From the OEP

This week, we present our next installment of the 2010 OEP Awards: High Achieving Elementary Schools. So far, we have presented the overall top performing schools in Arkansas on the Benchmark and EOC examinations and schools that are “Beating the Odds” in which economically disadvantaged students are reaching high levels of achievement. This week, our report focuses on the top performing elementary schools by taking a deeper look at the high performing elementary schools that serve students in grades 3-5 broken down by each grade, by each region, and by each Benchmark subtest. Congratulations to all the OEP award-winning elementary schools!!

The next installment of the OEP Awards, to be released in early October, will highlight the top middle schools across the state. Have a great rest of the week!

News from Around the Natural State

Bonesteel Harriman Named Arkansas Department of Education Director of Policy
Susan Bonesteel Harriman joined the Arkansas Department of Education today as director of policy. Harriman comes to the department from the National Center for Educational Achievement, ACT, Inc.’s Just for the Kids Initiative in Austin, Texas.

Arkansas Public School Children to Get Flu Shots
Arkansas school children will get influenza vaccinations this fall under a program approved by the state Legislature. Schools are to start administering the vaccines on Oct. 11, though the schedule for individual schools is still being set.

Weiner Schools' Merger Stands For Now
U.S. District Judge James Moody denied a request Wednesday to undo a merger between the Weiner and Harrisburg school districts, saying advocates of such a reversal didn’t prove that it needed to be done immediately.

Prescription Medication: Arkansas Schools Battle Drug Abuse
Arkansas leads the nation in teen prescription drug abuse, according to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. The president’s Office of National Drug Control Policy reports that 10.3 percent of Arkansas teens ages 12 to 17 abused prescription drugs in 2007.

News from Around the Nation

Merit Pay Found to Have Little Effect on Achievement
The most rigorous study of performance-based teacher compensation ever conducted in the United States shows that a nationally watched bonus-pay system had no overall impact on student achievement. Nearly 300 middle school mathematics teachers in Nashville, Tenn., voluntarily took part in the Project on Incentives in Teaching, a three-year randomized experiment conducted by researchers affiliated with the National Center on Performance Incentives at Vanderbilt University. It was designed to study the hypothesis that a large monetary incentive would cause teachers to seek ways to be more effective and boost student scores as a result.

**California Board of Education Addresses Teacher Evaluation Issue**

The California State Board of Education took up the controversial issue of teacher evaluations Wednesday, unanimously voting to create an online database to share information about local, state and national efforts to measure educators' effectiveness.

**How the ACT Caught Up With the SAT**

For the first time ever, as many students last year took the ACT as the SAT.

**Internet Service Upgrade Coming to Poor and Rural Schools**

The Federal Communications Commission is expected on Thursday to approve an overhaul of the $2.25 billion E-Rate program, which subsidizes Internet service for schools and public libraries, to give schools more options for faster Internet service, allow for community Internet service and to begin pilot programs for digital textbooks.

**Standards' Impact for Special Education is Weighed**

Special education advocates are greeting the burgeoning common academic standards movement with a mixture of optimism and caution. The standards offer an opportunity for students covered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, to have access to the same rigorous coursework that is offered to their peers in general education, the standards writers believe. But the standards-content creators intentionally have not spelled out how the new curricula should be taught to a student population with a range of physical and cognitive needs.

Don't forget, you can always keep up with more education news on the In the News section of our website.

**Site Seeing**

This week, the film *Waiting for Superman* was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show and we thought that you might enjoy reading and watching Oprah’s coverage and commentary on how the film could raise awareness about education reform in our country.

**Mark Your Calendar**

Sep 28: Training session for Childhood Obesity Grant  
Sep 28: Joint House and Senate Education Committee Meeting, Rich Mountain Community College, Mena, AR  
Sep 29: Joint House and Senate Education Committee Meeting, Rich Mountain Community College, Mena, AR  
Sep 29: Public School Desegregation Lawsuit Resolution Task Force, State Capitol Building, Little Rock AR  
Oct 1: Deadline to register for Distance Education Workshop: Coordinated Review Effort and the School Meals Initiative  
Oct 8: 12th Annual Arkansas Conference for Parent Education and Parental Involvement
OEP Conference Reminder: **November 9, 2010** - Annual OEP Conference at the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, Arkansas. This year’s Conference topic is Assessment and Accountability. The keynote speaker will be Raymond Simon, Arkansas Commissioner of Education from 1998 to 2004. He was appointed Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education in 2005. Rather than holding the conference in the spring, as in years past, we are now holding it in the fall to avoid conflict with the Arkansas State Benchmark and EOC testing dates. We hope you will consider attending. We will be working to allow professional development hours credited to teachers and administrators for this conference.

NEW!!! You can now register online: [Click Here to register for the 2010 OEP Conference!](#)

**Final Thought**

“Nationally, Arkansas is respected for its efforts in education policy, and I am honored to play a role in this important work.” - Susan Bonesteel Harriman - New Director of Policy at the Arkansas Department of Education

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

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