From the OEP

Good Afternoon! As promised, in preparation for the OEP Conference tomorrow, Friday, April 16th at the Double Tree Hotel in Little Rock AR, we are releasing another OEP Policy Brief titled National Standards: Following the Pendulum of Debate which takes a look at the debate over adopting a common set of K-12 education standards to guide our nation’s educators.

We also provide an abbreviated set of news stories for you to peruse. As always, more news can be found on the OEP website. Today will be our last OWL for the week as we are on our way to Little Rock for the OEP Conference. We hope to see you there!

News from Around the Nation

BREAKING NEWS!!! Crist Vetoes Teacher Performance Pay

Gov. Charlie Crist announced Thursday that he vetoed a measure that would have implemented a performance-pay standard for teachers, a move that places Crist at odds with his fellow Republicans. The performance-pay measure passed the Senate last month and, after a marathon debate last Friday, it passed the House, too. It has generated controversy throughout Florida, with a loud outcry from teachers and their unions.

$23 Billion Fund Proposed to Save Teacher Jobs

Senator Tom Harkin, an Iowa Democrat, wants to create a $23 billion jobs fund to prevent teachers in the U.S. from being fired because of budget shortfalls. Harkin, chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, today introduced the Keep Our Educators Working Act. The measure has 13 cosponsors, all Democrats, according to a statement from Harkin’s office. Job losses at public schools and colleges in the U.S. may top 100,000 in the next school year, Harkin said today at a U.S. Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing. The legislation needs to be passed now because school districts are making budget decisions this month, he said.

Spotlight on Common Standards

As we prepare for our own conference on Preparing Effective Leaders in Arkansas, our colleagues in the Department of Education Reform are capitalizing on the current discussion surrounding the proposed Common Core Standards by hosting the “Forum on Proposed National Standards” at the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Center.
The purpose of this meeting is to provide a forum for teachers, administrators, parents, and others to discuss the public comment drafts of Common Core's math and ELA standards. These standards reflect the work that the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association have been doing for the past year. And these are the first drafts that Common Core has made available to the public. They have enormous policy and fiscal implications for the states that choose to adopt their final versions—which will be ready in late May or early June. If adopted, Common Core's standards will replace Arkansas’ current standards in math and ELA. These standards will also serve as the basis for common assessments in the states that adopt them.

This meeting is open to all interested administrators, curriculum directors, teachers, parents and other community stakeholders. However this meeting will be especially useful for teachers and district and school curriculum coordinators, who will be responsible for implementing these proposed standards.

Two hours professional development will be credited to attendees. For more information, contact Misty Newcomb at 479.575.7024 or mdn01@uark.edu

**Site Seeing**

In preparation for the OEP Conference on Effective School Leadership this Friday, our featured website today is the [New Teacher Project](#); which employs OEP Leadership Conference speaker Ellen Hur. The New Teacher Project is structured around five lines of business, which include Policy & Research, Teacher Quality Innovations, Teaching Fellows Programs, Staffing Initiatives, and Training & Certification.

**Mark Your Calendar**

- **April 16:** OEP Conference – “Preparing Effective School Leaders for Arkansas” at the DoubleTree in Little Rock.
- **April 20:** Forum on Proposed National Standards at the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative 6:00 - 8:00 PM. Contact Misty Newcomb at mdn01@uark.edu for more information.
- **June 15:** “Common Standards, Common Sense: What the Common Core State Standards Mean for Arkansas” hosted by The Learning Institute at Bryant Middle School, 9am – 3:30pm. Contact Quentin.suffren@tli.net for more information.

More information is available on the [OEP Calendar](#).

**Final Thought**

'To penetrate and dissipate these clouds of darkness, the general mind must be strengthened by education.' - Thomas Jefferson

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