



# Arkansas House Newsletter

August 4, 2023

## “L” Stands for Literacy



LITERACY • EMPOWERMENT • ACCOUNTABILITY • READINESS • NETWORKING • SCHOOL SAFETY

As we approach the new academic school year, we want to extend our deepest appreciation to teachers across the state and wish them and our students a successful year. Classrooms are buzzing with excitement and we can't wait to witness the progress our students will be making.

There will be several changes made to education over the course of the next few years due to the passage of the [LEARNS Act](#). The legislation was the result of a joint effort between the Governor and members of the legislature. [LEARNS](#) stands for Literacy, Empowerment, Accountability, Readiness, Networking, and School Safety.

While you have heard a great deal about the educational freedom accounts and the changes to teacher pay, we want to bring your attention this week to the literacy component of [LEARNS](#).

Every child in Arkansas is capable of reading and writing proficiently, but today only 32.2% of 3rd-grade students are reading at grade level.

One of the goals of LEARNS is to equip every K-3 classroom with materials aligned with the Science of Reading. Science of Reading refers to the decades of research in fields that point to effective strategies in teaching kids to read. LEARNS also seeks to provide teachers with high-quality training material and to ensure every teaching candidate is trained in the Science of Reading.

Another component of the [LEARNS Act](#) requires the [Arkansas Department of Education](#) to recruit, train, and onboard at least 120 literacy specialists to provide direct coaching and professional learning to all K-3 teachers in D and F-rated schools.

[The Department](#) is in the initial stages of that recruitment process. The department is also working on guidance and resources for districts to implement individualized reading plans and read-at-home plans for K-3 students who do not meet the reading standard. There will be opportunities for tutoring literacy grants for families of students in grades K-3 who are identified as at-risk readers. Families should anticipate information by Oct. 1.

While it may take time to fully implement all of the goals outlined in the [LEARNS Act](#), we expect parents of elementary-age students to start seeing changes and progress this year.

You can read all of the objectives of the LEARNS Act at [learns.ade.arkansas.gov](https://learns.ade.arkansas.gov).