6-13-629. Training and instruction -- Reimbursement.

(a) (1) (A) A member of a local school district board of directors who has served on the board of directors for twelve (12) or more consecutive months shall obtain no less than six (6) hours of training and instruction by December 31 of each calendar year.

(B) A member of a school district board of directors elected for an initial or non-continuous term shall obtain:

(i) No less than nine (9) hours of training and instruction by December 31 of the calendar year following the year in which the member is elected; and

(ii) The training or instruction under subdivision (a)(2)(B) of this section within the first fifteen (15) months of service on the board of directors.

(2) (A) The training and instruction required under this section shall include topics relevant to school laws, school operations, and the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the members of the board of directors, including without limitation:

(i) Legal requirements, including without limitation:

(a) The items listed or required by the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee under § 6-1-101; and

(b) Other financial laws or regulations designated by the Department of Education;

(ii) Role differentiation;

(iii) Financial management, including without limitation how to read and interpret an audit report; and

(iv) Improving student achievement.

(B) The training or instruction on how to read and interpret an audit report:

(i) Shall be conducted by a person who:

(a) Is licensed to practice accounting by the Arkansas State Board of Public Accountancy;

(b) Has prior experience in conducting a school district financial audit;

(c) Is not an employee of the Division of Legislative Audit unless the training or instruction is conducted for the boards of directors of multiple school districts; and

(d) Is not the person conducting the annual audit or other financial audit of the school district unless the training or instruction is presented in a large group setting sponsored by a statewide or regional organization that is attended by multiple school districts; and

(ii) May be conducted by electronic means or in person or both.

(3) Hours of training and instruction obtained in excess of the minimum requirements each year may accumulate and be carried forward from year to year.

(4) This instruction may be received from an institution of higher learning in this state, from instruction sponsored or approved by the Department of Education, or by an in-service training program conducted by or through the Arkansas School Boards Association.

(5) A school district shall maintain a record of hours of training and instruction for board members, which may be in the form of an attested, cumulative annual report from the training providers and which shall be subject to verification and inspection during the school district's annual audit.

(b) Local school district boards of directors are authorized to pay per diem and other necessary expenses from
funds belonging to the school district and to reimburse school board directors for expenses incurred in attending in-service workshops, conferences, and other courses of training and instruction required in completing the training and instruction as required in subsection (a) of this section.

(c) (1) The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules, which may be included in the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts, requiring that a statement of the hours of training and instruction obtained by each member of a school district board of directors in the preceding year be:

(A) Part of the comprehensive school plan and goals;

(B) Published in the same way that other components of the comprehensive school plan and goals are required to be published; and

(C) Made a part of the annual school performance report under § 6-15-1402.

(2) The state board shall promulgate rules as necessary to carry out the provisions and intent of this section.