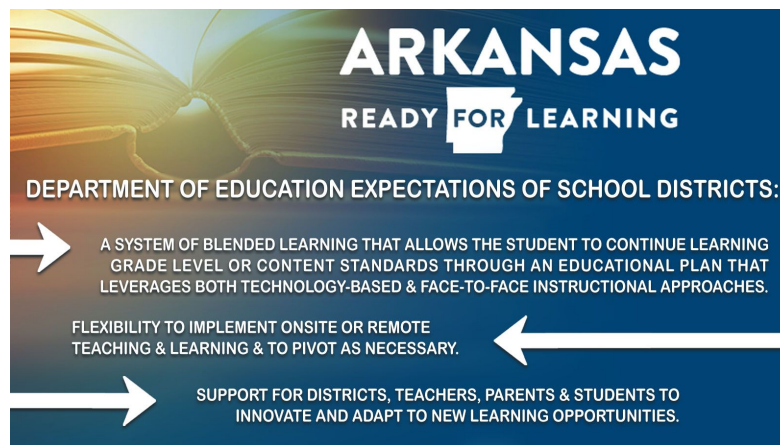




Arkansas House Newsletter

July 10, 2020

Arkansas Ready for Learning



This week, the Education Secretary Johnny Key made a presentation to the House and Senate Education Committee about the Arkansas Ready for Learning initiative. Ready for Learning is a planning and guidance document created to serve as a game plan for district and school administrators as they begin to grapple with making decisions for the 2020-2021 school year.

The Ready for Learning initiative also includes a playbook designed to address gaps as a result of lost learning that may have occurred because of school closures due to COVID-19. A team of approximately 130 educators developed the playbook that will serve as a learning guide this fall.

Going forward, all Arkansas schools will implement blended learning systems that deliver curriculum, instruction and assessment through multiple methods. This type of system incorporates both on-site teacher interaction and off-site instruction, including new content, through streamed or uploaded lessons and activities if extended school closures become necessary. Building a statewide system of blended learning will ensure that all K-12 students are connected to high quality instruction and engagement, regardless of

location.

To give the districts more time to make sure their campuses are ready and that teachers are prepared for the blended learning environment, the Governor moved the start date for the 2020-2021 school year forward from August 13 to the week of August 24. Schools can start no later than August 26.

In collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Health, the Department of Education also established a three tiered system of response based on factors including student and staff active cases, evidence and severity of spread within the school, and spread within the surrounding community. A limited response intensifies cleaning, a moderate response alters meal locations and staggers schedules, and a critical response restricts on-site access and pivots to remote learning. Education Secretary Johnny Key said the response guidance is not intended to identify a district's status prior to the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Secretary Key told the committee that policy decisions regarding face masks will be left to individual districts.

Schools are fundamental to child and adolescent development and well-being. They provide a safe place for academic instruction, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, opportunities for physical activity, and social skill development.

We know many of you have questions and concerns regarding the safety of the students, the teachers, and the community. We will continue to update you on policy changes and any new information we learn regarding the school year. In the meantime, we encourage you to read the Ready for Learning material

[HERE.](#)