

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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I. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

All school districts' policies and actions shall be nondiscriminatory and shall be in compliance with state and federal laws.

II. GOALS AND ADMINISTRATION OF ARKANSAS SCHOOLS

A. STATE AND NATIONAL GOALS

It is well established by history and law that education is a state responsibility. As a framework for school district planning, a set of statewide and national goals for education and a long-term plan to meet these goals have been developed.

B. SCHOOL DISTRICT GOALS

1. Each school district in Arkansas shall be required to develop, with appropriate staff and community participation, a five-year educational plan. School district goals shall be compatible with state and national educational goals and shall address local needs. The plan shall be filed with and reviewed by the Department of Education annually.
2. Each school district shall provide and publish, in a newspaper with general circulation in the district before November 15 of each school year, a report to the public detailing progress toward accomplishing program goals, accreditation standards, and proposals to correct deficiencies.
3. Each school shall systematically and, at least annually, explain its policies, programs, and goals to the community in a public meeting that provides opportunities for parents and other members of the community to ask questions and make suggestions concerning the school program.

C. SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

1. OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Each school board shall adopt written policies for the operation of the school district in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Education.

2. RECORDS AND REPORTS

- a. Each school shall maintain all reports and records necessary for effective planning, operation, and education.
- b. Each school district shall annually submit a report to the Department of Education appraising its students' performance. The report shall be prepared in accordance with guidelines developed by the Department of Education.

3. SCHOOL BOARDS

- a. Each school board, prior to November 15 of each year, shall hold a public

meeting, at a time and place convenient for a majority of the school patrons and employees, to review and discuss its annual report detailing progress toward accomplishing its district's program objectives, accreditation standards, and proposals to correct deficiencies.

- b. All accreditation and evaluation studies and reports shall be reported and discussed in a public meeting at a time and place convenient for a majority of the school patrons and employees.

D. *SCHOOL GOALS*

1. The administrators, teachers, other school staff, and parents of each school shall develop an annual school improvement plan to monitor that school's progress and to project its continuing needs. The annual school improvement plan shall be filed with and reviewed by the Department of Education.
2. Each school shall review in-depth each curriculum area at least every five (5) years.

III. **ACTIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- A. Each school district shall form a coalition of parents, representatives of agencies and institutions, and of business and industry to develop and implement a plan for effective and efficient community involvement in the delivery of comprehensive youth services and support.
- B. Each individual school shall investigate and, where feasible, utilize community resources in the instructional program of the school.

IV. **CURRICULUM**

A. *COURSE CONTENT FRAMEWORKS*

1. The Department of Education shall appoint committees to write curriculum frameworks based on the adopted Arkansas Student Learning Expectations. Each committee shall consist of teachers and instructional supervisory personnel from public schools assisted by teachers from institutions of higher education. Committees will meet periodically to review, revise, and update the curriculum frameworks.
2. Each accredited school shall use these curriculum frameworks to plan instruction leading to student demonstration of the Arkansas content standards.
3. The Department of Education, with advice from public schools and institutions of higher education, shall devise an assessment system that will measure progress toward meeting the content standards expressed in the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks. These evaluations shall serve as a major factor in determining the accreditation status of public schools.

B. *EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CURRICULUM*

The early childhood education curriculum shall be developmentally appropriate for the age span of the children within the groups and implemented with attention to the different needs, interests, and developmental levels of those individual children.

C. CURRICULUM

The core curriculum for grades K-8 shall encompass all types of developmentally appropriate learning experiences and provide for differences in rates of learning among children. It shall emphasize reasoning and problem solving, communicating, connecting (linking knowledge, skills, and other understandings within and across disciplines to real-life situations), and internalizing (acting on the learning to make it meaningful, useful, and worthwhile). Mastery of core concepts and abilities in the following areas is to be emphasized.

GRADES K-4

1. Language Arts
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Listening, Speaking, Viewing
2. Mathematics
 - Number sense, properties, and operations
 - Measurement
 - Geometry and spatial sense
 - Data analysis and statistics
 - Algebra and functions
3. Social Studies
 - History and culture of Arkansas (a unit at each grade level with emphasis at grade 4), the nation, and the world (including foreign language experiences)
 - Geography
 - Economics
 - Civic education
4. Science
 - Life science
 - Earth and space science
 - Physical sciences (physics and chemistry)
 - Environmental education
5. Tools for Learning
 - Technical skills: research and information skills, use of computers and calculators
 - Data gathering: use of data banks, atlases, dictionaries, almanacs, networks, news sources, and interviews
6. Fine Arts
 - Visual arts instruction, appreciation, and application
 - Performing arts instruction, appreciation, and application
7. Practical Living Skills/Career Exploration
8. Health and Safety Education and Physical Education

GRADES 5-8

1. Language Arts
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Listening, Speaking, Viewing
2. Mathematics
 - Number sense, properties, and operations
 - Measurement
 - Geometry and spatial sense
 - Data analysis and statistics
 - Algebra and functions
3. Science
 - Life science
 - Earth and space science
 - Physical sciences (physics and chemistry)
 - Environmental education
4. Social Studies
 - History and culture of Arkansas (a unit at grades 5 and 6, with emphasis at grade 5), the nation, and the world (including foreign language experiences)
 - Geography
 - Economics
 - Civic education
5. Physical Education
6. Fine Arts
 - Visual arts instruction, appreciation, and application
 - Performing arts instruction, appreciation, and application
7. Health and Safety
8. Tools for Learning
 - Technical skills: research and information skills, use of computers and calculators
 - Data gathering: use of data banks, atlases, dictionaries, almanacs, networks, news sources, and interviews
9. Career and Technical Education
10. Each school shall be encouraged to offer in the seventh and eighth grades instruction in reading and mathematics skills to assist those students who need such additional instruction to make satisfactory progress in their required courses.
11. A unit of Arkansas history shall be taught as a social studies subject at each elementary grade level in every public elementary school in this state with greater emphasis at the fourth (4th) and fifth (5th) grade levels, and at least one (1) full semester of Arkansas history shall be taught to all students at the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade level in every public secondary school in this state.

12. It is strongly recommended that schools offer at least one Level I foreign language course and Algebra I. These traditionally ninth-grade courses may be counted as credit toward high school graduation.

GRADES 9-12

The following courses shall be taught by an accredited high school. The courses marked with an asterisk (*) may be taught every other year. THE REMAINING COURSES MUST BE TAUGHT EVERY YEAR. Total: 38 units.

1. Language Arts - 6 units
 - 4 units English
 - 1 unit oral communications or ½ unit oral communications and ½ unit drama
 - *1 unit journalism
 - (Other options as approved by the Department of Education)
2. Science - 5 units
 - 1 unit biology
 - *1 unit chemistry
 - *1 unit physics
 - (Other options as approved by the Department of Education)
3. Mathematics - 6 units
 - 1 unit Algebra I
 - 1 unit geometry
 - *1 unit Algebra II
 - *1 unit pre-calculus mathematics to include trigonometry
 - (Other options as approved by the Department of Education)
4. Foreign Languages - 2 units of the same language
5. Fine Arts - 3 ½ units
 - 1 unit art
 - 1 unit instrumental music
 - 1 unit vocal music
 - *½ unit survey of fine arts or an advanced art or music course
6. Computer Applications with emphasis on current applications - 1 unit
(to include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, graphics, and telecommunications)
7. Social Studies - 4 units
 - 1 unit American history each year with emphasis on 20th Century America
 - 1 unit world history
 - ½ unit civics/government
 - ½ unit of Arkansas history if not taught in grades 7 or 8
 - (Other options as approved by the Department of Education)
8. Health and Safety Education and Physical Education - 1½ units
 - 1 unit physical education
 - ½ unit health and safety education
9. Career and Technical Education - 9 units

(EIGHT UNITS MUST BE TAUGHT EVERY YEAR)

A minimum of three (3) programs of study selected from three (3) different occupational/technical programs offered annually from the following list:

Agriculture Education
 Business Technology
 Health Occupations
 Home Economics Education
 Marketing Technology
 Trade, Industrial, and Technical Education
 Work-Based Learning/Apprenticeship (GCE)

10. The course offerings should include appropriate Advanced Placement courses.
11. Additional foreign language courses such as the Level III and IV of the same foreign language and other foreign languages should be included.

V. INSTRUCTION**A. REQUIRED TIME FOR INSTRUCTION AND SCHOOL CALENDAR**

1. Student-teacher interaction time shall be for a minimum of 178 days, except as waived by the Department of Education for professional development.
2. All public school teacher/administrator contracts (elementary, secondary, vocational B exception vocational agriculture) shall be a minimum of 185 days.
3. At least thirty (30) hours shall be used for professional development and in-service training and at least two (2) days shall be used for parent/teacher conferences.
4. The planned instructional time in each school day shall not average less than six (6) hours per day or thirty (30) hours per week.

B. CLASS SIZE AND TEACHING LOAD

1. Early childhood education programs shall be no more than ten (10) students to one (1) teacher in a classroom or no more than twenty (20) students to one (1) teacher and a qualified adult aide.
2. Kindergarten shall be no more than twenty (20) students to one (1) teacher in a classroom. However, kindergarten class maximum may be no more than twenty-two (22) with a one-half time instructional aide being employed for those classes.
3. The average student/teacher ratio for grades one through three in a school district shall be no more than twenty-three (23) students per teacher in a classroom. There shall be no more than twenty-five (25) students per teacher in any classroom.
4. The average student/teacher ratio for grades four through six in a school district shall be no more than twenty-five (25) students per teacher in a classroom, and shall be no more than twenty-eight (28) students per teacher in any classroom.
5. In grades seven through twelve, a teacher shall not be assigned more than one hundred fifty (150) students; and an individual academic class shall not exceed thirty (30) students, provided that, in exceptional cases or for courses that lend themselves to large group instruction, these ratios may be increased.

C. *INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS*

1. School districts shall adopt instructional materials which provide complete coverage of a subject as described in that subject's curriculum frameworks and which fit the achievement levels of the students assigned to each teacher.
2. Each school may utilize purchasing agreements arranged by the Department of Education to achieve the greatest economy in spending state funds.

D. *DISCIPLINE*

1. Guidelines for the development of student discipline policies shall be established by the Department of Education. Each school district shall adopt written discipline policies consistent with those guidelines that include a code of student behavior.
2. Each district's written policies shall be filed with the Department of Education.
3. Local districts and individual schools shall involve parents, staff, and students in the formulation and review of their student discipline policies, rules, and procedures.
4. Schools shall inform students and parents of the rules and procedures by which the school is governed. Schools shall make the students aware of the behavior that will call for disciplinary action, as well as the types of corrective actions that may be imposed.
5. Students and parents shall acknowledge that they have received and understand the school's discipline policies by a signed statement. The school shall document procedures and methods used to inform parents and students of the policy.
6. Teachers and administrators, classified school employees, and volunteers shall be provided with appropriate student discipline training (Act 1475 of 1999).

E. *EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES*

Each school district shall adopt a written policy on extracurricular and non-instructional activities and their appropriate place in the school program. The policy shall limit and control interruptions of instructional time in the classroom and the number of absences for such activities.

F. *REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES*

Each school district shall adopt a written policy consistent with applicable State Board of Education rules and regulations, specifying the requirements students must meet to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

G. *HOMEWORK AND INDEPENDENT STUDY SKILLS*

Each school district shall adopt a written policy for appropriate and meaningful homework. The policy shall promote the development of students' independent study skills and work to be done outside the classroom which will reinforce and strengthen academic skills, broaden the educational experiences of students, and relate those experiences to the real life of the community. Parents shall be notified of the policy at the beginning of each school year.

VI. ATTENDANCE AND ENROLLMENT

A. MANDATORY ATTENDANCE

All children who are ages five (5) through seventeen (17) on or by September 15 are required to be in school that school year with the exception of five-year-old children for whom kindergarten has been waived by the parent, guardian, or person having custody or charge; students who have received a high school diploma or its equivalent; or students who are enrolled in a postsecondary vocational-technical institution, a community college, or a two-year or four-year institution of higher education.

B. INITIAL ENROLLMENT

A birth certificate, Social Security Number, or other documentation, as provided by law, shall be required to enroll in school.

C. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

It is recommended that school districts provide the opportunity for each child age three (3) on or before September 15 to enroll in an approved early childhood education program. No parent or guardian shall be required to enroll a child in an early childhood education program at age three (3).

D. KINDERGARTEN

Each school district must provide a full-day kindergarten for each child age five (5) on or before September 15. A parent or guardian shall sign a waiver if they elect not to enroll a child in kindergarten at age five (5). Any six-year-old child who has not completed a state accredited kindergarten program prior to public school enrollment shall be evaluated by the school district to determine whether placement for the child shall be in kindergarten or the first grade.

E. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

All students shall meet immunization requirements established by the State Board of Education. All enrolling kindergarten students shall furnish evidence of a comprehensive and developmental preschool examination.

VII. STUDENT PERFORMANCE

A. PERFORMANCE OF ALL STUDENTS

Schools shall be responsible for assessing each student's progress at each grade level in acquiring mastery of the competencies, skills, and other subjects required by law and Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) regulations. Assessment data may include performance assessments, competency test scores, standardized test scores, subject matter mastery test scores, and observations of teachers and parent(s) or guardian(s).

B. GRADING

Grades assigned to students for performance in a course shall reflect only the extent to which a student has achieved the expressed academic objectives of the course. Grades that reflect other educational objectives such as the student learning expectations contained in the

curriculum frameworks may also be given.

C. *SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS*

Students with special needs shall have equal access to programs that meet the criteria for their identified Individualized Education Program and shall receive services in the least restrictive environment that meets their needs.

D. *SCHOOL REPORTING OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE*

1. Each local district shall adopt a written policy requiring teachers to communicate personally with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of each student during the school year to discuss the student's academic progress and requiring more frequent communication with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students not performing at the level expected for their grade.
2. Elementary school teachers shall meet with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of each student at least once a semester through a parent-teacher conference, telephone conferences, or a home visit.
3. All grade level conferences with parent(s) and or guardian(s) shall be scheduled at a time and place to best accommodate those participating in the conference. The school shall document participation or nonparticipation in required conferences. If a student is to be retained at any grade level, notice of retention and the reasons for retention shall be communicated promptly in a personal conference.

E. *TRANSFER BETWEEN SCHOOLS*

1. Any student transferring from a school accredited by the Department of Education to another school accredited by the Department of Education shall be placed into the same grade the student would have been in had the student remained at the former school.
2. Any student transferring from home school or a school that is not accredited by the Department of Education to a school that is accredited by the Department of Education shall be evaluated by the staff of that accredited school to determine that student's proper placement in the accredited school.

VIII. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Data from the performance indicators shall be used by the Department of Education and schools in establishing goals and objectives for school improvement.

IX. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. At least a total of twenty-one (21) units earned in grades nine through twelve shall be required for high school graduation. Only one (1) of these units may be in physical education.
- B. A unit of credit shall be defined as the credit given for a course which meets for a minimum of 120 clock hours. A minimum average six-hour day or minimum average thirty (30)-hour week is required.
- C. For graduates through the 2000-2001 school year, there will be two paths of study: a traditional postsecondary college preparatory core curriculum and a technical postsecondary preparatory core curriculum. The following fifteen (15) units shall be required for all students for high school graduation.

English - four (4) units
 Oral Communications – one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit
 Social Studies - three (3) units, or two (2) units Social Studies and one (1) unit of Vocational/Technical studies
 Mathematics - three (3) units
 Science - three (3) units. At least one (1) science unit shall be in a life science and one (1) unit in a physical science. All required science units must provide hands-on laboratory experience for students a minimum of 20% of instructional time.
 Physical Education - one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit
 Health and Safety Education - one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit
 Fine Arts - one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit

D. Beginning in the school year 2001-2002, twenty-one (21) units of credit will be required for graduation. These requirements include the following:

1. **COMMON CORE B Fifteen (15) units**

English B four (4) units
 Oral Communications B one-half (2) unit
 Social Studies B three (3) units
 (one (1) unit of world history, one (1) unit of U. S. history, one-half (2) unit of civics or government)
 Mathematics B three (3) units
 (one (1) unit of algebra or its equivalent* and one (1) unit of geometry or its equivalent.* All math units must build on the base of algebra and geometry knowledge and skills.)

Science B three (3) units
 (at least one (1) unit of biology or its equivalent and one (1) unit of a physical science)

Physical Education B one-half (2) unit
 Health and Safety B one-half (2) unit
 Fine Arts B one-half (2) unit

*A two-year algebra equivalent or a two-year geometry equivalent may be counted as two units of the three-unit requirement.

2. **CAREER FOCUS**

All units in the career focus requirement shall be established through guidance and counseling at the local school district based on the students' contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses shall conform to local district policy and reflect state frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.

Local school districts may require additional units for graduation beyond the fifteen (15) common core and the career focus units. These may be in academic and/or technical areas. All the common core, career focus, and elective units must total at least twenty-one (21) units to graduate.

X. PERSONNEL

A. *SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT*

Each school district shall employ a full-time superintendent when enrollment exceeds three

hundred (300). A full-time superintendent may, at the discretion of the local school district, teach no more than two (2) classes per day.

B. *PRINCIPALS*

Each school shall employ at least a half-time principal. A full-time principal shall be employed when a school's enrollment reaches three hundred (300). A school district superintendent may be permitted to serve as a half-time principal (when district enrollment is less than 300) providing the superintendent is appropriately certified and is not already teaching classes. Schools with an enrollment exceeding five hundred (500) shall employ at least one full-time principal and a half-time assistant principal, instructional supervisor, or curriculum specialist.

C. *LICENSURE AND RENEWAL*

1. All administrative, teaching, and other personnel shall meet appropriate state licensure and renewal requirements.
2. Personnel holding a probationary license or any other such license which results in an accreditation violation may be used in emergencies only and may not be replaced by a person not fully qualified for the position, unless appropriate documentation is provided to the Department of Education describing efforts to hire a qualified individual.
3. Licensure renewal in a subject area shall require intervening educational experience related to that subject area.
4. Licensure renewal for administrative and other personnel shall require appropriate intervening educational experience related to their responsibilities.
5. Issuance and revocation of a license shall be in accordance with Arkansas statute and State Board of Education regulations promulgated for such action.
6. The state licensure system shall include a process designed to provide qualified individuals applying for a license an alternative to completion of a traditional teacher education program.

D. *PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND IN-SERVICE TRAINING*

1. Each school district shall develop and implement a plan for professional development and in-service training based on local educational needs and state educational goals. The plan shall provide education and training for school board members, school and district administrators, teachers, and support staff on a continuing and regular basis throughout the school year. Teachers shall be involved in the development of the plan for their own in-service education. All programs for professional development and in-service training shall be evaluated by the participants in each program.
2. Each school district shall have flexibility in establishing plans for professional development and in-service training, provided the plans meet standards for in-service education as developed by the Department of Education. A minimum of thirty (30) hours of professional development is required for teachers and administrators annually.

XI. SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services shall be designed to be comprehensive and integral to the process of schooling and the development of all students. Each school district for each school building site shall develop and implement a written plan, as set forth in current laws and regulations. The plans shall be based upon the needs identified by parents, teachers, principals, students, and other agencies with which the school district works. Further, the plan shall be incorporated into the comprehensive school improvement plan for each site.

A. *GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING*

1. Each school shall provide a developmentally appropriate guidance program to aid students in educational, personal/social, and career development.
2. Each school shall provide supportive personnel and appropriate facilities to ensure effective counseling to meet individual needs of students.
3. Each school shall assign appropriate certified counselor staff with the district being required to maintain an overall ratio of one (1) to four hundred fifty (450).

B. *MEDIA SERVICES*

1. Sufficient resources shall be budgeted and spent yearly for purchasing and maintaining an appropriate, current collection.
2. A process to provide for input from teachers, parents, and students in the acquisition of instructional materials shall be implemented. These materials shall enhance and support the goals of the school improvement plan.
3. The changing role of the library media center shall support technology as a tool for learning. Each school with less than three hundred (300) students enrolled shall employ at least a half-time certified library media specialist. A school with three hundred (300) or more students enrolled shall employ a full-time certified library media specialist. Schools enrolling fifteen hundred (1,500) or more students shall employ two full-time certified library media specialists. For districts with enrollment less than five hundred (500), a full-time library media specialist may serve the district. The library media specialist(s) shall ensure that access to records and resource data bases shall be available to students. The media specialist(s) shall assist students in the development and use of research skills.
4. The school media collection shall consist of a balance of print, nonprint, and electronic media adequate in quality and quantity to meet the needs of the developmentally appropriate curricular program. The minimum book collection, exclusive of textbooks, shall be three thousand (3,000) volumes, or at least eight (8) books per student enrolled, whichever figure is larger.

A minimum technology requirement will be one (1) computer per media center with multimedia/networking capacity for administrative purposes only.

C. *HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES*

1. Each school district shall have a health services program under the direction of a licensed nurse. The program shall include screening, referral, and follow-up procedures for all students.
2. Each school shall provide facilities, equipment, and materials necessary for operation

of a school health services program.

3. The school health services program shall provide and maintain current health appraisal records for all students in accordance with guidelines developed by the Department of Education.
4. Each school shall take proper measures to ensure the safety of its students and protect against injuries which may occur in or on the school facilities or site.
5. In accordance with Act 1565 of 1999, health services shall include but not be limited to: (1) Students with special health care needs, including chronically ill, medically fragile, and technology dependent, and students with other health impairments shall have an Individualized Health Care Plan. (2) Invasive medical procedures required by students and provided at school shall be performed by trained, licensed personnel who are licensed to perform the task, and the regular classroom teacher shall not perform these tasks. (3) Custodial health care services required by students under an Individualized Healthcare Plan shall be provided by trained school employees other than the regular classroom teachers.

XII. SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education programs and special schools shall be accredited in accordance with applicable laws and rules and regulations adopted by the State Board of Education.

XIII. GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

- A. Each school district shall develop procedures to identify gifted and talented students in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Education.
- B. Each school district shall provide educational opportunities for students identified as gifted and talented appropriate to their ability.
- C. Each school shall use procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions of these educational opportunities.

XIV. SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- A. Each school district shall develop and implement programs which take advantage of educational opportunities outside the traditional classroom.
- B. Each school district shall provide opportunities for qualified students to enroll in courses at institutions of higher education.
- C. Each school district shall provide appropriate alternative program(s) for students who are identified as requiring such programs to continue their education.
- D. Each school district should provide opportunities for summer school and adult education programs.

XV. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

- A. School facilities shall be planned and constructed in accordance with the laws of the State of Arkansas and the regulations of the Arkansas Department of Health, the office of the State Fire Marshall, and the Department of Education.
- B. Each room shall be furnished with equipment and instructional materials necessary to provide the environment and working conditions appropriate for subjects or activities assigned.

XVI. AUXILIARY SERVICES

Auxiliary services, such as transportation and food services, shall be provided in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines developed by the Department of Education.

XVII. COOPERATION AMONG SCHOOL DISTRICTS

School districts may comply with these standards through cooperative efforts among themselves. All plans for cooperation among school districts and institutions of higher learning for the purpose of complying with these standards shall be submitted for approval to the Department of Education.

XVIII. ACCREDITATION OF SCHOOLS**A. *COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS***

A school shall be accredited on the basis of its complying with these standards and state law related to these standards.

B. *DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES*

The Department of Education shall prepare guidelines to be used in the evaluation of schools to determine whether they are in compliance with these standards. The guidelines will provide for the design and format for reports required to be submitted to the Department of Education to indicate the extent to which school districts and schools are in compliance. The guidelines will include criteria for measuring each standard and the documentation required to indicate compliance with the standard. Required reports will be submitted to the Department of Education by October 15 of each year.

C. *ACCREDITATION PROCESS*

The Department of Education shall annually review all reports and investigate any suspected deficiencies in meeting standards. All written complaints charging violations of standards received by the Department of Education shall be investigated. Each year the Department of Education shall make an on-site visit to a selected number of school districts and review the schools for compliance with the standards. The Department of Education shall notify all school districts and schools not meeting the standards for accreditation of deficiencies by June 15 of each year.

D. *ACCREDITATION*

1. Any school, which falls below current minimum standards for accreditation, as determined by the Department of Education, shall be classified as probationary.
2. School districts shall be notified of a school's probationary status and advised that the school will be classified as probationary for no more than two (2) school years, after which time they shall be classified as not accredited. Schools classified as not accredited are subject to dissolution and annexation under Ark. Code Ann. 6-15-206 (Repl. 1993).
3. The Department of Education shall review pertinent information from every school district at least every five (5) years to ensure that the district and schools are in compliance with current standards for accreditation.
4. A comprehensive evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Education (i.e., with the Department of Education's prescribed procedures and school improvement planning processes). The Department of Education shall use teams of evaluators that may include representatives from the Department of Education, colleges and universities, and teachers and administrators from other districts. The Department of Education shall report the conclusions of the evaluation team to the local school within thirty (30) days. (Conform to Standards Review and the Arkansas Consolidated School Improvement Plan [ACSIP])
5. The Department of Education shall provide school improvement teams to local school districts needing assistance in meeting the standards or when it is determined a school has deficiencies. The school improvement team shall recommend action that the school should take to improve its program and eliminate deficiencies.

E. *RIGHT OF APPEAL*

1. In the event a district or school believes the Department of Education has improperly determined that any school or schools in said district fail to meet standards for accreditation, the school district shall have a right to appeal to the State Board of Education.
2. Any such appeal shall be held in an open hearing, and the decision of the Board shall be in open session. Pursuant to the Ark. Code Ann. 6-15-203 (Repl. 1993), the appeal must be filed not later than June 30 following the June 15 certification; and the State Board of Education hearing must be held prior to July 15 of the same calendar year.
3. The State Board of Education may confirm the classification of a school or schools, as determined by the Department of Education; or it may sustain the appeal of the district.
4. Pursuant to the Ark. Code Ann. 6-15-203 (Repl. 1993), an appeal from the ruling of the Board may be made by any district to a court of competent jurisdiction provided such appeal is made within ninety (90) days after the effective date of any annexation.

Standards for Accreditation

Arkansas Public Schools

Revised January 2000

