February 19, 2010

From the OEP

Happy Friday! We would like to highlight the 2009 Report Card that was posted last week. This annual report highlights Arkansas’ student performance on standardized assessments, achievement gaps between our students, how our students fare when they leave secondary school, and school and student characteristics.

We will be posting the policy brief about algebra in the early grades next week. We are still collecting information about the topic and apologize for the delay.

Have a great weekend!

News from Around the Natural State

Some Lawmakers Oppose New Language in Lottery Bill
A Senate resolution allowing lawmakers to consider a bill setting the amounts of lottery-funded scholarships during the fiscal session passed in the House today, despite opposition from some members who objected to the inclusion of new language in the bill regarding grade inflation.

School Board Delays Union-Successor Step
The Pulaski County Special School District School Board will consider next month whether to create special personnel policy committees to replace the recently decertified unions.

Twin Rivers School District
Arkansas Education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell announced Monday the appointment of Tommy Arant to serve as superintendent of the Twin Rivers School District for the remainder of the 2009-10 school year. Arant has worked in Arkansas as an education administrator at the school, education service cooperative, and state levels.

State School Fund to See $3.62 Million Less
Arkansas’ Public School Fund budget will be about $36.2 million less than planned for this school year because of a shortfall in state revenue that was announced in January.
News from Around the Nation

High Schools to Offer Plan to Graduate 2 Years Early
Dozens of public high schools in eight states will introduce a program next year allowing 10th graders who pass a battery of tests to get a diploma two years early and immediately enroll in community college.

Home-Language Surveys for ELLs Under Fire
A growing chorus of people are saying that some school districts are overzealous in categorizing students as English-language learners in the aim of complying with federal and state laws to ensure that children of immigrants get extra help with English. They contend that the information requested on the home-language survey that parents are commonly asked to fill out when they enroll their child in a public school can be misleading or misused.

Panel Approve Bible Classes for KY Public Schools
Kentucky may follow the lead of Texas and a handful of other states in allowing Bible classes to be taught in public schools. The Senate Education Committee on Thursday unanimously approved legislation that would effectively return the Bible to classrooms across Kentucky.

Site Seeing
This week we would like to highlight an Education Week chat that was held earlier this week – Schools and the Stimulus: A Midterm Report. One of the guest speakers was from our own state – Charlotte Vann, a federal program coordinator from Conway Public Schools.

In addition, we found an opinion article from an Oklahoma paper that you might find interesting: What’s Up With Arkansas? The writer states: “I used OEA statistics that show Oklahoma is in last place among our cohort of states. We spend $7,615 per child. No. 1 is Arkansas at $9,591 per student. Surprised? I have to say I was. I figured Texas, Kansas, and Colorado would be the leaders and Arkansas would be near the bottom with us (Oklahoma) and New Mexico. So, what's up with Arkansas?”

Mark Your Calendar

February 26: Lecture Series: Babbette Gutmann, Westat – “Design and Results from an Intervention Study of Preschool and Parenting Curricula Using an RCT” at the Graduate Education Building room 343, 12:00pm
February 26: 2nd Annual ESL Symposium at the Clarion Inn, Fayetteville
March 2: Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee Meeting at the State Capitol Building Room 171, 10:00am
March 3 and 4: 3rd Annual ASD Symposium at the Fayetteville Continuing Education Center. March 3 from 7:00 – 8:30pm is a free community meeting on “Meeting the Needs of Persons with ASD.” Contact Barbara Gartin (bgartin@uark.edu) or Tom Smith (tecsmith@uark.edu) for more information.

March 12: Lecture Series: Sandy Kress – “The Movement Toward Common Standards – The Possibilities and Challenges Ahead” at Graduate Education Building room 343, 12:00pm

April 16: OEP Conference – “Preparing Effective School Leaders for Arkansas” at the DoubleTree in Little Rock. Send your RSVP to oep@uark.edu

More information is available on the OEP Calendar.

Final Thought

“Teachers are people who state things they never see finished, and for which they never get thanks until it is too late.” – Max Forman

Thanks for reading! See you next week!

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