



**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**Legislative Update for
Dollarway School District**

State Authority

September- December 2020

Submitted by

Office of Coordinated Support & Service

January 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 Dollarway School District (DSD) was placed under the direction of the Commissioner of Education in December 2015. At that time Dollarway High School was classified in Academic Distress. State statute related to schools classified in Academic Distress has given the State Board of Education the authority to administer a wide range of actions when schools or districts are classified in Academic Distress. These actions are inclusive of removal of the local school board and assignment of the overall district administration to the Commissioner of Education.

In April of 2016, the Dollarway School District was classified in Fiscal Distress. DSD also had two secondary schools classified in Academic Distress (Dollarway High School and Robert F. Morehead Middle School). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Waiver classified the same schools as Priority and in the lowest 5% of schools as measured by multi-year performance of students on the state accountability assessment.

It should be noted that the ESEA was reauthorized by Congress in December of 2015 under the general name of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A number of substantial changes were made during the reauthorization and states are in the process of modifying accountability systems based on the new legislation. Transition to full implementation of the new law was to occur by the start of the 2017-2018 school year, but the complexity of the challenges in developing federal rules has moved that date back at least one school year. Timelines for the Arkansas full implementation are established and have been included in the Every Student Succeeds Act application recently approved by the United States Department of Education on January 16, 2018.

Academic Distress as a state classification was removed with the passing of Act 930 of 2017. This was to be replaced with Levels of Support as part of Act 930. The State Board of Education classified the Dollarway School District in need of Level 5 support on July 13, 2017. Priority and Focus schools were federal designations that were removed with the approval of the Arkansas ESSA plan approval on January 16, 2017. The intent of all designations (state and federal) has been to call attention to levels of student proficiency and for districts and the state agency to take action to assist schools with greater challenges in facilitating students to meet performance measures.

On December 10, 2020 the SBE voted for annexation of the Dollarway School District to the receiving district, Pine Bluff School District effective July 1, 2021.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

Exit Criteria/Plan

[Exit Criteria Final Review](#)

[Order Of Annexation](#)

ADE/DESE Support Plan

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

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

School Level Plans

20-21 [James Matthews Elementary School](#)

20-21 [Robert F. Morehead Middle School](#)

20-21 [Dollarway High School](#)

District Support Plans

20-21 [Ready for Learning Plan](#)