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 month, we hope that your summer is kicking off to a good start.

We wanted to send you one more bit of summer reading by letting you know that last week the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) released a set of state-led, education standards known as the Common Core State Standards. You can review the OEP coverage of the history and debate of National Standards in the United States leading up to the Common Core Standards in our Policy Brief National Standards: Following the Pendulum of Debate. The release of the standards marks the conclusion of the development of the Common Core State Standards and signals the start of the adoption and implementation process by the states. The year-long process was led by governors and chief state school officers in 48 states, 2 territories and the District of Columbia. The final standards were informed by nearly 10,000 public comments and by standards in other top performing countries so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy.

Also, in case you missed it last week, we posted our 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.

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

2 to Pay School District $3,407

Two Pulaski County Special School Board members said Tuesday that they will repay $3,407 to the district for improper expense reimbursements. But acting Superintendent Rob McGill said he was unaware of any payment plans and needs copies to present to state auditors and legislators by Friday. McGill had recommended that the School Board cut off travel privileges and take legal action
against board members Mildred Tatum and Gwen Williams if they did not pay back district funds that they received for unallowable travel costs incurred between July 1, 2006, and March 3, 2009.

**Report Ranks Arkansas Second in Nation in pre-K Education**
Arkansas is ranked second in the nation in a new report that evaluates states’ early childhood education programs. “The State of Preschool 2009,” a report released Tuesday by the National Institute for Early Education Research at Rutgers University, ranks Arkansas’ pre-kindergarten program as second only to Oklahoma in terms of enrollment, quality standards and funding adequacy.

**News from Around the Nation**

**NEA Eyes Congress as High Court Refuses NCLB Case**
Fresh from a snub by the U.S. Supreme Court, the National Education Association is turning to Congress to address its concerns that the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—in the form of the 8-year-old No Child Left Behind Act—is an unfunded mandate.

**Plan to Grade Teachers Would Take 2 to 4 Years**
A plan to grade Iowa teachers in part by how their students do in classrooms will take up to four years to put in place, a timeline critics say is too slow and threatens the state's shot at millions of dollars in federal aid. The time is needed to make sure tougher evaluations are fair to teachers, state education officials say.

**Site Seeing**
Now that the Common Core State Standards have been released, the accompanying website is full of interesting information including both the English Language Arts Standards as well as the Math Standards.

**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.
- **June 17**: Physical Education Symposium. 8:00am - 3:00pm. Click here for more information.

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

**Final Thought**
“The very spring and root of honesty and virtue lie in good education.” - Plutarch

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

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