



Highlighted Project Arkansas

Arkansas Indistar System for School Improvement

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) needed a way to help turn around low-performing schools with improved planning, tracking, monitoring, and technical assistance support. To address this need, the South Central Comprehensive Center (SC3) at the University of Oklahoma and its former comprehensive center, have been supporting ADE in strengthening its statewide system of support (SSOS) since 2009. The comprehensive center provided ADE with guided assistance, as well as information on research-based tools and resources that included Indistar.

Indistar is an online system that guides districts and schools in planning and managing the continuous school improvement process. The system was developed by the former Center on Innovation and Improvement, now called the Center on Innovations in Learning (CIL). States, districts, and schools can implement the tool, and improvement teams are able to use it to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report improvement activities. Indistar allows districts and schools to map their improvement efforts against research-based indicators in a variety of areas as they seek to improve teaching and learning.

Arkansas worked with CIL developers to implement a budget section that allows districts and schools to submit vital information regarding the use of funds for school improvement. The goal is to consolidate several required reports, including annual school improvement plans. This also allows evaluation of costs relative to improvements in teaching and learning. SC3, in partnership with CIL, continues to support ADE through professional learning on the use of the Indistar budget tools, as well as support for ADE as it provides professional learning to schools using the system.

SC3 has provided continuous support for ADE as it implements and expands the use of Indistar in Arkansas. ***More than 100 Arkansas schools are now using the system, and four schools that had used the system are no longer designated as in improvement status.*** In addition to providing a comprehensive planning tool, Indistar has the potential to improve the efficiency of ADE's reporting processes greatly through streamlining report development and having a central location for districts and schools to gather data. In connection with the Indistar reporting tools now available, ADE also is taking a proposal to the Arkansas state legislature's education committee for a potential change to state law regarding how districts and schools report use of state funds related to school improvement.

"SC3 has been instrumental in providing the School Improvement Unit and me with much needed professional development support and technical assistance. SC3 has also been able to provide assistance by bringing in outside specialists to assist with training ADE staff and school district staff. ... [The SC3 Arkansas TA Coordinator] has been invaluable, as she has become a part of our leadership team. She provides us with an outside and a fresh view to problems, which has enabled us to stay on track with our projects," said ADE School Improvement Director Elbert Harvey.

The South Central Comprehensive Center at the University of Oklahoma also supports other states in its region using the Indistar system, including Louisiana and Oklahoma. For more information and resources, visit the South Central Comprehensive Center website at www.sc3ta.org.



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