



What is the Arkansas Comprehensive School Reform Model?

The Arkansas Comprehensive School Reform Model is a school-wide design for ensuring that all children will be achieving literacy proficiency by the end of third grade. The goals are aligned with state initiatives (Smart Start, Next Step) and national initiatives (Reading First, Reading Excellence) that include research-based principles for initiating and sustaining literacy improvements in elementary schools. The Arkansas Model is a partnership between the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the Arkansas Department of Education, and Arkansas elementary schools. The ten features of the Arkansas model are outlined below:

A Curriculum for literacy that includes a balanced literacy approach with explicit instruction in the essential components of a K-3 reading program: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing process.
Coaching and mentoring sessions that emphasize apprenticeship techniques for supporting teachers in implementing a literacy curriculum.

Model classrooms that are implemented at each grade level and used as literacy learning labs.

High standards that are based on the Arkansas State Standards and the National Primary Standards in Reading and Writing.

Accountability for student progress that includes school reports, reading and writing assessment graphs, and ongoing formal and informal assessments.

Early Intervention that includes Reading Recovery for the lowest-achieving students and high-quality small group instruction for K-3 students who need extra help in targeted areas.

Professional development that includes explicit training in literacy components, and bi-monthly literacy team meetings that focus on teaching and learning issues.

Well-designed literacy plan that includes short and long-term goals, a three-year timeline, and benchmark indicators for monitoring progress along the way.

Technology that includes networking opportunities for working together in program development and implementation across sites.

Spotlighting schools that are achieving high results, including school visits, presentations, research articles, and news releases.

History of the Arkansas Comprehensive Model

In 1990, the Arkansas Reading Recovery program was implemented in schools with Title 1 funding. Three years later, Title 1 services were expanded to include a menu of Early Literacy programs for struggling readers. The cost-effectiveness of the program was reflected in the knowledge and expertise of the Reading Recovery/Early Literacy teacher, who served the lowest achieving first graders with individualized tutoring and provided a range of supplemental services for

other K-3 students. In 1997, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE), in collaboration with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), developed ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas), a professional development model for K-2 classroom teachers. ELLA grew to statewide proportions and contributed dramatically to the comprehensive nature of the Arkansas model. Due to the success of ELLA, the ADE developed and implemented Effective Literacy (ELF), a professional development program for upper elementary teachers. In 1999, the Arkansas Comprehensive Model was further expanded to include funding and training for school-based literacy coaches in seven schools with an average poverty level of 60 percent. To be eligible for the Literacy Coach training, it was expected that schools would meet two criteria: fully implemented Reading Recovery and Early Literacy programs and prior participation in the ELLA professional development program. Components of the Arkansas Comprehensive School Reform Model include:

1 Literacy Coaching

School-based literacy coaches receive specialized training and work in an apprenticeship relationship with classroom teachers in implementing changes in literacy assessment and instruction. Site-based professional development through literacy team meetings are held and scheduled regularly by the literacy coach. Research-based practices and techniques are demonstrated by the coach, and teachers are supported to take on modeled literacy components.

2 Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas (ELLA and Effective Literacy (ELF))

ELLA and ELF are school-embedded professional development programs for K-2 and 3-4 classroom teachers. Educators are taught the most recent research-based instructional and assessment practices in literacy. Instructional materials and professional texts are provided to assist teachers in maintaining high standards in their teaching and in student learning.

3 Early Intervention– Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery is a research-based literacy intervention that provides intensive tutoring for struggling readers in first grade. Most students accelerate their literacy learning and reach average or better performance. The goal is to dramatically reduce the number of learners who have extreme difficulty with literacy learning and the cost of these learners to educational systems.

4 Supplemental Support- Early Literacy Groups

These groups provide intensive literacy interventions for K-3 students. Children who are on the way to becoming proficient readers and writers but who are experiencing literacy difficulties may be seen in this small group instructional setting. Specially trained teachers support and monitor children's literacy progress in targeted areas.