From the OEP

School Leadership Conference: Last week at this time, the OWL was happy to be flying around the DoubleTree in Little Rock at a great conference with many excellent Arkansas educators. We enjoyed the presentations and conversation throughout the day. We hope to improve each year, and, thanks to the feedback from the attendees, we learned a lot about ways to host a better conference. Next year we will have more free time and perhaps some break-out sessions so we can interact more. If you were unable to attend the school leadership conference, or would like to view a presentation again, we have posted material to the OEP conference web page.

Forum on Proposed National Standards: The Department of Education Reform sponsored a Forum on the Proposed National Standards this past Tuesday, April 20th. Over 120 teachers, principals, and superintendents attended the meeting developed in partnership with the Education Renewal Zone and the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative. Members from other parts of the state have asked the Department for to hold similar meetings in their part of the state. The Department is currently in the process of developing a program for central and east Arkansas. More information about the Forum can be found in this article from the Northwest Arkansas Times.

Thanks for reading! Have a great weekend!

News from Around the Natural State

School Board Again Yanks Recognition; Union Bristles
The School Board for the Pulaski County Special School District cast a divided vote late Tuesday to discontinue recognizing the Pulaski Association of Classroom Teachers as the contract-bargaining agent for district teachers, setting the stage for a possible strike or other job action.

Bush Drops in on El Dorado: He Gives Scholarship Recipients Big Pats on the Backs
Former President George W. Bush traveled to El Dorado on Thursday afternoon to congratulate this year’s recipients of the El Dorado Promise scholarships, heaping praise on the students, their parents and the company that is footing the college tuition bills - the Murphy Oil Corp.

News from Around the Nation

Scramble Begins for $650 Million in ‘i3’ Funding
Nearly 2,500 districts, schools, and nonprofits representing every state have indicated they plan to compete for an Investing in Innovation grant, setting up a furious fight over $650 million in federal economic-stimulus money that's designed to scale up creative solutions to education's most vexing problems.

**NJ Voters Asked to Pay More for Less at Schools**  
School budget talks have become so contentious in this township that 700 people recently packed a school board meeting — and 100 of them stayed more than nine hours, until 4 a.m.

**Regents Plan New Route to Master’s in Teaching**  
The New York State Board of Regents voted unanimously on Tuesday to approve a pilot program that would allow educational groups like Teach for America to create their own master's degree programs, a role long reserved for education schools.

**Site Seeing**

This week we are going to refer you to our own website! To view the school leadership conference material (including presentations from the speakers and video of the keynote address), visit [The OEP 2010 Conference Web Page](#).

**Mark Your Calendar**

- **April 27**: Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee meeting in room 171 of the State Capitol, 10:00am [agenda](#)  
- **April 27**: Joint Subcommittee on Grade Inflation meeting in room 171 of the State Capitol, 1:30pm [agenda](#)  
- **May 10**: State Board of Education Meeting at the State Education Building in Little Rock  
- **May 14**: Professional Licensure Standards Board Meeting  
- **June 11**: UCA Leadership Institute, 8:30am – 3:00pm. Contact leadershipstudies@uca.edu for more information [click here](#).  
- **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**

“Our teachers and principals are heroes to us...because they changes lives.” – Tom Kimbrell, Arkansas Commissioner of Education (at the OEP School Leadership Conference)

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