From the OEP

Happy Last Week of School for some of you in the state…and for those of you whose school year ended earlier this week, we hope that your summer is kicking off to a good start. For those who have one more week…hang in there…you are in the home stretch!

For those of you who may be looking for some good summer reading, we have posted our “hot off the presses” Arkansas Education Report **Comprehensive Analysis of Arkansas Teacher Salaries: State, Region, and District**. In this report, we compare teacher salaries that *have* and *have not* been adjusted for cost-of-living in surrounding states and the regions in Arkansas. Among the findings, in the comparison to other states, Arkansas’ 2008-09 average teacher salary ranked 36th in the nation, 11th among Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) states, and second among Arkansas’ bordering states. After adjusting for the cost of living, Arkansas’ average teacher salary ranked 12th in the nation, fifth among SREB states, and first among border states. When average teacher salary was compared to the state median household income, Arkansas ranked seventh, fourth, and third in the three respective rankings.

This topic of teacher salary and school funding is also relevant as the Joint House & Senate Education Committee as well as the Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Committee in our state legislature will sit for a fiscal session this fall and among the many line items in the state budget, one such item that will be discussed is adequate funding in our schools. This will be one area of news on which the OWL will cast a keen eye.

The OWL will also take a break this summer and visit your inbox less frequently. We will e-mail you once or twice a month as news and issues arise, but you can always check our list of education news on the **In the News** section of our website.

News from Around the Natural State

**Arkansas Submits Application for Second Phase of Race to the Top Grant Competition**

Arkansas submitted its Race to the Top application for $175 million dollars to the U.S. Department of Education today. June 1 was the deadline for states competing in the second phase of the grant. The application outlines the state’s plan to elevate public education in Arkansas to the next level by using information gleaned from high quality data to drive decisions for better instruction at the classroom level and more effective policy-making at the state level, with a primary focus on finding and implementing strategies to turn around low-performing schools. The full application can be found [here](#).
UALR Professor to Assess ‘No Child Left Behind’ Supplements
Do after-school tutoring sessions – required of public schools failing to meet No Child Left Behind goals – work? That is the question UALR psychology Professor Robert Corwyn, assistant professor in UALR’s College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, hopes to answer during his summer research project. Corwyn has been selected by the U.S. Department of Education to research the efficacy of after-school tutoring as required of public schools that fail to meet yearly educational progress goals for three years in a row.

Two Rivers loses school-closure appeal
An Arkansas Board of Education decision that resulted in the 2009 closing of a geographically isolated campus in the Two Rivers School District did not violate the state constitution or state law, the Arkansas Supreme Court said Thursday. The state’s high court upheld Pulaski County Circuit Judge Collins Kilgore’s July decision in which Kilgore denied a request by parents of Fourche Valley Elementary and High School students in Yell County in western Arkansas to block the closing of the campus.

News from Around the Nation

N.Y.C. Cancels Teacher Raises to Avoid Layoffs
New York City will avoid laying off 4,400 teachers as a cost-cutting measure by instead canceling raises for teachers and principals, Mayor Michael Bloomberg said Wednesday. The teachers' and principals' unions said that they welcomed the decision on layoffs but that the move to rescind 2 percent annual raises planned for the next two years is subject to collective bargaining. United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew said Bloomberg "has made the right decision to avoid massive disruptions to our schools."

Education Jobs Bill Faces Tough Climb in Congress
Against a current of political resistance—including from some Democrats—the Obama administration and congressional leaders continue to seek new strategies to pass a $23 billion measure aimed at helping schools stave off what could be massive layoffs.

Site Seeing
The National Center for Education Statistics has released *The Condition of Education 2010*, a Congressionally mandated report to the nation on education in America. It covers all aspects of education, with 49 indicators that include findings on enrollment trends, demographics, and outcomes. The report, released May 27, projects that public school enrollment will rise from 49 million in 2008 to 52 million by 2019, with the largest increase expected in the South. Over the past decade, more students attended both charter schools and high-poverty schools (those in which more than 75% of the students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch). One in six U.S. students attends a high-poverty school; and the number of charter school students has tripled since 1999.

Mark Your Calendar
June 11: UCA Leadership Institute, 8:30am – 3:00pm. View the [flyer](#) for more information.
June 14: State Board of Education Meeting at the State Education Building Auditorium, 9:00am
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**

"Do you know the difference between education and experience? Education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don't." - Pete Seeger

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

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