



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

Earle School District

Legislative Quarterly Report

April - June 2023

Submitted by

Office of Coordinated Support & Service

Sheila Whitlow, Associate Deputy Commissioner

July 2023

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.

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.

On June 1, 2023, the State board of Education removed the Earle School District from Fiscal Distress Status and assumed authority of the District based on their classification of Level 5 Intensive 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 2-3 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. Tally Harp, DESE public school program advisor, Kelly Stone, DESE RISE (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) regional specialist, assists in ensuring implementation of the science of reading.

Emphasis this quarter has been on continuing to support local staff in a manner that allows for maximum local capacity in all fiscal matters. Academic emphasis has been on positively impacting classroom instruction. 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 all district systems.

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 supported by Solution Tree, CRESC and DESE staff.

The district is continuing to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in its 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 continuing to be 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. 34 students received dyslexia intervention services from a trained dyslexia interventionist this year. Initial screening is complete and students are being monitored for progress.

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 172 courses in 2019 to 89 courses in 2023). The district success is a combined effort of district staff and the ongoing support of DESE staff.

In preparation for the upcoming school year a staffing projection for FY 24 has been completed, a district job fair was held in April, and administrative staff have begun interviewing job applicants.

Academic

High school students took interim assessments in literacy and math in December and building level teams disaggregated data to determine what small group interventions were needed for students. Students received interventions as needed. Elementary students took NWEA interim assessments during the year. Building level teams disaggregated the K-6 data. Students received regular interventions based on the data.

Support teams from DESE, CRESC and OCSS continued to conduct monthly districtwide focus walks in collaboration with district staff during this quarter. The continued emphasis has been on improving instructional effectiveness. Trend data seems to show a significant improvement at the elementary school. Data trends at the high school have not yet yielded the consistent improvement desired, but the support teams continue to provide guidance, suggestions and support to district and school level administration.

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. The advisory board continues to meet monthly and all meetings are open to the public. The superintendent continues to update the Earle city council monthly on school district affairs. In addition to these activities, the superintendent presented to the State Board of Education twice in this quarter. The second of these meetings took place in the Earle school district with a large local contingency of patrons from the district.

Facilities and Transportation

The district applied for and received a school safety grant of \$85,475 and projects are being planned so that they can be in place at the beginning of FY 24.

A roofing project proposed for th high school has gone out for bids and the bids are scheduled to be opened in June.

The HVAC project designed to improve air quality in the district is now scheduled to be completed by the end of June.

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 all fiscal matters. The ESD fiscal staff continues to participate in training with the intent to become self-sustaining.

The district has continued to work with OCSS and DESE to help prepare for new salary schedules and staffing for the 2023-2024 school year.

On June 1, 2023 the State Board voted to remove the district from fiscal distress and assumed authority of the district based on their classification as in need of Level 5 Intensive support. The Board also voted to establish a local Limited Authority Board for the district utilizing the remaining members of the suspended board from 2017 and to establish a process to fill one open position.

Budget Summary

EARLE SCHOOL DISTRICT(1802000)

FY23 as of 2023-06-19			
Beginning Balance <u>7/1/2022</u>			Ending Balance <u>6/30/2023</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
379,928.22	4,290,641.74	4,304,407.2	366,162.76
FY23 Budget			
Beginning Balance <u>7/1/2022</u>			Projected Balance <u>6/30/2023</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
379,928.22	4,682,813.31	4,540,266.69	522,474.84
FY22			
Beginning Balance <u>7/1/2021</u>			Ending Balance <u>6/30/2022</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
289,263.28	4,904,105.26	4,813,440.32	379,928.22
FY21			
Beginning Balance <u>7/1/2020</u>			Ending Balance <u>6/30/2021</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
96,942.77	5,507,744.05	5,352,798.86	251,887.96
FY20			
Beginning Balance <u>7/1/2019</u>			Ending Balance <u>6/30/2020</u>
	Revenue	Expenditures	
85,347.19	4,898,952.22	4,887,356.64	96,942.77