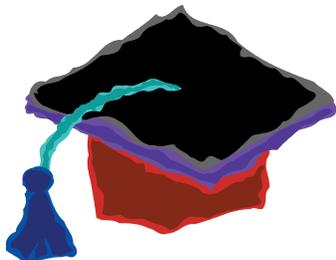


How will this study circle program help?

Good communication is essential to finding solutions that work. Study circles promote good communication by:

- Building trust and connections between the school, home, and community.
- Helping families and educators respect each other and listen to different ideas.
- Deepening our understanding of why students do, or do not succeed in school.
- Sharing concerns and ideas, finding common ground, and looking for ways to make things better.

Whether your school is struggling or a success story, these elements can help improve your community's schools as well as schools all across Arkansas.



Praise for Speak Up, Arkansas! The Conversations Continue

It is important to all of us that our schools and our students do their very best. We know, however, that many of our students are not doing well. This study circle program will help people from all parts of our community work together to create opportunities for our children to succeed. To accomplish this goal, everyone in the community must be involved. We can find better solutions if we get to know one another and listen to different points of view on the issue. Working together, we can create strategies and action plans to increase opportunities for long-term success for all students.

- Amy Malick, Communication Director
Study Circles Resource Center

Do you want to be part of the action?

If you are interested in having study circles in your community, contact Arkansas Study Circles Project at (800) 482-1212 or (501) 372-1415 or studycircles@arsba.org

Speak Up, Arkansas! The Conversations Continue

Schools & Communities Working Together to Help Arkansas Students Succeed



A guide for public dialogue & problem solving.

A program of the Arkansas Study Circles Project.

Study Circles to Help Arkansas Students Succeed

Across Arkansas, people are concerned about how our children are doing in school. We want the best for our children—all of them—and we want our schools to offer an education that allows children choices and opportunities as they grow into adulthood. This discussion is designed to help schools, families, and communities explore the meaning of a good education and create action steps to develop schools and communities where all students can succeed.



What are Study Circles? Study Circles:

- are groups of 8-12 people who meet multiple times to discuss a critical issue facing their community, school district or school.
- bring people from many viewpoints and backgrounds together for honest and helpful talks.
- give people a chance to build trust and find common ground for solutions and action.
- build on good work that is happening already.
- are organized by a diverse working group of people within the community.
- are guided by a neutral facilitator, recorder and a discussion guide.

What does this guide offer?

In addition to four discussion sessions written in clear, simple language, the guide for this discussion also offers:

- tips for study circle facilitators and recorders.
- tips for study circle participants.
- pointers on how to move from dialogue to action.
- resources for further discussion and action.

The Discussion Topics:

- 1. What Does a Good Education Mean to Each of Us?**
 - Explore how our life experiences shaped our thinking about schools.
 - Explore what we want our students to know and be able to do.
- 2. Why Are So Many Students in Arkansas Not Succeeding?**
 - Explore data on how our students are doing in school.
 - Explore different views on why students perform poorly in school.
- 3. Picture a State Where All Schools and Communities Help All Students Do Their Best.**
 - Explore what a state would look like that is focused on education.
 - Explore what a school would look like where all students can succeed.
- 4. Making a Difference: What Specific Actions Do We Want to Take?**
 - Explore our expectations.
 - Explore and prioritize specific action ideas.