Good afternoon! We hope you’re enjoying the beginning of summer! The OWL aims to serve you by providing you with the latest education news in Arkansas and around the nation. During the school year we have been keeping you up to date once a week. Now that it is summer time, we will be sending the OWL less frequently. However, as important news arises or as we prepare new publications, we will still be in flight throughout the next several weeks. We are currently working on a summer newsletter (which will reflect the topic covered at the OEP conference – teacher quality), a policy brief about the 2008 Teacher of the Year, and a research project studying why Arkansas has experienced a drop in enrollment. So do not fear, we are still busy here in the office! Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments. We’d love to hear from you.

In the mean time, enjoy your summer!

Don’t forget that there are more news stories on our “In the News” section of the OEP website. These are some of the highlights, but there were several interesting stories and studies worth visiting!

**News from Around the Natural State**

**Lottery Director Named**
The Arkansas Lottery Commission voted unanimously Friday to hire Ernie Passailaigue, currently executive director of the South Carolina Education Lottery, as executive director of Arkansas’ lottery.

**Some State Grad Rates Highly Rated**
A higher percentage of Arkansas’ minority students graduate from high school than peers in other states, according to a survey of nationwide graduation rates released Monday.

**Arkansas Public Schools Lost 2,192**
The average number of students attending Arkansas public schools in 2008-09 fell 2,192 short of the figure the year before, surprising state education officials who had predicted an increase of nearly 600.
Connecticut District Tosses Algebra Textbooks and Goes Online
Westport teachers were frustrated at having to rush through the curriculum only to find students didn’t grasp important concepts, so they created their own online program.

Next Test: Value of $125,000-a-Year Teacher
A school opening in New York in September may test whether high pay translates into more successful students.

Diplomas Count 2009, Broader Horizons: The Challenge of College Readiness for All Students
The 4th annual Diplomas Count produced by Education Week has been released for 2009. Stories include NCLB Rules Back Common Rate, Building a Future Aimed at College, and Enthusiasm Builds for Data System. You can also find state graduation rate reports and trends.

Ed Secretary: Judge Teachers on How Students Do
Teachers should be judged on student performance, though not solely on test scores, Education Secretary Arne Duncan said Monday.

Why We’re Behind: What Top Nations Teach Their Students But We Don’t
This study conducted by Common Core, compares the U.S., whose education system focuses on a set of basic skills, to other countries who concentrate on content and trust that the basic skills will be taught through exposure.

Site Seeing
The Arkansas Department of Education has updated its data center (a collection of public data on Arkansas Public Schools) and we have found it to be very useful. Information can be viewed by state, district, or school and includes enrollment data, personnel information, lunch status, finances, and a variety of other measures. To use this helpful tool provided by the ADE, visit adedata.arkansas.gov

Mark Your Calendar
Tuesday, June 23: The Higher Education Subcommittee is meeting in Arkadelphia.

Final Thoughts
As the school year ends, we’ll leave you with two optimistic quotes from a legislator and researcher (located in the article linked above about Arkansas’ graduation rates).
“We’re still far behind what I want to see. If we can come as far as we’ve come, we can go all the way to the top.” – Senator Jimmy Jeffress

“It may be that we have perhaps more of a commitment to progressive education in Arkansas than we often think of ourselves. We seem to be doing something right.” – Jay Greene

**Thanks for reading! See you next week!**

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