansas Review of Schools Classified in Academic Distress

July 15, 2016

Submitted by
Division of Public School Accountability
School Improvement Unit

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INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas State Board of Education took action on April 14, 2016, to classify twenty-four schools and three districts as meeting the definition of Academic Distress (attachment A). In accordance with the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) and the Academic Distress Program (10.06.2 and 10.06.3) the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) appointed teams to conduct on-site reviews of these schools and districts (attachment B).

Schools are classified in Academic Distress if **less than** 49.5 percent of the students assessed over a consecutive three year period score proficient. The reviewers visited fourteen high schools, nine middle school/junior high schools, and one elementary school. Seventeen of the schools were classified for a third consecutive year; three schools were classified for a second consecutive year; and four schools were newly classified. Twenty-two of the schools were also classified under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under the ESEA Flexibility Waiver granted to Arkansas, these twenty-two schools were classified as "Priority School". Two of the schools reviewed were not currently classified as Priority or Focus under the federal ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

Three districts/systems were classified in Academic Distress. Blytheville School District, Dollarway School District and the one-school charter system of Covenant Keepers were identified in Academic Distress. A school district or charter school system is classified in Academic Distress when **less than** 49.5 of all the students of that district/system score proficient on state assessments during a consecutive three year period.

The schools varied widely in student population ranging from approximately 100 students to over 1000 students. The schools classified had high percentages of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, all had high minority populations, and all reported high rates of discipline referrals. Teacher turnover or teacher attendance issues were identified by almost all as a substantial problem. Twenty-two of the schools were currently making efforts to implement Priority Improvement Plans and were receiving assistance from one or more ADE support units. Principals voiced concern that the review would result in a change of direction or numerous additional activities.

RECOMMENDATION # 1: PREVIOUSLY CLASSIFIED SCHOOLS

Because twenty of the schools were previously classified in Academic Distress, and two of the other four schools were classified as Priority, it was noted that they have goals and efforts currently in progress from prior ADE site reviews or technical assistance. Thus, the review team is recommending continuation of the Priority Improvement Plans established for school year 2015-16, but with modifications for greater clarity. ADE School Improvement Unit (SIU) staff will provide technical assistance to assist these twenty-two schools in integrating into their current plans three targeted goals that would be monitored monthly by the SIU. These overarching goals are:

1. The School Improvement Leadership Team will develop a clear and shared academic focus that will lead to removal from Academic Distress.
2. The School Improvement Leadership Team in conjunction with all stakeholders will develop a positive school culture conducive to learning and staff professional growth.
3. The School Improvement Leadership Team in conjunction with the District Improvement Leadership Team will develop a culture of continuous improvement.

These goals are attached and greater clarification of their meaning and purpose are provided (attachment C).

RECOMMENDATION 2: NEWLY CLASSIFIED SCHOOLS

Two of the schools classified in Academic Distress are not currently working under goals and efforts identified by an ADE site review team. Thus, the review teams make the following recommendation:

By the first of October these two schools will develop a School Improvement Plan based on a comprehensive needs assessment and designed to address the three overarching goals identified in recommendation 1. The Needs Assessment will be done in collaboration with the ADE School Improvement Unit and the overall plan will be developed collaboratively by the school and district leadership teams with support from the ADE Fiscal Support Unit, the School Improvement Unit, Educator Effectiveness Unit, and the Assessment Unit. The school will report progress to the State Board of Education quarterly in the same manner as a Priority School.

These goals are attached and greater clarification of their meaning and purpose are provided (attachment C).

RECOMMENDATION 3: DISTRICT WILL CLARIFY SUPPORT TO BE PROVIDED

It was noted during the site reviews that schools varied in the level of district support. No school reviewed by the ADE teams had a written document that outlined the level of support that a school would receive from the district.

It is recommended that by September 15, 2016, the District Improvement Leadership Team, in consultation with the School Improvement Leadership Team and other stakeholders, will submit for State Board of Education review a plan of support for each school in Academic Distress. The plan will detail the types of support to be provided to each school and will be inclusive of, but not limited to:

- The professional development plan of activities that will support the principal in becoming an accomplished turnaround principal (identifying specific trainings, readings, mentors, and timelines for activities to occur and the expected

outcome of each component of the activities). This plan shall include observation calibration training for Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) along with training in the use of the BloomBoard Insight Reports. Further, district and school leaders will work with the ADE Educator Effectiveness Unit to align existing walk-through practices to be recorded as informal observations within the TESS (BloomBoard) process.

- A description of specific State and Federal Categorical (restricted funds) funding provided to the school. The funding description will clarify positions and programs purchased with categorical dollars; specify the amount of student improvement anticipated by the expenditure and how the effectiveness of the program or position will be evaluated in accordance with the anticipated student gains. The funds available and at the discretion of the School Improvement Leadership Team will be defined and the allowable use of the funds determined.
- The description of all assessments to be administered by the school and clear detail on how the assessments will be utilized by teachers, instructional teams, and the School Improvement Leadership Team. It is encouraged that the ACT Aspire Interim Assessments be used for progress monitoring. Post-unit assessments are to be developed by instructional teams specific to the units taught and may include both standards based questions and questions related to any foundational knowledge required as part of the units of instruction. Dates for assessments by grade level, expected levels of student achievement (SMART Goal), and clear use of each type of assessment will be detailed in the plan(s). It is encouraged that the school minimize assessment to Formative Assessments, Aspire Interims (or Aspire aligned interims), and Unit Assessments. Semester Exams may be substituted for the third Unit Assessment if all students at that grade level or subject area are administered the Semester Exam.
- The clarification of the decision making autonomy that each School Improvement Leadership Team will have, and the parameters within which the team must operate. Included will be a description of the discretionary money/resources available to the School Improvement Leadership Team to support teacher development as needs are identified.
- The description of how the district will attempt to retain effective teachers at the school, and how the district will support the building in recruiting qualified teachers when openings occur. This would include how teachers are incentivized to remain at the school as well as the monitoring of teachers for their “feelings or perceptions” of support on a quarterly basis (ADE developed instrument or ADE approved instrument).
- A description of the actions the district is taking to ensure that there is curriculum alignment in at least the areas of literacy and mathematics as assessed for accountability.
- The description of the supports to be provided to engage parents and community in the turnaround efforts. Specifically identify the activities that will

be offered, a timeline and how the school will maintain and analyze data related to parent participation. The analysis should contrast parents of proficient students in contrast to parents of non-proficient students with the intent of providing additional services and support to parents of non-proficient students.

- The description of the supports to be provided in creating a positive learning environment and positive school climate. It is encouraged that the district support the school in adopting a Positive Behavior Intervention System as well as other culture improvement strategies.

Recommendations are attached and greater clarification of their meaning and purpose are provided (attachment D).

RECOMMENDATION 4: INFORMING AND DEVELOPING THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

The local school board holds accountability for the progress of students. The National School Boards Association in conjunction with the Center for Public Education have identified characteristics of effective school boards. These include and require that school boards are data literate, allocate resources to needs, and maintain a focus on student achievement goals. To support the local school board in being effective, the review teams make the following recommendation:

In conjunction with the School Improvement Leadership Team, and the designated team from the Arkansas Department of Education, the District Improvement Leadership Team will present the school's required quarterly progress report to the local school board and discuss supports, actions, and/or trainings in which the local school board can participate to further support the school or schools.

To clarify the intent of this recommendation, each quarter following the submission of the quarterly progress report, the assigned ADE Team will meet with representatives from the district and school to develop and present a report of progress to the local school board. To the degree possible, the report to the local board will highlight the decisions made that either supported or distracted from the school's efforts. The District Improvement Leadership Team and the assigned ADE Team will then assist the local school board in identifying any trainings that would assist in their efforts to become more effective.

Recommendations are attached and greater clarification of their meaning and purpose are provided (attachment D).

SUMMARY:

All review teams identified that every school was making efforts towards improving student outcomes. The degree of sophistication level of these efforts varied by the expertise and experience level of school and district leaders. It was noted that a majority of the school leaders were in the first three years of being assigned to a school

in Academic Distress. While each school staff had a general understanding of the Academic Distress classification, it was noted that in all schools reviewed that there was minimal understanding of specific efforts that the school was taking to advance beyond Academic Distress. The intent of these recommendations is to assist the district and school in maintaining the efforts currently underway, but adding a more defined focus on the specific grade levels and/or courses that are used to determine state accountability classifications. Further, it is anticipated that by the schools structuring their work under the recommended three overarching goals, they will be better able to communicate to all stakeholders the purpose of each action being taken to improve student outcomes.

Attachment A

Schools Identified in Academic Distress Three Consecutive Years

District	School Name	2013-2015 Percent Proficient All Students Math + ELA
Blytheville	Blytheville High School New Tech	44.089
Covenant Keepers	Covenant Keepers Charter	44.147
Dollarway	Dollarway High School	39.53
Forrest City	Forrest City High School	39.516
Forrest City	Forrest City Junior High School	48.697
Forrest City	Lincoln Academy of Excellence	46.771
Helena	Central High School	48.517
Little Rock	Cloverdale Aerospace Tech	42.905
Little Rock	Hall High School	41.006
Little Rock	Henderson Middle School	46.459
Little Rock	JA Fair High School	48.335
Little Rock	McClellan Magnet High School	46.989
Pine Bluff	Belair Middle School	46.129
Pine Bluff	Pine Bluff High School	43.268
Pulaski County	Wilbur D. Mills High School	46.188
Strong-Huttig	Strong High School	46.05
Watson Chapel	Watson Chapel High School	47.31

Schools Identified in Academic Distress Two Consecutive Years

District	School Name	2013-2015 Percent Proficient All Students Math + ELA
Blytheville	Blytheville Middle School	44.899
Dermott	Dermott High School	49.445
Pulaski County	Jacksonville Middle School	46.487

Newly Identified Schools in Academic Distress

District	School Name	2013-2015 Percent Proficient All Students Math + ELA
Dollarway	Robert F Morehead Middle School	46.206
Hope	Hope High School	47.362
Little Rock Prep	Little Rock Prep Academy Elementary	47.992
Marvell-Elaine	Marvell-Elaine High School	45.932

Districts Identified in Academic Distress

District	District Name	2013-2015 Percent Proficient All Students Math + ELA
Blytheville	Blytheville School District	49.257
Covenant Keepers	Covenant Keepers Charter School	43.211
Dollarway	Dollarway School District	47.829

**Attachment B
Academic Distress Site Review Schedule and Teams**

School District	School	Date of Academic Distress Review Visit	ADE Review Team
Blytheville School District	Blytheville High School-A New Tech School	May 4, 2016	Dr. Bob Brewer, SIU Janie Hickman, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Blytheville School District	Blytheville Middle School	May 4, 2016	Jamie Holiman, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Rocci Malone, EEU
Covenant Keepers Charter School	Covenant Keepers Charter	May 9, 2016	Dr. Bob Brewer, SIU Janie Hickman, SIU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Renee Nelson, EEU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Dermott School District	Dermott High School	May 23, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU
Dollarway School District	Dollarway High School	May 10, 2016	Becky Cezar, SEU Jamie Holiman, SIU Janie Hickman, SIU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Renee Nelson, EEU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Dollarway School District	Robert F. Morehead Middle School	May 10, 2016	Becky Cezar, SEU Jamie Holiman, SIU Janie Hickman, SIU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Renee Nelson, EEU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Forrest City School District	Forrest City High School	May 16, 2016	Krista Harrell, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU

			Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Sandra Hurst, EEU Tiah Frazier, SIU Tommy Norton, SIU
Forrest City School District	Forrest City Jr. High	May 17, 2016	Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Rocci Malone, EEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Forrest City School District	Lincoln Academy	May 17, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Tommy Norton, SIU
Helena/W. Helena School District	Central High School	May 18, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Rocci Malone, EEU Tiah Frazier, SIU Tommy Norton, SIU
Hope School District	Hope High School	May 25, 2016	Judy Foot, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Lisa Knoedl, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Little Rock Preparatory Academy	Little Rock Prep Academy Elementary	May 13, 2016	Dr. Bob Brewer, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tammy Thorn, SEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Little Rock School District	Cloverdale Aerospace Tech Charter	May 26, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Rocci Malone, EEU Sharesa White, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Little Rock School District	Hall High School	May 11, 2016	Becky Gibson, EEU Janie Hickman, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU
Little Rock School District	Henderson Middle School	May 26, 2016	Becky Cezar, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Maureen Harness, EEU Misty Pitman, SIU

			Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Tammy Thorn, SEU
Little Rock School District	J.A. Fair High School	May 11, 2016	Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Sharesa White, SIU Tammy Thorn, SEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Little Rock School District	McClellan Magnet High School	May 3, 2016	Becky Gibson, EEU Jamie Holiman, SIU Janie Hickman, SIU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Sharesa White, SIU Tammy Thorn, SEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Marvell-Elaine School District	Marvell-Elaine High School	May 19, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU Tommy Norton, SIU
Pine Bluff School District	Belair Middle School	May 6, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Rocci Malone, EEU
Pine Bluff School District	Pine Bluff High School	May 5, 2016	Becky Cezar, SEU Jamie Holiman, SIU Janie Hickman, SIU Krista Harrell, SEU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Maureen Harness, EEU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Pulaski County Special School District	Jacksonville Middle School	May 20, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Judy Foot, SIU Lisa Knoedl, SIU Renee Nelson, EEU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Tammy Thorn, SEU Tiah Frazier, SIU

Pulaski County Special School District	Wilbur D. Mills High School	May 24, 2016	Janie Hickman, SIU Judy Foot, SIU Lasonia Johnson, SIU Lisa Knoedl, SIU Misty Pitman, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Rocci Malone, EEU Tammy Thorn, SEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Strong-Huttig School District	Strong High School	May 23, 2016	Judy Foot, SIU Lisa Knoedl, SIU Dr. Richard Wilde, SIU Rocci Malone, EEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
Watson Chapel School District	Watson Chapel High School	May 6, 2016	Jamie Holiman, SIU Judy Foot, SIU Lisa Knoedl, SIU Dr. Robert Toney, SIU Renee Nelson, EEU Sandra Hurst, EEU Tammy Thorn, SEU Tiah Frazier, SIU
ADE Unit Abbreviation Key:		Educator Effectiveness Unit – EEU School Improvement Unit – SIU Special Education Unit – SEU	

Attachment C

SCHOOL GOALS

BACKGROUND

Campus teams did not clearly articulate the components of accountability that would lead to the removal from Academic Distress, including the steps that need to be taken to improve student outcomes.

GOAL 1

The School Improvement Leadership Team will develop a clear and shared academic focus that will lead to removal from Academic Distress.

CLARIFICATION

The School Improvement Leadership Team ensures the development of a clear and shared focus involving all stakeholders. All stakeholders know the focus and how achieving the focus will lead to increased achievement, long range commitment to continuous improvement and specifically removal from Academic Distress classification. All stakeholders can articulate their role, and the role of interventions/innovations/programs in accomplishing the focus. The focus will be foremost in decisions related to support expenditures. All faculty will clearly understand the evidence that identify progress throughout the year. The School Improvement Leadership Team will provide an update of progress to the local school board quarterly.

BACKGROUND

School staff interviewed as part of the site reviews communicated high turnover rates of teachers, difficulty recruiting qualified teachers, high number of discipline referrals, high teacher absenteeism, high failure rate and a high number of students entering secondary settings behind grade level.

GOAL 2

The School Improvement Leadership Team in conjunction with all stakeholders will develop a positive school culture conducive to learning and staff professional growth.

CLARIFICATION

The School Improvement Leadership Team ensures there is a sense that educating students extends beyond teachers and staff in schools to include all educational stakeholders. Parents, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all know their role in this effort. Teachers, staff, students and stakeholders believe that all students can learn and are able to articulate a personal vision of success. The school has a safe, caring, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment where all

students and staff feel welcomed, supported and valued. The social-emotional, behavior and academic needs of students are addressed using a research based multi-tiered approach. Instruction is student-focused; teachers have high expectations of student learning and believe they can teach all students. Teaching and learning are continually adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Teachers determine needed support and professional development that aligns with the school and district's clear focus and high expectations. The School Improvement Leadership Team will regularly assess school culture by utilizing ADE provided or approved student and teacher surveys and provide an update to the state and local school board quarterly.

BACKGROUND

Campus teams did not articulate the plans and processes in place for creating a culture of continuous improvement. Various teams did not demonstrate an understanding of the comprehensive picture of a culture of continuous improvement.

GOAL 3

The School Improvement Leadership Team in conjunction with the District Improvement Leadership Team will develop a culture of continuous improvement.

CLARIFICATION

A culture of continuous improvement is one that involves assessing, planning and monitoring of school improvement indicators and making data-driven decisions toward achieving the shared and clear focus. All teams work collaboratively within and outside of their teams, have a clear and communicated written purpose, bylaws, and can articulate their role in achieving the focus.

The School Improvement Leadership Team has the autonomy to identify and attend necessary training to ensure they are capable of leading a turnaround effort. The School Improvement Leadership Team meets regularly and serves as a conduit of communication to all stakeholders in a way that enables the School Improvement Leadership Team to receive input. A schedule and description of all assessments to be administered will be created including detail of how the assessments will be utilized by teachers, instructional teams, and the School Improvement Leadership Team. It is recommended that the Aspire Interim Assessments and Aspire Classroom Assessments are used for progress monitoring as available. Post-Unit Assessments can be combined with Aspire Classroom Assessments to monitor both standards attainment and/or the learning of foundation knowledge. Dates for assessments by grade level, expected levels of student achievement (SMART Goal), and clear use of each type of assessment will be detailed in the plan(s). The School Improvement Leadership Team analyzes data in order to draw conclusions and make decisions about school improvement and professional development. The School Improvement

Leadership Team with support from the District Improvement Leadership Team seeks ways to retain effective teachers and how they will recruit and incentivize qualified teachers. This would include monitoring teachers for their “feelings or perceptions” of support on a quarterly basis.

The Instructional Improvement Team (otherwise referred to as PLC) works collaboratively with the empowerment to draw conclusions and make decisions based on data. Instructional Teams develop instructional units based on the curriculum standards and the local curriculum document. This unit typically encompasses three to six weeks of work. An assessment is administered prior to instruction to plan for differentiated instruction within the unit. Assessments will be administered following instruction in two to three week intervals to assess effectiveness of instruction and to identify students in need of instructional support or enhancement. The Instructional Improvement Teams use student data to assess strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and instructional strategies. The Instructional Improvement Team reviews the results of assessments and uses the information to guide efforts to assure that every student masters the instructional standards taught in the instructional unit and reflect on personal effectiveness. The Instructional Improvement Teams use the results from multiple measures of data to plan for professional development, inform subsequent instructional unit plans and make adjustments to the curriculum.

Attachment D

DISTRICT RECOMMENDATIONS

BACKGROUND for recommendation 1:

The ADE Review Team did not find a clearly articulated plan to support the school's turnaround effort.

RECOMMENDATION 1: DISTRICT

It was noted during the site reviews that schools varied in the level of district support. No school reviewed by the ADE teams had a written document that outlined the level of support that a school would receive from the district.

It is recommended that by September 15, 2016, the District Improvement Leadership Team, in consultation with the School Improvement Leadership Team and other stakeholders, will submit for State Board of Education review, a plan of support for each school in Academic Distress. The plan will detail the types of support to be provided to each school and will be inclusive of, but not limited to:

- The professional development plan of activities that will support the principal in becoming an accomplished turnaround principal (identifying specific trainings, readings, mentors, and timelines for activities to occur and the expected outcome of each component of the activities). This plan shall include observation calibration training for Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) along with training in the use of the BloomBoard Insight Reports. Further, district and school leaders will work with the ADE Educator Effectiveness Unit to align existing walk-through practices to be recorded as informal observations within the TESS (BloomBoard) process.
- A description of specific State and Federal Categorical (restricted funds) funding provided to the school. The funding description will clarify positions and programs purchased with categorical dollars; specify the amount of student improvement anticipated by the expenditure and how the effectiveness of the program or position will be evaluated in accordance with the anticipated student gains. The funds available and at the discretion of the School Improvement Leadership Team will be defined and the allowable use of the funds determined.
- The description of all assessments to be administered by the school and clear detail on how the assessments will be utilized by teachers, instructional teams, and the School Improvement Leadership Team. It is encouraged that the ACT Aspire Interim Assessments be used for progress monitoring. Post-unit assessments are to be developed by instructional teams specific to the units taught and may include both standards based questions and questions related to any foundational knowledge required as part of the units of instruction. Dates for assessments by grade level, expected levels of student achievement

(SMART Goal), and clear use of each type of assessment will be detailed in the plan(s). It is encouraged that the school minimize assessment to Formative Assessments, Aspire Interims (or Aspire aligned interims), and Unit Assessments. Semester Exams may be substituted for the third Unit Assessment if all students at that grade level or subject area are administered the Semester Exam.

- The clarification of the decision making autonomy that each School Improvement Leadership Team will have, and the parameters within which the team must operate. Included will be a description of the discretionary money/resources available to the School Improvement Leadership Team to support teacher development as needs are identified.
- The description of how the district will attempt to retain effective teachers at the school, and how the district will support the building in recruiting qualified teachers when openings occur. This would include how teachers are incentivized to remain at the school as well as the monitoring of teachers for their “feelings or perceptions” of support on a quarterly basis (ADE developed instrument or ADE approved instrument).
- A description of the actions the district is taking to ensure that there is curriculum alignment in at least the areas of literacy and mathematics as assessed for accountability.
- The description of the supports to be provided to engage parents and community in the turnaround efforts. Specifically identify the activities that will be offered, a timeline and how the school will maintain and analyze data related to parent participation. The analysis should contrast parents of proficient students in contrast to parents of non-proficient students with the intent of providing additional services and support to parents of non-proficient students.
- The description of the supports to be provided in creating a positive learning environment and positive school climate. It is encouraged that the district support the school in adopting a Positive Behavior Intervention System as well as other culture improvement strategies.

CLARIFICATION of the recommendation:

The ADE will make Specialists available (upon request) to assist the district in the development of the plans. Specialists from Educator Effectiveness, School Improvement, Standards, Curriculum, Finance and Assessment may be accessed in July and August.

The turnaround principles are the basis of this recommendation:

- Providing strong leadership by ensuring the principal is capable of leading a turnaround effort; and Providing operational flexibility in the areas of scheduling, staffing, curriculum, and budget

- Using data to inform instruction and for continuous improvement, including providing time for collaboration on the use of classroom level data
- Establishing a school environment that improves safety and discipline as well as addressing other non-academic factors that impact student achievement such as social, emotional and health needs.
- Incentivizing effective teachers to remain at the school and preventing the transfer or hire of ineffective teachers.
- Increasing mechanisms for parent and community involvement

BACKGROUND for district recommendation 2:

There was evidence of the required reporting of progress to the local school board. There was not clear evidence that the local board was receiving training in how their actions and decisions could influence or support the school improvement process.

RECOMMENDATION 2 District:

In conjunction with the School Improvement Leadership Team, and the designated team from the Arkansas Department of Education, the District Improvement Leadership Team will present the school's required quarterly progress report to the local school board and discuss supports, actions, and or trainings in which the local school board can participate to further support the school or schools.

CLARIFICATION of the recommendation:

Each quarter following the submission of the quarterly progress report, the assigned ADE Team will meet with representatives from the district and school to develop and present a report of progress to the local school board. To the degree possible, report to the local board will highlight the decisions made that either supported the school's efforts or distracted from the school's efforts. The District Improvement Leadership Team and the assigned ADE support team would then assist the Local School Board in identifying any trainings that would assist in their efforts to become more effective.

The National School Boards Association has published articles related to eight characteristics of effective school boards. In addition, the Center for Public Education has both an executive summary and a full report on the characteristics of effective school boards. This can be easily accessed at <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Public-education/Eight-characteristics-of-effective-school-boards>.