ACSIP PILOT

The Arkansas Department of Education has embarked on a new direction in district and school improvement this year as it begins implementation of the ACSIP Pilot project in the 2014-15 school year. Three years in the making and launched this Spring, this project involves 37 districts and 198 schools across the state who volunteered to test a new approach to leading and supporting continuous improvement in their schools. Participating districts and schools receive support from a dedicated and growing team of 15 School Improvement Specialists from the Arkansas Department of Education. Participants are provided access to Indistar, an innovative online platform that focuses the work of leadership teams as they plot the course and manage the implementation of their continuous improvement plan. Districts and schools participating in the pilot are also able utilize the plan created in the Indistar system as their required plan under Arkansas law (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-419).

(Complete story on page 9)

In Partnership with:
The Planning Process:

Statewide Systems of Support
- 2008-2009
  - Dee Cox, Annette Barnes, Berniece

Academy of Pacesetting States
- 2009-2011
  - Dee Cox, Annette Barnes, LaDonna Spain, Elbert Harvey

Indistar (initial exploration)
- October 2009
  - Dee Cox, Deb Coffman

Indistar – Parent Involvement
- October 2009
  - Dr. Geraldine Mallette

Indistar – SIG Schools
- July 2011
  - Elbert Harvey, Bobby Lester, Jayne Green

Indistar – Priority and Focus Schools
- July 2012
  - Elbert Harvey, Bobby Lester, Jayne Green

ADI built Budget Piece per ADE request
- 2013-14 Request
  - ADE staff asked that a budget piece be created that connected the federal & state dollars being spent to actual improvement plan efforts

Pilot
- June 2014
  - 30-50 volunteer districts + their schools with work thru a 1 year pilot using Indistar / ACSIPilot
Pilot Program

2014

April – May  Ask for volunteers to pilot new ACSIP process and software
May  Provide training to administrators on School and District Improvement Planning – Leadership Teams if needed
June  Provide training to administrators and federal coordinators on funding (consolidated federal and state categorical) applications processes
September  Improvement Plans due – Submit what is in system – continue to developing 2014-2015 plans during pilot year – start development 2015-2016 plans
October  Funding applications due for Substantial Compliance (2014 – 2015 ACSIP)
October  Substantial Compliance granted and plans released to for Program Adjustments

2015

January  Program Adjustments due for Final Approval (2014 – 2015 ACSIP)
Feb. – March  Provide training to all school administrators on School Improvement Planning - Provide training to all school administrators and all federal coordinators on funding (consolidated federal and state categorical) applications processes
March – April  Districts and Schools complete School Improvement Plans and funding applications (ACSIP) for 2015-2016
June  All components of ACSIP for 2015-2016 due
July  Substantial Compliance granted or components of ACSIP sent back for Program Amendments
Sept. – May  Districts and Schools develop 2016-2017 Improvement Plans

2016

January  Program Adjustments due for Final Approval for 2015-2016
March – April  Districts complete funding applications (part of ACSIP) for 2016-2017
June  All components of ACSIP for 2016-2017 due
July  Substantial Compliance granted or components of ACSIP sent back for Program Amendments
1. Improvement Plans develop prior to funding – easier for schools and districts to develop a true school improvement plan – all funds outside of improvement plan but included in ACSIP – easier for districts to budget funds (federal and state) - Improvement drives plan not funding
2. Improvement Plans and funding can be approved separately
3. Improvement Plan prefille other required plans – stop duplication of work
4. In compliance with USDOE regarding School-Wide application and plan – limits duplication
5. Would pre-populate data for Applications
6. Smaller and more aligned improvement plans – usable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Volunteer Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Train on School Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Train on Applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Improvement Plan due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Funding Applications due Substantial Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Final Approval Granted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 2015</td>
<td>2015-2016 ACSIP Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. March</td>
<td>Train all Districts</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Substantial Compliance</td>
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<td>Sept. May</td>
<td>Develop 2016-2017 ACSIP</td>
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<td>Jan. 2016</td>
<td>Final Approval 2015-2016 ACSIP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACSIP**

- **School Improvement Plan**
- **State Plans**
- **Federal Application**
- **Federal Funds Budget**
- **Targeted Application/Plan**
- **Categorical Funds Budget**
- **Other as Needed**

**Flowchart Diagram:**

- **School Improvement Plan**
  - Train on School Improvement
  - Train on Applications
  - Improvement Plan due
  - Funding Applications due Substantial Compliance
  - Final Approval Granted
  - Final Approval 2015-2016 ACSIP
  - Develop 2016-2017 ACSIP

- **State Plans**
  - Categorical Funds Budget
  - Other as Needed

- **Federal Application**
  - Targeted Application/Plan

- **Federal Funds Budget**
  - Other as Needed
Training Schools and Districts:

The Journey

37 Districts

198 Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACSIP Pilot Training Agenda</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 Welcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief overview of the day – goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of the tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess – Create - Monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you learn? -activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 - 12:30 LUNCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Improvement/AM Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mock Leadership Team meetings – activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(assessing/planning with Wise Ways research and resources)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Tour (dashboard, main menu, coaching comments, reports)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on (Steps 1-2-3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan Leadership Team Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 - 3:30 Expectations from state (ADE)</td>
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In partnership with:

[Logos of various organizations]
## Progress Activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Progress Type</th>
<th>Formed a Leadership Team</th>
<th>Utilize Agendas &amp; Minutes</th>
<th>Assessed at least 1 indicator</th>
<th>Created at least 1 task</th>
<th>Received at least 1 Coaching Comment</th>
<th>Responded to Coaching Comment</th>
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### ACSIP Pilot Progress Summary-District level

- [Graph showing district progress](chart)

- **37 Pilot Districts**

### 198 Pilot Schools

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>122</td>
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<td>133</td>
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<td>192</td>
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<td>148</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>184</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACSIP Pilot Progress Summary-School level

- [Graph showing school progress](chart)

- **198 Pilot Schools**
Opportunities to Learn From:

• Take your time and start slowly

• Know and understand who you are working with both internally and externally

• Don’t assume everyone understands

• Form a state advisory committee made of up district personal early

Next Steps:

• Evaluate Pilots process and progress to date

• Develop lesson learned

• Expand Pilot or go state wide

• Develop additional training videos
ACSIP Pilot

ACSIP Pilot

The Arkansas Department of Education is embarking on a new direction in district and school improvement this year as it begins implementation of the ACSIP Pilot project in the 2014-15 school year. Three years in the making and launched this Spring, this project involves 37 districts and 198 schools across the state who volunteered to test a new approach to leading and supporting continuous improvement in their schools. Participating districts and schools receive support from a dedicated and growing team of 15 School Improvement Specialists from the Arkansas Department of Education. Participants are provided access to Indistar, an innovative online platform that focuses the work of leadership teams as they plot the course and manage the implementation of their continuous improvement plan. Districts and schools participating in the pilot are also able utilize the plan created in the Indistar system as their required plan under Arkansas law (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-419).

This pilot is the brainchild of the team of Elbert Harvey, Jayne Green, and Bobby Lester who were convinced that the approach to school improvement in Arkansas wasn’t working, and they wanted to find a better way to support Arkansas educators. Under Arkansas law, districts and schools in need of improvement must file an improvement plan in the computerized ACSIP system; however, the planning process, as practiced, rarely involves the consensus of those educators charged with implementing the plan. The development and submission of the plan is seen by districts and schools as an exercise in compliance and not an expression of local commitment to continuous improvement.

Harvey and his ADE team have been part of a national effort supported by the U.S. Department of Education to rethink how states could support district and school improvement by focusing on the importance of local school leadership to assume responsibility for the adult practices that create an environment where kids learn well. Working together in teams, interacting in a culture of high expectations and candor, educators use research-based indicators of effective practice to guide the creation and implementation of improvement plans within the Indistar system. This national effort led to the development of the Indistar online platform to guide and support the work of these local teams in a manner that satisfies the need for compliance with federal and state regulations but urges the teams to go beyond minimum effort and engage school improvement with sincerity and enthusiasm for the sake of the students they serve. Two hallmarks of the platform and the process it guides are the importance of leadership teams composed of teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders serving as a model of professional learning, collaboration and execution; in addition, the process relies on the support of a school improvement specialist who serves as a coach and critical friend to the team keeping them on track with the process and the details of implementation.
The Indistar platform is not new to Arkansas; it has been used for SiG, Priority, and Focus schools since 2013 in a collaborative effort uniting ADE leaders in Title I, Federal Programs, School Improvement, Monitoring, Accountability, Special Education, and Parent Involvement. Based on its initial success, the ADE team now intends all Arkansas districts and schools to use the process and platform to satisfy the legal requirement for designated Arkansas schools to submit improvement plans. This pilot further tests the value of the continuous improvement process and refines the best way to transition Arkansas schools to this new approach. Indistar is currently used as an improvement platform in 20 other states.

Once Harvey and his team had confirmed that Indistar was the core of their strategy to better support school improvement, they brought their recommendations to the Arkansas Education Commissioner and his leadership team, who confirmed that the strategy was promising and deserved greater implementation and evaluation.

Harvey next took his strategy to the legislature and outlined his critique of the present system, the promise of the new approach, and his plan to move forward and was well received. When successful, the pilot will lead to a new means to satisfy Arkansas law and propel Arkansas districts and schools into a more meaningful and effective way to improve teaching and learning.

In this pilot, participating districts and schools commit to engage this new platform and process, including the formation of district and school level leadership teams, regular well-structured meetings focusing on the assessment of the present adult practices against research-based indicators of effective practice. After this assessment, the leadership teams plot their own course to implement, monitor, and sustain local implementation of these indicators. The work of the Leadership Teams is supported by interaction with a state provided School Improvement Specialist. The work of the teams are chronicled in the Indistar system and are visible to team members, as well the school community, district, coaches, members of the district and school community interested in knowing more and supporting the improvement work. The ADE team will also monitor the progress of participating schools by reviewing the improvement work entered into the Indistar system, including:

- the comments entered by School Improvement Specialists addressed to the Leadership Teams and responses by the team to comments
- the number of Leadership Team meetings, including corresponding agendas and minutes
- the Leadership Team’s assessment of current practice of 13 core indicators of effective practice, plans created, tasks assigned, tasks completed.

Unlike the common approach to school improvement where education leaders submit static annual plans, the Indistar process is continuous improvement; the work of the team continuously evolves and will be reviewed and submitted to the state three times during the year. The work of improvement never ceases or lags. Participating districts and schools will submit school improvement plans on November 1 (plans may be amended as many as three times during the pilot year). On December 1 districts will also use the Indistar platform to submit all Title program applications as well as submit State Categorical Budgets. Finally, after
review and feedback by ADE School Improvement Specialist and other ADE officials, local leadership teams will refine and make a final submission of a Pilot ASCIP submission on March 31.

This September, leadership (district and school administrators, Indistar Process Managers) from participating districts and schools attended training on the Indistar process at sites in each of the three geographical zones across Arkansas. These Regional meetings will continue quarterly (November, February, April) throughout the pilot year and are designated Zone Pilot Leadership Team meetings. Each Pilot Leadership Team Zone will also designate two members to serve on a statewide Pilot Leadership Team which will meet after the quarterly Zone Pilot Leadership Team meetings to compare observations, monitor the implementation of the pilot, and provide guidance to the ADE team for improving the pilot effort.

In partnership with Academic Development Institute, the creators of Indistar, the Arkansas team will evaluate each participating district and school according to the following metrics available through Indistar:

- # leadership teams meetings, complete with agendas, minutes
- Total # tasks proposed/ tasks completed
- # tasks proposed/tasks completed according to the 13 indicators required for the plan.

The improvement plans and evidence of progress entered into Indistar will also be monitored to determine where and how successful improvement appears, what difficulties are encountered, and what supports are provided that help a district or school to be successful in its improvement work.

The ADE team will report their findings to the ADE Commissioner’s lead team in late April 2015.

This year’s pilot include selected volunteer districts from the three zones across Arkansas. As the pilot year concludes, the ADE team and a legislative committee will review progress and determine if Indistar/ACSIP will be rolled out to all Arkansas districts and schools, or if an additional pilot year is warranted to implement further improvements in the approach.

Written by Mark Williams, ADI (2014)

*Note: The ACSIP Pilot story was based on the initial plan created in early 2014. Since rollout began, a few details may have changed. The ACSIP team continues toward their goal of implementation, always monitoring and adjusting as needed. 3/9/2015*