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OEP Welcomes New Commissioner: Tom Kimbrell


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The Office for Education Policy is excited to welcome the new Arkansas Education Commissioner – Dr. Tom Kimbrell.

Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe recommended Dr. Kimbrell for the position today, and the Arkansas Board of Education is expected to consider him for the position on Monday, September 14.

Dr. Kimbrell has been widely involved in education in Arkansas for the last 25 years. He currently serves as the executive director of the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA), and is an Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Prior to his work with the AAEA, Dr. Kimbrell served as superintendent of schools in the North Little Rock and Paragould school districts.

Dr. Kimbrell began his career in education as a classroom math and science teacher, as well as a coach in the Pocahontas School District. He then worked in the Paragould School District as a teacher, coach, building level administrator and eventually as Director of Fiscal Services after spending over three years as an assistant principal at his alma mater and home town of Corning in Northeast Arkansas.

During his time as director of the AAEA, Dr. Kimbrell has stressed the importance of accountability for Arkansas schools and educators, and recognized the need for more reliable measures of student achievement. In a letter sent to the former Education Commissioner, Dr. Kenneth James, Kimbrell noted that:

“Measuring the growth of learning and achievement is what we (Arkansas educators) should be about in meeting the education needs of every child in our schools.”

Dr. Kimbrell was also at the forefront of the implementation of new legislation that required Arkansas to collect data to allow for the evaluation of student achievement growth models, and stressed the need for tracking student progress over time. He noted that “Measuring growth of that child’s academic achievement over time provides an accountability measure of the success of that school and its educators.”

Dr. Kimbrell will replace Dr. James, who served as the Commissioner of Education from May 2004 until June 2009.

The Office for Education Policy would like to wish Dr. Kimbrell good luck as the new Commissioner, and look forward to providing any assistance we can as he assumes this important challenge.

Dr. Tom Kimbrell

Positions Held:

- Executive Director, AAEA
- Assistant Professor, University of Arkansas
- Superintendent, North Little Rock & Paragould
- Math & Science Teacher, Pocahontas Schools

Degrees Attained:

- Ed.D.-Educational Leadership, Arkansas State University, 2003
- M.S.E.-Secondary Principalship, Arkansas State University, 1991
- B.S.E.-Secondary Education, University of Arkansas, 1984