

Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired District Support Plan 2024-2025 School Year



Mission: To provide quality education and training for young people (birth through age twenty - one) who are visually impaired so that they possess the required skills to become personally productive and self-sufficient citizens.

Vision: To be a high performing school that is made up of life-long learners who are well equipped to succeed beyond high school, contribute actively to the community and be productive global citizens.

School Level Improvement

The District Support Plan focuses on support for the Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Plans. Arkansas L.E.A.R.N.S was signed into law and focuses on:

Literacy
Empowerment
Accountability
Readiness
Networking
School Safety

The Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ASBVI) will continuously implement the tenets of L.E.A.R.N.S by ensuring teachers are adequately knowledgeable of the Arkansas State Standards, ensuring that every student is being taught grade-level standards, providing High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) as approved by DESE, and preparing students to demonstrate growth on the ATLAS state assessment. The district will also continue to develop and support Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in the Elementary and Secondary schools. During the 2024-2025 school year, the elementary school has planned to address the following areas for improvement:

Remediation in Core Academic Areas (for lost learning)
Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) skills
Increased student attendance
Increased Reading and Writing Skills (SoR)
Increased student accountability/responsibility
Increased partnerships with parents and community partners for learning

The Secondary School Improvement Plan will focus on the following areas for improvement:

Professional Development
High Quality Instructional Materials
Graduate Studies
Educational Loss

Absenteeism

District Level Support

ASBVI employs a literacy and a math coach that will collaborate with teachers to ensure that curriculum is implemented with fidelity. The district will support teachers by utilizing common planning time, professional development sessions, and Professional Learning Communities to be explicit with instruction. The goal is to make sound instructional choices to ensure students attain the skills and master the standards to be successful in the classroom. In addition to academic needs, students will be supported with social and emotional needs via shared services via the medical and infirmary staff. Also, students will get social and emotional support via the school counselor and the school social worker. The dietary and nutritional needs will be supported via the child nutrition department. The intent of this District Support Plan is to reflect the support and resources we are committed to delivering to students, parents, staff, and community members.

L.E.A.R.N.S. 2024-2025

LITERACY

ASBVI will use data from the state ATLAS assessment, NEWA MAPS data, and classroom assessments to implement strategies working toward successful literacy outcomes for students. The goal is to ensure that students are reading fluently and on grade level by the end of the third grade. In addition, students will be supported to ensure continuous growth as they matriculate through school.

EMPOWERMENT

ASBVI will continue to collaborate with parents and the community as outlined in the school's Family and community Engagement Plan to empower the students and their families.

ACCOUNTABILITY

ASBVI is committed to offering opportunities for students to be successful in the classroom and prepare them for post-secondary success.

READINESS

ASBVI will continue to develop Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to provide our students with future job opportunities. In addition, we will continue to provide work opportunities and skills development through our campus work study program, and through our partnerships with the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) and World Services for the Blind (WSB).

NETWORKING

ASBVI will be supported through a collaborative effort from a shared Arkansas School for the Blind and Arkansas School for the Deaf (ASD) Information and Technology department. Together we will implement changes necessary to support students and staff using a broad range of specialized and adaptive technology.

SCHOOL SAFETY

The district will be supported by a collaborative ASBVI/ASD school safety committee that will continually assess campus safety and make decisions/recommendations to keep the school community safe. In addition, all staff members and students are required to wear an ID badge at all times. Visitors must check in through the front office to receive a screening and get a temporary badge, and must be escorted by a staff member at all times.

Elementary Improvement Plan Continued

Remediation for Core Academic Areas:

Elementary staff members will assess students during the first 2 weeks of school to obtain specific data regarding achievement in core curricular areas. Teachers will assess students using checklists of grade level standards (ADE DESE Essential Standards - revised) in addition to our traditional curriculum-based methods (Brigance Inventory, the Wilson Reading System, and the John's Reading Inventory, Dibel's {Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills} in addition to the Key Math program and curriculum-based assessments). Moreover, students will be assessed using the NWEA assessment three times per year to assess progress in reading and math. Our Administration Team has worked closely with Region 14 consultants with very powerful results and students have benefitted from this consultation.

*Click following link for ASBVI's Foundational Literacy Plan:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/179E3INbl0ejjSTyY0CcpHNFwSv_1fHMa/view?usp=sharing

Remediation plans will be made for each student based upon their assessment data. Classroom teachers will use a tiered approach to intervention within the classroom. Daily remediation time will be a standard protected time of the daily schedule of classes. Small group instruction will be conducted to meet the needs of the students. Additionally, after school programming for remediation will also be offered.

Reinforcement of Expanded Core Curriculum skills:

The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is one of the most important curricular areas within the entire educational process for students with impaired vision. We have made a more concerted effort to address the key ECC through addressing student need during IEP meetings and through discussions in the elementary PLC. Required PD will be provided to all staff at ASBVI (O&M, AT, braille, and self-advocacy) to encourage consistent reinforcement and continuity of ECC skills, along with 6 additional required hours specifically in behavior, which will be provided

through Arkansas Ideas. This required PD will also be provided to the Home Life staff (residential advisors).

ECC assessment and documentation will be done through the Oregon Project for our younger students and the Casey Life Skills Curriculum will be used for our older students in addition to other resources that are available such as the Independent Living Skills and ECC checklist published curriculum from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

All staff members on the campus will be empowered to provide support for the use of canes, appropriate etiquette and ensuring that students are always engaged in the learning process. The residential advisors will continue to monitor skills and progress of ECC skills throughout the school year. Progress reports will be shared with parents, teachers, and advocates at the same frequency as academic grades (each 9 weeks). This information will also be shared in “mini-conferences” with the students, RA, teacher(s) and parents to verbally review progress and to allow students to better understand progress and deficits regarding specific ECC skills. For non-residential students, parents will also be given similar information and goals that their children should be working toward regarding ECC skills. The overall objective is to foster meaningful and action provoking conversations as information is shared through “mini-conferencing”, parental support and student sharing of information and self-awareness.

Students will participate in “Manner’s Masters” throughout the academic school year. This program is designed to encourage appropriate behavior in the 1st – 6th grades. Students are awarded a small golden plate each Friday for having the best manners and etiquette in the dining room during the lunch period. At the end of the 4th 9 weeks, the class that has won the most golden plates will be awarded a trip to a nice restaurant (of their choice with teacher approval).

Elementary teachers suggested giving students the tools and instruction for strengthening student needs in the areas of social interaction skills, self-determination, and independent living skills. The suggestion was made for each student to have a “hygiene box” with the following items: hand

sanitizer, toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, and comb. These items could be provided through support of the ASBVI special needs funds in conjunction with the Friends of ASBVI. Each child would be encouraged to use these materials in the morning during homeroom time and then, again, after lunch.

Additionally, teachers would also like to work with the school counselor to implement an elementary-wide program that supports appropriate behavior and positive outcomes.

Increased student attendance:

Student attendance continues to be challenging as we, as a school, evolve into a post-pandemic era. Following through in a more consistent manner to both the child's custodians and LEAs has provided more opportunities for conversations with custodians regarding the overall need for students to be present in class, however student absenteeism above the 9 days remains higher than desirable. To continue with the school improvement, ASBVI elementary will continue sending notification letters regarding truancy to both the child's custodian and LEAs at 3 days, 6 days, and 9 days for the 2024-25 school year. ASBVI's Foundation has offered financial support to assist with our mission to promote student attendance.

Secondly, through implementing a positive attendance incentive program, such as a monthly "perfect attendance party" or "student bucks" for attendance, it is our hope students will be encouraged to improve their attendance in school.

Thirdly, the staff will continue to provide elementary parents with easy-to-understand information regarding the truancy laws in Arkansas and covering the negative impact that truancy has on their learner's education. Moreover, the staff will emphasize the importance and positive impact that BEING at school has on their learners' education. This information can be shared with parents at the annual registration activity in addition to sending reminders regarding attendance throughout the school year. This could be done through school messenger, social media, notes from teachers, along with notes from the principal.

Increased reading and writing skills:

One of the core beliefs of the staff of the elementary program is consistent with the LEARNS Act's "Student Focused Learning System". Collectively, we fully believe in the "Arkansas Growth Mindset" and strive to serve the whole child. It is critical to provide differentiated instruction that is based on data and specific areas of academic strengths and weaknesses. Focus on a strong foundation in the English Language Arts curricular area is critical for lifelong success. Student engagement and motivation are key components for a successful ELA program.

First, the teachers would like to provide a consistent uninterrupted block of time each day for reading instruction and ELA. Research indicates that student focused reading and instruction that is rigorous and uninterrupted is critical for improvement outcomes in the early grades.

In accordance with the DESE strategic plan for the 2024- 2025 school year, ASBVI will be focusing on Foundational Literacy. With the prior guidance from the Region 14 team, we have established the following goals: 1) Boost grade-level literacy and 2) accelerate progress for struggling readers.

The following steps are being implemented to work toward these goals.

Teachers will submit a uniform "Reading Differentiated Lesson Plan" along with their weekly lesson plans, which will include planning for the whole group lesson, small group, and independent work planning. Teachers will be required to document planning for the tiered intervention instruction model to assist struggling readers and writers and to challenge students achieving at a higher level. Teachers will need to complete an additional documentation form for students receiving a level three tier instruction (one to one instruction or pull-out from reading interventionists or braille resource), which will include providing observation notes of progress to be communicated with the intervention teacher. This will be an effort to strengthen the efficacy of the interventions used to reach the student's overall reading and writing goals.

Leveled readers and decodable texts from the Benchmark for Education curriculum have been sent to the Wrightsville Prison Braille program to be brailled and printed in large print for small group reading times.

The ASBVI Library Media specialist will continue facilitating the “Accelerated Reader” incentive reading program for students. Students will be set reading goals and encouraged to read to reach their quarterly goals of 25%, 50%, 75% and 100%. Students reaching 100% will have a special field trip at the end of the year. Library books will be sent home daily with students in their daily “parent communication” folders and students will be expected to read nightly with their parents. This can be documented on a reading log, which will accompany the folder.

ASBVI will continue to use the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum by Literacy Resources. This curriculum will be used in Pre-K through sixth grade. Students will be screened for potential reading difficulties using the Heggerty program, Dibels and the John’s Reading Inventory. And will receive intervention as appropriate through individual remediation. Specific intervention programs used at ASBVI are the Wilson Reading System and the Building on Patterns Curricula for braille.

A strong step in improving student writing is the implementation of monthly writing prompts for students to write and complete the entire writing process. Students will do the prewriting strategies, write a rough draft, have conferencing with the teacher to improve, and lastly, complete the final copy of their writing monthly. Additionally, the Benchmark for Education curriculum has a “Writer’s Workshop” component that elementary teachers will utilize in their daily instruction.

Teachers will have shared planning times that will allow for teacher group discussion and professional development with the goal of having a positive influence upon ELA performance. PLC’s can also be a focus of this joint time. Moreover, vertical, and horizontal alignment of curriculum can be ensured and reinforced through such PLC’s. Teachers will make data walls that are accessible to students so that they can track their individual progress within this critical area. Data from the NWEA assessments will be completed and shared within individual student teacher conferences.

(Assessment information will also be shared with parents.) Students will be given goals and objective to help raise their skills and abilities in ELA. Teachers will continue with specific PD in “the science of reading” and will be provided support through AFESC throughout the academic school year. Completing frequent classroom “walk-throughs” will continue to be held for the purpose of data collection regarding teaching with fidelity and consistency.

Student responsibility/accountability:

The elementary school will begin the year with a social emotional learning approach which correlates to DESE’s “G.U.I.D.E. for Life” principles of Growth, Understanding, Interactions, Decisions, and Empathy. We feel, as a school, our “Accountability Campaign” fits well into these components. Students will be encouraged to partner with their teachers to establish expectations for the classroom. Classroom procedures and expectations will be established the first week of school and students will learn these and it is our expectation that students will be able to recite these rules at any time. Additionally, Elementary students will continue the morning routine of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, the Mantras, and having a moment of silence. It is our hope that through establishing expectations alongside our students that students will make better decisions and fully understand and value the sense of community we have at ASBVI.

Additionally, student lessons will be given through the school counselor, the classroom teacher and the principal. Our vision is to provide periodic learning experiences to foster self-regulated behavior management skills that become intrinsic. Basically, returning to the “toolbox” concept of having students make good decisions for themselves and those around them based upon prior knowledge and expected learned norms. The elementary school would prefer to become proactive rather than simply be reactive. If we can subscribe to utilizing teachable moments and student preparation for a healthy and happy life, we feel that our students will grow into more healthy and happy life-long learners.

Increased partnerships with parents and community partners for learning:

Parent engagement and support is critical for student growth. Teachers will be required to send home weekly progress notes and classroom work samples in the form of “Friday Folders.” In addition, students will have daily parent communication folders that are sent home with important announcements and ways the parents can assist their child in learning. Teachers will maintain parent communication records for each student throughout the year. In addition to (2) open house events per year, ASBVI elementary will also host parent nights to include the following subjects: math, literacy, computer science, and braille. Parents shall be encouraged to be active members of the Friends of ASB organization, which is comprised of parents, teachers, and community supporters of the school. Positive communication and important information to include upcoming events will be reported through the ASBVI website, Facebook, Class Dojo, and school messenger.

Please note, this endeavor will be revisited, monitored, and adjusted as necessary throughout the school year.

Secondary Improvement Plan Continued

Professional Development:

ASBVI is continuing to implement meaningful Professional Development (PD) for teachers and instructional assistants. Teachers will complete state required PD, and they will be responsible for completing PD that relates directly to their Professional Growth Plan (PGP). This is to ensure that PD will be meaningful and positively impact the students. ASBVI is committed to becoming a High Reliability School (HRS) and will provide resources and support for teachers to innovate in their teaching methods. Educators will continue to focus on skills and strategies that make positive progress toward the goal of achieving HRS status (Marzano, Warrick, Rains, & DuFour, 2018). During the 2024-2025 school year ASBVI will continue assessing and monitoring indicators to become a HRS.

ASBVI will continue training and assessing teachers in the Science of Reading through Pathway D which consists of:

Phase I – Arkansas IDEAS Learning Path: Science of Reading (18 hrs.)

Plus 3 additional days of the following list:

- ADE Science of Reading Overview
- ADE SoR Phonological Awareness
- ADE SoR Phonics – Decoding
- ADE SoR Phonics – Encoding
- ADE SoR Content-Based Morphology
- ADE SoR Content Area Reading Strategies

Curriculum:

AR School for the Blind and Visually Impaired will ensure the curriculum is rigorous, relevant, and aligned with college and career readiness standards. Resources used will include Benchmark Workshop, an approved literacy curriculum through DESE. This curriculum includes decodable readers, explicit instruction in spelling and phonics, and a structured writing curriculum. In addition, ASBVI has purchased sets of decodable readers that are available to students K-12. ASBVI will continue to use Heggerty as a supplement to phonological awareness. The combination of Heggerty and decodable readers will be used as a supplement for the students in grades 7-12 to address any deficits in reading fluency. Moreover, students will be given materials from Study Sync and Words Their Way to increase vocabulary acquisition. Math instruction will be delivered with Envision Math curriculum. Math instruction will also include lessons supplemented by IXL to address individual student deficits. Teachers will plan and implement curriculum maps that will be used in the scope and sequence of instruction while also implementing regular assessments to monitor student progress and guide instruction.

Graduate Studies Plan:

ASBVI is committed to providing opportunities for students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills. Each student will collaborate with their parents, counselor, Special Education Supervisor, and advocate teacher to ensure that their transition plan is reviewed annually and include plans to enroll in a college or university or encompass the necessary skills to enter the workforce with adequate training. All parties will have objectives that will help the student become independent and self-sufficient adults. ASBVI will strengthen college and career counseling services while integrating life skills and vocational training into the curriculum. Each student's progress in the Science of Reading will be assessed each trimester via the NWEA MAP assessment. Students' needs in the ECC will be addressed in their IEPs and updated quarterly.

Addressing Educational Loss

Students will continue to have access to technology that includes Chromebooks, iPads, Wi-Fi-enabled Braille devices, hotspots, and laptops. ASBVI will continuously update technology used by students and teachers and ensure they are proficient in using this technology for learning and teaching. Each student has access to their own device to access educational information digitally. ASBVI will continue to utilize remaining ESSER Funds to address needs outlined by all stakeholders. ASBVI plans to employ an Educational Specialist to help with needs like reading intervention, math intervention, and Special Education accommodations. The Educational Specialist will plan and use data-driven instruction to identify student strengths and weaknesses and tailor interventions accordingly.

Absenteeism

Students will be held to the attendance policy outlined in the student handbook. Failure to follow the attendance policy may result in denial of credit/retention. The policy is (but not limited too) as follows:

- Teachers will record attendance daily for every student enrolled at ASBVI
- Tardy students will be considered absent if they arrive later than 15 minutes after the bell

- Make up work, missed class(es), and absences may be assessed on a case-by-case basis
- Students will be allowed 6 excused absences per semester with an accompanying note from a medical doctor.

ASBVI will remain committed to ensuring that ALL students have access to a high quality, rigorous, and appropriate education. Our continued efforts will be to ensure that all students become independent and positive contributors to society.

Monitoring Timeline and Written Expectations

School Improvement Plans will be monitored during weekly administrative staff meetings. This will allow for frequent monitoring and feedback as well as for keeping the plans linked and relevant to the everyday work with students and staff. It is expected that school leaders will be able to address specific areas of the plan and highlight specific efforts in place and progress as well as present requests for resources and support.

Evaluation Timeline and Expectations

School improvement plans will be evaluated at the end of each nine-week period and revised, as necessary. Since ASBVI is a combined school district evaluation will take place as a team comprised of the superintendent, Principal, Special Education Supervisor, and Teacher Supervisor. The team will look at data sources related to each area in the plan and assess where revisions need to be made.

Funding

ASBVI is a state agency and works within the constraints of a state budget and general revenue appropriation for the operation of the school and the meeting of students' needs. ASBVI at this time does not receive ESA or other categorical funding normally associated with a public-school system. However, ASBVI remains committed to prioritizing funds in support of the Elementary and Secondary schools.

District Literacy Plan

ASBVI will be making data informed decisions based on the results of the ATLAS assessment administered in the spring of 2024. In addition, ASBVI will use NEWA data and classroom assessments to make decisions on remediation and intervention. The NWEA assessment will be administered three times this year and used as a data point to assess and make educational decisions. According to the NEWA data for the spring of the 2023-2024 school year: (Data will be updated once we receive ATLAS scores)

In grades K-6 reading, 36% of students scored in the 1st-20th percentile; 9% of students scored in the 21st – 40th percentile; 9% of students scored in the 41st – 60th percentile; 14% of students scored in the 61st – 80th percentile; 32% of students scored above the 80th percentile.

In grades 7-12 reading, 10% of students scored in the 1st-20th percentile; 3% of students scored in the 21st – 40th percentile; 39% of students scored in the 41st – 60th percentile; 16% of students scored in the 61st – 80th percentile; 32% of students scored above the 80th percentile.

ASBVI recognizes the special needs of our students with blindness and visual impairments and the challenges they face in successfully navigating the state assessment. ASBVI also recognizes the vital importance of our students being able to meet those challenges as they prepare for transition towards college and career success and towards productive lives of independence.

Additionally, ASBVI recognizes that effective and strong reading skills are an essential foundation to success in other content areas pursued by the student. To accomplish improved student outcomes in reading on the annual state assessment ASBVI will begin work with the following goals during the 2024-2025 school year.

Goals:

1. Using the data as assessed by ATLAS, students “in need of support” will scores at least 15 percentage points higher on the next ATLAS assessment.
2. Using the data as assessed by ATLAS, ASBVI will increase the percentage of students moving from “in need of support” to “close” by 6%. In addition, ASBVI will increase the percentage of students moving from “close” to “ready” by 8%.
3. In support of improved reading skills and improved student outcomes on the ATLAS state assessment for reading, ASBVI will prioritize explicit curriculum instruction and staff support via the literacy coach. In addition, teachers new to ASBVI will become proficient in the Science of Reading.
4. Observe and support teachers via classroom walkthroughs and observations.
5. Continue our literacy development work with the Office of Coordinated Support and Service (OCSS).

Conclusion

The District Support Plan along with the Elementary and Secondary Improvement Plans will be revised and updated as necessary to reflect a continuous cycle of improvement at ASBVI. Our approach is one of Plan, Do, and Check. With the support of all stakeholders, ASBVI has been educating students for over one hundred years. Instructing students with visual impairments has its challenges, but it is done through the dedication of committed individuals and a village of support.