



Highlighted Project Arkansas

SC3 Support for Arkansas Student-focused Learning System Legislation

Previously, the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at the University of Oklahoma and the Building State Capacity and Productivity Center (BSCP Center) led team members from all levels of the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) through the Strategic Performance Management (SPM) process and professional learning series. ADE team members engaged in the development of ambitious goals, strategies, milestones, and action plans and are now engaged actively in implementation of the strategic plan, known as the Vision for Excellence in Education, which centers on student-focused education. Through SPM, ADE's knowledge and skills, processes and procedures, and ability to garner stakeholder support were enhanced so teams could differentiate support to districts and schools as they implement student-focused education.

Through cross-divisional planning, ADE identified the legal opportunities and challenges associated with its vision for student-focused education, as well as its state and federal accountability system. Ultimately, ADE found 86 specific changes in state law that would improve the ability of ADE, districts, and/or schools to realize their vision. SC3 anticipated ADE might face a challenge of articulating why certain laws were barriers to implementation of student-focused education and garnering support from the governor, legislators, the education community, and the general public to change legislation. To address this need, SC3 created a crosswalk of ADE's strategic action plan previously developed through SPM and its list of legislative requests. Of the 86 requests, 60 were directly aligned to one or more of ADE's SPM milestones. Many of these requests also supported implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

SC3 continued to support ADE during and following the 2017 legislative session by monitoring which requests were approved, amended, or rejected. The result was all but two (84 of ADE's proposed 86 requests) were addressed by the Arkansas State Legislature, with a total of 105 acts passed related to education. SC3 provided ADE with a draft alignment analysis between all of the passed education acts and SPM milestones and values, finding that all 105 acts supported the new vision, and 27 of those acts directly supported implementation of student-focused learning systems. The laws will revitalize Arkansas's accountability and support system, educator licensure, career advancement, and educator support structures.

ADE Commissioner Key shared the alignment with the Assistant Commissioners, unit leaders, and Governor's Office and added, "Thank you [SC3] for your help with this. I'm not sure it would have been easy for us to see these connections since we are so close to the work."

SC3 continues to equip ADE's staff members with the tools and skills needed to develop policies and practices to implement student-focused education at the local level. These intermediate outcomes will lay the foundation for districts and schools to become more student-focused, for teachers to provide personalized instruction, and for students to select pathways of learning aligned with their individual goals for college, career, and community engagement. Additional information about Strategic Performance Management in Arkansas can be found here: [Project Story](#), [Infographic](#), and [Video](#).



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