OEP WEB LINKS

September 11, 2009

BREAKING NEWS from the OEP!!

The OEP is pleased to report breaking news that Dr. Tom Kimbrell has been tapped by Governor Beebe to be the next Commissioner of Education for the State of Arkansas. Dr. Kimbrell, of Cabot, AR, is currently the executive director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, a position he has held since 2005. The Arkansas Board of Education is expected to consider Dr. Kimbrell’s hiring at their meeting Monday September 14th. If the Board votes to hire Dr. Kimbrell, Governor Beebe is expected to confirm the selection Monday at 10:00 AM in the Governor’s Conference Room.

Dr. Kimbrell’s career in education has included the positions of classroom teacher, coach, building level administrator, assistant principal and Director of Fiscal Services. He has been active in the work of the administrators’ association since his own beginnings as an administrator in 1990. The OEP congratulates Dr. Kimbrell on his past accomplishments, and on his recommendation by Governor Beebe to serve as the next leader of our State Education Department. More information on Dr. Kimbrell’s achievements and background can be found in our policy brief announcing his appointment.

As such, the OWL finds this to be an appropriate time to recognize and say farewell to Dr. Ken James, former Arkansas Education Commissioner, who announced his resignation with the ADE this past summer. During this transition time, we would like to highlight Dr. James’ contributions to Arkansas Education over the past 5 years. We appreciate all his hard work and have written a policy brief to highlight the success in Arkansas education under Dr. James’ leadership.

OEP is in the planning process and would like your input as to the types of publications we release. We would love your thoughts on the topics to be addressed and the best format in which to send them (electronically or by snail mail). We have created a survey that we would like you to complete to help us make these decisions. Of the response we receive by September 22, we will randomly select two winners for a $50 gift card to Barnes and Noble bookstore and a $25 gift card. So be sure to fill out the OEP survey for your chance to win a gift card!

Next week we will add a section to the evolving Arkansas Education Report: Outstanding Educational Progress Awards. We will highlight schools in Arkansas that are “beating the odds.” We hope you are enjoying recognizing Arkansas’ top schools!
News from Around the Natural State

Springdale Seeks to Convert Center to Charter High School
The Springdale School District hopes to delve into the world of charter schools by converting the Springdale Alternative Learning Center to the Springdale Charter High School.

County Schools to All Have Nurses
The School Board for the Pulaski County Special School District approved a $230 million budget Tuesday night that, despite a drop in state funding, includes money to place a registered nurse at each of the district’s 36 schools.

First Woman Elected to State's Supreme Court, Imber Will Retire
Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Annabelle Clinton Imber, informed fellow justices late Thursday afternoon after their weekly conference in which the justices discussed cases. The only woman ever elected to the Supreme Court, Imber is best known for a 1994 landmark ruling in the school-funding case filed by the Lake View School District that declared the state was violating the state constitution by funding districts inequitably.

News from Around the Nation

Work hard – No Excuses – Obama Tells Nation's Students
President Obama urged America's K-12 students to study hard and stay in school, saying, "What you make of your education will decide nothing less than the future of this country." Click Here to view a video of the speech from the White House’s You Tube Channel.

Harkin New Chair of Senate Education
U.S. Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa stepped into the chairmanship of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee filling the vacated seat after Senator Ted Kennedy’s passing last month.

Site Seeing
The Thomas B. Fordham Institute and Brookings Institution recently announced the publication of From Schoolhouse to Courthouse: The Judiciary’s Role in American Education. This book “provides a wealth of critical information and insight for scholars, students, attorneys, and school officials alike, examining the effects that the courts have had on American classrooms over the last sixty years and are having today.” Visit the Thomas B. Fordham Institute website for more information.

Mark Your Calendar
Monday, September 14: Arkansas Board of Education Meeting; 9:00 AM, State Education Building Auditorium
Thursday, September 24: Education Committee Meeting; 12:15 PM, Deer High School
Final Thought

“Ken James has played an invaluable role in moving Arkansas's education system out of the courtroom and onto the path of excellence. The educational advancements he oversaw have already produced measurable improvements for our students, but the true extent of those advancements will be revealed further with each additional school year. On behalf of all Arkansans, I thank Ken for his tireless, single-minded efforts to improve the education of our children.” – Governor Mike Beebe

Thanks for reading! See you next week!

The Office for Education Policy
University of Arkansas
Director: Gary W. Ritter
Research Associates: Nathan Jensen Caleb Rose Bentley Kirkland James Shuls

If you would like to be added or removed from this list, please send an e-mail to oep@uark.edu.