

Johnny Key
Commissioner of Education – March 25, 2015 – current
Cabinet Secretary, Department of Education – May 2019 – current

Vita

Education

Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, 1991

Positions Held

- Cabinet Secretary, Department of Education, 2019 – Present
- Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education, 2015 – Present
- Associate Vice President for University Relations, University of Arkansas System, 2014 – 2015
- Arkansas Senator, Arkansas Senate, 2008 – 2014
 - Senate Committee Chair
 - Arkansas Legislative Council Administrative Rules and Regulations Committee
 - Arkansas Lottery Commission Legislative Oversight Committee
 - Joint Retirement and Social Security Committee
 - Senate Education Committee
 - Senate Committee Vice-Chair
 - Academic Facilities Oversight Committee
 - Arkansas Legislative Council Policy Making Committee
 - Joint Budget Committee
 - Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Programs
- Arkansas Representative, Arkansas House of Representatives, 2003 – 2008
- Justice of the Peace, Baxter County Quorum Court, 1997 – 2002

Awards

- 2013 Legislative Pacesetter of the Year – Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- 2012 Distinguished Service Award – Arkansas State University at Jonesboro
- 2012 Invest in Life Award – University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Cord Blood Bank of Arkansas
- 2011 Guy Newcomb Award – Arkansas Pharmacists Association
- 2010 Person of the Year – Arkansas Phi Beta Lambda

Biography

On March 25, 2015, Commissioner Johnny Key was approved by the State Board of Education to be the chief school officer of the Arkansas Department of Education. Gov. Asa Hutchinson recommended Key for the leadership position. In May 2019, Gov. Hutchinson announced Key as the Secretary of the Department of Education as part of his plan to transform state government. Key now serves in both capacities.

Under Key's leadership, the agency focused the vision on transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education. The mission is to provide leadership, support, and service to schools, districts, and communities so every student graduates prepared for college, career and community engagement. The value statements and goals guide the daily work within the agency.

Prior to being named commissioner, Key served as associate vice president for university relations at the University of Arkansas System, a position he held since August 2014.

Key began his career in public service in 1997 when he was elected to serve as a justice of the peace on the Baxter County Quorum Court. He was elected to three two-year terms in the House of Representatives, followed by a tenure in the Senate that began in 2008.

While in the Senate, Key served as chair of multiple committees: Senate Education Committee; Arkansas Legislative Council Administrative Rules and Regulations Committee; Joint Retirement and Social Security Committee; and Arkansas Lottery Commission Legislative Oversight Committee. He served as vice chair of the Joint Budget Committee; Arkansas Legislative Council Policy Making Committee; Academic Facilities Oversight Committee; and Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Programs.

Key graduated from Gurdon High School and received a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering in 1991 from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

He has received many awards, including the 2013 Legislative Pacesetter of the Year by the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading; the 2012 Distinguished Service Award from the Arkansas State University at Jonesboro; 2012 Invest in Life Award from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Cord Blood Bank of Arkansas; the 2011 Guy Newcomb Award from the Arkansas Pharmacists Association; and the 2010 Person of the Year by Arkansas Phi Beta Lambda.

Key and his wife, Shannon, live in Little Rock and have one son, Ryan, and one daughter, Rachel.