

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RULES GOVERNING GRANTS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

June 14, 2004

1.00 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

1.01 These rules shall be known as Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Grants for Distance Learning.

1.02 These rules are enacted pursuant to the State Board of Education's authority under Arkansas Code 6-11-105 and Act 34 of 2003 2nd Extraordinary Session of the 84th General Assembly.

2.00 PURPOSE

2.01 It is the purpose of these rules to set reasonable guidelines to make distance learning available to every school district in the state and to establish grant standards for providing funds to education cooperatives for acquiring equipment and telecommunication services necessary for each school district to have the availability of distance learning. These rules are specifically for the purpose of establishing grant standards to implement Act 34 and distribute funds that become available through Act 96 of the 84th General Assembly Second Extraordinary Session of 2003.

3.00 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these rules and regulations:

3.01 "Distance Learning Consortium" is a group of school districts or an education cooperative submitting a grant proposal to obtain funds available through Acts 34 and 96 of the Second Extraordinary Session of 2003.

3.02 "Education Cooperative" includes the 15 legally established Education Service Cooperatives created pursuant to Arkansas Code 6-13-1002 and one collaborative entity between the three public school districts in Pulaski County.

3.03 "School District" is any school district eligible to receive foundation funding under Act 59 of the 84th General Assembly Second Extraordinary Session.

4.00 GRANT NEED FOCUS AREAS

In order to assist school districts needing to receive advanced high school courses, advanced placement courses, enriched course content, or other academic courses not otherwise available in the school district, there is hereby established grant need focus areas for education cooperatives to assist school districts in obtaining and updating distance learning capabilities. The grants shall be designed to address the following needs:

4.01 Acquiring equipment and software necessary to implement distance learning;

- 4.02 Upgrading existing equipment and software for more efficient operation of distance learning;
- 4.03 Providing adequate connectivity for distance learning;
- 4.04 Providing for telecommunication services for distance learning;
- 4.05 Providing technical support for distance learning;
- 4.06 Providing professional development and sharing of information on resources available for the utilization of distance learning.

5.00 GRANT ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

Grant funds will only be distributed to an education cooperatives or distance learning consortium that submits a grant proposal in which the school districts participating and/or the distance learning consortium meets the following standards:

- 5.01 Address one or more of the established grant need focus areas;
- 5.02 Have technical protocols in alignment with standards established by the office of the Executive Chief Information Officer;
- 5.03 Coordinate with the Department to seek the Federal Communication Commissions E-Rate discounts;
- 5.04 Collaborate to share course content.

6.00 DEPARTMENT OVERSIGHT

- 6.01 The Arkansas Department of Education shall oversee the efficient operation and use of the system pursuant to law. In order to comply with the Department's oversight responsibilities, the Department shall require submission and approval of grant proposals by the education cooperative or distance learning consortium prior to distribution of funds. The Information and Technology Section of the Department shall design the proposal format and approve the proposals for funding.

7.00 GRANT PROPOSALS

- 7.01 The grant proposals shall include the amount of funds requested by each focus area and an implementation plan supporting the purpose, need and standards contained in these rules. The superintendent and /or the education cooperative director of each participating school district shall approve the proposal submitted to the Department. The plan contained in the proposal shall be consistent with Arkansas Code and existing Arkansas Department of Education rules regarding distance learning Proposals will be

reviewed for approval as submitted. In order to be considered for Act 96 funding, implementation proposals must be received by the Arkansas Department of Education by October 1, 2004.

8.00 DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

The Department will budget and distribute funds appropriated in Act 96 according to the following:

- 8.01 To provide up to \$7,640,000 for school districts with a maximum of \$45,000 per district to acquire equipment and software necessary to implement distance learning in districts not having interactive video capacity and to add equipment and software to education cooperatives for distance learning content delivery;
- 8.02 To provide up to \$600,000 to upgrade and maintain existing equipment and software in districts and education cooperatives currently providing video conferencing capacity;
- 8.03 To provide up to \$1,600,000 for distance learning technical support and organizational assistance to school districts. To meet this need each of the education cooperatives will receive \$100,000 to hire and support one new distance learning technical assistance position:
- 8.04 To provide up to \$160,000 for professional development and training for participating school districts in the utilization of distance learning. Each of the education cooperatives will receive \$10,000;
- 8.05 Any funds not distributed through sections 8.01 through 8.04 will be distributed for connectivity, backbone capacity, and telecommunication services for distance learning.

9.00 EFFECT ON TEACHERS

- 9.01 A teacher that is under contract in a school district in the respective fields of study that is being offered by distance learning shall not be terminated by the school district because of the availability of distance learning courses.