From the OEP

Good Afternoon! As promised, in preparation for the OEP Conference this Friday, April 16th at the Double Tree Hotel in Little Rock AR, we are releasing another OEP Policy Brief titled **Race to the Top** which provides an update on Arkansas’ performance in the grant competition. Our state’s scores in each category are highlighted and the difference between Arkansas’ score, and the total available points in these categories is examined. Finally, we address the strengths and weaknesses in the Arkansas application for Race to the Top funds.

We also provide an abbreviated set of news stories for you to peruse. As always, more news can be found on the [OEP website](http://www.oeparkansas.org). Tune in tomorrow for another OEP publication as we continue to get closer to the OEP Conference.

**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 Arkansas Leadership Academy; Directed by OEP Leadership Conference speaker Debbie Davis. The Arkansas Leadership Academy is a “a nationally recognized statewide partnership of 15 universities; 9 professional associations; 15 educational cooperatives; the Arkansas Departments of Education, Higher Education, and Career Education; the Arkansas Educational Television Network; Tyson Foods, Inc; Walmart Stores, Inc.; 2 superintendent representatives; the Office of the Governor; and the State Board of Education.” The Academy, through the use of research and best practices, designs creative and innovative approaches to establish learning communities in public schools by developing human resources and by modeling and advocating collaboration, support, shared decision making, team learning, risk taking, and problem solving. Partners commit to changing their organizations to support system improvement.

Mark Your Calendar

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

‘If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.’ - John Quincy Adams

Thanks for reading! See you next week!

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