

1 State of Arkansas
2 89th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2013

A Bill

SENATE BILL 66

4
5 By: Senator Elliott
6 By: Representative Lenderman

For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO IMPROVE EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS BY CREATING
10 DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

14 TO IMPROVE EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS BY
15 CREATING DISTRICTS OF INNOVATION.

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17
18 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

19
20 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 15, is amended to add an
21 additional subchapter to read as follows:

22
23 Subchapter 28 -- District of Innovation Program

24
25 6-15-2801. Definitions.

26 As used in this subchapter:

27 (1) "District of innovation" means a public school district that
28 has:

29 (A) Developed a district of innovation plan in compliance
30 with § 6-15-2803;

31 (B) Obtained necessary waivers from laws, rules, and local
32 policies to improve the educational performance of students from the State
33 Board of Education; and

34 (C) Been designated as a district of innovation by the
35 state board.

36 (2) "Eligible employees" means the employees in a school that is



1 considering being designated as a school of innovation who are regularly
2 employed at the school and whose primary job duties will be affected by the
3 district of innovation plan;

4 (3) "Innovation" means a new or creative alternative to the
5 existing instructional and administrative practices that is intended to
6 improve academic performance and learning for all students; and

7 (4)(A) "School of innovation" means a school that participates
8 voluntarily in a district of innovation to improve academic performance and
9 learning of all students.

10 (B) A school of innovation is subject to the waivers
11 approved by the state board for the school of innovation.

12
13 6-15-2802. District of innovation designation -- Rules.

14 (a)(1) The State Board of Education may designate any public school
15 district as a district of innovation for the purpose of improving the
16 academic performance and learning of students.

17 (2) The state board shall provide flexibility for an approved
18 district of innovation by permitting the necessary waivers from laws, rules,
19 and local policies to ensure that administrators, teachers, and staff meet
20 the diverse needs of students.

21 (b) A district of innovation shall be approved for a period of five
22 (5) years and may be renewed for a period of five (5) years thereafter.

23 (c) The state board shall adopt rules to administer this subchapter,
24 including without limitation rules that address the:

25 (1) Rules subject to exemption or modification for a district of
26 innovation if approved by the state board;

27 (2) Application, district of innovation plan review, approval,
28 and amendment process for a public school district to establish a district of
29 innovation;

30 (3) Timeline for initial approval of a district of innovation
31 and subsequent renewal, including any ongoing evaluations a district of
32 innovation is subject to;

33 (4) Documentation required to show sufficient parental,
34 educator, community, and business support and capacity for the change
35 identified in the district of innovation plan;

36 (5) Approval by the employees of a public school district or

1 school required by the district of innovation plan;

2 (6) Evidence of teacher collaboration and shared leadership
3 responsibility within the public school district and each school seeking to
4 become a school of innovation;

5 (7) Process for revocation of a district of innovation or school
6 of innovation;

7 (8) Reporting and oversight responsibility of the district of
8 innovation and the Department of Education;

9 (9) Budget and financial detail of the public school district or
10 district of innovation, including evidence of sound financial management
11 practices;

12 (10) Applicable areas of emphasis for innovation;

13 (11) Applicable documentation of job-embedded professional
14 development within the proposed district of innovation plan; and

15 (12) Other information necessary as determined by the state
16 board.

17
18 6-15-2803. District of innovation plan.

19 (a) A public school district shall develop and submit a district of
20 innovation plan to the State Board of Education to become a district of
21 innovation.

22 (b) A district of innovation plan shall address, without limitation:

23 (1) The goals and performance targets for the district of
24 innovation, which may include:

25 (A) Reducing the achievement gap among one (1) or more
26 groups of students by expanding learning experiences for academically low-
27 achieving students;

28 (B) Increasing student learning through the implementation
29 of highly rigorous standards for student performance;

30 (C) Increasing student participation at each grade level
31 in curriculum and instructional components within selected schools of
32 innovation;

33 (D) Increasing the number of college and career ready
34 students; and

35 (E) Motivating students at each grade level by offering
36 more curriculum choices and student learning opportunities to parents and

1 students in the district of innovation.

2 (2) Changes needed in the public school district that will lead
3 to better prepared students for success in life and work;

4 (3) Innovative practices that will be used in the district of
5 innovation;

6 (4) Schools within the district of innovation that will be
7 designated schools of innovation;

8 (5) Documentation of parental, educator, community, and business
9 support and capacity for the proposed district of innovation;

10 (6) Rationale for law, rule, and local policy waiver requests;

11 (7) Fiscal and human resources the board of directors of the
12 public school district will provide to the district of innovation; and

13 (8) Any other information requested by the Department of
14 Education.

15
16 6-15-2804. District of innovation.

17 A public school district that is designated a district of innovation
18 shall:

19 (1) Ensure that the same health, safety, civil rights, and
20 disability rights requirements are in place as those that apply to all public
21 school districts;

22 (2) Ensure that high school courses offered meet or exceed the
23 minimum high school graduation or early graduation requirements adopted by
24 the State Board of Education;

25 (3) Ensure that student performance standards meet or exceed the
26 minimum student performance standards adopted by the state board;

27 (4) Adhere to financial audits, audit procedures, and audit
28 requirements adopted by the state board for public school districts;

29 (5) Require criminal background checks for school employees and
30 volunteers as required by law for public school districts;

31 (6) Comply with open records and open meeting requirements;

32 (7) Comply with purchasing limitations and requirements;

33 (8)(A) Provide instructional time that meets or exceeds the
34 instructional time requirement adopted by the state board.

35 (B) Instructional time may include on-site instruction,
36 distance or virtual learning, and work-based learning on nontraditional

1 school days or hours; and

2 (9) Provide data requested by the Department of Education to
3 generate reports.

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5 6-15-2805. School of innovation.

6 (a)(1) Except as provided under subdivision (b) of this section,
7 before a public school district submits a district of innovation plan to the
8 State Board of Education that includes designated schools of innovation, the
9 eligible employees of each proposed school of innovation shall vote on
10 whether the school shall be designated a school of innovation.

11 (2) A minimum of fifty-one percent (51%) of votes in support of
12 the school being designated as a school of innovation is required before the
13 public school district may include the school as a school of innovation in
14 the district of innovation plan.

15 (3) A school-based council shall be responsible for conducting
16 the vote required under subdivision (a)(1) of this section.

17 (b) The board of directors of a public school district may require a
18 school that has been identified as a persistently low-achieving school to
19 participate as a school of innovation in the district of innovation plan.

20 (c)(1) A school of innovation may request waivers from all of selected
21 laws and rules concerning school-based decision making, including Personnel
22 Policy Law for Classified Employees under § 6-17-201 et. seq. and § 6-17-2303
23 et seq.

24 (2) A minimum of fifty-one percent (51%) of votes in support of
25 requesting waivers under subdivision (c)(1) is required before the school of
26 innovation may request a waiver.

27 (3) A school-based council shall be responsible for conducting
28 the vote required under subdivision (c)(2) of this section.

29 (4) A superintendent, school board of directors, or the state
30 board shall not compel a school of innovation to request a waiver under
31 subdivision (c)(1) of this section.

32 (d) The state board shall ensure that teachers, staff, and parents are
33 actively involved in the management and decision-making operations of a
34 school of innovation, including the employment and selection of personnel,
35 before waivers are granted to a school of innovation.

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